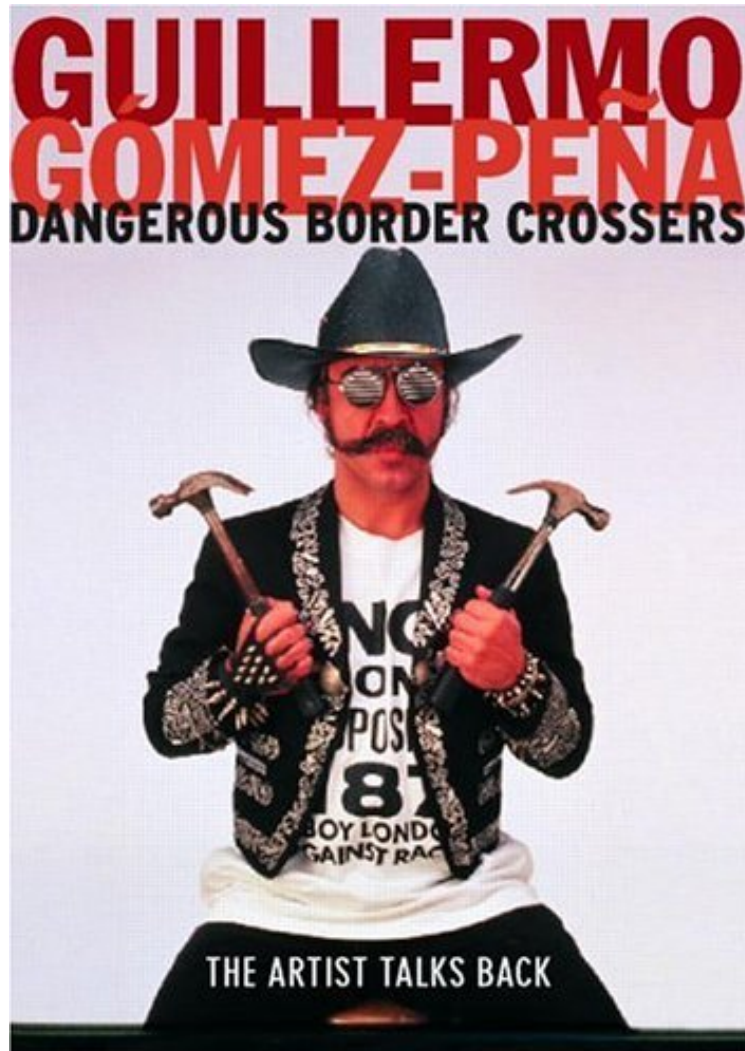


Dangerous Border Crossers

GUILLERMO GOMEZ-PENA

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GUILLERMO GOMEZ-PENA : Dangerous Border Crossers before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Dangerous Border Crossers:

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Performance Artist Peers into the American Psyche...By Zane Ivy
Guillermo Gomez-Pena has put together a book that should rock you in your socks if you've got any interest in how performance art can, and is being used shamanically (although "he" doesn't use this term) to manifest the hidden powers of the human unconsciousness, play with them, and perhaps bring balance. In this collection of essays, interviews, and scripts, Gomez-Pena describes the preparation, processes, goals and results of his work, and muses on the whole shebang. While so much of the art world seems to be content with cerebral stagnation in the hallowed halls of the "academy" - Guillermo is out there on the pavement, living his art for the betterment of everyone. He's not just making himself look good in this work, he's honest enough to talk about his own fears and insecurities, and discuss the

idea of artistic responsibility. He does this all in a way that is down to earth while clearly displaying the depth of his intelligent approach to his work and the issues involved. He's funny and theoretically as sharp as a razor. If you are at all interested in performance art, or, the American psyche as it relates to race, gender, economics and politics, get the book and enjoy. (I might add that this is a great price particularly considering the quality of the paper it's printed on.)

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Unmasking "us and them" By Enrique Torres Performance artist Guillermo Gomez -Pena is an incredible talent who in this, his fifth book, has put together his thoughts and recollections on his art through the nineties. I was intrigued with him after seeing some of his performances on video and wanted to know more about this modern day shamanistic being. The book does not disappoint, reads fast and is full of the emotions evoked from his performances. His writing style is punctuated with sharp insights into the human psyche. There is poetry, interviews and some experiences that will make you laugh. GGP often writes in Spanglish, creating colorful language, deep rooted in the barrios from points north and south of the border, easily shifting gears and writing as though he were Harvard educated. GGP shares his views on everything from Zapatismo to skinheads, Roc en Espanol to La Virgen de Guadalupe, cyber communities to barrios and everything in between from an insightful Chicano perspective. Although it is not necessary to read the book chapter by chapter, if one does you'll find yourself flying through the experiences and recollections of GGP and partner Roberto Sifuentes and other collaborators. The characters that GGP creates for his art are memorable and often take off on pop icon culture. In this book you'll meet such notable creations as "Border Brujo," "El Naftaaztec," "El Mexterminator," "Cyber-Vato" and "El Mad Mex" (from the film "Natural Born Matones"), traverse the globe from Helsinki to Vladivostok, Montana to Buenos Aires, Chiapas to Ciudad Juarez, Wales to Tijuana or from Fort Collins to back "home" in San Francisco or Mexico City. Experience the selections from audience confessions as they confront the beings created by GGP, the reactions and fears are amazing truths that only performance art can create. See GGP and partner Roberto Sifuentes almost die from hanging on crosses as they portray themselves as the good and bad thief from the crucifixion. They stayed on the cross until they were finally brought down when someone realized they could die from their performance. Vicariously experience the shock that they both create and receive from their performances. GGP lives an existence that is bicultural and international in scope, a Mexican who is a Chicano in the US, he understands the nowhere land he stands firmly on, neither Mexican nor American through some people's eyes, he confronts people's fears making them examine their own prejudices. This is a brilliant book that captures the essence of GGP and his performance troupe La Pocha Nosta. The book is printed on quality paper, full of magnificent black and white photographs and some very nice precolumbian illustrations. The photographs visually delight as they show the characters created, complete with props that result in stunning dramatic appeal. This book is a cultural tour de force that transcends borders, extending the reader's imagination to challenge common perceptions and reevaluate the world of the Chicano as we know it. Highly recommended for those interested in one of the best performance artists of our times.

This anthology of Gomez-Pena's performance chronicles, diary entries, poems, essays, and texts, sheds an extraordinary light on the life and work of this migrant provocateur.

From Publishers Weekly A Mexican transplanted to Los Angeles, writer and performance artist Gomez-Pena celebrates hybridity, borderless frontiers, interdisciplinary art forms, linguistic amalgams, cultural collisions. A virtually everything that partakes of "betweenness," especially the image of the Chicano cyborg, half human-half machine. So it shouldn't surprise that the author's fifth book confounds definition, fusing performance theory with performance diaries, conversations, essays, scripts, commentaries for NPR, travelogues, anecdotes and photographs of "living dioramas." (Philosophically, all this amalgamation stems from the concept of *mestizaje*, the mixing of European and indigenous "blood" that produced the Mexican peoples.) A cross between Oscar Wilde and Lenny Bruce, witty and gritty and brilliant, Gomez-Pena stretches language to the breaking point, coining words and code shifting at will. He defines performance itself as "an artistic 'genre'... in a constant state of crisis," an "ideal medium for articulating a time of permanent crisis such as our own." Performance art is by definition controversial, often intended to provoke thought by violating social strictures. Yet Gomez-Pena finds that, in the '90s, "citizen action," in which people banded together to protest 'immoral' art, became a "weekend sport" with performance artists "fair game." Anyone interested in contemporary performance theory should read this book. For the rest of us, it is a cultural roller-coaster ride with decidedly satirical seat belts. (Aug.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From Library Journal Awarded a prestigious MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1991, Gomez-Pena is known for shocking audiences with such performances as "Couple in a Cage" (1994), a critique of the historical practice of displaying and exoticizing indigenous peoples. His newest book is a collection of performance texts, radio scripts, poetry, critical writing, interviews, and photographs that chronicles his performance and activist escapades since 1994, when his books, *The New World Border* and *Warrior for Gringostroika*, left off. Filled with biting humor and political satire, the text again weaves between such diverse topics as border culture, technology, racism, language, and globalization. *Dangerous Border Crossers* complements a second title from Routledge, *Corpus Delecti* (1999), an anthology of Latino performance art from the Caribbean and the Americas, edited by Coco Fusco. Both books add to the much-needed

recent surge of publications on performance art. Recommended for academic and other libraries with specialized collections in contemporary art, theater, or Latin culture. DKrista Ivy, Bryn Mawr Coll. Lib., PA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. Another valuable addition to the literature on world drama and performance. Choice E.C. Ramirez, St. Philip's College, February 2001...this book is recommended for collections supporting Chicana/Chicano topics, theater and drama, and performance art. All levels. Choice E.C. Ramirez, St. Philip's College, February 2001 Add[s] to the much-needed recent surge of publications on performance art. Recommended for academic and other libraries with specialized collections in contemporary art, theater, or Latin culture. Library Journal Gomez-Pena celebrates hybridity, borderless frontiers, interdisciplinary art forms, linguistic amalgams, cultural collusions--virtually everything that partakes of betweenness, especially the image of the Chicano cyborg, half human-half machine. So it shouldn't surprise that the author's fifth book confounds definition, fusing performance theory with performance diaries, conversations, essays, scripts, commentaries for NPR, travelogues, anecdotes and photographs of living dioramas.... A cross between Oscar Wilde and Lenny Bruce, witty and gritty and brilliant, Gomez-Pena stretches language to the breaking point, coining words and code shifting at will... Anyone interested in contemporary performance theory should read this book. For the rest of us, it is a cultural roller-coaster ride with decidedly satirical seat belts. Publishers Weekly On the experimental front, this volume celebrates hybridity, borderless frontiers, interdisciplinary artforms, linguistic amalgams, cultural collisions-virtually everything that partakes of betweenness. The L.A.-transplanted Mexican writer and performance artist, now a commentator on NPR, uses the startling image of a Chicano cyborg to exemplify the betweenness, stretching language to the breaking point, coining words and code-shifting at will. San Antonio Express-News