Acts of Transgression
Contemporary Live Art in South Africa
EDITED BY JAY PATHER AND CATHERINE BOULLE
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This collection of essays coheres around conceptual themes that link the instability, volatility, precarity, and excess of live art itself to the instability, volatility, precarity, and excess of the contemporary moment in South Africa.
— Catherine M. Cole, Professor of Drama, University of Washington.

This book is a groundbreaking project. It is timely and relevant . . . [and] makes a very important contribution to the scholarship of live art in South Africa.
— Marie-Heleen Coetzee, Professor and Head of Department of Drama, University of Pretoria.

In this collection of new critical essays, 15 writers explore the experimental, interdisciplinary and radically transgressive field of contemporary live art in South Africa.

Contemporary South African society is chronologically ‘post’ apartheid but it continues to grapple with material redress, land redistribution and systemic racism. Acts of Transgression finds representation of the complexity of this moment within a performative art form that transcends disciplinary boundaries and aesthetic conventions.

The authors probe the intersection of live art with crisis and socio-political turbulence, shifting notions of identity and belonging, embodied trauma and loss, and questions of archive and memory. The potential of live art to trouble colonial systems of knowing, and interrogate narratives of the past and visions for the future is richly explored.

These diverse essays analyse the work of over 25 South African artists – including Athi-Patra Ruga, Dean Hutton, Chuma Sopotela, Donna Kukama, Tracey Rose, FAKA, Mamela Nyamza, Igshaan Adams, iQhiya and Steven Cohen – accompanied by a striking visual record of over 60 photographs.

For those working and practising in the fields of theatre, performance studies, dance and drama, this is a must-have collection on a burgeoning and fascinating field of contemporary South African research.
About the Editors

Jay Pather is a choreographer, curator and academic. He is Director of the Institute for Creative Arts at the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Associate Professor in UCT’s Centre for Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies.

Catherine Boulle is a writer and researcher based at the Institute for Creative Arts (ICA), University of Cape Town. Since completing her Masters in English at Oxford University, her work at the ICA has included initiating new research on live art in South Africa.

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