Queering Identity in the African Diaspora: The Performance Dramas of Sharon Bridgforth and Trey Anthony

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Abstract
Noticedly, there is little to no cross-cultural analysis of Black queer women artists of the African diaspora in Diaspora, Literary and Theatre and Performance studies. These disciplines tend to focus on geographic locations with an emphasis on the United States, the Caribbean islands and Europe in relation to the African continent. In addition, the work of Black men artists holds precedence in discussions of blackness, diaspora, and performance. Overwhelmingly, the contributions of Black women artists in the diaspora pale in comparison to their male counterparts, especially in number. More drastically, the voices of Black queer women artists actually published are few. Because of these discrepancies within scholarship and practice, I follow the footsteps of the late scholar Gay Wilentz to advocate a diaspora literacy of Black women writers across the diaspora.

I employ a transnational feminist approach to survey the work of Sharon Bridgforth and Trey Anthony, two Black queer women artists who explore intersectionality in regards to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality and nationality. I also curated and produced Black/Queer/Diaspora/Womyn Festival, a festival of staged readings and panel discussions that placed both artists at the center. This thesis fully details the planning and execution of the festival, an evaluation of the successes and pitfalls of the festival, and then draws conclusions on how both scholars and practitioners can further engage in a diaspora literacy for Black queer women artists.

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literature in the fields of theatre and performance studies. Through workshops with guest artists and faculty, we will explore cutting-edge approaches to the field, deepening our engagement with theatre as a constantly evolving art form. In 2008, Bridgforth received a National Performance Network Creation Fund award, for delta dandi, co-commissioned by Women & Their Work, in partnership with the National Performance Network. Freedom Train Productions in New York presented a reading of the work in 2008.[5] A workshop production of the work was produced in the Spring of 2009 at the Long Center in Austin, Texas.