

# GENRE



Call for papers – Issue #18

*Genre en séries : cinéma, télévision, médias*

<https://journals.openedition.org/ges/>

## **Performing and outperforming gender: Actors, actresses and gender (de)construction.**

In her landmark essay *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Judith Butler challenges conventional notion of gender by insisting on its performative nature, describing it as ‘a stylized repetition of acts’ simulating the prior existence of an essence. That repetition usually ensures the coherence and stability of gender; but discontinuities produced by the imperfect repetition of those acts also offer a potentiality of its critical subversion. Butler’s analysis of the drag performances in *Paris Is Burning* (Jennie Livingston, 1990) in her following book, *Bodies That Matter* (1993), suggests that they can be both a subversion and a reaffirmation of prevailing norms of gender, ethnicity and social class.

Such a perspective seems helpful in order to renew research on actors and actresses on screen and stage, as well as art performers. In France, film and television scholars working on gender have tended to envision actors and actresses through the lens of star studies, analyzing the meaning of their personas in a specific cultural context (Gauteur and Vincendeau, 1993; Le Gras, 2010; Sandeau, 2002). This special issue of *Genre en séries* would like to highlight the actors and actresses’ contribution to the construction and deconstruction of gender through their performances and their involvement in the creative process, through close formal readings of individual films or focus on the production and reception process. Faithful to the transdisciplinary perspective of *Genre en séries*, contributions may explore various types of audiovisual objects and research approaches:

### **• Screen acting and performance analysis**

Screen acting may be used as a critical tool to expose the performative nature of gender in apparently cohesive performances of hegemonic masculinity (Vincent Cassel, Niels Arestrup, Jeff Bridges) or femininity (Fanny Ardant, Leonor Silveira, Julianne Moore) by identifying the separate ‘acts’ that constitute them (e.g. gestures, vocal mannerisms, etc.). Contributors might also pay interest to less normative gender performances (Vincent Lacoste, Denis Podalydès, Olivia Colman, Anjelica Huston, Barbra Streisand) or ones questioning the intersection between gender and social class (Émilie Dequenne, Tom Courtenay), age (Charlotte Rampling, Sônia Braga, Jean-Paul Roussillon), ethnicity (Sandra Oh, Alex Descas), sexuality (Adèle Haenel, Rupert Everett) and so forth. They may as well work on performances that rely on ostentatious artificiality (Lesley Ann Warren in *Victor Victoria*, Delphine Seyrig in *Daughters of Darkness*, Dwayne Johnson and Zac Efron in *Baywatch*) or explore liminal spaces between masculinity and femininity (Tilda Swinton, Nicolas Maury, Tim Curry) therefore putting into question gender bipartition.

## • Analysis of the production process

Contributors may also intend to explain how creative decisions taken by and around actors and actresses play a part in the production of gendered images on screen. Contributions might for instance review physical transformations required from male and female stars during the studio era or in contemporary cinema. Interviews with actors or actresses might be used in order to understand through which conscious or unconscious strategies they put into place in order to resist to gender stereotypes (see Susan Kobloch's paper "Helen Shaver: Resistance Through Artistry" in Krämer & Lovell, 1999).

## • Reception

Contributions may pay attention to the way audiences get to grips with those performances, how they reproduce, renew or destabilize them. Performative practices of fans might be of interest, whether they take the shape of spectacular practices such as cosplay (Winge, 2018) or come through ways of consuming, dressing or behaving in everyday life (Stacey, 1994).

### Submission guideline

Submitted papers must not have been published in any other journal or conference proceedings. The proposals will explain and justify precisely how they incorporate the existing literature on screen performance and gender.

Proposals (abstract of 500-800 words along with a short bio-bibliography) are to be sent before **October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023** to [fanny.beure@univ-lorraine.fr](mailto:fanny.beure@univ-lorraine.fr) and [alexandre.moussa@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr](mailto:alexandre.moussa@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr), with [genreenseries@gmail.com](mailto:genreenseries@gmail.com) copied. A response will be given on **December 15, 2023** and the finished papers are to be submitted by **April 30, 2024**. They will then be subject to double-blind peer review. The issue will be published in **spring 2025**.

### Suggested references

Vincent AMIEL et al. (dir.), *L'Acteur de cinéma : Approches plurielles*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2007.

Cynthia BARON et Sharon Marie CARNICKE, *Reframing Screen Performance*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 2008.

Jeremy G. BUTLER (dir.), *Star Texts: Image and Performance in Film and Television*, Detroit, Wayne State University Press, 1991.

Judith BUTLER, *Gender trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, New York / London, Routledge, 1990

Judith BUTLER, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of « Sex »*, New York / London, Routledge, 1993.

Marguerite CHABROL, *Katharine Hepburn : Paradoxes de la comédienne*, Rennes, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019.

Michel CIEUTAT et Christian VIVIANI, *Pacino / De Niro : Regards croisés*, France, Nouveau Monde, 2006.

Danae CLARK, *Negotiating Hollywood: The Cultural Politics of Actors' Labor*, London / Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1995.

Christophe DAMOUR (dir.), *Jeu d'acteurs : Corps et Gestes au cinéma*, Strasbourg, Presses universitaires de Strasbourg, 2016.

Richard DYER, *Stars*, Londres, British Film Institute, 1979.

Richard DYER, *Heavenly Bodies: Film Stars and Society*, London / New York, Routledge, 2004 [1987].

Claude GAUTEUR et Ginette VINCEDEAU, *Jean Gabin : Anatomie d'un mythe*, Paris, Nathan, 1993.

Peter KRÄMER et Alan LOVELL (dir.), *Screen Acting*, London / New York, Routledge, 1999.

Gwénaëlle LE GRAS, *Le Mythe Deneuve. Une star entre classicisme et modernité*, Paris, Nouveau Monde, 2010.

Paul MCDONALD, *The Star System: Hollywood's Production of Popular Identities*, London / New York, Wallflower, 2005 [2000].

Adrienne L. MCLEAN, *Being Rita Hayworth: Labor, Identity, and Hollywood Stardom*, New Brunswick, Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Jacqueline NACACHE, *L'Acteur de cinéma*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2005 [2003].

James NAREMORE, *Acting in the Cinema*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1990 [1988].

Roberta E. PEARSON, *Eloquent Gestures: The Transformation of Performance Style in the Griffith Biograph Films*, Berkeley / Los Angeles / Oxford, University of California Press, 1992.

Pamela ROBERTSON WOJCIK (dir.), *Movie Acting: The Film Reader*, New York, Routledge, 2004.

Jules SANDEAU, *'The Unsinkable Kate' : Katharine Hepburn et son public*, Bordeaux, Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2022.

Jackie STACEY, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship*, London / New York, Routledge, 1994.

Aaron TAYLOR (dir.), *Theorizing Film Acting*, New York, Routledge, 2012.

Christian VIVIANI, *Le Magique et le Vrai : L'Acteur de cinéma, sujet et objet*, Aix-en-Provence, Rouge profond, 2015.

Therèsa M. WINGE, *Costuming Cosplay: Dressing the Imagination*, London / New York, Bloomsbury, 2018.

Carole ZUCKER (dir.), *Making Visible the Invisible: An Anthology of Original Essays on Film Acting*, Metuchen / Londres, Scarecrow Press, 1990.