

Performance and the Disney Theme Park Experience

“Building on an extensive body of transdisciplinary Disney scholarship, this collection brings a fresh critical perspective to the complex interactions between experiential commodities and the individuals who make meaning of them. With their focus on theme parks as performance spaces, these essays evidence Disney’s profound significance for theatre and performance studies.”

—Julie C. Garlen, *Associate Professor and Co-Director, Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies, Carleton University, Canada,*
Co-Editor of Disney, Culture, and Curriculum

“This is a timely and fascinating compilation of essays on the performances of tourists and the worlds they help construct, perpetuate and dream into being in the many kingdoms of Disney. The diverse range of perspectives within contain a charm that both criticises and celebrates the performances of tourist actors and the realms they frequent: a most valuable contribution to Theatre and Performance Studies scholarship.”

—Caroline Heim, *Senior Lecturer in Drama, Queensland University of Technology, Australia, Author of Audience as Performer: The Changing Role of Theatre Audiences in the Twenty-First Century*

“The thirteen essays in this excellent collection offer a range of critical perspectives on Disney theme parks. Taking readers on a virtual tour of familiar attractions, from Tomorrowland and Frontierland to Splash Mountain and the Hall of Presidents, the authors present deep analyses of the scenography, costumes, choreography, dramatic tropes, and other performance elements that shape the tourist experience. An invigorating read!”

—Marlis Schweitzer, *Associate Professor, Department of Theatre and Performance Studies, York University, Canada*

“*Performance and the Disney Theme Park Experience: The Tourist as Actor* contributes to an burgeoning scholarly literature that examines the problems and potentials of ‘immersive industry’. Jennifer Kokai and Tom Robson draw together a rich combination of essays that provoke necessary debate in this area. In doing so they offer a collection that opens up arguments around the commercial, cultural and political impact of interactive Disney events for a contemporary audience. Combining theory and practice from the fields of business, culture, economics,

identity politics, performance, theatre and tourism, the scope of this book is broad in its appeal. There are chapters that examine the sinister hegemonic undertow that flows beneath Disney theme parks, as captured by Banksy, and equally those that highlight the pleasures and possibilities of these environments and the impact they might have not only on imagining but instating an inclusive world. By placing the tourist as actor at the centre of the analysis, this edited collection addresses issues of agency and repeatedly returns to the intersections of Disney worlds with immersive theatres. It offers clear illustration of the value of theme parks to the creative industries (not to mention the immersive economy) in providing access to artistic events for a vast and enthusiastic audience. Anyone with an interest in how immersive practices are at work in popular contexts—and how this wide-ranging form remains at the forefront of critical enquiry as much as creative practice—will benefit from reading this book.”

—Josephine Machon, *Associate Professor in Contemporary Performance*
Middlesex University, London, UK

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Editors

Performance and the Disney Theme Park Experience

The Tourist as Actor

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and
Annette & George Robson*

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