



Acts of Passion: Sexuality, Gender, and Performance

Nina Rapi, Maya Chowdhry

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The first volume to focus exclusively on lesbian performance work, *Acts of Passion: Sexuality, Gender, and Performance* draws on the experiences and expertise of a wide range of lesbian practitioners and theorists to explore the impact and influences of sexuality and gender on performance. It examines essays, dialogues, and performance texts from theater directors, performers, theorists, playwrights, and performance writers against social and cultural constructs and performance theories to produce a diverse and challenging portrait of lesbian live performance art. The book's penetrating scope covers drag queens, lesbian vampires, representations of lesbian sex, solo artists, the art of collaboration, lesbian aesthetics, and lesbian playwrights writing straight and illustrates why live performance is one of the most dynamic forums in which women can create, control, and produce their work without artistic constraint. *Acts of Passion* explodes binary definitions of gender and sexuality by destabilizing familiar notions of the 'real' and creating new production values and aesthetics in the process. The relationships between experience and expression, sexuality and cultural placing, context and artistic control, representation and self-representation become clearer as the book discusses:

- the manner in which women are represented as absent in the signifying system of patriarchal society
 - how questions of purity, 'authenticity,' and self-definition complicate the field of representation
 - the power of lesbian dance performance to make the lesbian body culturally visible
 - several 'new wave' performers--creating work, getting seen, showing flesh, doing politics, and making money
 - the projections, preconceptions, expectations, and general baggage attached to the performing lesbian body
 - what the term 'lesbian playwright' means within contemporary culture
 - 'It's Queer Up North'--a British National Arts Organization
 - the arguments for and against mainstreaming lesbian performance
- Anyone interested in theater and performance, cultural studies, gender issues, and the politics of 'positive representation'--whether playwright, performer, director, writer, academic, student, or theatre goer--will find *Acts of Passion* a powerful step in wrenching the power of representation away from the dominant culture. Defiant, saucy, sexy, and smart, the contributors appropriate their own spaces, identities, crafts, and languages, both within this book and without.

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