



FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

Action Hero. (2015). *Action Plans: Selected Performance Pieces*. Introduction by C. Lavery. London: Oberon Books.

Action Plans is one of a series of books published by Oberon, written by companies who make postdramatic theatre and documenting a selection of their key productions. As alternatives to the traditional form of the published play, each book explores different forms of presenting text and image in the attempt to document the live experience of the individual pieces on the page. *Action Plans* begins with an introductory 'lexicon' by academic Carl Lavery, which explores Action Hero's work through an alphabetical list of terms and concepts – such as action, failure, interaction, popular – and documents six of Action Hero's theatre pieces.

Bailes, S. (2011). *Performance Theatre and the Poetics of Failure*. London & New York: Routledge.

Here, Sara Jane Bailes theorises a tradition of theatre practice in which the concept of failure becomes a primary principle. After analysing failure in certain forms of dramatic theatre, such as the theatre of [Samuel Beckett](#) and slapstick, she explores how failure has been adopted in postdramatic theatre through analyses of the work of Forced Entertainment, [Goat Island](#) and Elevator Repair Service. Bailes explores how failure functions both in performance style and through the use of compositional techniques (such as chance, improvisation and risk) that question traditional acting methods and create new forms of theatrical representation. She also considers the theories of Karl Marx to show how a 'poetics of failure' can expand our understanding of politics and power in established theatrical traditions and point to alternative ways of making or doing.

Barthes, R. (1977). 'The Death of the Author'. In: *Image-Music-Text*, trans., S. Heath. London: Fontana.

This famous essay by the French theorist focuses on a tradition in literary criticism that interprets texts in relation to the author's life or viewpoint. Barthes is not arguing that the author is irrelevant but that neither is he or she the 'God-like' centre of a text's meaning. Rather, every text has potential layers of meaning, not all of which are intended or known by the





author, because this depends also on the reader's interpretation. Barthes' criticism has influenced theatre-makers and critics in resisting the notion that a director of a play should seek to uncover and convey the playwright's 'original intention'. His ideas have also influenced postdramatic theatre-makers' creation of multi-layered works that leave gaps for an active space of interpretation or physical participation by the spectator.

Bogart, A. and Landau, T. (2005). *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*. New York: Theatre Communications Group Inc.

Viewpoints is a form of improvisation that initially came from the world of postmodern dance and was developed by [Anne Bogart](#) and Tina Landau for use by actors. It is a highly physical technique through which performers can develop their skills in ensemble working, spatial awareness and working spontaneously and intuitively. The 'viewpoints' are a set of names given to certain principles of movement through time and space including time, space, gesture, shape, repetition, tempo and composition. This book is an accessible and practical how-to guide through the stages of viewpoints. It is included here due to its wide use and application in postdramatic theatre-making.

Bottoms, S. and Goulish, M. (2007). *Small Acts of Repair: Performance, Ecology and Goat Island*. London & New York: Routledge.

This book is a collaboration with [Goat Island](#) co-founder Mathew Goulish. It is structured as a collage of texts, including writings by all company members as well as critical reflections by Steve Bottoms and other academics. The book is split broadly into three parts: the first part contains essays on Goat Island's key performance pieces and the second on their performance processes. The third part contains a practical day-long workshop with multiple versions of each step, which allows the reader to mix different variations. It is a comprehensive resource for those interested in Goat Island's work or for making physical theatre in a postdramatic context.





Brown, A. and Wetherell, M. (2007). *Trial: A Study of the Devising Process in Reckless Sleepers' 'Schrödinger's Box'*. Plymouth: University of Plymouth.

The book is both a documentation of Reckless Sleepers' devised production *Schrödinger's Box*, and a collage of writings by the authors and other company members and collaborators. Richly illustrated with sketches and storyboards from Mole Wetherell's own production journals, the book provides individual perspectives on the work of Reckless Sleepers. It offers a fascinating insight into their working process and can be dipped into for inspiration for those making their own theatre work.

Crawley, P. and White, W. (2011). *No More Drama*. Dublin: Project Press in association with Carysfort Press.

This is an edited collection of essays on individual productions from a range of theatre companies, which Peter Crawley, in his opening introduction, frames through the lens of the postdramatic. Written in a down-to-earth voice, *No More Drama* includes chapters on the work of influential companies such as [Rimini Protokoll](#), Pan Theatre Company and Elevator Repair Service. It concludes with a chapter on the work of Quarantine, in which the company invites associates familiar with their work (such as collaborators, academics and producers) to respond to a series of questions about the company's approach.

Crossley, M. and Yarker, J. (2017). *Devising Theatre with Stan's Cafe*. London: Bloomsbury Methuen Drama.

Co-written by Stan's Cafe's Artistic Director, James Yarker, this is a very accessible introduction to the company's work and theatre-making processes. It contains analyses of many of their theatre pieces over their 25-year career, alongside insights by Yarker and other company members. Mark Crossley also analyses the company's devising approach and productions with reference to postdramatic theory and concepts such as 'not acting', personae, and audience as co-author. Crossley considers how the company's work connects with (or deviates from) developments in contemporary performance. Each chapter begins with a short overview of its content and includes text boxes with short descriptions of key





productions for ease of reading. Yarker also offers practical ideas for stimulating and making performance work.

Daniels, R. J. (2014). *D.I.Y. (Do. It. Yourself.)*. Chichester: Bootworks Theatre and the University of Chichester.

A compilation of writings by over 30 theatre and arts practitioners, the book's aim is to contextualise a DIY approach to making performance work that is common in postdramatic theatre. It shares theories and practices of DIY making in a visually dynamic style full of photographs and illustrations. Written by practitioners themselves in a conventional and straightforward style the book contains reflections, performance texts, and instructions and inspiration for theatre-making and includes writings by Action Hero, Stan's Cafe, Gob Squad, Third Angel, Michael Pinchbeck and many more.

D'Cruz, G. (2018). *Teaching Postdramatic Theatre: Anxieties, Aporias and Disclosures*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This is a useful book for university tutors and students, which describes a set of strategies for teaching postdramatic theatre through practice. It identifies some of the problems, anxieties and institutional obstacles that might be generated by teaching postdramatic theatre in higher education, with a useful series of case studies. The book draws on critical theory and uses performance analysis and contextualises postdramatic theatre in relation to the concept of postmodernism. For university tutors, the book will assist those involved in teaching postdramatic theatre and directing theatre productions; for students, it will also deepen their understanding of the concept of postdramatic theatre.

Dixon, S. (2007). *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art, and Installation*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

In this wide-ranging book, Steve Dixon produces an introduction to the history, theory and practice of the use of new media – the digital – in live performance. It is partly a historical overview and partly an analysis of key practitioners, in different artistic contexts, who have produced work in which the inter-relationship of computer technologies with live performance is a central component. Although it is not a book on





postdramatic theatre specifically, many chapters contain insights and relevant productions that will contribute to a deeper understanding of how new technologies have contributed to developments in postdramatic theatre and allowed new forms of interaction with audiences. The chapters on 'Performance and Technology since 1960', 'Liveness' and 'Postmodernism and Posthumanism' and 'Digital Theatre and Scenic Spectacle' may be of particular interest.

Etchells, T. (1999). *Certain Fragments: Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment*. London & New York: Routledge.

Written by the director of Britain's foremost experimental theatre company, Forced Entertainment, this book is a seminal publication that contains a series of essays on their work as well as texts from four of their most significant productions. Rather than a linear telling of the company's history, Tim Etchells forms a personal, fragmented reflection, giving his unique insights on some of the main concerns in the company's work, and postdramatic theatre generally, such as risk, play, process and failure. *Certain Fragments* also investigates the influence of urban life and popular culture on the company's work in a style that mixes autobiography and anecdotes with intelligent observations on contemporary performance practice.

Fischer-Lichte, E. (2008). *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics*. London & New York: Routledge.

This is a companion read to Lehmann's *Postdramatic Theatre* in that Fischer-Lichte also considers the development of experimental theatre and performance since the 1960s. Whilst Lehmann engages with dramatic theory in order to describe theatre's development away from drama, Fischer-Lichte does not use the term 'postdramatic' and takes an approach that engages more substantially with Performance Theory. However, she focuses on and expands many of the same ideas as Lehmann, in particular, the experiential dimension of the performance event and the blurred distinctions between artist/performer and audience. She also proposes some helpful concepts in mapping out this 'new aesthetics' (such as the 'autopoeitic' feedback loop between audience and performers), which will help the reader deepen their understanding of key aspects of postdramatic theatre.





Goat Island. (2000). *School Book 2*. Chicago: Goat Island and The School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

This practical resource primarily consists of workshop exercises linked to summer schools run by Goat Island in Chicago and Bristol in 2000. The book is split into two main categories: Goat Island's teaching methodologies, with detailed descriptions of the company's workshop exercises, and more theoretical writing by notable scholars and company members in Part Two. This is a valuable resource for making postdramatic theatre with an emphasis on physicality and for a deeper understanding of the company's performance-making processes and concerns.

Gob Squad (2010). *Gob Squad and the Impossible Attempt to Make Sense of it All*. Gob Squad.

Written and published by Gob Squad themselves, this book gives a unique understanding of the processes the company use in making their work – work that often takes place in city streets or non-theatre sites. Written in a conversational and punchy style, the book includes scripts, interviews and concept documents and a wealth of insights into their working processes. After an initial chapter 'On Process', each subsequent chapter focuses on key aspects of their practice, such as the use of cameras and participation with audiences. This is a must-read for anyone who wants to learn more about the company's theatre-making processes and thematic obsessions.

Govan, E. Nicholson, H. and Normington, K. (2007). *Making a Performance: Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*. London & New York: Routledge.

Making a Performance traces the historical development of devised performance through the 20th and into the 21st century. The book covers a range of devising contexts and includes chapters on autobiographical performance, site-specific performance, physical theatre and companies who work in community settings. Whilst not all of the work and practitioners featured sit within the field of the postdramatic, the book discusses the work of several companies who make postdramatic theatre, including Forced Entertainment, Lone Twin and Gob Squad, and highlights how postdramatic theatre emerged in collaborative devising contexts.





Harvie, J. and Lavender, A. (2010). *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

In this edited volume, Harvie and Lavender compile contributions from academics, who have each observed the rehearsals of a significant international theatre practitioner. Each contributor takes a specific production as a case study to analyse the making processes of their chosen practitioner, revealing what happens inside the rehearsal room. The individual chapters are supported with illustrations and with text boxes that provide additional detail or describe a specific, sometimes significant, moment in a rehearsal process. Usefully, *Making Contemporary Theatre* begins with an introduction by Jen Harvie that frames the work presented through the lens of the postdramatic and is a helpful aid to understanding some of the challenging ideas proposed by Lehmann.

Heddon, D. and Milling, J. (2015). *Devising Performance: A Critical History*. 2nd ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book maps the development of collaboratively devised theatre practices from the 1950s to the present. In an easy-to-read style, Deirdre Heddon and Jane Millington analyse the work of devising companies from the UK and beyond, and consider different approaches to, and models of, devising. The chapter on 'Contemporary Devising and Postmodern Performance' expands on many of the themes and concepts discussed in the introduction to this handbook with a critical eye and will be of particular interest to those teaching, studying and making postdramatic theatre.

Jurs-Munby, K., Carroll, J. and Giles, S. eds. (2013). *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political: International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*. London: Bloomsbury.

This is an edited collection of essays in which academics explore the relation between aesthetics and politics in postdramatic theatre. This is a challenging read for those who wish to develop a deeper theoretical understanding and explore the ways in which postdramatic theatre responds to current social and political concerns. Some concerns that are addressed include the continuing relationship with the dramatic tradition and ethics around audience participation. Across the book, a wide range





of performance examples are used and all the chapters critically discuss aspects of Lehmann's postdramatic theory, sometimes bringing this into dialogue with other theorists. Lehmann himself contributes an essay to this book, in which he further considers some of the ideas introduced in his earlier book in relation to the political dimension of postdramatic theatre.

Kirby, M. (1972). On Acting and Not-acting. *TDR: The Drama Review*, 16(1), pp.3-15. Reprinted in P. Zarrilli. ed., (2002). *Acting (Re)Considered: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*. 2nd ed, London & New York: Routledge, pp.40-52.

This is Michael Kirby's influential essay in which he makes an important distinction between performing and acting. Kirby relates performing with task-based actions, which he describes as 'non-matrixed', and dramatic acting with a fictional matrix of story and character. He argues that acting and not-acting are end-points on a spectrum, rather than binary opposites, with different degrees of matrixed performance along the line. This includes 'simple acting', which he relates to the performance of 'persona'. Illustrated with useful examples, this is an accessible foundational essay for starting to understand different performance modes in theatre and performance practice.

Klich R. and Scheer, E. (2012). *Multimedia Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

This book is a comprehensive introduction to the broad range of theatre practices using screen media and digital technologies in live performances, many of which can be placed under the umbrella of postdramatic theatre. The book explores how developments in audio-visual technology have changed traditional relationships between spectators and performers and considers the key concepts and terms needed to understand multimedia performance. The book draws on case studies from practitioners such as Blast Theory, the **Wooster Group** and the Builders Association to demonstrate and analyse the increasing role of multimedia technologies in contemporary theatre practice.





Lavender, A. (2016). *Performance in the Twenty-First Century: Theatres of Engagement*. London & New York: Routledge.

Here, Lavender takes a broad look at performance across different contexts including YouTube, sporting events and theme parks as well as contemporary theatre. He considers how theatrical and cultural events in the 21st century create experiences for audiences or participants in which the live encounter is a key element, often involving spectators (or consumers) as performers themselves. With direct reference to Kirby and Lehmann's work, the book includes a section on '(Not) being an actor', which usefully explores how character has re-emerged in various forms – such as through online performance and social media celebrity.

Lehmann, H.T. (2006). *Postdramatic Theatre*. Introduction and trans., K. Jurs-Munby. London & New York: Routledge.

This is the seminal work by Hans-Thies Lehmann (originally published in German in 1999) that introduced the term 'postdramatic' and analysed the relationship between contemporary performance and the dramatic theatrical tradition. After describing a 'pre-history' of postdramatic theatre, which includes experiments in both dramatic forms and avant-garde practices, he goes on to discuss the development of postdramatic theatre. He positions this in relation to a historical shift from a text-based culture to a new media age of image and sound, with references to a diverse body of work that ranges across the fields of theatre and performance art. This is sometimes a challenging read but the extensive use of sub-headings, which Lehmann uses to guide the reader through this new theatre landscape means that the reader can 'jump in' as they wish to pick out specific aspects or themes.

Machon, J. (2013). *Immersive Theatres: Intimacy and Immediacy in Contemporary Performance*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Immersive theatre practices, which place emphasis on the experience of the theatre event and the active participation of audiences, are often postdramatic in form. Here, Josephine Machon maps the growth of immersive theatre in the first book dedicated solely to its practices and associated theories. It includes interviews with key practitioners and companies, such as the influential company Punchdrunk, who feature





heavily in the book, and examines topics such as site-specific performance and immersive technologies.

Oddey, A. (1996). *Devising Theatre: A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*. London & New York: Routledge.

Oddey combines a critical look at devised theatre practice through descriptions of some important theatre companies – including Forced Entertainment. The book's final section is a guide to the devising process with some practical ideas and exercises. This section does tend to assume that the user is making work within a dramatic matrix of character and story, however, her case studies include postdramatic as well as dramatic theatre examples. Also the down-to-earth style and principles, and the strategies of ensemble working she discusses, make this a valuable general guide for those who are new to devising.

Ontroerend Goed. (2014). *All Work and No Plays: Blueprints for Nine Performances*. London: Oberon Books.

This wittily titled book represents another in the Oberon series of publications that present alternative ways of documenting postdramatic performance texts. This book features the controversial company Ontroerend Goed from Belgium, who are renowned for making interactive pieces that sometimes push ethical boundaries. *All Work and No Plays* contains 'blueprints' for nine of their performances, each of which has its own specific way of addressing or involving an audience. The book attempts to mimic the experience of an Ontroerend Goed event in the way each specific text is differently presented on the page. Therefore, these 'blueprints' are more than just a documentation of their work but also potential stimulus and material for theatre-making.

Quick, A. (2007). *The Wooster Group Workbook*. London & New York: Routledge.

The Wooster Group Workbook features documentation from several of the company's productions, as well as interviews with director Elizabeth LeCompte, other company members and collaborators. It focuses on six of their influential performance pieces from 1987 through to 2002, including *Brace Up!* (1990), their radical deconstruction of [Anton Chekhov's](#) *The*





Three Sisters. Working closely with the **Wooster Group**, Andrew Quick has compiled a diverse range of material that presents a unique account of how the company makes its work, including performance texts, actors' notes, stage designs and photographs. The book also contains three essays by Quick that contextualise aspects of this pioneering company's theatre work.

Savran, D. (1986). *Breaking the Rules: The Wooster Group*. New York: Theatre Communications Group.

This was the first major book on the work of the **Wooster Group**. It describes and analyses landmark productions from their first 10 years as a company. Although its documentary material is less extensive than in Quick's book, it combines descriptions of their performance methodology, interviews with the company and production photographs. A feature of this book is that, in a structure that imitates the form of a Wooster Group piece, Savran juxtaposes quotations from interviews and the performer's notebooks with his own analysis to allow a collage of different voices to be presented on the page.

Schechner, R. (2013). *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. London & New York: Routledge.

Here, Richard Schechner introduces newcomers to the complex and interdisciplinary field of performance studies in a lively and accessible format. The content of the book is vast, with sections related to performances of many kinds and in many different contexts, such as ritual, play, sport, and social performance in everyday life. Some of its sections have a direct relationship to the postdramatic: such as, 'From total acting to not acting', 'Performing in everyday life' and 'From performance montage to virtual reality'. Alongside his own writing, Schechner helpfully provides boxed-off quotations and writing extracts from key thinkers and artists, which offer supplementary or alternative opinions and ideas. This third edition also has a companion website with supplementary online materials for use by both tutor and students. This is an important book that can be used by students in both further and higher education, and can be read in a linear way or dipped into to focus on particular elements.





Tomlin, L. (2013). *Acts and Apparitions: Discourses on the Real in Performance Practice and Theory 1990-2010*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

In this book, Liz Tomlin takes a critical look at postdramatic theatre and some of its associated claims and theories (including Bailes's theory of the 'poetics of failure'). She examines how performance practices since the 1990s have explored questions relating to the status of the real, drawing heavily on the theory of poststructuralist philosopher Jacques Derrida, who popularised the term 'deconstruction'. After an introductory chapter, which provides a historical and theoretical foundation, Tomlin focuses on the works of specific practitioners, including Forced Entertainment, the **Wooster Group** and Ontroerend Goed. Although this is not an easy read, it is useful for the reader who wishes to extend their understanding of postdramatic theory and look at it from a critical perspective.

Ward, G. (2010). *Understand Postmodernism*. Oxon: Teach Yourself/Bookpoint Ltd.

This is an introductory book on postmodernism for students encountering this challenging topic for the first time. It outlines the key ideas of postmodernism and related theories, such as poststructuralism and hyperrealism with examples from across the arts and popular culture. Ward begins by offering a one-minute and a five-minute introduction to the topic to help get the reader started. Each chapter includes bullet-point summaries and boxed off 'insights' to highlight key thinkers or ideas. The book ends with a useful glossary of key terms and suggestions for further reading. Written in a straightforward way that cuts out technical terminology, this book is a valuable guide to understanding some of the concepts and historical developments that relate to the broader cultural context in which postdramatic theatre has emerged.

Westerside, A. (2017). *A Machine They're Secretly Building*. London: Oberon Books.

This is the full production text of Proto-type Theatre's *A Machine They're Secretly Building*. The production combines original text and classified intelligence documents with film, music and sound to explore the ways in which government surveillance secretly monitors our daily lives. In the





same vein as the other Oberon publications of postdramatic works featured here, Proto-type's Co-Artistic Director, Andrew Westerside, attempts to document the fuller experience of the performance event in an alternative way to the traditional play format.

Williams, D. and Lavery, C. eds. (2011). *Good Luck Everybody: Lone Twin: Journeys Performances, Conversations*. Aberystwyth: Performance Research Books.

This book is both a documentation and contextual analysis of the diverse work of Lone Twin. It covers their site-based durational work, studio-based performances and collaborative public projects, and includes interviews, critical essays and performance texts. The book has an innovative and playful design, full of photographs and diagrams that document specific performances and journeys undertaken as part of a performance project and is organised by themes that highlight their interest in storytelling, journeys, endurance and kindness. Each section contains essays on their work by different scholars, including the editors, which are followed by transcribed conversations with Gary Winters and Gregg Whelan themselves. This is a rich resource for an in-depth understanding of Lone Twin's work that gets to the heart of their aesthetic approach and the participatory and optimistic character of their work.





RESOURCES ON DIGITAL THEATRE+

A Mighty Big If: Robert Wilson

Robert Wilson interviewed by Richard Strange on his work as a theatre director, renowned for his rigorous shaping of choreographed movement and stunningly visual, often large-scale approach to stage design.

Blast Theory: Matt Adams Interviewed by Andy Lavender

Interview with Matt Adams, co-founder of Blast Theory – the UK’s leading arts collective in the experimentation of interactive media and live performance.

Forced Entertainment: Tim Etchells Interviewed by Matt Trueman

Interview with Tim Etchells on his work as director of Forced Entertainment, and their theatre-making processes and obsessions.

Goat Island

A profile, by Marvin Carlson, on the collaborative US performance company, who combine theatre, live art and postmodern dance to create multi-layered physical performances that express contemporary social and political concerns.

Rimini Protokoll

Profile of the German Theatre Company whose international influence and interest in making work that integrates everyday reality to reflect on the contemporary world, has contributed to the development of a new strand of postdramatic theatre, termed ‘reality theatre’.

Robert Wilson

A profile, by Marvin Carlson, of one of the most influential pioneers of postdramatic theatre.





Stages and Screens: Katie Mitchell's Theatre Aesthetics

Janis Jefferies and designer Leo Warner discuss the award-winning theatre director's approach to the integration of screen media and cinematic techniques within her theatre productions and her work with non-linear narratives.

Tim Crouch on the Role of the Audience

In this interview, playwright and theatre-maker Tim Crouch talks about his early influences and his experiments in challenging naturalism, and the importance of the imaginative role of the audience's process in theatre.

Tim Crouch

Catherine Love introduces the celebrated British playwright Tim Crouch, whose innovative experiments in text-based theatre explore the boundaries between dramatic and postdramatic theatre.

Wilfull Distraction: Katie Mitchell, Auteurism and the Canon

A recorded lecture by Tom Cornford, in which he discusses her radical restagings of classical texts and the critical response to them.

The Wooster Group

Marvin Carlson presents a profile of the Wooster Group, exploring the methods the company use in their work, which challenge the traditions of mainstream American theatre.

