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# EMERGENCY INDEX

AN ANNUAL DOCUMENT

OF PERFORMANCE PRACTICE

**VOL. 7**

documenting 2017

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## PREFACE

**A** *PHYSICAL BOOK* and an online collection of texts offer very different opportunities for interaction and interpretation. When we started publishing it seven years ago, *Emergency INDEX*—stubborn pulp pushed into paper, inked, bound and carried—was to be a platform for presence. It wanted to make a vast array of living performance work become *durably present* to a vast array of living performance makers, and it wanted this presence to *emerge* from a self-nominated collection of performance makers who wished to document their recent work, in their words, and in these pages. From its beginnings, we were dedicated to publishing *INDEX* as a paper volume, but we'd also imagined that the contents of each paper volume would eventually be freely available online. But *how*?

What could an online repository of these archives do that the book can't? We dreamed that an online interface for *Emergency INDEX* would allow for key-word searches *acrossthe* different volumes, proliferating alternative paths through which to explore years of performance documentation. We wanted an online platform that would allow authors and others to link directly to a published performance description and thus be able to circulate these texts in other ways. Finally, we wanted the online version of *Emergency INDEX* to allow its readers to propose interpretations of this material: a sort of digital zine to publish essays, diagrams, audio tours, and menageries that reflect on what performance is or does by considering the documents in previous volumes of *Index*. But sadly, these were dreams barely worth talking about; for the six preceding years we had barely enough funding and time to publish the paper volume, and none at all to attempt even a simple version of such a website.

As we were starting work on Vol. 6, the stars began to align. UDP collective member Michael Newton wrote a grant application to the New York State Council for the Arts, deftly arguing the ways that *INDEX* served performance makers and the field of performance. NYSCA responded by awarding us five years of support, making it possible to think seriously about what an online publication would look like. Brian McCorkle (PPL, Varispeed) and Edward Sharp (Future Death Toll), both performance makers and longtime contributors to *INDEX*, came forward to brainstorm, design and build the new site. Not only have they built a fully searchable repository of previous volumes, but also an embedded online journal—*Index the Index*—publishing responses to and interpretations of previous volumes. Brian and Edward will continue in the forthcoming year as co-editors of *Index the Index*, in which they invite contributors to submit works that reconsider, reinterpret or re-index the online archives of *Emergency INDEX*. For their open call, and a more detailed description of the online archives, please visit [www.emergencyindex.com](http://www.emergencyindex.com).

Thus, as Vol. 7 goes to print, we find ourselves poised for change. The joy and excitement of working with Brian and Edward to finally make previous volumes of *INDEX* available online are tempered by having to say goodbye to our beloved Katie Gaydos, who (alongside Sophia Cleary and myself) served as co-editor of *Emergency INDEX* from 2015 through 2017, when she resigned in order to pursue personal projects. Imagining a future without her has been difficult. It is no exaggeration to say that Katie's precision and devotion shaped each of the volumes she worked on. We wish her success and are grateful for her indelible contribution to the documentation of performance.

Dear reader, as you prepare to dig into the pages and performances that follow, we leave you with this final reminder: *Emergency INDEX* is a living project that invites your vital participation, whether as a place to document your own performance work, as a platform for re-indexing and reinterpreting these collections of performance documents, or as a community of performance makers and performance acts becoming ever more present to each other.

— YELENA GLUZMAN

## HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, one of the most hotly-disputed issues in performance has been that of documentation. Acknowledged as, at best, a conflicted endeavor, and at worst, a betrayal of the very essence of performance, documentation has been problematized while performances have proliferated. Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of performances have come and gone, witnessed only by the people in the room, or on the street. And though we can argue about the advantages of such a condition, it does make a rather unique situation: performance has become a field whose practices are largely invisible to itself.

To respond to this situation, we began with a simple idea: to create an annual periodical allowing the people who made performances in that year to document their work in print. We would not curate these entries on the basis of their genre, their popularity, their location, or their perceived quality. All performances were eligible, as long as they identified themselves as performance and were performed in the year of publication.

In its non-curatorial approach, Emergency INDEX is indebted to the legacy of High Performance magazine (1977–1998) and their “Artist’s Chronicle,” a section of the magazine in which performance artists were openly invited to send descriptions of their recent works—the result is a surprising document of performance in the late 1970s. Famous works appear alongside one-offs, celebrated artists next to unknowns. From this democratic hodge-podge comes a fascinating snapshot of an emergent form.

Emergency INDEX is not, however, concerned solely with performance art. We believe that the broad, confusing field of performance has evolved into a similarly emergent situation, and we hope that our contemporary re-imagining of the “Artist’s Chronicle” can help make visible the breadth of contemporary performance.

Because each annual edition of INDEX will include dance, therapy, poetry, protest, rehabilitation, scholarly research, theater, conceptual art, advertising, and many other fields utilizing performance, we feared simple descriptions would be opaque to those who are not familiar with the histories and problems of a particular field. So we asked authors to articulate not only what they made, but why they made it—to describe the problematics driving their work as well as the performance itself. Instead of focusing on the inevitable misrepresentation of describing the performance as experience, these documents endeavor to describe the choices, tactics, and techniques used to pursue a specified aim.

Each yearly volume contains hundreds of performance descriptions. For all we know, the pages of Emergency INDEX may provide the only print documentation of some performances described herein; certainly, for most, this is the only printed description written by the performance’s creators for no purpose other than documenting the work.

While eschewing traditional curation and designing the book with equal space for every performance, we do not wish to imply that the works documented in this book are equivalent through their self-identification as “performance.” On the contrary, rather than emphasizing the category, the book aims to underscore the variety of the works themselves. Moreover, instead of being discouraged by the disparity between the descriptions (necessarily reduced to language) and the performances they inevitably misrepresent, we have decided to cheerfully use the materiality of language itself to provide yet another channel of information.

That is why the back-of-the-book index is a salient feature of this book. By cross-referencing and indexing the language used by authors in their descriptions, we hope to leave a document not only of the performances themselves, but also of the language used when talking about performance.

You are holding in your hands a simple, flexible, physical, and time-tested technology. It allows for chance encounters, unplanned adjacencies, sudden epiphanies, as well as casual browsing and concerted searching. We hope that INDEX will serve as a useful tool and an inspiration for those to whom performance matters, to whom it is a persistent thorn, who look to performance as a means or as an end.

In short, we are tremendously excited for you to get lost in the labyrinth of Emergency INDEX and to find many threads to guide you through its pages.



## NO HOLIDAY

first performed on January 28, 2017  
 Streets and trails of Cheung Chau Island, Hong Kong  
 performed three times in 2017

PATRICK S. FORD

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## NO HOLIDAY

PATRICK S. FORD

For many working people, the highlight of the year is the annual summer holiday. During this short, intense period people remove themselves from their habitual surroundings and immerse themselves enthusiastically into what is often unfamiliar geographical and/or cultural territory.

The proposed performance deals with the journey to and from this holiday adventure. This journey, which takes us to our holiday destinations, can be stressful and problematic, involving long periods of queuing, waiting, may involve delays, questions, endless security checks, document examinations, aimless window shopping in duty-free shops, trips to the toilet, always with one eye on the information screen anticipating announcements of the appropriate gate number from which our long-awaited flight will depart. This stressful experience is regarded as something to be endured, is unavoidable and often begins to tear away at the relationships between accompanying family members or travelling companions.

After the experience of working on my previous performance "Releasing Sisyphus," I wish to continue this cathartic trend. I wish to address the holiday journey itself, rather than the time spent at the destination. The journey has become the holiday and I now approach the travelling time as my vacation.

The suitcase, which represents a link to my origins as it contains my spare clothes and other items brought from home, shall also become a burden that slows me down and forces me, to choose the path of least resistance along the trail. I must take the suitcase everywhere with me and it will no doubt hinder my forward progress and sap my strength, but I will endeavor to push on, exploring the choreography of the holiday experience.