

OPPONENT'S RECOMMENDATION FOR THE MASTER'S THESIS:

Attachment to the state magister's examination report.

STUDENT: **DILLARD Alyssa**

Branch of study: MA DOT

Opponent: MgA. Cristina Maldonado

In "Devising Selves Through Chaotic Performance Explorations on Radical Blackness", Alyssa Dillard exposes the process, influences, and methodologies she used to devise a new perspective for her theater-making and to reposition herself concerning personal, cultural, historical, and social tensions.

Her thesis is thorough and analytical in the account of references that serve as coordinates to position herself within the contemporary art practice. She also makes a lucid acknowledgment of her motivations, limitations, and the potential of her personal questions. She gives an account of her research in devising methodologies that adjust to her personal and artistic needs, and that lead her towards specific ways of understanding collaboration, structure, location, time, context, and dramaturgy, which came together to form her particular way of performance-making.

The topic she engages with is significantly urgent and essential at personal, artistic, and social levels. The structure of the paper offers an introduction to her initial position before the Master's studies, a chronological evolution of her work, including the works she created and the role they played in the overall development of her personal and artistic interests. The conclusion of the paper offers a view of possible venues for further development and she recounts the knowledge and methodologies gained as director, performer, and dramaturg. I find especially interesting her reflections on the embodiment of historical and cultural heritage. And the proposition of balancing this heritage load by dosing it in relation to the multiple dimensions of an individual's identity.

The thesis is well-drafted, but I have a few minor comments and some observations: on pages 26-27, three paragraphs are repeated in a different order. The visual documentation of her work is scarce and it would have been helpful to be more generous with it in the sections in which the performances are described.

I have a comment regarding "Marie Antoinette Walks Down An Elegant Hallway Knowing Everyone Hates Her". The final work has accumulated locations, performers, interpretations, places, and strategies that seem to function as a growing organism. The ephemerality of the performance is only present if seen each performance separately. But in fact, this body of work is a continuum. There is a discourse, beyond the author's and participants' intentions, that is growing each time the performance is presented. I recommend to reflect on: What does this body of work is saying on it's own? What is the agency of this performative device? What is being activated through it? Can the accumulation of experiences of this performance re-enter the problematization of racial stereotypes and from which angle?

For the defense I pose two questions regarding missing points of interest in the recount of "Marie Antoinette Walks Down An Elegant Hallway Knowing Everyone Hates Her":

- You made a personal work that addressed an embodied conflict: redefining, rejecting, and regulating social heritage and your personal material. Did the other performers go through the process of challenging the particularities of their embodied heritage and social tensions? If so, how was the method you used to enable this? If not, how valuable it is for your artistic research that others challenge the particularities of their inherited stereotypes along with you?
- What possible places and contexts can help you to explore different intensities of operating inside and outside blackness in a near-future with this performance?

The submitted paper complies with the requirements applicable on a standard basis to master's thesis and therefore I recommend the paper to be admitted for defense.

Date: 11.09.2020

Cristina Maldonado

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