



Call for Proposals

Vol. 31, No. 5: On Carceral Shifts (Sept 2026)



Wave Jesse Wright
(14 x 14 x 2 in, acrylic, poster, canvas, 2022)

Proposal deadline: 15 August 2025

Issue Editors: Juan Manuel Aldape Muñoz, Michelle Castañeda and Anna Jayne Kimmel

When ‘No One is Illegal’ cohered as a campaign for migrant justice in the face of border imperialism and racialized surveillance, Syed Khalid Hussan encouraged global communities to imagine otherwise: ‘In a world where too many still tell stories that some are illegal and that to be free we must control the movement of others, the work of making new myths is essential’ (Walia 2014: 282). A decade later, detention sites, fortified enclaves, carcerality, and militarized gatekeeping continue to proliferate globally, and, as such, remain an imperative of our time and kinaesthesia.

This issue of *Performance Research* asks how do performance practices attend to those various bordered conditions such that we might conjure a new myth of legality that disturbs the carceral state? How do methods from dance studies, which attend to the body and its movements at scale, suggest *jurisgenerative* (law-making) possibilities that undo the practices of carcerality, spatial segregation and border imperialism that define cartographies of the settler state? What might ‘moving otherwise’ (Fortuna 2018) feel like in new myths? How might attunements towards bodily interiority reveal the affective and legal unease and discomfort of the meanwhile?

We seek to explore how dance studies might contribute to theorizing carcerality as a complex configuration of mobility and stasis. We hope that by holding this dual attention to ‘process and condition’ (Chak 2014) of both mobility and stasis this issue can contribute to the vast array of scholarly efforts working to unseat and unsettle the logic of prison as an inevitable or necessary process and form. How might this dual attention offer unique

insights into what James Oleson (2020) describes as ‘unlocking’ the fragmented archipelagos of criminal justice facilities?

Linking movement and carceral governance allows a closer inspection of the ways and means the law spatializes and, in turn, how artistic interventions may simultaneously reshape the production of space and *legality*, broadly construed (Olson 2022). Law and space come together in the idea of jurisdiction – the place of law's enunciation, the zone of its enforcement in what is allowed to be done, where and under what conditions. For instance, although a large portion of the world's incarcerated population is imprisoned because of their irregular, illegalized or undesired *mobility*, many of the corporations and political entities that administer such facilities are entirely transnational and actively work to break down legal barriers to their own mobility. Human mobilities and immobilities not only traverse this topography of multiple, overlapping jurisdictions, but they also produce that topography, in turn. That is, human movement, containment and the refusal to move (what the Dance Studies Association (2020) has affirmed as the ‘inviolability of the right to move’) all contribute to the contestation of meaning that produces particular laws, including contestations over the law's official illegality (impunity, differential enforcement, open contradiction and so forth).

We envision contributions that focus on particular dance and performance works, as well as contributions that harness the full range of concepts in dance studies – choreography, phenomenology, kinaesthesia, carnal knowledge and so forth – to analyze particular manifestations of global carcerality. Contributions can focus on any site – from borderlands to international waters, to rural communities, to city centres – and at all scales – from the space immediately surrounding a body in confinement to the carceral archipelagos that crisscross the globe. Indeed, following Mary Pat Brady in *Scales of Captivity*, contributors to this issue might choose to focus on the politics of scale itself, given that scale is not a neutral descriptor, but rather a key ingredient of carcerality: ‘the shaping, capturing force of scale, the way its logic is the sine qua non of colonial power, the force of abstraction through comparison, containment, and homogenization’ (2022: 4).

Attending to the entanglements between movement, carceral governance and the spatialization of the law also provides an opportunity for assessing the discrete kinetic and kinesthetic changing nature of tracking and confinement that emerge as new technologies and legislation shift surveillance methods. For example, while in some locales the increased overcrowding of prisons coincides with (or is motivated by) the introduction of mobile monitoring devices (for example, Global Positioning System (GPS) ankle

bracelets), in other instances the parole population far exceeds the imprisoned population and is subtended by an extensive parole check-in system. These regimes dictate appropriate behaviours outside of containment structures to avoid parole violations and recidivism. How do prisoners without prisons navigate transforming corporeal conditions? How are households and communities socially and kinesthetically impacted by increasing and changing parole regimes? And what possibilities for moving otherwise exist through, and in service of, *abolition geographies* (Gilmore 2022)? In response, an expanded assessment of the relationship between carcerality and movement is necessary as both scholarly and historical developments in carceral cultures reach beyond the concrete architectures toward 'prison by any other name' (Schenwar and Law 2021).

While the legal humanities has begun to turn towards law and performance, its force remains largely historical and textual in nature, without centring the moving body (Peters 2022; Sarat *et al.* 2018). We pivot dance scholarship towards the legal to flesh out these connections by attending not only to the discourse of such intersections, but also to movement-centred artistic practices and the thickening of the cell block through the law. How can a critical dance studies perspective supplement the body of work in legal studies, critical geography, and carceral studies through an understanding of space as produced through movement (including its proximities, intimacies, and affective relationship)? Likewise, we are particularly interested in contributions that articulate the *jurisgenerativity* of human mobilities and immobilities as seen through the global lens of dance.

Some potential areas of interest that we would like to see represented in this volume include:

- choreographic interventions within carceral sites and systems
- the intersection of criminality, legality and performativity
- the potential to 'move otherwise' within bordered zones and along migratory routes
- somatic attentions to bodily autonomy, bodily integrity and reproductive rights, including fleshed experiences of gendered carcerality
- insurgent creative practices that become legally protected conduct
- embodied practices found within various forms of justice (transitional, sanctuary, restorative, transformative) that sustain people as the law shifts locally, nationally and internationally
- performances of the meanwhile in response to deportability, probation, visa application and other liminal states of being
- carceral-adjacent repertoires (for example, detention release practices, bail bond advocacy, pen pal exchanges, electronic monitoring alterations)

Format

Contributions are invited in the standard, single-authored article format. Additionally, given the interdisciplinary nature of this issue, we also invite contributors to consider the possibility of non-traditional, collaborative forms. For instance, a set of joint contributions might pair an artistic proposal for a work of dance with a critical essay analyzing its intervention in spatial, legal and political terms. Some artistic or political interventions might be fruitfully analyzed from multiple disciplinary perspectives. In such instances, we invite scholars and practitioners working in different fields to submit contributions analyzing a single event or phenomenon in joint application. Any author interested in participating in this kind of collaboration – or who hopes to propose another collaborative model – is encouraged to alert the editorial team at time of submission.

Authors are also encouraged to submit multi-media companions to their written work, including film, photography, sound and other digital offerings.

Select References

Brady, Mary Pat (2022) *Scales of Captivity: Racial capitalism and the Latinx child*, Durham and London: Duke University Press.

Chak, Tings (2014) *Undocumented: The architecture of migrant detention*, The Architecture Observer.

Dance Studies Association (2020) 'Statement on the inviolability of movement as a right', Dance Studies Association, www.dancestudiesassociation.org/assets/docs/Statement-on-the-Inviolability-of-Movement-as-a-Right_DSA-_Jan-18.pdf, 24 January, accessed 1 March 2025.

Fortuna, Victoria (2018) *Moving Otherwise: Dance, memory, and violence in Buenos Aires*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Gilmore, Ruth Wilson (2022) *Abolition Geography: Essays toward liberation*, London and New York: Verso.

Oleson, James (2020) 'Unlocking prisons: Toward a carceral taxonomy', in Marcus Harmes, Meredith Harmes and Barbara Harmes (eds) *The Palgrave Handbook of Incarceration in Popular Culture*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 17–29.

Olson, Greta (2022) *From Law and Literature to Legality and Affect*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Peters, Julie Stone (2022) *Law as Performance: Theatricality, spectatorship, and the making of law in Ancient, Medieval, and early modern Europe*, 1st edn, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sarat, Austin, Douglas, Lawrence and Umphrey, Martha Merrill, eds (2018) *Law and Performance*, Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press.

Schenwar, Maya and Law, Victoria (2021) *Prison by Any Other Name: The harmful consequences of popular reforms*, New York, NY: The New Press.

Walia, Harsha (2014) *Undoing Border Imperialism*, 1st edn, vol. 6, Edinburgh: AK Press.

Issue Contacts:

All proposals, submissions and general enquiries should be sent directly to *Performance Research* at: info@performance-research.org

Issue-related enquiries should be directed to the issue editors:

Email: Anna Jayne Kimmel: anna.kimmel@gwu.edu

Outline Schedule:

Proposals: Submission by: 15 August 2025

Outcomes: September 2025

First drafts: January 2026

Final drafts: September 2026

Image

In Jesse Wright's *Wave* (14 x 14 x 2 in, acrylic, poster, canvas, 2022), a morphing, weathered form expands and recedes in a single motion. It rises diagonally like a blue

foamy wave, cutting orthogonally against an enveloping vast yellow horizon that appears impenetrable and enveloping at the same time – suggesting containment and resistance, capturing a tension between stasis and motion. Beneath this action, faint and thick water stains layer the surface, evoking the sediment of history, memory, imagination, and futurity in motion. Wright is an interdisciplinary artist and instructor who visually meditates on displacement, migration, and scripture. His approach references his Jamaican American heritage.

General Guidelines for Submissions:

- Before submitting a proposal, we encourage you to visit our website – www.performance-research.org – and familiarize yourself with the journal.
- Proposals should be created in Word – this can be standard Microsoft Word .doc or .docx via alternative word processing packages. Proposals should not be sent as PDFs unless they contain complex designs re artist pages.
- The text for proposals should not exceed one page, circa 500 words.
- A short 100-word author bio should be included at the end of the proposal text.
- Submission of images and other visual material is welcome provided that there is a maximum of five images. If practical, images should be included on additional pages within the Word document.
- Proposals should be sent by email to info@performance-research.org
- Please include your surname in the file name of the document you send.
- Please include the issue title and number in the subject line of your email.
- Submission of a proposal will be taken to imply that it presents original, unpublished work not under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- If your proposal is accepted, you will be invited to submit an article in first draft by the deadline indicated above. On final acceptance of a completed article, you will be asked to sign an author agreement in order for your work to be published in *Performance Research*.