

# Scene Design

between  
profession,  
art and  
ideology

1<sup>st</sup> International  
Conference

in the cycle  
What is scene design?



Novi Sad 2012.

1st International Scientific Conference in the cycle „What is scene design?“

# **SCENE DESIGN – BETWEEN PROFESSION, ART AND IDEOLOGY**

Book of Proceedings

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## **SCENE DESIGN – BETWEEN PROFESSION, ART AND IDEOLOGY**

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# WHAT IS SCENE DESIGN

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It seems that Pamela Howard was the first who introduced the modern use of the English term scenography (which most text-processors mark as a typo[1]), thus clearly emphasizing the belief that the term "scenography" refers not only to creating decor (*Stage Design* or *Set Design*), but it also includes the reflection, articulation and production of the entire stage layout - visual, but also auditory, tactile, and even addressing the other senses - in a word, an image that belongs to the theatre understood not as "a play for watching" (*Schauspiel*), nor as "a play for hearing" (*Hörspiel*), but as a joined play "omniplay" (*Mitspiel*) [2]. Scenography, therefore, is constructed out of the architectural stage space (constructed or selected), rearticulation of that space (set design in the narrow sense of the term), and the design and presentation of all elements of scene design (scenery, props, costumes, light, sound, video projections, special effects...). Above all, the set is filled with the bodies of artists (actors, dancers, extras...), as well as movements of their bodies. Scenography is "an elegant synthesis of space, text, research, fine arts, actors, directors and viewers, which contributes to the creation of truly original works,"[3] writes Pamela Howard in her book "What is Scenography?", published simultaneously in London and Belgrade[4], today one of the fundamental works in the field of theory of scenography and stage space.

Pamela Howard, who was at the time the Course Director for MA Scenography at Central St Martin's College of Art and Design [5], one of the best schools of art and design in the world, I happened to meet in the spring of 1996. One could say that our meeting was incidental (at one of the "social events" associated with a meeting of OISTAT, "our brotherhood of scenographers of the world"[6]), and I must say that the meeting with her and the school that she was affiliated with, had a great effect on everything that happened in Serbia later in the domain of education within the fields of set design and scene design, and in relation to the understanding, interpretation

and use of these two terms. After all, that is not our exclusive experience - in a similar way Pamela Howard affected, and still affects scenography as a profession, as an art, and as means of creative thinking in even the most advanced areas of the world.

At that time, YUSTAT [7] was developing very dynamically in our country. The YUSTAT organisation was created in the theatre (Atelje 212) with the aim to influence, above all, the character and quality of professional theatrical productions - an aspiration which, for the most part, remains only a dream about some different reality (which despite being possible, remains for us unfortunately quite unattainable). The other major endeavour, however - to bring out into the light all those individual and collective contributions that *theatre people* make in the world "behind the scenes", and to show what a stage event is and what it can be, and, consequently, to bring into the light all the places that can be used as a stage - YUSTAT has fulfilled in the best of ways.

This was done on two parallel planes, which are often intertwined and pervaded - through the cycle of international symposia titled "Spectacle - City - Identity" and through the Biennial of Scene Design, an event that was regularly held in the period between 1996 and 2006 at the Museum of Applied Arts, as well as in numerous galleries, theatres and public areas of Belgrade and throughout Serbia. The artists who have exhibited at the Biennial of Scene Design have shown that "the theatre can be created wherever a group of people gather in one place, from open air street events, to small rooms in some basements. This use of different spaces brought the theatre and architecture closer together, reduced the need for heavy stage constructions, and once again put the emphasis on actors and their stage costumes that animate the space." [8] The term "scene design" was then introduced to describe the totality and complexity of that whole process, appearance, profession, art, views of reality and creativity that Pamela Howard called the "scenography"[9]. More broadly, "scene design interconnects set designers, costume designers, theatre technicians and technologists, architects, light and sound designers, as well as critics and scholars, directors and producers, playwrights, and all those whose activities were directed at the area of the stage." [10]

Further study of this concept leads us to the question what is a staged event, and what are all the possible manifestations of staged events, and, consequently, where stages can be found. Outside the theatre, scene design could be defined not only as an "extended" set design, but also as a distinct

art form: "A work of art in the field of scene design can also arise from any creative process which includes a scenic way of thinking and the use of scenic resources aiming at the creation of a staged event." [11] Therefore, if we apply the logic of theatre to other artistic disciplines, scene design can also be viewed as art in itself. Scene design has gained full legitimacy in Serbia first through opening a study course under the same name at the University of Arts in Belgrade, then through the introduction of the term at the register of professions, through the introduction into the arts and curatorial practices, and finally through the introduction of this concept into the theory of art and media. [12]

As we all know, the Prague Quadrennial has been the most important place for the exchange of ideas and experiences of set and costume designers from around the world for more than half a century. Founded primarily with the desire to provide a place where the artists from the East and the West could meet, since those kinds of encounters were almost impossible in everyday life at that time, the Quadrennial soon became a major arena for competition between the most prominent theatrical nations, as the main prize of the Prague exhibition, the "Golden trig", was not awarded to the winning artist, but to the winning national exhibition. Of course, this meant that the setting of the exhibition itself became a work of art often crucially important, and that the productional and financial aspects of the exhibition were by no means unimportant and unnoticed, and further that the selection of artistic works became an issue of particular importance – on a national and international level. Along with the development of curatorial practice in contemporary art in general, here the role of the "National Commissioner" changed as well, from a position of a more or less objective selector of already realized artistic works from professional theatre productions, into the position of a creative interpreter of problem issues, and furthermore even into a creating entity.

When we were faced with the task of representing Serbia (for the first time without the frame of the former Yugoslavia) at the Prague Quadrennial in 2007[13], we first had to answer the question: what constitutes the production in the field of scene design - in Serbia, and in general. Traditionally, in the category of national exhibitions in Prague until then, only theatre productions prepared in the professional theatres (which are almost all institutions owned by the state or local community) were presented. Also, the Yugoslav and Serbian artists were always presented in Prague in a most conventional possible way - exhibiting original sketches, drawings and, at best, set design models. The experience of the Biennial of Scene Design however, clearly

spoke of the vast opportunities that artistic practices outside the theatre could bring, and the potentials of exhibiting scene design which significantly exceeded the limitations of the classic gallery approach. In addition, the contemporary history of Serbia brought two decades of extremely dramatic events that took place outside the theatre, outside the arts in the narrow sense of the word, and almost outside the cultural domain commonly understood as a realm of "social superstructure." In those political developments, often devastating, and always dramatic, which turned all public areas of settlements in Serbia particularly in big cities into stages, scenic resources and the scenic way of thinking were deployed during the nineteen nineties as direct tools of political, ideological, and often existential struggle.

That is why for Serbia's participation in the Prague Quadrennial in 2007 the problem theme "Theatre - Politics - City" was formulated, emphasizing the triad nature of this relationship, which meant that the object of observation and contemplation was each phenomenon, their mutual relationships, as well as the complex entity that they build together.

Subject of the performance was explored in all three official frameworks (national, student and architectural exhibition), as the architecture and the city on the one side, and stage events and scenic resources on the other, have always been fundamentally defined by the energy and the actions of young people, students above all. For a research arena, i.e. the physical framework for the case study, Belgrade was chosen, as it became synonymous with the public political scene of the nineties.

The national exhibition consisted of an original spatial structure with gripping semantic values as the authorial reply to the topic of the Quadrennial and the theme of the presentation of Serbia. At the same time, this setting was a spatial framework in which every day the most important creative personalities, projects and events in the theatre and around the theatre in Serbia were presented. The author of the national exhibition was Branko Pavić, painter and graphic artist, full professor at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade. Personal artistic activities of professor Pavić, as well as his work with students from different schools, is continually directed towards establishing the unity of performing and visual arts in the specific cultural, social and political context. Pavić was the initiator and a co-author of the project "Lust for life - Workshop 301" which was awarded the Grand Prix of the Second Biennial of Scene Design.

The exhibition in the selection of student works was created as a specific joint work of art, created from months-long work of hundreds of

students aimed at drama, visual arts and applied arts, music, architecture, and all other areas that touch the phenomena of stage and scenic. Students from all faculties and universities in Serbia were invited through public contest to participate in the preparation of this work, which was based on authorial photos placed in an exceptional unique context. The topic for the photographs was "Scene" in the broadest possible sense of the term that can be found, read from or into any kind of space. The idea for this exhibit was based on the work of Bojana Lukić, architect, who won in the year 2000 at the international student competition "Balkan Cities as Stages for the XXI Century", organized as the part of the Third Biennial of Scene Design.

Through exhibiting theatre architecture and technology, Belgrade was represented as a "city-stage" and as a "city-scene". Belgrade festivals and events, above all Bitef (Belgrade International Theatre Festival) and Belef (Belgrade Summer Festival), that permanently explore potential scene spaces in Belgrade, continuously expanding an already very rich list of permanent, temporary and part-time city stages, are set at the same level as the architectural and technological projects, realizations and interventions through which the scenic qualities of Belgrade houses, buildings and environments were dramatically developed in recent years.

It is clear that „in the past decade the scenographic practice and the scene design have continually wandered off from the theatrical black box towards a hybrid area placed within the points of intersection of the theatre, architecture, exhibitions, visual arts and media” [14]; additionally, that very same area was built through action and interaction, as well as „defined individual and collective behaviour”[15]. In light of this, it is entirely natural that the question of „staging the space”[16], becomes the reason for gathering and exchanging opinions by professionals, artists and scholars. All these topics were the subject of thought provoking and immensely interesting discussions that took place during the past year in Riga, Belgrade and Evora, within the scope of the series of symposia named „Scenography Expanding“, where the goal was to establish a theoretical platform for a new evaluation of scenography and scene design as forms of professional activities, as complex structures of distinctive artistic and curatorial practices, and finally, as areas of possible analyses of values in regards to creativity and maybe life in general – areas that could be, not without some certain pretentiousness – nevertheless labelled philosophic or ideological. Besides, during the nineteen sixties Guy Debord has already made it clear in which and what kind of society we live in, therefore nowadays the determination for (not) taking part in creating and

consuming of the spectacle, without a doubt, represents an ideological concern.

The Prague Quadrennial 2011 has just passed, and it has shown us the course in the development of ideas regarding scenography, scene spaces, theatre and art in general, in various areas, based on diverse traditions, cultural forms, artistic practices, and, what is perhaps most important, based on completely different intentions. There are many reasons, of course, to examine means that are at our disposal at present time for creating and presenting the scenic arts. It is even more important to examine the changed, and at the same time, the continuous nature of theatres and scenic arts. It is an undisputable fact that the theatre of today is closer to technology, architecture and visual arts than ever before. Increasing similarities between the Quadrennial in Prague and both Biennales in Venice, the architectural and artistic, testify to this fact. Many installations from any of the events could just as easily have switched places.

Nevertheless, the key question is still open and will remain so for the time being: not how, but why do we bother with theatre and arts at all? Scene design as a process, means and way of thinking, not only as a professional, or artistic, but foremost as an ideological category, is maybe, no matter how paradoxically it may sound, in the „society of spectacle“ one of the possible ways towards the individual, internal being.

## REFERENCES

[1] And that is how Tomaš Žiška, scenographer and professor at DAMU, Prague, sees it also, answering the question of Pamela Howard „What is Scenography?“, published in a book under the same title (Clio, Beograd, 2002, str. 12).

[2] Branko Gavela, *Glumac i kazalište, Sterijino pozorje*, Novi Sad, 1967, pg. 151

[3] Pamela Hauard, *Op. cit*, pg. 152.

[4] *Pamela Howard, What is Scenography?, Routledge*, London, 2002; Pamela Hauard, *Šta je Scenografija*, Clio, Beograd, 2002.

[5] Pamela Howard ran the Course for MA Scenography at the Central St Martin's College of Art since 1994 until 1998

[6] Pamela Howard, *Op. cit*, Clio, Beograd, 2002, pg. 7.

[7] Yustat was founded in 1991 as a Yugoslavian society for theatre art and technology, and it was excepted into OISTAT, and became the OISTAT Centre for Yugoslavia en 1995. The title of the organisation was later changed into Yugoslavean Centre for Scene Arts and Technology, and than into YUSTAT Centre (a non/government organisation still works under this name focused on the issues of cultural policies, social and corporative responsibilities, but it does not take part in the matters of OISTAT projects and actions). Today, Serbia is represented in OISTAT by the Centre for Scene Design, Architecture and Technology (S.Cen) based at the Faculty of Technical Sciences at the University of Novi Sad.

[8] Pamela Hauard, Op. cit, str. 9.

[9] In serbian language this term has already got its quite clear and unambiguous meaing, and it is not possible to use it in a broader sense of the word.

[10] Tatjana Dadić Dinulović, Scene Design As Art, [www.intersection.cz](http://www.intersection.cz) – *Scenography Expanding 2: On Artists / Authors, July 08-10 2010, Belgrade, Serbia*

[11] Ibid.

[12] See at Miško Šuvaković, *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti*, Horetzky, Zagreb, 2005.

[13] The exhibition was organised by YuSTAT, the curator of the exhibition was Radivoje Dinulovic, and the producer was Aleksandar Brkic.

[14] [www.intersection.cz](http://www.intersection.cz) – *Scenography Expanding 2: On Artists/Authors, July 08-10 2010, Belgrade, Serbia*

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

# ART IN THE SUBWAYS; A CASE STUDY OF BERLIN'S U-BAHN PERFORMANCE U-BAHN ANTIGONE

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**Abstract:** The subway is a part of modern man's life, where man spends a lot of his time. For this reason, it is important to accommodate the subway to modern man and his desires. The use of subways for artistic purposes is not a new idea, but nowadays art is present in subways in different forms. The performance *U-Bahn Antigone*, inspired by the fundamentals which assemble the famous ancient Sophoclean text, was presented in Berlin in June 2012 in Berlin's U-Bahn by Berlin performance collective Das Ist Doch Keine Art and is a good example of how the subway is used as a performance scene.

**Keywords:** Berlin; art and architecture; art and the city; urban design; creative city; art in public space; performance; subway art.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Subways are an important element of the modern world. Today, almost all major cities have subways. Also, numerous new subways are currently being constructed or there is a plan for their future construction. For this reason, one may conclude that the number of people using the subway on a daily basis is large.

Modern subway architecture has advanced so much that today new subway stations and their architectonic solutions are not just pure technical solutions but have high visual quality. Thus, they no longer carry out only their basic function, transportation of the population, but are also often pieces of modern, rich architecture which stand shoulder to shoulder with buildings designed on the ground, fully exhibiting the power and glamour of a new architectonic work. Many new subway stations are admired so much that they attract numerous visitors almost like museums, because their architecture leaves no one indifferent. In some of them, art works are also present. [1]

## **2. SUBWAY ART**

The use of subways for artistic purposes is not new and there are many examples from the past. In 1968 *Louvre Metro* station in Paris (opened in 1900) was redesigned and reproductions of famous items from the museum were displayed.

Stylish and artistically valuable, invaluable subway stations were already being built during the construction period leading up to World War I. Subway stations have been used for many years as museums and exhibition galleries, presenting their art to the rushing traveler heading for his destination. The ceramic decorations, in particular, are of outstanding quality. Also, art in metro stations is more common than ever. [4]

The purpose of the subway as a museum exhibiting works of art is to draw art closer to the average man from the metropolis, who might not be interested in art, who might never visit a museum. In this case, when he should inevitably pass next to an exhibit, there is hope that it will arouse his attention.

In this period of expansion of electronic media and commercials, the subway is yet another venue in which the advertisement can reach the passer

by. In this way, the advertiser and modern civilization can use the subway for propaganda purposes. Underground areas have psychological and physiological effects on people; in the artificial world underground, the light is always constant. Many people feel confined and threatened in small inner spaces with low ceilings and in entrances with dark, narrow stairways. This negative attitude to underground spaces can be intensified by poor interior design.

The subway in Munich is well known for its art work, like, for example, the dynamic design of the ceiling and wall murals by Johannes Klinger, then the work of Rupprecht Geiger [2] or murals by Ricarda Diez made by stencil and burning techniques. Berlin has one of the oldest subways in Europe, as the railway section south of the city center was opened in 1902. Up to World War II, there arose an extensive rail network with a large number of interestingly designed stations.

In some cities of the world there are successful examples of how the Underground can be integrated into people's lives. Montreal Metro, which was opened in 1966 for the 1967 World Exhibition, was designed together with a large system of pedestrian walks. Through the combination of underground passages in the city center with public transport, not only was the problem of the rapidly increasing street traffic eliminated, but also the risk of the city's economic decline. Montreal City Council was able to stimulate investment and to persuade the trading and service industry that improved access to their location for employees and customers would guarantee their success. As a result of the Metro's construction, land prices around the Metro stations went up. The Bureau de Transport Metropolitain, which was responsible for Underground construction, laid down ambitious design standards in order to promote a high degree of creativity among architects. The construction of the underground system involved private funding. [5]

### **3. PERFORMANCE U-BAHN ANTIGONE**

"[...] not politics as a question of representation but to that political possibility that emerges when the limits to representation and representability are exposed". Judith Butler [3]

The performance *U-Bahn Antigone* is based on the timeless story of an ancient tragedy. Antigone and was performed for the first time in Berlin's U-Bahn in the summer of 2012, by Berlin performance collective Das Ist Doch

Keine Art. The performance is a collaboration between Israeli, German, Greek, Brazilian, American, Polish and Swedish female artists, all part of the Berlin based performance collective. These performers are both professionals and non-professionals and come from different disciplines. This the variety of languages used during the performance. There are seven spoken and sign languages used during the play.



Figure 1 Performance *U-Bahn Antigone* played in Berlin's subway (photographer: Dan Safier)

This classic tragedy envelops the tensivity working within the boundaries of traditional political instruments. The existence of choice and the possibility of an alternative, which were the main idea in Antigone's story, were used as leading motif in this performance.

Consisting of a pre-set route through platforms and train carts the *U-Bahn Antigone* joined the ancient Sophoclean text with the sociospatial specifics of Berlin's *U-Bahn*. The *U-Bahn* dictates the performance's scenography, which is simply made up by the existing architectural units of this particular subway decor. All actions were performed in a group, collecting different kinds of engagement in instant living and dynamic circumstances. The participants approach public space in the subway with rhythmical vivid choreographed sets. The passers-by are allowed to accompany the performers.

‘The physical organization of space imposes a particular logic and produces norms, docility and conduct of everyday life. Urban planning and architecture manifest an ideology of a time and place, they are created according to it and simultaneously sustain it. Travelling from a starting point to a destination establishes a hierarchy where the “in-between” environments are marginalized and overlooked. Nevertheless, these setting’s liminality encompass a theatrical potential. They enhance the fleeting and momentary but also the eternal nature of space and time. It is effectively composed of meaninglessness and estrangement but conduces to the creation of symbols through framing. Intervening in urban spaces creatively, inevitably questions their characteristics and challenges those spaces’ fundamental principles.’ [6]



Figure 2 Performance U-Bahn Antigone played in Berlin’s subway (photographer: Dan Saffer)



Figure 3 Performance U-Bahn Antigone played in Berlin's subway (photographie: Dan Safier)

This performance can be played in different locations and is not connected with one specific place. First played on the platforms of Berlin's underground system, it was then transported to the tunnels of Stockholm's subway. The Berlin performance collective *Das Ist Doch Keine Art* took part in the STOFF 2012 festival, the performing arts Stockholm Fringe Fest. We have the same play with the same message but in a different location. *T-Bana Antigone* was the winner of the STOFF 2012 festival Audience Choice Award. The performance was played in the modern decorated tunnels of Stockholm's transportation system. Much different from Berlin's architectural elements which are minimal and old fashioned, Stockholm's modern and artistic subway design emphasizes the ephemeral idea of the performance even more.



Figure 4 Performance U-Bana Antigone played in Stockholm's subway (photographer: Tamsin Lindstrom)



Figure 5 Performance U-Bana Antigone played in Stockholm's subway (photographer: Tamsin Lindstrom)

## 4. CONCLUSION

The subway belongs to our civilization. Subways follow the development of modern society and the rest of technology. In modern metropolises, life without the subway would be unimaginable. The metropolis and the subway are two inseparable terms. The purpose of art in subways is not just to be noticed by passengers but to shape underground space and to contribute to the promotion of art among the wider public. The aim would be to make art inseparable from subways the same like metropolis and the subway are two inseparable terms. The U-Bahn Antigone performance is one step in that direction.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# INSIDE: EXPLORING ARCHITECTURE BY SCENE DESIGN

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**Abstract:** In this paper I will discuss the method, process and result on the project “Inside” that was created on the course “Creative and theoretical research in architecture and urban planning” on the specialist and doctoral studies at the Department for Architecture and Urbanism, Faculty of Technical Sciences Novi Sad.<sup>1</sup> Method included a series of workshops in which participants explored their inner archetypal spaces and their relationship with the real spaces of everyday life. The archetypal spaces – without scale, typology and style are elements of imaginary architecture that permeates objective architecture and reality. The aim of the project was research and the construction of these inner spaces in real space by using practices of scene design. Realization of individual works was deeply conditioned by spatial and social context. The authors have used architectural elements as scenic instrumentality, questioned dramatic potential of space, applied the logic of the theater, and in general - *scenic* way of thinking. The result was a scene design artwork, the exhibition “Inside” featuring eleven works that have been realized in the space called “Fabrika”, part of Student Cultural Center in Novi Sad, during the International Festival of Alternative and New Theatre - Infant 2012.

**Keywords:** scene design; creative and theoretical research in architecture; inner architecture; space installations.

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<sup>1</sup> Author of the project is Romana Boskovic, and participants – authors of works are students Dijana Apostolovic, Natasa Bulut, Daniela Dimitrovska, Sanja Maljkovic, Sladjana Milicevic, Maja Momirov, Jelena Spasojevic, Jovana Stanisic, Sandra Stefanovic, Djurdjica Terzic and Marijana Zorzić-Petrovic.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Project “Inside”**

Project “Inside” was created on the course "Creative and theoretical research in architecture and urbanism" on the specialist and doctoral studies at the Department for Architecture and Urbanism, Faculty of Technical Sciences Novi Sad.

“Inside” was work in progress project with aim to:

- Explore and connect spaces, events and feelings that are deeply personal and intimate with questions of professional importance related to design of real spaces;
- Analyze correlation between inner, imaginary spaces and actual spaces of everyday life;
- Build space / construct an event in public space with use of architectural tools as scenic instruments in intervention.

### **1.2. Context**

There are three contexts in which project “Inside” appeared: Department for Architecture and Urbanism, International Festival of Alternative and New Theatre – INFANT and Student Cultural Centre Novi Sad “Fabrika” (“Factory”). These milieus were determinants in conceptual, productional and spatial sense.

Department for Architecture and Urbanism at the Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, was founded in 1996, and today it has over 750 graduate engineers in this complex discipline – both technical and artistic simultaneously. Multidisciplinary approach is the main policy at Department for Architecture and Urbanism. “In this sense, first steps have already been made towards organizing studies in diverse areas, in cooperation with other faculties within the integrated University of Novi Sad, other universities in the region and Europe, as well as institutions and organizations whose activities can contribute to the quality of educating future specialization students.” [1]

International Festival of Alternative and New Theatre – INFANT in Novi Sad was known as Yugoslav festival and at the beginning had several names: OFF theatre, Sterijada, Mala sterijada and finally Small Theatre (1974-1994). During its existence (1995 - ), hosted a great number of different theatre companies as well as the best representatives of amateur theatre.

Also, it was enriched with special thematic seminars and side programmes, exhibitions, workshops and other forms of collaborative work that explore *new theatrical tendencies*. From the festival that was expressing new and radical tendencies in Yugoslav practice, it becomes new context for wide range of new practices that are close to theatre way of thinking. [2]

“Fabrika” (“Factory”) is a main events space of Cultural Student Centre Novi Sad. It is important institution in the cultural life of young people in Novi Sad. “Its work encompasses literary, theatrical, musical and visual arts. SKCNS insists on genuine artistic value, in so doing playing an educational role for young people. It especially works to promote young talent”. [3] “Fabrika” is located in the old industrial complex called “Kineska cetvrt” (“China town”).

### **1.3. Project beyond architecture**

Architecture is, by the nature of its character “tied to material, physical presence”. [4] But, always there is more than function, form and construction and architecture is above all just a framework that takes on fully meaning only in interaction with the users.

Participants in project “Inside” were exploring inner, imaginary architecture of the psyche, as systems of pictures and archetypes that are deeply connected with the nature of our perception “and hence ultimately with our experience of architecture”. [5] “The deconstruction of architecture, which resembles sessions of psychoanalysis, reveals the structure ‘behind architecture as building’ and clearly speaks of architecture as thinking, as specific form of philosophical reflection”. [6]

### **1.4. Method of work**

Approach that was used in this project is unusual for students of architecture, future engineers. In similar form it was used in 2007 by Slovenian theatre director and Professor Tomi Janezic, at the Group for scene design, PhD interdisciplinary studies of the University of Arts in Belgrade. Participants in project “Spaces of imaginations” were Dina Radoman, Marina Radulj and Romana Boskovic. Tomi Janezic was applying psychodramatic techniques to different artistic field, primarily in the field of scene design and in

work with students he was giving them tools with which they can understand better personal processes during creative work. [7]

Method in project “Inside” included series of workshops in which participants explored their inner archetypal spaces and their relationships with the real spaces of everyday life. In pedagogical process students were offered creative/artistic tools and theoretical/practical knowledge in order to explore inner architecture, mental images, spaces, events and emotions from the past. These creative tools are originally instruments from the field of scene design. “Term *scene design* was introduced into Serbian language to define this complex process that links several artistic disciplines – design of a performing space, set design, costume design, sound and light design, as well as management and presentation of the final artwork”. [8] Scene design “relates to professional, artistic, curatorial, theoretical and ideological practices developed from the expanded meaning of scenography – as semantic category and artistic discipline”. [9]

In educational work with students these tools can help themselves during creative process both individually and collectively. Students had chance to create a quality group which gives individual space and freedom, security and support. According to Janezic “On the other hand also a teacher or a director – as a member of the group – cannot escape these processes and the processes of transference and counter-transference, projection and projective identification etc”. [10]

There are several aspects of the method used in project “Inside”:

- Exploring “a hybrid terrain located at the intersection of theatre, architecture, exhibition, visual arts, and media”; [11]
- Educational – task within the course “Creative and theoretical research in architecture and urbanism”;
- Introduction to new form of research – personal research;
- Individual and collective creative (art) work, work in group;
- Use of architecture tools as scenic instrumentality;
- Contextual framework - space, time and possibilities;
- Production aspect, from idea to realization.

### **1.5. Process of production**

The main aspect of production was realization of installations in space. In order to do that, students were making sketches, drawings, and then scale models, with intention to represent ideas and concepts, later to solve details of construction and at the end to build installations. During this process students were faced with various production sub-disciplines as scenic, lighting, sound, projection and video, and they were dealing with matters ranging from financial part, logistics, scheduling, preparing and making promo materials and catalogue, workplace safety. All students showed great willingness, competence, technique, craft and professional communication skills during the process of production.

### **1.6. Case study – poetics of works**

"Change", Dijana Apostolovic - work "Change" problematize perception, understanding and experience of inner spaces through different associations. Intimately spaces we recognize in parts of the moments, in unseen and unknown spaces, in other people. "We will understand them if we understand ourselves". [12]

"INTROspection", Nataša Bulut – the space installation "INTROspection" is metaphorical idea of imaginary but initially personal space through dominants that determine it – spaces of initiation, evolution, interpretation and transformation of all, both previous and future spaces. [13]

"Every System Sucks in its Own Way", Daniela Dimitrovska - is space installation that has aim to produce atmosphere and feeling that is quite usual when the individual meets with the state administrative apparatus. It is feeling of helplessness, frustration, lost, with which the author, as a foreign citizen is often faced.

"Our Wings are Clipped", Sanja Maljkovic – is story about the lost space from early childhood that is connected with the author by different memories. This space is not clearly defined and it doesn't have concrete shape, but it is always present, in other spaces and dreams.

"Extimité", Sladjana Milicevic – this work analyze space, primarily by examining relationship between personal (intimate) and real (psychical) space. The title is neologism from the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan created to questioned relationship of external and internal. At the level of

perception, work "Extimité" is seen as external, as an exhibit, as well as internal, i.e. object which is entered.

"How high", Maja Momirov – is installation that shows intimate, inner space that is separated from the outside world and events. Also, it questions opening those personal spaces to the others: „I am part of the space where are other people. I can see them, I can hear them, but here where I am there is room only for me. I notice what other people notice, but I see only what I see.“ [14]

"Flow through Infinity", Jelena Spasojevic – this work explores space of inner being in which are impulse of life and energy. Author uses circle as means of expressions and it represents center and place, initial point from which we orient and conquest our surroundings. [15]

"Roots", Jovana Stanisic – is story about three completely different experiences of one psychical space, that define character of the author and that who is she today. During the time, unplanned and under the circumstances that happened (war), one same space framework got three forms that provoke different feelings.

Inside\_Out, Sandra Stefanovic - is installation that represents spatial manifestation of impressions and experiences of personal spaces, way from the imaginary spaces of author to the real space of spectator and back. "Space installation consists of a temporary cell as place without directions that transfers to the user subjective perception and emotions of the author. User perceives and experiences space from their own perspective, or identified with the author. By entrance in the cell, user enters in real image of imaginary spaces. Through the projected image it becomes subject of observation and therefore subjective spaces of author become public." [16]

"Nebula Creativa", Djurdjica Terzic – is installation that represents inner, creative space of unlimited possibilities and undefined borders. In that space "stars are born and world are made, while similar attracts similar and fundamental characteristics of matter – grouping, is brought to light". [17]

"Idea about the accident is easy solution", Marijana Zorzic-Petrovic – is story about intimate space and their identification with the real space of mankind.

## 2. CONCLUSION

Project “Inside”, as part of the course “Creative and theoretical research in Architecture and Urbanism” carry on “the four parallel and interfused lines of architectural creativity – drawn, written and built architecture, and education” [18] and stands “at the intersection of theatre, architecture, exhibition, visual arts, and media”. [19]

The main idea was *educational turn* [20] in exploring architecture by using tools and practices from the field of scene design. “By taking the space “in between” disciplines, scene design becomes an open model for artistic research and practice, as well as a core drive for a large number of artistic and curatorial works.” [21] According to such a process, trans-disciplinary research and “transdisciplinary understanding of space” [22] result of the project was exhibition of space installations which opens questions of curating and exhibiting the ephemeral and performative, spatial performance of an exhibition, examines the possibilities of experience and potential spatial dialogues within the contextual framework. [23]

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Exhibition “Inside” was realized during the International Festival of Alternative and New Theatre - Infant 2012, at the “Fabrika”, events venue of Student Cultural Centre in Novi Sad.

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[20] “In thinking about exhibiting the ephemeral, two discursive *turns* might be of interest: For some time now, we have surrounded by the idea of the *educational turn* and there seems to be certain trust in that creative educational formats may generate kinds of performative reading in the exhibition space.” Schlieben K, Artistic/Curatorial Research Practices and their visual Translation in Expanding Scenography – On the Author of Space, ed. Brejzek T, The Arts and Theatre Institute, Prague, 2011, p. 84.

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# SCENE DESIGN AS CURATORIAL AND ARTISTIC PRACTICE

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**Abstract:** As a specific artistic discipline, scene design developed from the practice of exhibiting and presenting of scenography. Naturally, the key question here relates to the uncertainty of whether a segment of theatre performance, taken out from the context of theatre production, should and can be displayed in an exhibition space. However, as soon as scenography was taken from the context of theatre performance to become a gallery discipline, systematic display and presentation of scenographic arts began. The result of this process represents the first step towards scenographic influence on other disciplines. Special place in developing scene design as art belongs to Prague Quadrennial, the most important international manifestation dedicated to visual aspects of the performing arts, but also to the Biennial of Scene Design, the most influential Serbian manifestation dedicated to scene design. Further development of exhibition practice, not only at the PQ but also at various international expositions such as Venetian Biennial, followed by an emergence and development of new media, as well as rapid advancement of art market, strongly influenced the presentation and exhibition of scenography. The use of various artistic practices, modest at the beginning, became very dominant. Many exhibitions started to use and combine various elements from other arts, resulting in creation of independent art works. As a complex artistic and curatorial discipline, the practice of scene design obviously moved from theatre “black box” towards interdisciplinary artistic field, becoming an open model for various types of research and practice.

**Keywords:** scene design as art; scene design as curatorial practice; exhibiting and presenting of scenography; Prague Quadrennial; Biennial of Scene Design.

As a specific artistic discipline, scene design comes from theatre - not from theatre as artistic discipline as a whole, but from scenography. More precisely, scene design evolves from the practice of exhibiting and presenting of scenography. Naturally, the key question here relates to the uncertainty of whether a segment of theatre performance, taken out from the context of theatre production, should and can be displayed in an exhibition space or, in other words: „it is said that to exhibit theatre art is vain glory and false endeavour“[1]. Miloš Hlávka, Czech playwright, states that “it is true that live theatre art which takes place within a second of our perception cannot be exhibited, but its components can; its soul cannot exist but its spirit can, its shape in time cannot be shown but it can be shown in space... not the live and warm auditorium but its social roots and its spiritual structure; not the unique moment of our emotional experience but the historical or psychological prerequisites of this experience...” [2] As soon as scenography is taken from the context of theatre performance to become a gallery discipline, systematic display and presentation of scenographic arts begins. The result of this process represents the first step towards scenographic influence to other disciplines. However, it is obvious that such influence has not happened immediately, but over time, at the moment when exhibiting scenographic documentation and artefacts becomes subject of independent artistic intervention.

Special place in developing scene design as art belongs to Prague Quadrennial, the most important international event dedicated to visual aspects of the performing arts. In the first exhibition catalogue, published in 1967, Vladimír Jindra, historian, theorist and author of the PQ statutes, says: “the Prague Quadrennial is guided by an attempt to capture the specific nature of stage art, that stage design can not be separated from the direction and all the other components of dramatic art their synthetic character should be underlined”[3]. Quadrennial was therefore founded with the idea to introduce scenography to exhibition space, but as integral part of theatre work. Miloš Hlavka explains this idea by stating that “the visitor must experience the exhibition as performance; he has to feel that it concerns him alone; that it is being put on just for him and that he is the main part.” [4] However, the first steps towards exhibiting scenography started with various displays of authentic documents created and produced not for the exhibition space but for the actual needs of theatre production - set and costume design drawings, models and photographs from the performances. From the very beginning, Quadrennial exhibition stand showed tendency towards becoming a piece of art work, but as an arrangement or assemblage. In this sense,

setting up and arranging various artefacts can be seen as the most significant artistic value of the stand. For this reason, until recently, Prague Quadrennial did not address interests of general public, but served as meeting point for professionals from different geographic, political and cultural environments, who rarely had an opportunity to meet in other circumstances. To some extent, PQ could be seen as a festival of scenography and, at the same time, excellent opportunity for theatre designers to present their work to each other, compete among themselves and, at the same time, build professional and artistic reputation in their own countries. Pamela Howard, British scenographer, points out that “without continuous work of OISTAT, our world brotherhood of scenographers – and this is our debt to Prague, the Head of Quadrennial, and leadership of Jaroslav Malina – we would not have met each other”[5]. It is also important to stress that for the artists coming from Eastern Europe Quadrennial served as a very important channel for presenting their work to the West and its theatres. Further development of exhibition practice, not only at the PQ, but also at various international manifestations such as Venetian Biennial(s), followed by an emergence and development of new media, as well as rapid advancement of art market, strongly influenced the presentation and exhibition of scenography. The use of various artistic practices, modest at the beginning, became very dominant. Many expositions started to use and combine various elements from other arts, resulting in creation of independent art works - the result of this process can be seen as true beginning of curatorial and artistic practice of scene design.

Although greatly influenced by other artistic disciplines, scene design directly developed from the practice of presenting scenography. It is, however, interesting that this transformation at the PQ happened over time. On the other hand, at the Biennial of Scene Design, established in Belgrade in 1996 as the largest and most important performing arts exhibition in ex-Yugoslavia, this happened from the very beginning. Biennial was established with the idea to “promote, enhance, stimulate, develop and perfect creative and professional work in all areas connected to design, technique and technology, production, realisation and promotion of theatre projects and performing events in general” [6]. The first Biennial exhibition [7], on display at the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade in 1997, included actual art works produced for theatre performances, such as the sculpture by Živorad Žira Savić, first winner of the Biennial Grand Prix, created and produced for “The Dresser” by Yugoslav Drama Theatre. For this reason, Biennial can be seen as an ideological movement – in terms of selection and presentation of works

and, especially, in terms of the awarding policy. The fact is that the Biennial Grand Prix had never been awarded to a set or costume designer for their art works, but to various authors whose ideas and values strongly influenced performing arts in general. From the very beginning, Grand Prix and other Biennial awards promoted the ideology of Yustat (Yugoslav performing arts centre), based on the idea of “establishing, developing and evaluating all areas, activities and processes constructing physical corpus and equipment of the performing space, as means of theatre communication and correspondence with all aspects of public spectacle, culture and built environment“, as stated in Yustat’s founding documentation. Among other values, this ideology also promoted commitment to public art, various forms of urban spectacle, rethinking of art in general from theatrical point of view, as well as cross over of various artistic disciplines. The main intention of the Biennial of Scene Design was to identify and determine different phenomena and disciplines as performing arts, but also to define those aspects of performing arts that were progressive and avant-garde. The Biennial promoted new ideas and challenged the usual and generally accepted.

It is obvious that scene design as curatorial and artistic practice did not come from the need for new art expression, different view of the world or idea of introducing new discipline, but from the necessity to change the existing practice. In order to explain the complexity of the discipline seen as wider cultural context, Sodja Lotker, artistic director of Prague Quadrennial, and one of the main reformers of this event since 2007, uses term *performance design* as synonym for the *scenography expanded*, or, in our case, scene design: “today we talk about *scenographies of exhibitions*, *scenographies of dreams*, *scenographies of war etc.*, when we talk about built and active environments that surround us in personal, political, sociological, or artistic ways that we inhabit or visit. Even in the theatre scenography, as a part of performance, obviously has not been a mere theatre backdrop for a very long time. Scenography, or performance design, today can be defined as a complex environment including space, light, sound, and body, an environment for creation of performative relations. This environment is active and activating inter-relational space, ‘a love affair’ of space and time – a movement. Scenography perceived as environment is not a silent passer-by, an immobile witness, but an active agent of movement – an activity that has both poetical and ethical consequences. Because scenography conceived as a ‘spatial situation’ also incorporates the fragile, dynamic, and emotional relationships of performers and audience in real space. It is a ‘liable space for creation’, that is always political in the sense that this is where the humans

meet.”[8] Investigating relationship between theatre and visual arts, Sodja Lotker places scene design in an in-between space. Result of this is the PQ 2011 project entitled “Intersection: Intimacy and Spectacle”, dealing with the “display of action” and “exhibit of performance”[9].

As a complex artistic and curatorial discipline, the practice of scene design obviously moved from theatre “black box” towards interdisciplinary artistic field, becoming an open model for various creative research and practice. It is evident that it currently stands at the crossroads of many areas - performing and visual arts, architecture, installation, site-specific works and various new media. A large number of international art exhibitions and manifestations, formally categorised as one or the other of the above mentioned disciplines, become more and more similar. Prague Quadrennial and Venice Biennials (visual and architectural) show a number of displays and events resembling each other in terms of space articulation, artists’ profiles or means of expression. On the other hand, need for the “white cube” also becomes redundant, opening the possibility for a hybrid artistic environment and creating a complex map of contemporary scene design works.



Figure 1. PQ 2011 – Intersection (photo: [www.pq.cz](http://www.pq.cz) )



Figure 2: PQ 2011 – Intersection (photo: Tatjana Dadić Dinulović)

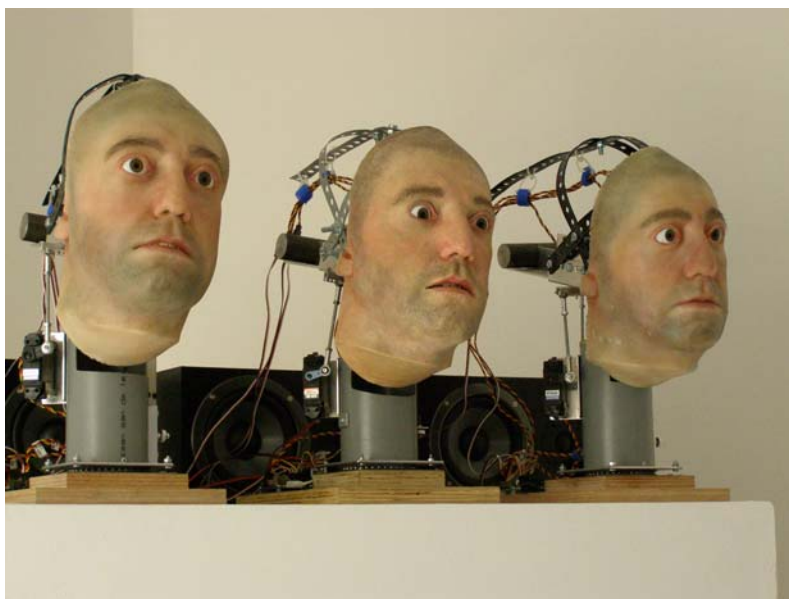


Figure 3. PQ 2011 – Intersection (photo: Tatjana Dadić Dinulović);



Figure 4 PQ 2011 - segment of Portugal exhibition – Intersection (photo: Tatjana Dadić Dinulović)

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# RECONSTRUCTION OF BANJA LUKA'S STUDENT THEATRE: RETHINKING PRESENT UNCONVENTIONAL AS FUTURE CONVENTIONAL THEATRE OR TO GIVE A FULL SPATIAL FREEDOM TO THE STUDENT THEATRE?

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**Abstract:** This paper is presenting the exploration of space and the institution of Banja Luka's Student Theater, which is a part of efforts to formulate the program foundation planning and projecting the Student Theater reconstruction. While working on the reconstruction program, authors had felt the need to consider a series of questions: what is the contemporary theater today, what position does it take in the structure of contemporary urban life, what functions does it include and what meanings does it carry and interpret, as well as the question of the architecture adequacy of the existing building. Even more, authors realized that this task has been imposing to them a discursive and contextual thinking and reflections on history and cultural background of the Student Theatre, location and building, on spatial and architecture meanings and functions of the students' way of dealing with theatre in Banja Luka, on Veselin Masleša, on attitudes of the society towards the youth theatre. Conducted research and all existing problems (personnel, spatial and financial problems), indisputably have imposed the question: does Student Theater, instead of the existing unconventional space need a conventional theater space or is it a better solution to try to give to this theater a full spatial freedom?

**Keywords:** amateur theatre; Banja Luka's Student Theatre; theatre space; reconstruction.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reconstruction of existing structure always starts with "reading" of the existing material, narratives and contexts of one space and its people. By interpreting of the current, authors of the reconstruction project of Banja Luka's Student Theatre, Maja Đilas and Una Umičević, had attempted to determine what is stronger and more firm – structure or narrative – so that answer could be further exposed and developed as a potential generator of the reconstruction process. That perhaps could be an existing architecture and urban structure and position of the building, its immediate surroundings and the existing unfinished Basement Scene, or that could easily be the case with historical and cultural narrative of Banja Luka's Student Theatre, its location and facility. Space of the Student Theater has its own function and it was necessary to redefine "existing" space and program, but also their expected framework and to create an adequate model of its transformation. Significant determinant in outlining of the space for play is this: the space must endure transformations in relation to onward unknown scenarios. Student Theater needs to have a full spatial freedom to create events, those onward prepared and those spontaneous, which demand elastic spatial and time boundaries and seek an open platform – a public space, (un)define and out of the rigid models of universalities.

## 2. CULTURE AND ARTISTIC SOCIETY, AMATEUR THEATER, ACTING SCHOOL ...

Today's Banjaluka's Student Theater was found on February 19<sup>th</sup> 1977 at newly established Banjaluka's University „Đuro Pucar Stari“ as a University Cultural and Artistic Society „Ivica Mažar“ (local abbreviation: UKUD „Ivica Mažar“). Society was found by Banjaluka's theater and TV actor and director Živomir Ličanin-Likota<sup>1</sup>. The first solemn academy „I am adjuring

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<sup>1</sup> Živomir Ličanin-Likota (born in Banja Luka on March 8<sup>th</sup> 1944), acted in theaters and TV movies and series, directed over 20 theater plays and acted in 2 operas. As Belgrade student of Faculty of Nature and Mathematic he had found Academic Theater scene „Branko Kršmanović“ in Belgrade (Serbia) in 1968. He was a member of the troupe of National Theater of Bosanska Krajina in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina) from 1971 to 1984. In year 1985 he had found an Open scene „Belveder“ in Rijeka (Croatia) in which town he had worked as an actor and director in Croatian National Theater „Ivan Pl. Zajc“ from 1984. until his retirement. He was a seven times laureate of the Best Actor Award of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Festival of Profesional Theaters that have taken place in Jajce: 1973-74 and 1976-80. He was apraised with Award for life achievement „Veselin Masleša“ of the city of Banja Luka in 1978. Živomir Ličanin was forced to abandon work in Banja Luka, due to the nationalistic war and aggression on Bosnia

the Party to take me in its membership“ had taken place on May 31<sup>st</sup> 1977 at big hall of Banja Luka's Culture House. This event was directed by Živomir Ličanin as a recital performed by Banjaluka's students. On this occasion students had declaimed in poetic manner about Tito, about times of illegal work of Communist Party and about “Bombing” proceeding”. They had spoke about significance of SKOJ-a (Association of Yugoslav Communist Youth), about role of Communist Party and a desire of young people to step into the Party membership. Premiere of the first theater play „Arif Tamburija“ based on the text of the Banjaluka's writer Irfan Horozović had taken place on February 17<sup>th</sup> 1979 at the Local Community Club “Hiseta 1”. This play written by Horozović, a local story about acrobat who is walking with the dajak<sup>2</sup> in his hands on the wire that connects two banks of the river Vrbas and the city of Banja Luka, was the first play of Banjaluka's students that had toured out of the city, in Maribor (ex Social Republic of Slovenia, and now just a Republic of Slovenia) in 1979. This play had been also performed in the social restaurant of Banjaluka's industrial factory „Kozara“ and in factory „Metal“. Banjaluka's students had performed 10 theatrical premieres during the first 5 years of existence (1977-1982). By winning the first place at the 24<sup>th</sup> Festival of Amateur Cultural and Artistic Societies and Organizations in Social Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1982, with the play „Children of the night“ by author Zlatko J. Lukić, Banjaluka's University Cultural and Artistic Society „Ivica Mažar“ had gain a status of amateur theater, which had imposed the obligation to the troupe and directors to perform at least two premieres a year. Until the beginning of the war in ex-Yugoslavia they performed 19 more premieres. At the beginning of nationalistic war in 1992 and later, the work in Student Theater must jilt director Bahrudin Avdagić and actor Nikola Jurin, same as many other Banjaluka's cultural workers of that period, so by the 1995 there had been only 3 premieres. Neglected because of the war and postwar nationalism and impoverished with lack of people, from 1994 till 2005 Student Theatre practically doesn't work, with exception of 3 premieres in that

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and Herzegovina and to moor his profesional engagement mainly for Rijeka, where he still lives under the name Bosnamir Ličanin. He have changed his name in 1992, out of the protest because of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>2</sup> Dajak is a 4 meters long sprit which is design for pushing forward of the wooden and shallow Vrbas's water craft. It has a wooden bar and biting iron top. Steering wo/man of Vrbas's water craft „Dajakaš“ is sticking a sprit and its iron top in the river bed and by relying on it, he/she is pushing craft forward. It is an assumption that Vrbas's water craft with dajak sprit was invented in the time when Banja Luka was formed as a small village and through the course of centuries this oddly craft had become a symbol of the Banja Luka. Newly history of this craft in .last 40 years is connected with the brothers Zamolo, Mario and Antonio-Tonči.

period (1997, 1998, and 2001). From 2005 till 2010 work of the Student Theatre has been reduced to an acting school, without premieres or theatre plays what so ever. In recent 2 years, theater revives its activities by staging the old and new premieres, but with certain hiper-production. In two years, 26 premieres were staged. During its 35 years of existence, Student Theatre was made by amateur and professionals together, but bearers and engines of theatre life were always a professionals – an established Yugoslav and Bosnian and Herzegovinian actors, directors or writers who lived in Banja Luka and who often played a role of art directors of theatre. Actors were and now are, commonly, amateurs, students or high school teenagers. Theatre has played and now is playing pieces of Banjaluka's, Bosnian and Herzegovinian, Yugoslav and world famous writers.

### **3. SPACE(S) OF PLAY**

University Cultural and Artistic Society „Ivica Mažar“ had been established in times that were characterized by ideas of exiting of theatres out of the theatrical spaces and staging the theatrical scenarios in different profane environments. Society started with its work at the Banjaluka's Faculty of Electric Engineering, precisely in the classroom No 14. During its 35 years of existence, theatre had used, seized and occupied different open and closed urban spaces for play. Among them, classical theatrical spaces and scenes were least represented, such as those of Banjaluka's Children and People Theatre of Bosanska Krajina. But therefore, their plays had often seized utilitarian spaces such as: Culture House, House of Yugoslav People Army, People and University Library „Petar Kočić“, Public Art Gallery Banja Luka, Social Community House „Mejdan“, Pedagogical Academy, Technical High school; then public city spaces such as: courtyard space in the Simo Šolaja Street and street space in Veselin Masleša Street; even various profane spaces such as: Community Clubs Centar 1 and Hiseta 1, factory „Metal“, Students House „Veljko Vlahović“, social restaurant of Banjaluka's industrial factory „Kozara“. Though the presence of Student Theatre in these spaces were most often ephemeral, sometimes even for one staging, the combination of factual lack of their own theatrical space and new tendencies and desires to transfer the play into the unconventional performative spaces, had made that this performative and activist start up of Student Theatre become their general mark, a characteristic of new young theatre that is open for different, sometimes even subversive, rethinking of theatre and socio-political context in

which it works and from which it draw authors, themes, pieces, publics, positive and negative critics.

Whether it had come from generic desire to provide a space to the Student Theatre or from a tender concern because of their unconventional, performative and street work, never the less, festival success and won status of amateur theatre in 1982, had made that Executive Council of Municipal Assembly of Banja Luka decide to award a space for Student Theatre to use. With this decision from October 7th 1982, Student Theatre was awarded with basement space in the Veselin Masleša Street No 20, so called Gentlemen's Street, in the very same building in which ground and first floor a Commemoration Room were situated, devoted to the life of Veselin Masleša, a writer, revolutionist and National hero of National Liberation War and on the very same location that had been symbolically and factually connected with recent history of Banja Luka, socialistic Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia. But, adaptation of this space, so called Basement Scene, had never been finished, so this conventional stage of Student Theatre had seen only 2 premieres until the war (1989 and 1990). It seems that a "floating" Student Theatre didn't allowed to be put into the basement, so the practice of usage of non-theatrical objects and spaces continued during 1980s and 1990s, until the beginning of Bosnian and Herzegovinian war. During the dreary and wartime 1990s and later, plays were staged in Banjaluka's theatres: National, Children and City Theatre, as well as in Youth House, and during these post-socialistic "free and democratic" years, nobody from stripped and rarefied professional and amateur troupe of Student Theatre had came onto idea to try to get outside of given staging spaces and dominant local cultural discourses. Basement Scene had been reactivated in 2010, when it staged the 3rd "basement" premiere ever the Richard O' Bryan's „The Rocky Horror Show“, directed by the student of Banja Luka's Art Academy, Aleksandar Pejaković. In 2011 there were 4 more premieres in the basement („Bloody Mustaches“, a folk grotesque based on motifs from the piece of the modern Serbian drama „Larrup-men and Mercenaries“ by Miroljub Nedović and Timošenko Milosavljević; „They are something completely different“ by Milena Depolo, a young Belgrade dramaturge that problematized violent in schools; „A man who laughed“ by Banjaluka's writer Lana Bastašić and „Backstage“, by the Polish writer Kšištof Varga, adapted by Zoran Đerić), and in 2012 just Irish musical „Dubling“ by John Carney. All premieres were directed by Aleksandar Pejaković.

### 3.1. House of Steve Masleša

As it was mentioned earlier, today's building, that is, a location of the building in which basement Student Theatre gained its space in 1982, had its historical and symbolical narrative connected with recent history of Banja Luka and socialistic Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia. At the location of today's building, before the Big Banjaluka's Earthquake in 1969, there was an old building built in 1936 in the style of reduced Neoclassicism, with private house and merchant's shop in it and small courtyard. On the occasion of 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Banja Luka, on April 22<sup>nd</sup> 1965, a memorial plaque had been put on this old building, devoted to the life of Veselin Masleša<sup>3</sup>, the poet, revolutionist and National hero of the Yugoslav National Liberation War. Plaque has a following inscription: *"At this place was a house in which, a National hero Veselin Masleša was born, on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1906."* Yes, this old and after earthquake destroyed house at the location of today's space of Student Theatre was a home and working space of Banjaluka's family Masleša, in which a revolutionist Veselin Masleša with his parents had lived. He lived, but he wasn't born there, not even grow up. Researching archive documents, I determined that Veselin's father Stevo Masleša had acquired ownership on that lot in 1919, a 13 years after Veselin was born. House in which this poet was really born were more modest built a long before 1919 on the nearby lot, but a memorial plaque is put on the location of the newer Masleša's house, though it should stand some 10 meters to the South. This newer house of the Masleša family was projected by Banjaluka's engineer Franjo Mikuš in 1936 as a three-flor building with basement, mansard and courtyard, and with two shops on ground flor and one apartment on each floors above. House was finished in 1937 and 32 years later in Big Earthquake 1969, it was damage. During 1970s and reconstruction of the main pedestrian street, so called Gentlemen's Street (which was officially named in Veselin Masleša Street in 1960s), this damaged house was pulled

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<sup>3</sup> Veselin Masleša (born in Banja Luka, on April 20<sup>th</sup> 1906 – died on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1943), poet, journalist, interpreter, revolutionist and National hero. As a student of Banjaluka's Grammar School, he is involved in youth movement, writes for magazine „Youth“ and takes active part in labor movement. He was a member of Association of Yugoslav Communist Youth. He studied law in Zagreb and economy in Frankfurt and politic economy and sociology in Paris. He took an active part in social and political life, simultaneously engaged in illegal Communist Party activities, as well as in legal manifestation of progressive intellectuals, because of what he was convicted and relegated, several times. He was a member of Yugoslav Communist Party. He took part in the First session of AVNOJ (Antifascist Council of the Yugoslavian National Liberation Movement) in Bihać in 1942. He lost his life on June 14<sup>th</sup> 1943 at Battle against Nazis and their Serbian and Montenegrin collaborators in Sutjeska.

down. Whether it was because of the lack of will or competencies to rebuild damaged objects, or because of lack of consciousness on importance of preservation of cultural and historical heritage, or because factual irreparable damages, or because something else, who knows? On the location of Masleša's house a new object, VM 20 is build and on the occasion of 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Veselin Masleša in 1983, on the ground floor and part of the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of VM 20 object, a Commemoration Room was open, in his honor. During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1995) in a burst of historical revisionism and ideological revanchism Masleša's Commemoration Room with all its exhibits is evicted and its destiny stayed a mystery ever since, while space itself is sold to the private owner in the process of transitional privatization. Today, at the spot of remembrance on famous poet, revolutionist and National hero, on the wall of new VM 20 object, stands a memorial plaque from 1965.

### **3.2. VM 20**

Object VM 20 was projected by architect Ferid Hozić in Banjaluka's Institute for civil engineering studies and projects in 1982, and investor was a Public company for rebuilding of Banja Luka. Users of the space, aside from Student Theater in basement and Masleša's Commemoration Room in part of the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor, were also a publicly owned Hairdresser's Craft and Labor Organization "Relaks" and Banjaluka's Poet's Club. At first project had defined that entire basement and ground floor had a business purpose as hairdresser salons and accompanied offices, and entire 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floor was designed as a Veselin Masleša Commemoration Room. Soon later, basement was seen as space for Student Theater, and hairdresser salons had been moved on ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor, reducing space for Commemoration Room. In regard to the theatre, in later projected and never finished adaptation of basement space, the scene of Student Theatre would included: stage and audience space, supporting areas (wardrobe for actors with galley and toilets), technical spaces (audio and light cabin and larder for requisites), as well as the necessary areas of communication. Configuration of the stage and audience space was designed in the conventional process, by opposing and separation of the stage and audience. Stage space was an assembly steel construction of irregular shape, 9,6 meters wide, 5,4 meters deep and 4,05 meters high. Audience sets were one-sided, structured in two levels, with capacity of 70 people.

### 3.3. Spaces of remembrance

A new post-socialistic time, a new “nafaka” (untranslatable), had taken away to this object and space then it had brought. At first, during the war, with ideological deletions – a Commemoration Room was closed and in time eliminated, and with postwar economical and ideological transformations – a publicly owned Hairdresser's Craft and Labor Organization “Relaks” was privatized, by which, almost entire object is *de facto* privatized. A long with the war that had marginalized and banished out of the city many ethnically and ideologically “unsuitable” names of theatre professionals and amateurs who had been an engines of Student Theater troupe, this never finished space of the Basemen Scene, had fallen into obscurity. It is interesting that such similar fate had stroked the troupe of National Theatre of Bosanska Krajina as well, so what had happened is the kind of transfer in which a number of amateur actors, who had been engage only in Student Theatre before the war, had become a part of professional troupe of National Theatre of Republic of Srpska, how the new authorities had renamed a National Theatre of Bosanska Krajina. These enthusiasts in following years, had tried and partially succeeded to preserve Student Theatre and its memory narrative, and even to enlarge and refresh amateur troupe, mainly by staging in the Children and National Theater spaces. Space of the Basement Scene itself had remained locked for years, and new private owners of the “Relax” company and larger part of the VM 20 building, had acted as usurpers of the basement space though they *de iure* wasn't. Arrogantly, they had kept this space under the key and oblivion and didn't allow its usage, hoping that with time this basement will, as Masleša's Commemoration Room, fall down into the ideological and cultural oblivion and hopefully become their “democratic and corporative” ownership. A real owner of the basement space were and is a municipality, now city of Banja Luka, and only after some 15 years after war and arrogant privatization and with support of the city, nowadays troupe, engaged professionals and amateurs, actors, directors and enthusiasts of Student Theatre have succeeded to enter in their space and started to think about its theatrical and performative future. Masleša's Commemoration Room wasn't that lucky and it had gone forever, as well as the narrative on Yugoslav and Bosnian and Herzegovinian antifascism, internationalism, time of labor and intellectual revolution and multiethnic Banja Luka and “peaceful Bosnia”. These days a basement space of the VM 20 building and its belonging (still) non-privatized courtyard, had become a place of rethinking and dealing with New and Forgotten in the same time. Project of reconstruction of the stage and audience space for Banja Luka's Student Theatre is in progress – it tries

to capture history and programme narrative of this theatre from its beginnings onward, to strip down all sediments of cultural memory and narratives of this city, location and space, and to find an answer to the question what is the theatre and performance space and space for play today, for the public, citizens, students and professionals.

#### **4. INSTEAD OF THE CONCLUSION**

Answer to the question what is the space for play today for Banjaluka's Student Theatre, has been already enounced in the introduction of this text. Space for play needs to be a free one; a freedom implies a constant and unpredictable transformation in relation to the onward unknown scenarios. Transformation seeks elastic spatial and time boundaries, open platform, occupation of public space, more or less (un)defined. To such transformation summons, even obliges, this layered, changeable and turbulent history, cultural memory and social, economic and political context through which had past: 1<sup>st</sup> – the University Cultural and Artistic Society „Ivica Mažar“, later Student Theatre and its programme portfolio; then 2<sup>nd</sup> – the location of former Masleša's house and political discourses of the name Veselin Masleša and his Commemoration Room; 3<sup>rd</sup> – the object which basement and courtyard has been reconstructed for Student Theatre and at the end 4<sup>th</sup> – people which constituted theatre troupe in 80s and 90s. By scrutinizing and revealing all these layers and narratives, discourses and connotations, personal and family destinies somehow connected to theatre, location, object and troupe, it is not possible to design space differently than as a liquid and floating platform through which a play, a performative narrative, a critical thought, a changeable and moveable stage and audience collectives and relations can flow – from public and open to closed and intimate space and vice versa; from basement to the roofs and back. Such space speaks about relativity and transformability of human lives, actions, deeds and remembrances in ever changing social and political systems and discursive cultural and artistic values and criteria. It resembles to life, a revolutionary impulse and tragic but ideologically striking end of young Veselin Masleša. It discloses and from oblivion saves narratives of newer history of Banja Luka, through the destiny of one family, house, theatre. It tell us about misapprehensions and fears of Yugoslav communism and ethno-socialism and about tragedy that has stroke theatrical people and theatre when this illusions and fears had grown into the war and killings, ethno-clerical

persecution and ethno-clerical despotism in which we are now trying to live and create. At the end such space ceases to be a passive one, and by itself becomes a performative one, giving an active resistance to the “new society” of corporative and criminal intimacies and role-models, and striking back to the arrogant privatization of, once common, city spaces. It does that by conceptualization, occupation and deprivatization of open public space, but also by opening and solidarization of existing closed public space – to the entire community for free, creative and critical use and learning.

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# OCCUPY SPACE – CREATE SPECTACLE

## CASE STUDY SKOPJE 2014

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**Abstract:** Nowadays a very common situation could be noticed in urban policy and it seems to have tendency of growth in the near future. Namely, the cities are about to use urban spectacles which take place in open venues with purpose to achieve their own social-cultural development. Organizing those manifestations can be seen as influence to collective experience of a city, making an image that can be accepted both positive and negative. If Skopje is being observed in the mentioned context, as a case study, we could notice that the city seems to be in continuing process of defining again its own identity and in repositioning itself on the regional and on the global level, too. Considering the project *Skopje 2014*, it can be claimed that city of Skopje uses it as a tool of cultural, ideological and social regeneration of the city, and the country itself, making the different types of spectacles.

Previously mentioned phenomenon represents the ground zero in this work, which has a goal to explain connections between the ideology, the space and the event. As it can be concluded, the subject of this study is a research of the certain types of spectacles, in actual open public urban areas, which are the consequence of specific architectural-urbanistic project *Skopje 2014*. The range of the research includes the analysis of the main city square of Skopje in the period from the year of 2010 to 2012. Depending from the type of spectacle, the space of the city square could be classified into three different scenes: Scene of Rebellion, Scene of Construction and the Scene of Glorification.

How can the use of scene design as an instrument in those three scenes contribute to transformation of the ideology, transformation of the space or transformation of the event?

Research is created as author's interactive act of observation and it analyzes the different spectacles being held within the project *Skopje 2014*, making three types of theatrical scenes, improving the power of scene design, which implicates the affirmation of the project *Skopje 2014* itself.

**Keywords:** Open city spectacle, Skopje 2014, ideology, space, event

## **1. ABOUT THE PROJECT SKOPJE 2014 - IN A SEARCH FOR (NON)EXISTENT IDENTITY**

Skopje is the capital of the Republic of Macedonia, where one third of the entire population of the state is located. It is being conceived as a center of culture, economics, politics and education in purpose to gain title of European metropolis. The main role for that challenge has been given to the architecture and urbanism. The physiognomy of the city has been constantly altered, spreading in all directions and experiencing great number of new features and events. Skopje represents the example of using architecture as a tool for urban and social regeneration of the city and the state.

The fact is that the city is threatened by new erasure of layers of history, narrative and memory of certain parts. It is particularly emphasized in the central area, in due to the rapid development of the city, in other words: because of the increase of the construction and the modernization in recent years. All in order to produce the image of Skopje as a European city.

The need for such an approach has always been present in the history of the Republic of Macedonia, because it never had its own space nor it was able to express its national identity. The fact is that the Republic of Macedonia was the last nation liberated from Ottoman rule which happened in the year of 1912. Then followed a period of occupation by the Bulgarian army during the First and Second World Wars, and in the end it became a part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. This whole process has had such consequences, that its national identity has always been invalidated. Macedonia was given a chance to develop its own different South Slav identity only since the year of 1945. Until the 1991, Macedonia was the southern republic within Yugoslavia, and since 2005 the country has been a candidate for membership in the European Union. Since then until now the Republic of Macedonia has been in constant conflict with its neighbors. Due to the conflict regarding the name with neighboring Greece (whose region is also called Macedonia), in the European Union the country is known as FYROM, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. All these provocations resulted in the fact that the Macedonian state, in these new circumstances of becoming an independent state, has decided to turn to revising the national identity. So the government of RM, started to lay claim to the succession rights of the ancient Macedonian state - holding that the contemporary Macedonian nation evolved from a meeting of ancient Macedonians and Slavic peoples who had settled in that territory.

With the slogan "*European city's historic center is needed*," from 2009 the new face of the city center is awarded to Skopje - the promotion of new architectural - urban concept is initiated and that is project SKOPJE 2014. It is about megalomaniac project involving a large number of public buildings and monuments, where architecture is used as a tool to show and display government's objective promoting and demonstrating national identity. A pompous and scenic product that is based on the architectural reanimation of "eclecticism" in the central city area. Skopje 2014 project is reduced to building a facade, implementing bad taste and eclectic ideas highlighting baroque - historical art period that has never been present in Macedonia. In other words, a style that suits the glorification of the project and the power of government has been chosen.

Trying to explain or to paraphrase project Skopje 2014 is a difficult challenge. First, because it involves a large number of new buildings and monuments, which all makes an extremely culturally historical confusion and spatial - urban mess. In this case, the architecture is a natural image, a visual form of a society that tells us about the form, not the functionality. Any gap that hadn't been unconstructed now was occupied by imperialistic architecture. This is an example of arbitrariness and absolutism. The architecture is manipulated by the state in the process of building the national identity of Macedonia. Ideology that completely engulfed culture, art, architecture.

Project Skopje 2014 presented in this way, as a cultural political phenomenon in modern history of the Republic of Macedonia, has opened a new interesting topic which is connection between ideology [1], space and events. Skopje 2014 more or less insists on the ideology of art [2], then conquers the urban central area and causes various types of events [3]. This triad (ideology, space and event) is the starting point for the research, so their mutual relations and unity they build tend to be simultaneously observed.

In this regard, the range of the research includes analysis of the town square of the city of Skopje in the period since the year of 2009 to 2012. Depending on the type of spectacle [4] that takes place in that area, the square can be classified into three different scenes, as follows: (1) Scene of Rebellion (2) Scene of Construction and (3) Scene of Glorification. Each scene will be observed through two dimensions, namely: (1) how to construct a spectacle out of the event and (2) why it is transformed into a scene.

### 1.1. Scene of Rebellion – DON'T ABUSE SKOPJE!

*"The parameters of a city extend as far as the voice of man can be heard."* Aristotle

A city reflects the diversity of voices. In fact, it is his essence. The city could not be a choir. The voices that are intended to be heard always have stood out, stressing the need to frame the urban area by the real values, ideals and principles. These are the voices of the so-called revolt that rebel. The rebellion in the broadest meaning is the act of opposing or denying one's power or authority by the individuals unified in a group based on the same and / or similar ideas and goals. Provocative voices are particularly active and challenging, when the city is the object of change by the state government, whose vision has been based on political manipulation. It is a clear fact that the Skopje 2014 is primarily cultural and ideological platform, and then architectural project and project of urban design. It is inconceivable that the state would begin a radical change in the very center of the capital, and it is going to avoid and ignore the expert opinion and the opinion of the general public. Skopje 2014 has formulated the principle fact that all the buildings and monuments are protected because they have a pre-national - state immunity, where none of the artistic and aesthetic criticism cannot take away or deny that right. Therefore controversial project Skopje 2014 brings up two points of view. The first affirms the changes that have been imposed, while the other opposes the changes. The second group includes organizations such as Prva Arhi Brigada (trans. First Archi Brigade) and Ploštad Sloboda (trans. Town Square of Liberty).

Prva Arhi Brigada is an informal group consisting of students of architecture, professors from the Faculty of Architecture and young architects, while the Ploštad Sloboda is the non-government organization whose members consider themselves as real residents of Skopje (those who worship their city and its spirit). Although different in content, they both have the same goal - to criticize and stop the project Skopje 2014. Gathered under the slogan: "Do not abuse Skopje! [5]" they want their voice to be heard which makes it clear that the Skopje 2014 is primarily economically unjustified project, harmful to the society, inconsistent to the principles of multiculturalism and aesthetically maladjusted. Revolted by the project Skopje 2014, they initiate the protests in the town square, transforming the square into an urban area - Scene of Rebellion. In fact, there are series of events, pre-designed and organized at the Macedonia Square, which make urban area theatrical

space generating two types of open urban spectacle namely: performance and demonstration [6].

According to Miško Šuvakovic and his *Pojmovnik moderne i postmoderne likovne umetnosti i teorije posle 1950* (*Glossary of modern and postmodern art theory and art after 1950*), the performance is noted as staged event based on the artwork that artists realizes in front of the audience. The most articulated example in its resistance to the powers of government, in the context of the implementation of performance certainly is Raspeani Skopjani [7], who belongs to the organization Plošad Sloboda. This is an informal group of young people with different professions who express their opinion on the transformation that city is experiencing through various scene performances in public urban space of the city. Their work is characterized by the fact that they themselves are both the authors of performance and performers, who "play" for the incidental audience. One of their most important performance is the one called Hedge, which took place on a bridge near the central square. As a part of the project Skopje 2014, state leaders announced the reconstruction of its fence with its realization worth about a million and a half euro's. The idea was to transform the steel railing fence into a stylish baroque with ornamentals made of wrought iron (golden-bronze hue). With a desire to defend Skopje, a group of 70-odd people belonging to Raspeani Skopjani (in meaning of Singing citizens of Skopje), gathered on the bridge, and then had it covered with fake banknotes and sang: Skopje, grade moj mill! (Skopje, my beloved city!) This narrative situation's critical text is actually the largest component of this performance and could be read as a play. Or its dramatization has created the play by means of words, music and movement that express the course of action and emotions of actors – members of Raspeani Skopjani. It was a play performed in the syncretism of audio and dance performances based on speech and elements of choreography. Defined in such an expressive way, scene act assigns an attribute of a spectacle to the performance. Paradoxical fact is that this scene only had a short-lived effect, in other words, today the bridge is just a part of the urban kitschy decor and residents of Skopje can only remember this Scene of Rebellion as an attempt to change the reality, which was unsuccessful.

As to the second part of the Rebellion Scene - demonstrations, they occur in large number, where with the noise and banners, actors in this show achieve a certain tension and drama in urban public space. All in order to symbolically exercise their right to their own city, the right to freedom of Skopje. The fact is that every civil protest is in abundance of theatrical

character. These are the images of the city that cannot be seen daily, whose presence transforms the city into an urban scene. Each of these scenes is rich in scenic character. After a series of unsuccessful protests, which have almost always been violently stopped, there was a reduction of the space of rebellion. The last event that ended the whole situation was a banner placed in the center of the landscape arrangement at the town square, see figure 1, by Prva Arhi Brigada. LIBERTY 28<sup>th</sup> March 2009 was written on it, it was stuck in the ground and flowers were strewn below.



Figure 1. Funeral Scene Rebellion.

It was the scene that shows and demonstrates burial of Macedonia Square. Metaphorical artistic expression about the end of the existence of this place, and the beginning of 'architorture' that follows. Today, after three years, exactly on that place the most colossal work of Skopje 2014 stands, monument Voin na konj (trans. Warrior on his horse).

Based on this, we can summarize that the Scene of Rebellion was formed from the above-mentioned two types of spectacle (performance and demonstration) and as a matter of fact it was a unique method of raising voices of indignation showing their right to own a public space. Scenic design was a tool for achieving that goal, and thereby to look, to observe and to experience the spectacle presents series of pre-staged scenes!

## 1.2. Scene of Construction – ArchiTORTURE of a space

*"Remember current appearance of square of the capital. It will never be the same again."* With these words the actor Branko Gorcev announced the video presentation of Government project Skopje 2014 which was shown

in public for the first time. After that, without a doubt after its promotion its realization could have started. Macedonia Square has become a giant construction sight, i.e. Scene of Construction. In other words, Skopje has been getting a new face in the next few years. The face that was based on inspiration by the neoclassical architectural styles (Roman imperialism or neo-classicism). All these announced buildings and monuments were rough, dead copies of styles and forms already processed in museums, where the principle of ignoring the selection of architects and artists for the project was applied. Skopje 2014 is not a naive project, on the other hand works were in full swing. The policy of the state knowingly used the architecture and urban design as a medium to create images that never had really existed. Architecture does not forget that each regime relies on archiTORTURE - means of manipulation which has always been a tool for development of this particular area for a certain political ideology, will and power. Understood as such, it marks a new system of evaluation and fact that architecture has the power as well as the politics itself. That Scene of the Construction is an example of using architecture for demagogic political goals, which demonstrates the power of the state leadership.

Event which marked the beginning of arhiTORTURE of a space was the arrival of a large number of construction workers and a huge number of machines that have become part of everyday decor of Scene of Construction. The situation culminated when the central part of the square became fenced with huge panels, when the function of the square as a public space was definitely replaced with the function of the construction place. Inside they have been making the preparations for the construction of approximately 15m high pedestal where central monument of this project Voin na konj was supposed to be put, behind which stands the character and the work of Alexander the Great. It is a bloated work of art made in bronze, weighing about 35 tons, 13m tall, which installation will change the environment forever. The ambience, in which the space had been previously known, will never come to the fore of because of the dominance and theatricality of this monument. The whole scene was reminiscent of theater scenery, the backdrop of a Scene of Construction that only lacked a spectacle.

Dramatic action that caused the show was "Ispravlivanje Aleksandar Makedonskog ispred Skopjanima" ("Raising Alexander the Great in front of the people of Skopje.") Date of the 20th of June 2011 is significant because of the arrival of Voin na konj, then the mounting, and finally lifting and placing Alexander exactly in the heart of Skopje. The place was already surrounded by high barriers built around the pedestal, and a huge horse's head was

peering from inside. It was dominating above the panel and immediately attracted the attention of a random audience. Over time, the crowd spontaneously started to gather in large number and patiently waited to see the art object in its entirety. In theory there is a concept of art reception [8], which defines and explains this phenomenon in space. Actually, in this case it is the so-called reception in culture, which is characterized by the fact that, in addition to offering direct relationship of perception and experience of the art work and the spectator, historical impact of the art work in particular circumstances should be also considered. Thus, assembled Alexander the Macedonian at one point began to rise in the air, which activated the scene and the audience located all over in order to watch this performance. It is interesting fact that, apart from spectators who were accidentally found here, there were also observers who enriched this scene with props (elements and symbols of the Macedonian nation). After 45 minutes of hanging in the air, grandiose monument was set in its place. Viewers were applauding delighted with that scene, recording it with their electronic devices and in the very end they loudly chanted "Macedonia!"

This Scene of Construction is extremely important for Macedonia, because the spectacle got assigned a special value which is the identification of the audience with a scene. Faces of spectators painted in red-yellow color, waving symbols of ancient Macedonia (Sun with sixteen beams) was actually a scene effect generated by the spectacle of his appearance and dimensions see figure 2.



Figure 2. The placement of the statue Warrior on a Horse - the audience is identifying with the new cultural and historical landmark.

This scene transformed Macedonia Square from site of construction into a square with spectacular new features, the new cultural heritage. From that moment on, this image has become the main symbol of the state. It appears everywhere. The scene that cannot be forgotten. Guy Debord on the subject said: "*The disposal of an active subject in the spectacle is reflected in the fact that his gestures were not his own, they are gestures of someone else who shows them to him.*" [9]. In other words, everything that was once directly lived is now relocated in the performance. Spectacle "*Ispravljanje Voin na konj ispred Skopjanima*" has made residents of Skopje unaware about the changes in the state of their daily existence.

### **1.3. Scene of Glorification – A caricature of an European city**

Plošad Makedonija is the most important city square that has existed throughout the history of the city of Skopje as a special central urban area, gathering people and presenting a variety of events and activities. The historical course was suddenly interrupted by the beginning of "building" the project Skopje 2014. In mid-2010, the square is losing its distinctive identity, and since then the place is transformed into NONPLACE [10] until the eighth of September 2011 when the square was given back his position of public space. Intentionally or unintentionally, the chosen date was a national holiday, Day of Independence of Macedonia. The date marks the sovereignty, independence and autonomy of the state. For the first time in the history of the Macedonian people, on the occasion of 20 years of independence of Macedonia, a big spectacular celebration was organized. Parades, theatrical performances, musical performances, political speeches and opening of the magnificent fountain nearby the monument of Alexander the Great, are just part of the spectacle - Scene of Glorification. The scenario of this event, cleverly and skillfully used the scene design as a tool in order to present the new national representation of new features and artistic capacity of the state. That is, the Scene of Glorification used spectacle as a medium which theatrically, dramatically shows the ideology of the state leadership. Related to that attitude Guy Debord in his book says that "*The spectacle is not a collection of images, it is a social relationship mediated by images*" [11]. Thus, the scene is not only a magnificent glorification, dignified celebration, on the contrary it is the mask that conceals two essential functions of ideology, namely: (1) socio-scenic and (2) urban-scenic.

As to the first, it is all about the affirmation and unification of citizens regarding the project Skopje 2014. For the first time a spectacle that has brought not only economic but also cultural - artistic expansion held. This event could be experienced as a modern economic production, where it is comprehended that culture and art as a commodity need to be consumed and presented, "sold." *"The spectacle is capital accumulated to the point where it becomes an image"* [12], or the celebration of 8th September is just a scene image that can and should only be watched, experienced and affirmed, see figure3. That was the main outcome of this pre-staged grand celebrations, Macedonia has never seen before, thousands of "expensive" scenes that had significant dramaturgically narrative theatrical effect on the audience.



Figure 3. Through juxtaposition of edited scenes, the Glorification Scene is created where in a scenic and dramatic way the ideology of the Governmental peak is depicted.

The Government of the Republic of Macedonia was aware of these facts, and thereby treating the culture and art as a kind of national capital, primarily made a concentrated spectacle [13]. Characteristic for this spectacle is to impose a good picture that sums up everything that officially exists, an image that usually comes down to one person, the one that guarantees total unity to the system. Knowing this, the question is: what is actually a social-scenic part of the Scene of Glorification, totalitarianism, or cosmopolitan celebration?

In other roles, urban-scenic, the answer would be space management. This celebration enabled that this nonplace is staged in advance, directed to exist as a place. *"Following the logic of total domination, the state can and now also must, transpose the whole area into its own decor"* [14]. The

spectacle was just physical construct of the political vision of national leadership, that working through scene design sets the scene to speak the official language of the state.

Therefore, the Scene of Glorification is only an evidence that Skopje 2014 cannot exist freely, and as the project it reflects non-architecture, non-triumph, and non-place. That is why the grandiose spectacle is conceived, the one that clearly shows that in the future this nonplace will become a place for generating a brand new smug and self-recognizable country.

## **2. CONCLUSION – SKOPJE 2014 A BRAND NEW CITY, A BRAND NEW MACEDONIA**

At the beginning of this study, the hypothesis was set: How much scene design, actually used as a tool in these three scenes, contribute to the changing of ideology, changing the space or changing the event?

Summarizing this research, it can be concluded that phenomenon of Skopje 2014 influenced a certain area in the period since year of 2009 to 2012, generating three different events, forming three scenes. In the first (1) Scene of Rebellion, a protest is taken as an event that causes two types of open urban spectacle: performance and demonstrations. Then in (2) Scene of Building, especially large number of construction workers and machinery of the square could be defined as an event that causes a spectacle during a “show” of setting the monument of Alexander the Great. And finally by (3) Scene of Glorification which takes eighth September as the event, organizing great spectacle-manifestation of celebration. Each of them individually works as well as a spectacular series of directed scenes. Observed and experienced sights become a scene, and the scene is actually an expressive value of the spectacle. The process of creating and performing that scene picture is the scene design. Here, scene design has the power of transformation to influence changes of space and changes of events. From space of rebellion it made art in public space, from archiTORTURE it made the theater, it made place out of NONPLACE, and so on. But what about the ideology? Out of totalitarianism it made a cosmopolitan celebration.

## REFERENCES

[1] Ideology – in a political and cultural sense implies relatively connected and defined set of ideas, symbolic representations, values, beliefs and forms of thought, behavior, expression, representation and actions shared by the members of social groups and individuals. (M. Šuvaković: *Pojmovnik moderne i postmoderne likovne umetnosti i teorije posle 1950*, Beograd-Novı Sad 1999, page 123.)

[2] Ideology of art is relatively complete system of aesthetic, artistic, market and political ideas, values and beliefs, the method of creating and presenting works in institutions of culture and the art world. (M. Šuvaković: *Pojmovnik moderne i postmoderne likovne umetnosti i teorije posle 1950*, Beograd-Novı Sad 1999, page 123.)

[3] The event is the basic constituent unit of every spectacle. (Miroslav L. Krstanović: *Spektakli XX veka, Muzika i Moć*, Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti, Etnografski institut, Beograd 2010, page 53). In other words the author gives a definition that the spectacle is a manufactured event in a series of staged images.

[4] Term spectacle can be noted as: (1) a large, lavish show with a lot of effects, appealing to a wide audience, (2) interesting, and sensational scenery. (Ivan Klajn, Milan Šipka: *Veliki rečnik stranih reči i izraza*, Prometej, Novi Sad, 2007, p. 1161). In the purpose of the research in this paper, concept of a spectacle is presented as a performance. The show, which transforms the city into an urban scene allocating public space of the city, and then it is perceived and experienced by a number of different images that make up a whole, with each individual sight as a scene. Scene as observed and experienced object in this study is to be interpreted as expressive value of the spectacle.

[5] Prva Arhi Brigada, was promoted in the public through a Manifesto titled “*Why have architecture students become activists*” consisted of five points under the parole Do not Rape Skopje (<http://pab.blog.mk/>)

[6] Towards Milena Dragičević Šešić, in relation to the artistic and political beliefs of the author and the contractor, or the organiser of events (referring to situations that have spectacular-theatrical character), a typology of civil spectacles in the open has been established. These are consisted of (1) celebrations and events, (2) demonstrations, (3) street addresses, (4) performances, (5) happenings etc. (Milena D. Šešić: *Javna i kulturna politika, socio – kulturološki aspekti*, Magna Agenda, Beograd 2002, page 177.)

[7][http://www.youtube.com/user/plostadsloboda?feature=results\\_main](http://www.youtube.com/user/plostadsloboda?feature=results_main)

[8] Reception is the process of perceiving the situation, and the experience of reading a work of art. Under a work of art the author Miško Šuvaković implies source of visual sensation and process information that observer receives and processes the reception as a kind of receiver. (M. Šuvaković: *Pojmovnik moderne i postmoderne likovne umetnosti i teorije posle 1950*, Beograd-Novı Sad, 1999, page 290 – 292.)

[9] Gi Debor (Guy Debord): *Društvo spektakla*, Blok 45, Beograd, 2003, page 13.

[10] "If a place can be defined as an identity, relational and historical, then a space which cannot be defined either as the identity or as relational, or be as historically NONPLACES" - Augé, Marc: *"Non-Places: Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity"*, Verso, 1995, page 16.

[11] Debor, Gi., *Društvo spektakla*, Blok 45, Beograd, 2003, page 8.

[12] Debor, Gi., *Društvo spektakla*, Blok 45, Beograd, 2003, page 14.

[13] Guy Debor in his book *Society of the Spectacle* (1967), in the chapter entitled *the illusion of unity and division*, defines two forms of spectacle, namely: concentrated and diffuse. According to the author, the concentrated spectacle can be used as a technique to strengthen the government and is most often applied in less developed countries, where the production of goods in the form of concentric or so-called dictatorship of the bureaucratic economy. Diffuse, or as the author says, diffuse spectacle is linked to the abundance of goods, conditions for the stable development of modern capitalism. Here every individual goods promote the overall size of the production of goods, and the spectacle is its luxurious, advertising catalogue.

[14] Gi Debor, *Društvo spektakla*, Blok 45, Beograd, 2003, page 55.

# INTERACTIVE DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ON SCENE – CONSEQUENCES AND PERSPECTIVES ON AESTHETICS OF PERFORMATIVE SPACES

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**Abstract:** Since the very beginning of electronical assisted performances, like OPEN SCORE (1966) by Robert Rauschenberg, we may identify a very close relationship between digital technology and the aesthetics of the resulting artistic work. More than a simple improvement of technical aspects, e.g. image sharpness, sound quality, interaction with those images and sounds, digital technology impacts strongly on the conceptual interferences between technological and aesthetical structures such as the possible conception of the work itself and the scene design. New possible relations and correlations between the sound, the image, the performer and the spectator open new possibilities to consider time and space in artistic expression, and lead to a new aesthetic grammar, which we propose to define by the notion **digital interactive aesthetics**.

Even if interactive digital technology is widely used in music, theatre, opera and visual arts, we observe approaches and experiments of new interactive aesthetics including the spectator mostly on the crossborder of installative art and performative works, often proposing a hybrid of both. We try to demonstrate that this new, and still fragile, aesthetics is possible to understand in the continuity of performative and participative art.

Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, participation and interactivity in arts and performance arts have been a big concern for artists. We can outline a strong conceptual continuity with artists' critics of new media, and specially the critics of artworks in the context of their relation(s) to the spectator.

Using historical and actual examples of performances and installations using interactive digital technology, we investigate different forms of relations between performativity, time, space and the spectator in the context of contemporary digital interactive aesthetics.

**Keywords:** Interactivity; aesthetics; performance; digital arts; HMI

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Interfacing the human body as a user of digital technology increasingly spreads into every aspect of life, at least in its commercialized versions such as in the entertainment industry, in the telecommunication, in the research on intelligent home or medical devices. How does this impact the field of arts, and how does this influence the reception/perception of those artworks?

As there are many analytic angles possible [a], we propose here to conceptualize our analysis from the aesthetical aspects of the artistic interface design based on real-time digital signal processing. Consequently, we'll treat technical or sociopolitical aspects only if necessary to understand those aesthetic aspects, although they are not completely to separate from each other.

We aim to demonstrate that this new, and still fragile, aesthetics is possible to understand in the continuity of aesthetic preoccupations of performative and participative arts. Furthermore, we hope to contribute to the conceptualization of this aesthetic grammar, which we propose to define by the introduction of the notion ***digital interactive aesthetics***.

## 2. AESTHETIC ASPECTS OF INTERACTIVITY

Focusing on aesthetic aspects of interactive technologies in the context of arts, we identify two main theoretical approaches in the discourse about media and interactive media:

Firstly, the position suggesting that art is continuously « *in search of technology* », as Gregory Whitehead [1] was stating it in opposition to his vision about radio considered as « *succeeding only in devouring itself* ». By extending his thought about sound and radio art to arts in general, could we assume the interfering process between arts and the underlying use of technical processes and devices as a *in search of technology*-process in which every new technique substitutes and/or *devours* the preceeding one?

As if, using the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a starting point, we would trace continuity from industrialized oil painting techniques, which allowed the impressionists to paint outdoor, towards photographic techniques, which radically changed artists' practices, to the later developements from electrical,

e.g. Duchamps/Tingely, over electronical, e.g. the emergence of synthesizer in music, to digital devices used in arts, e.g. the emergence of the computer.

Secondly, to consider interactivity as a « *possibility to create a virtual space of imagery wherein a three-dimensional structure of relationships between these images can be defined. This structure then constitutes the form of an interactive space in which the viewer can move about.* », as Jeffrey Shaw [2] wrote about his own interactive works. A conception, where sounds and visuals in interactive dispositions, including generative creative processes, were conceived as content that we could actualize, reactivate or where we can navigate in.

In our sense, these two conceptual axes are emerging from two different aspects of digital interactivity: on the one hand from the applied digital technique, and, on the other hand from the way we can operate with this technique, and in the case of generative processes, how we can let this technique operate. So we could state that the matter of the reciprocal relation between technique and aesthetic in digital interactive works emerges by questioning: what makes the digital interactivity work? Much more than a question on technical aspects of interactivity, it does open towards a much wider conception than just moving, and/or moving within, an interactive space.

## **2.1. Interactivity: what and who moves whom and what?**

The design of interactive *dispositifs* like sound and visual installations, musical instruments and interactive settings on scene is nowadays based on real-time digital signal processing. What is the role of the interfaced human body on the intersection of this collected and/or generated data?

As sound, visual or body centered performances have different approaches to conceive form as well as different concepts of re/presentation, are there correspondances between these art forms, and may we understand the body here as a *recontextualizer*, like a mediator between the different artistic contexts? The body of the performer, and, in case of its inclusion, the body of the public as *spect-acteurs* [b], *recontextualizing* the given visual, sound or physiological i.a. on symbolic, epistemic, aesthetic registers?

To reduce the body to a mere user agent in a relational data structure would reduce finally, as we assume, the human *aisthesis*, the human perception and the human sensation in the context of arts. To introduce the concept of interactive and relational experience in digital interactive aesthetics

a step further, we will analyze shortly in art history some aspects of the relation(s) between the artist, the spectator and the artwork.

#### 2.1.1. Semantic reference frame of experience

In the 1960s, in the so called artists movement “Wiener Aktionismus” (Viennese Actionism), Austrian artists [3] expanded the visual arts as well as the emerging media arts to body centered performance, an artistic practice implying a wide variety of experiences including psychological, sociological, political, gender and media aspects.

In a gender critic of media concepts and contexts Valy Export defines her performative work *TAPP UND TASTKINO* (Touch-cinema, 1968) as the first film « *of and with and about a woman* » [4]. In the public space, Export fixed a box on her upper body, which front, covered by a curtain, exposed her naked breast to the spectator, nothing to manipulate than the exposed breast of the artist. But, on the spectators' side, all the systems of signs regarding the social and political condition of women in all aspects of society are questioned on the base of *this* touch. Without any technique applied, we see here how participation operates already as a semantic reference frame of experience.

How does this semantic reference frame of experience work on stage, when electronic technics come in? We shall outline constitutive aspects of this issue by considering the example of the work *OPEN SCORE* (1966) by Robert Rauschenberg [5].

For the performance *OPEN SCORE*, Robert Rauschenberg experimented in 1966 different state-of-the-art technologies, in an armory specially adapted for the *9 evenings*. We will only mention here some of the elements necessary to point out our reflexion on the integration of the spectator.

A tennis court was installed, an audience of about 500 people seated around it. Two small groups of the audience were placed on each side of the tennis net. The performance started with a tennis game between two performers, a man (Frank Stella) and a woman (Mimi Kanarek). Their tennis rackets, equipped with a contact micro and a tiny FM-transmitter integrated in the handles, were emitting by wireless radio transmission the vibrations of the racket cords, a bong-like sound. Each *bong* corresponded to a switch off of one of the 48 lights illuminating the tennis court, till the complete darkness, performers making themselves visually vanish [c].

In the second part, in this complete darkness, the audience was invited to enter the court and to execute 10 gestures from a list provided to them by Rauschenberg, such as *move close together, man wave with his jacket, move apart, hug somebody, sing one of the given songs etc.* Infra-red cameras captured their actions, transmitted on three screens in front overhead of the audience. By moving around the tennis court, they felt where they were, but could not see exactly where they were, on the end all people were standing nearby each other. The people could not see each other directly, only feeling each other, seeing themselves only on the projection screens.

The audience is here an integrated part of the piece on at least two levels: part of the cast, and as such indispensable to the specific aesthetics and structure of this performance, and by their actions part of the active and passive part of the *aisthesis*. Observation and perception are held separately here, but conjoined disposed in presence, observation and perception *mediated* by the technical couple infra-red camera + projection. The spectator *performs* within a given aesthetical structure, and in the same time perceives the *aisthesis* of his performance, being able to observe and perceive, or selects only one of the two statuses. In Rauschenberg's *OPEN SCORE* we see aesthetic elements and conceptions at work, bringing together contemporary art and state of the art electronic technology of his time, and pioneers by this conceptual structures of - future - digital interactivity.

#### 2.1.2. Spectator and experience

While in the *TAPP UND TASTKINO* the experience is lead on the individual basis, in *OPEN SCORE* the experience is individual *and* collective. In Valie Export's case of individual setting in a public space, we observe one more aspect of inclusion of the spectator: the passive observer of an active participation, which could be / become active participation, by acceding to the place of participation. We understand this place as an oscillatory point of access, where the status may change from active to passive or *in between*. Consequently, interactivity is not reducible to navigation through and with data, but it is an operating system of conditions and statuses in the semantic reference frame of experience.

And this is where interactivity as a system of *aisthesis* reveals to be poetical *and* political, in losing its innocence. Consequently the spectator loses equally its innocence by assignment and discernment. We consider this

loss as processes of active, passive as well as *in between* choices of various degrees of freedom.

The human body and the associated body theories are determinant in the conception of such aesthetics, in a variety of ways, such as a link, as a surface, as an object, as an subject and so on. There are some structural elements underlying his roles. We will focus next on those underlying structures in regard of the body in physical interaction.

## **2.2. The interfaced body**

In actual projects taking recourse to computer assisted artworks and scenery, motion tracking, generative digital processing like image and sound synthesis, sound and visual spatialization in real or virtually augmented space are major preoccupations in technical/scientific as well as in artistic research [6] and in the collaborative field of art and science. We conceive the body, as interfaced body, in the center of those preoccupations.

## **2.3. Conceptual modalities for physical interaction**

The artistic interface design based on real-time digital signal processing is considering data on different levels and to different extents, as well as foresees interacting with those data on different levels and to different extents. As we are in this paper treating the technical aspects only in the background, we shall discern next the main conceptual modalities of interaction.

The term interaction in computer science was borrowed from the social science in the sixties, referring to the capacity of the computer to *react* to the user. In social science, the term defined a reciprocal relation between the actions [7]. This terminological borrowing reflects in our sense most of the metaphors used in human machine relationships, like the machine as an extension of the human body, man machine hybrid forms till the transhuman, or the human body becoming obsolete through the machine. These metaphors are echoing between arts and science, e.g. in the work of the artist Stelarc. Concerning digital interactive aesthetics, we would like to emphasize here on structural relations, and identify two major types of relations: the external and the internal relations. The external relations define the status of the spectator within the artwork, the status of the artist within the artwork, and the status of the artwork itself. The internal relations define the status of digital

processes operating, e.g. generative sound. When a spectator interacts via a tangible interface, or is captured by a light sensor starting a computational process with his movements, and is as a result, for example, visualized on screen, focalizing on this action-result vectorial coupling misses the spectator's experience as such.

As a spectator, experiencing *during* (as *during in presence*) this action-result connotation opens to the *aisthesis* involved. It is at this precise moment, a *TimeSpace*-based moment, that dramaturgical, scenographical, choreographical elements come in, which determines the relations and levels of interaction mentioned earlier. Diversity, complexity, degrees of freedom, participative structures till the co-creation through the spectator, linear or hypertextual narratives, net-work and non-figural structures, all these different artistic practices and strategies are held by the internal and external relations build between the spectator, the artist and the artwork. Then digital interactive aesthetics go beyond automatisisation, regulation and calculation as its heritage, beyond transmitting the invisible and visible between inscription and memory, constituting the data-body. At this precise *TimeSpace*-based moment latent power becomes imminent, alike the « *latent power of theatre* » as described by Peter Brooks [8]. We may extend this to performative digital interactive artworks and to the latent power of digital interactive aesthetics.

#### **2.4. Presence and its importance in digital interactivity**

Performance, as an artistic practice, is peculiar with regards to its use of time and space due to its constitutive ephemeral form. The *present* time of its duration, is also – maybe mainly – the time/the duration of a relation between the performer and the spectator, considered as a time/a duration of an action, of an invitation to act, of an invitation to an experience.

In this present time, considered as a time of experiencing, the spectator is not a mere observer, but an involved observer. This involvement that can be graduated in intensity relies on the attention, an attention that involves the performer as much as the spectator. The attention is in the present while an intention can arise also from the past or/and be directed towards the future. The performance is inscribed in the « *duration at present* » (in differentiation to the *duration of the present*, as well as to symbolic time structures that may be used throughout a performance). It is an action, a process inscribing its duration in the time of the present, which does not get replaced by another time (past or future) in favor of narrative purposes.

This time of presence is intrinsically linked to the space of the performance, (meaning the performing space here). A performing space that is not restricted only to the juxtaposition of two spaces: the *performance space* confined as *stage* reserved to the artwork on the one side and the *auditorium* space confined exclusively to the public on the other side.

The space of performance is a shared space. The performers' space and the spectators' space intertwine and interfere with each other, leading to a performative time-space weaved up by the will of the artist, his provocation, his incentives, opened to share experience.

This outlined present time does not coincide with the real-time as a specific notion of digital interactive works. On the aesthetics levels real-time does not substitute to present time, nor is it indispensable for experiencing present time. Real-time is one of the constitutive elements of digital interactivity for his intern structures, and may be, but not imperatively, an aesthetical element.

### **3. EXPERIMENTS ON DIGITAL INTERACTIVE AESTHETICS**

In our artistic research work, we investigate different forms of relations between performativity, time, space and the spectator in the context of contemporary *digital interactive aesthetic*.

We will take our project transcordanse [9] as an example. The aim of this project is to create an interactive time-space in dialogue with the public. A choreographic, sound and visual environment designed both as an interactive performative installation and as a choreographic environment for a performance. The use of strings as interfaces allows structuring the performance space like an open scenic space. An interface like a sculptural object, offering to the user, to the public as user as well as to the performers as users, the choice to interact through the strings made interactive by sensors. Moving the strings generate various interactions like the recording of movements, the processing and the diffusion of digital sounds and images in real-time. Structures of different size and numbers of strings have been explored.

The priority was to research how the interactive environment could be structured starting from the body and its movements, and how the interactivity generated from this device would allow the construction and the perception of

sounds and images. Furthermore to introduce the experience of sound and images linked to movement. More than an encounter with the resemblance of oneself, the body's movement finds its interferences and its reflections multiplied and fragmented in the movements of the images and the movements of the sounds, introducing a perceptible presence of the body, through and with the different media used, including the silence and the emptiness like the absence of the active body.

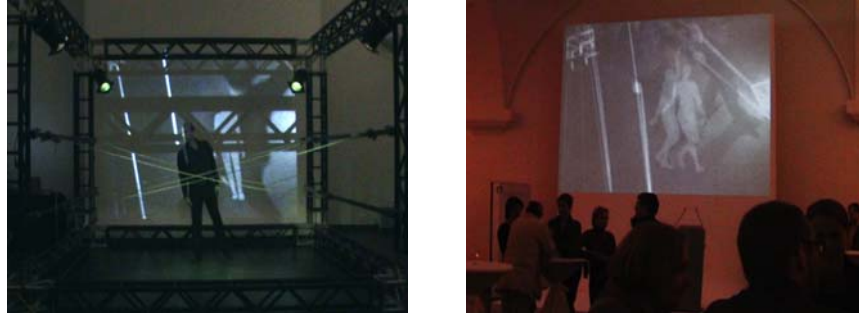


Figure 1. transcordanse #1, performative installation 2006; Museums Quartier Vienna (A)(a) view of cords structure (b) view of second projection`

In this choreography of bodies and data, structures of relationships will be established between the body and its visual and sound environment. The spectator shares his interactions with other spectators, he may be watched meanwhile or he may stay on the outside, but he remains part of the environment that includes the choice of non-action as a form of implication. Transitory trajectories, choreographic relations between real bodies and virtual *data* bodies as a multilinear experience, an open socio-choreography.

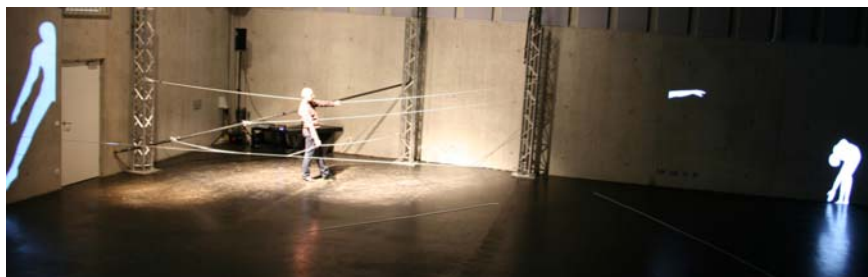


Figure 2. transcordanse #2, performance and performative installation 2010; Kabelwerk, (A)

#### 4. QUESTION THE SCENE IN THE FRAME OF DIGITAL INTERACTIVITY

Contemporary artists' practices in the presently discussed field, but not only, are blurring the lines between established categories such as installation, performance, visual art, theatre, dance, opera, music production and so on, going beyond usual settings in black box, white cube, public space or intermediate strata. To question digital interactive artworks, and consequently digital interactive scenery emphasizing on examples on the crossborder between installative art and performative works, as well as hybrids of both, leads us to reconsider the unstable, fragile character of digital interactive aesthetics in the continuity of aesthetic preoccupations of performative and participative arts since, at least, the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, as demonstrated here.

Stage productions are under the pressure of various constraints. One of the major constraints in regard of digital interactive aesthetic concerns the conventional stage/Fourth Wall dispositions what allow only little adjustments of the public focus point. The design of open space audience settings like described in the examples, with flexible spaces as principle, is a big matter since the emergence of experimental theatre and performative art, it is reappearing strongly regarding digital interactive aesthetics. Some productions try to circumvent this by using only the stage as a shared space for performers and public, using specific screen settings, and eventually by doing so, create virtual or augmented spaces, or by performing in adapted venues like black boxes or white cubes, or in public spaces.

To deal with this specific space/stage circumstances, to create specific open, versatile and transmittant space settings as well as relevant time settings is an integral part of the constitutive principles and elements of digital interactive aesthetic. That means going further then the appropriation and application of new technical procedures in conventional venues, it means to foster reciprocal influences between technical and aesthetical procedures.

This continuity of aesthetical experimentation, including non-linear and non-figural aesthetics, differs in our sense from traditional forms of **representation**, and underlines the inclusion of the double analysis in the fields of art and science, as well as in the fields of consistently renewed non-conventional artistic practices. The dramaturgical conventions of the *Fourth Wall* are called into question again, driven by interdisciplinary approaches linked to the digital, in the interwoven relationships between arts, sciences, individuals and society.

## 5. CONCLUSION

We aimed to point out the historical context in which interactivity inscribes itself in arts, and from another angle of analysis, to underline the historical context in which interactive arts inscribe themselves in artistic practices, and in consequence interactive arts inscribe themselves in the aesthetic discourse.

Beyond current disambiguities of the *reconstruction* of reality as augmented reality, virtuality of any kind, and the echoing alteration of our definition of reality, echoing also in the interstice between art and life, as well as resonating in the tension between the private and public sphere, digital interactive aesthetics is inscribed in a *time-space discourse* by those artistic practices, and furthermore, in the continuity of critical media studies, in a political discourse.

To conclude, we want to emphasize the unstable statuses between the artist, the artwork and the spectator: the artist is no longer the exclusive author of the artwork, the artwork is not freezed in its form, nor is the spectator.

## NOTES

[a] Many worthfull approaches cannot be treated here because beyond the scope of this paper, but stay open for our current and future research.

[b] *spect-acteur*. Neologism proposed by Jean-Louis Weissberg, by contracting the terms spectator and actor in french language: *spectateur*, *acteur*.

[c] Was finally executed manually due the impossibility to realise it technically as foreseen by electrical impulse.

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[6] see i.a.: Sommerer, Christa and Mignonneau, Laurent (Eds.). *Interactive Art Research*, SpringerWienNewYork, 2009

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[9] *transcordanse* is a series of interactive installations and choreographic environments, carried out since 2005 by Helmuth Reiter, [www.extendedmovement.cc](http://www.extendedmovement.cc)

# TYOLOGIES OF SCENIC SPACES IN NOVI SAD

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**Abstract:** In contemporary towns there are more open spaces which are used for different happenings, scenic performances, organised or spontaneous gatherings of inhabitants during the year. Analysing these public open spaces in Novi Sad, we chose different typologies mostly because of the varieties of different manifestations which are applied to them. This paper has to show how the organisation and order of these spaces, as well as their urban position in the town can make an influence on type of happenings, number and target groups of actors.

Analysis of surrounding buildings, permanent or contemporary structures have to show their importance and contributions to the quality of manifestation which are organised on these open public spaces. The level of design, scale, shape and urban furniture are also important for spontaneous and particularly organised happenings on the same open public spaces. Landscape design, flexibility and accessibility of space are also critical elements which will be analysed in this paper. All these mentioned elements and facts are influencing the quality and variety of scenic manifestations and performances in Novi Sad.

**Keywords:** scenic space; performance; open space; manifestation

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Public spaces in contemporary cities bring their citizens much more than purely functional spaces created between the built environments. Depending on the position of the urban pattern, shape, size, equipment and buildings that surround them, the public spaces are places of numerous events, festivals, and other performances, spontaneous or organized gatherings. Formed under the influence of social, economic, political and other forces, the public spaces of the city determine its physical and psychological identity; have numerous social and symbolic value and irreplaceable functions of urban space within the needs and context of specific time.

People's needs for socialization, as one of the main characteristics of human society, are manifested precisely in public urban spaces. The populations of the early time of development of human civilization gathered at certain places in settlements for the different ceremonies. Numerous spontaneous or organized events everyday attract people to gather in different types of spaces and participate in theatrical events. Urban solutions of public spaces and architecture of surrounding buildings are unavoidable scenery for such events.

## **2. PUBLIC SPACES IN TOWN – SCENOGRAPHY OF EVENTS**

The phenomenon of gathering in public spaces of the cities has been present since the beginning of civilization. It covers many aspects of the existence of a society (economic, political, social, climatic, cultural, demographic, etc.), which directly influence the content and articulation of public space in cities as well as on their characteristics and importance in terms of meetings.

Public spaces in the city play a vital role in urban units. A number of features they have, and the "services" they provide to their customers, are directly impacting the achievement of quality of life. By examining three components: identity, structure and importance of public space, we can get a clear picture of the current state in the city. The role of these quarters does not remain only in the establishment of environmental quality, but also to establish the necessary psycho-social relations in society. As Thompson says the public spaces in cities are "places that celebrate cultural diversity, the natural processes involved in the preservation of memories." [1] That

difference made by a number of events that take place in public spaces affect the image processing and enrichment of life and its inhabitants.

How much space will be attractive to a user's depends on a number of urban, architectural, sanitary and technical, landscape surfaces, applications and content, layout of buildings, streets, design of urban blocks and all surrounding space. "Public space is determined by the purpose, use, and maintenance, and is thus a paradigm of cultures which manifests itself and reproduces it. Public space is the stage of philosophy and way of life in a certain space-time coordinates. Therefore, dealing with public space assumes its first identification and the identification of its physical characteristics, socio-psychological and symbolic level ... "[2] Undoubted is the fact that these features are options that directly affect the attractiveness of public spaces, as well as their function in the context of different course of performances. Different types of public spaces as scenic spaces cause a content which can be articulating in them.

Assuming that the public space in the contemporary city is "a scene in the arena of urban life: the space of anarchy, conflict and codes they have for their concrete consequences," [3] it is apparent that the indisputable existence of interactions between events in a given place and its quality, impact on development of urban areas and to the lives of city residents.

### **3. CITY PUBLIC SPACE AS A STAGE**

In the domain of urban spectacle, indoor and outdoor urban spaces are places where growth and development of the game, a ceremony, an event and every form of entertainment that calls for interaction. It was founded in the thirteenth century (lat. Spectaculum) "concept combines spectacle and connects a wide range of seemingly unknown phenomena"[4] which include parameters of art, drama, literature, acting, art, as well as architecture and urbanism as unbreakable spatial and sensory components.

For example, in Novi Sad, whose public events have become part of its identity, it is obvious that the centre of the city for residents was "one and unique concept that has been primarily associated with its institutional and functional architecture course content and monumental buildings of various purposes." For this reason, the connection between the events, and the course of its successful space frame, are usually related to the old town of Novi Sad and the squares and streets as spaces in their performance. Each of these acts requires the presence of the audience, which is an integral part

of the spectacle, its static or dynamic parameter, but in any case, an essential part of the overall picture.

Areas in the centre of the city, which were analysed in this study, depending on their size, space, defining, architectural concept and possible capacity of people that can stay on it at the same time, are divided into two main parts:

- Scenic areas;
- Open, insufficiently defined physical areas.

### **3.1. Scenic areas**

City as the system is complex and consists of indoor and outdoor spaces that are unique entities, interconnected and authentic. Thus, the change in rhythm, continuation and contrast, overlapping and braking down, the urban scenes become alive and in motion. Facilities where environment becomes dominant with the urban context stage for performances and outdoor events, it stands out as a scenic area. Chamber experience for visitors, is caused due to a clear and defined spatial boundaries and awareness of physical, conditional enclosed complex, where the event is taking place. Human size of scenic areas is the basic characteristic of space, even more accentuated because of the possibility of perceptual and psychological overview.

An important factor in these places represents ambient structures forming the mentioned boundary space, and the "expressiveness of architecture with the ability to convey the message"[5], call to interact with its form, materialization, colours, style, concept and detail. In this way, a series of facades is not only the final form of objects in a row, but interesting and authentic setting for the spectacle that is going on inside the membrane.

For example, Zmaj Jovina Street, show the relationship of space and scenic character of the events that are in it for years alternating. Traditionally celebrated character and work of poet Jovan Jovanovic Zmaj is around his statue as symbolic and focal point on the end/beginning of streets. On the beginning of every summer numerous children with parents visit "Zmajeve dečje igre" an event that is continuously maintained throughout 55 years. Pedagogical and educational characters of this events foster social, artistic and ideological views and link them to an area that is well-known to children from everyday life, leading to a feeling of safety and environmental attractiveness.

Days of honey, wine, baked goods, various festivals and exhibitions also chose a place for their space installations the linear character of Zmaj Jovina Street. So specific space between maintenance events and festivals, providing a completely different concept from that of classical theatre which has a need to establish the main, central location i.e. stage. Festivals and Exhibitions require constant fluidity and ease movements in space so that all the booths, aedicule and display settings can perceive and explore. Perceiving an architectural context, one will find that "the role of objects in the streets can be defined as static, while the place and time frame of movement educates its dynamic process." [6]

Infant - International Festival, which takes place for twenty years, for his spectacles, exhibitions, presentations and performances in the open space elected a chamber space of Catholic churchyard. Architecture and urban context with a good disposition approach to a square, outstanding historical and environmental context facades, pedestrian urban character and reduced equipment is a true example of the organized city's theatre scene. Set design "stage" is creating by a continuous facade of the Palace of the Vatican on the northeast side, residential and office building facades on the southwest side and the dominant religious building on the southeast. Mary Church, aesthetically, symbolically and with specific ambiance, presents a place to which everything is oriented, because of it spatial and scenic significances. For this reason, a stage and projection screen are usually positioned next to her. Approximately proper rectangular square, near the Cultural Centre of Novi Sad and the spirit of a place which all visitors of this space feel, define the space Catholic churchyard as a clear example of scenic, chamber space.



Figure 1. (a) Promotion of wine on the Liberty Square; (b) Cinema City at the Catholic churchyard; (c) Infant - International Festival on the Liberty Square.

### **3.2. Open, insufficiently defined physical areas**

City events are public meetings aimed to gather a large number of participants. The space that is clearly defined and physically determined, regarding architectural concept, is usually inconvenient because it cannot meet the needs that some spectacles require. Society in XXI century increasingly strives to a public assembly for expression of opinions and sending messages through the media and the public eye. In this context, the goal of gathering is unbreakable tied to the place where the spectacle is organized as well as to physical qualities of the selected area.

Open and under-defined physical areas primarily involve a largest square in Novi Sad, Liberty Square, in the centre of the city, with spaces in the immediate vicinity. Wide streets of King Alexander and Modena, providing the pedestrian access to the square, are giving visitors a sense of vast space. In a perception of a dimension of the Square it looks much larger. The very need for space to accommodate a large amount of people primarily requires good organization, ability to easily come and leave out from that place, the existence of a central place for stage or the ability to set up multiple secondary stages. Thus it is possible to awaken the interest of observers and passers-by and keeps their attention longer, thereby causing their interactive role in the show.

Mass events that bring together a large number of visitors, link people with different manners, social and political beliefs, basic needs, and therefore such a meeting is closely related to the spatial organization of urban space and its ability to adapt to their needs during events. The architectural concept in this case consists of the atmosphere which is established by users, and the adequate management can influence the organizational culture that develops in these public places.

Liberty Square becomes a traditional place for New Year's celebration and concerts, political gatherings and rallies, promotions of books, wine and bread. In this case, its advantage lies in its dimensions, position and importance of land use, its accessibility irreducible street furniture, important and representative buildings that form its physical frame, situated in an enviable distance. As in open space belonging to this typology, it is not important the human size as it is expressed in scenic areas, the public space in the case of organised gathering often works separately in relation to the buildings and contents in them.

For example, the Liberty Square and events that take place on it exists in the collective memory of its inhabitants and visitors. Events which have been organised for a years, create an identity of places not just of the city itself but of local spirit and social culture.



Figure 2. Festivals and exhibitions on the Zmaj Jovina Street (a) Days of honey; (b) Street Artist Festival; (b) "Zmajeve dečje igre".

#### 4. CONCLUSION

If the spectacle is seen as a project that aims to "bring different meanings and personal messages in public space"[7] one can come to the conclusion that it is a complex system of factors that causes a reaction in the viewer. The impact that space has on performing the event, the conditions set design, atmosphere and overall experience is very dominant when it comes to outdoor installations.

For example, the central city area, looking only the most representative and most visited areas where events in Novi Sad are taking place, shows the difference between the ambient space in which the spectacle are organized. Most scenic areas are independent, friendly, enclosed spaces and as such they are not suitable for all theatre events. On the other hand, large open spaces, squares and terraces, allow mass gatherings for a wide range of events. The modern city should foster both typologies, linking these spaces in the urban fabric as a string room creating a series of interconnected stages in the city theatre.

Novi Sad can proudly boast with events that have already been the identity of the settlement, but there are a great number of new events required for successful performance defined both typology areas. One such festival is a street musician performance, which is happening on the entire city, and the most attractive and most popular stages were installed at Liberty Square and in Zmaj Jovina Street. As a transitional type, this event just proves that it is necessary to design and nurture free spaces that have the ability to be connect and transformed toward those needs.

Displayed analytical study was aimed to the example of the central city core appears interdependent relationship of outdoor spectacles and space in which it occurs, analogous to the defined positions, the analysis will be extended to other urban areas. In this analysis it is necessary to include a spacious area in front Spens, a plateau in the Strand beach, parks in Novi Sad and the other city squares. "Architecture is not used to looking at, but to be in it or be part of it," in such a way each area can be considered as a set design in which the daily movement is a form of spectacle.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# THE SANDBOX: USE OF REAL AND VIRTUAL PERFORMING SPACES IN SCENE DESIGN

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**Abstract:** How does a scenic designer perform when tasked with presenting a written play? The scenic designer is not a trained actor, but has the ability to tell a story visually. This paper examines the use of virtual spaces in live performance as scene design and the role of the scenic designer as visual maker and performer.

*The Sandbox*, by Edward Albee, was a scene design performance project co-created and performed by P. Marshall, P. Schmitt, MG. Wilkki, R. Schuepbach, and C. Green.

In this project, still photography was captured and arranged together to create an automated backdrop for the performance. Scenic elements from the photographs were selected and arranged for the performance. Throughout the performance, the scenic designer/performers interacted with the backdrop, each other and the scenic elements.

The performance was given at Third Street, a local bar close to the campus of Wayne State University, Detroit Michigan (December 2011) and presented as an art installation in the lobby of the Hilberry Theatre, Detroit Michigan (May 2012).

**Keywords:** Virtual space; live performance; performing arts; performance installation; art installation

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

"I am not good with memorizing lines," I said to my fellow creators as we set out on this project. It was not until later that I realized that I am also not an actor but a designer. How shall I tell this story? The next day I shared this insight with my collaborators as we set out to create a presentation of Edward Albee's play, *The Sandbox*. Our challenge was to tell the story as designers rather than traditional actors. The result of this collaboration was the creation of both real and virtual spaces to tell the story.

This paper examines the use of virtual spaces in live performance as scene design and the role of the scenic designer as visual maker and performer – by documenting and discussing a creative project titled – *The Sandbox*. Firstly, I will identify the meaning and use of virtual and real spaces as established for this project. Secondly, I will describe the two exhibitions in which the project was presented; a performance installation and an art installation. Lastly, in order to provide context, I will discuss the use of virtual spaces in live performance, and draw conclusions about the outcome of this project.

## **2. THE SANDBOX PROJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF REAL AND VIRTUAL SPACES**

The virtual space was created by a projected series of still photographs (Figure 1) which were captured by the designers and later arranged and manipulated using iMovie. The real space consisted of a designated area that included select properties and costumes that were used in the making of the virtual space images, which were arranged and interacted with by the designer/performers during the exhibitions. Both the virtual and real spaces created for these exhibitions provided visual reference, a story telling method, location, and character.

### **2.1. Two Formats: Performance Installation and Art Installation**

The Sandbox was presented in two formats, first as a performance installation and then an art installation piece. Edward Albee's play, *The Sandbox* was the foundation and central story in the creation of this project

and its two presentations, in which meaning was projected onto virtual space, costumes, and properties as well as the actions of 'performers.'

#### 2.1.1.1. ***The Sandbox*: a performance installation**

Here is the setup of *The Sandbox*: A Performance Installation presented at Third Street Bar in Detroit, December 2011. The real space consisted of the following: at one end of the bar, the virtual space was projected onto a large projection screen that hung on the wall. In front of the screen, on the floor, there was a light brown cloth that had two wooden chairs set up at the end of it. Between them was a large woven basket. On the basket, there was a silver coffee carafe and cup. The Angel of Death, dressed in a white sports coat and swim trunks had red lipstick on stood to the left of the screen as the Grandmother walked onto the brown cloth and laid down with her back towards the wooden chairs. A woman and a man walked into view and sat on the chairs. The man carried a cigar and a martini glass. A gauze-like scarf covered the woman's face; she was dressed in black and had red lips. When they sat down on the chairs the film began and we entered the virtual space of *The Sandbox*. (Figure 2.a.)

The virtual space, on the screen in this presentation included five designer/performers that were the same 'performers' of both the virtual and real spaces and were integral components of the presentations visual aesthetic. Throughout the performance the designer/performers of the 'real space' interacted with the virtual space in several ways. Firstly, they mimicked movements and facial expressions of the virtual performers; they reacted to their movements as one might interact with a video game. For example, in the virtual space on the screen the Angel of Death character was depicted as traveling from a distance to reach the mother character, while in the real space of the performance, the same performer was moving slowly into the composition and mimicking the movements of the virtual character.

Secondly, the story of the virtual space influenced the story of the real space by providing visual clues in which the real space designer/performers reacted. For example, the Mother and Father characters within the virtual space are depicted in motion and demonstrating the action of waiting. In this scenario, the action of the virtual space presents itself as a form of entertainment; a film that is being played for the performers of the real space. This in turn influenced the decision to have the real space performers sit side by side to watch the film. Their action of watching was very similar and connected to the virtual space performers action of waiting.

Lastly, this performance had a clear beginning and end. In the beginning, the 'real space' designer/performers controlled the action; however as the story unfolded they became more and more controlled by the 'virtual space' that ultimately ended the presentation in a cinematic manner with scrolled credits. It is worth noting, that the audience was made up of both invited guests and bar clientel.

#### 2.1.2. ***The Sandbox: an art installation***

Here is the setup of *The Sandbox: An Art Installation* presented in the lobby of the Hilberry Theatre in Detroit, May 2012. For this presentation, four connected blue theatre seats were arranged to create a spectator viewing area. To the right side of the screen was a coat rack on which hung, the costumes that were worn by the designer/performers in the making of the virtual space film and during the performance installation. The rack also housed the wooden chairs. Opposite this viewing area was a vintage portable projection screen. In front of the screen was arranged a toy piano, the cigar and martini glass, and the silver coffee carafe and cup.

The design choices made for this installation were influenced by the performance installation. For example, in the real space of the art installation, white sand was poured into the martini glass and over spilled onto the other properties that were arranged in front of the screen and on top of the same light brown clothe. The display of objects in this manner was connected to a scenario that occurred during the performance installation, in which the Mother character starts to fill and then overfill the Father character's martini glass with white sand that is poured from the silver coffee carafe. (Figure 2.b.)

In this presentation, unlike the performance piece, the virtual space looped, playing continuously and was the only sense of movement with in the installation. The presentation lasted for 1.5 hours, during which time the spectators could come and go with freedom; choosing whether or not to interact with the properties and costumes.

In this presentation, the lack of real space designer/performer in turn changed the role of the virtual space. The looped virtual space embodied the performers of the installation, provided a visual reference, story telling method and location. In this role, virtual space took on the role, identified by Gordon Craig as the "primary theatrical player." "Craig introduced screens into the theatre to serve as a background for the imaginative use of changing lights. His screens were a paradoxical refusal of set in the conventional sense, and an elevation of set from secondary decoration to primary theatrical player." [1]

## THE USE OF VIRTUAL SPACE IN LIVE PERFORMANCE

The use of virtual space in live performance can be connected to traditional practices of creating the so called 'real spaces' that are, and have been created for theatrical experiences throughout the history of theatre. There are connections between the virtual and real spaces that are created for and witnessed by the spectator. JR Parker in his paper titled, *Virtual Theatre for Performance Education* points out, "The common understanding of virtual reality (space) is of a set of interfaces that permit a person to seem to be in a 3D space when in fact they are somewhere else. In both a real theatre and in virtual reality (space), the stage and actors exist, and so do the sets and the props. But they all represent other things. There is nothing behind the set but 2x4 framing and plywood, whatever it appears as to the audience. One sees and hears things that are a representation or a simulation of a place and a situation created in the mind of the author and implemented by the director," or as in the case of *The Sandbox* projects, the designer/performers. [2] Whether the virtual space is a computer interface, a film, or a series of scenery flats, in theatre on stage we create environments that seem to be something other than what they really are.

The questions to consider are whether or not to use virtual space and when. Virtual space versus real space can be time and resource saving. For *The Sandbox*, we as designer/performers chose to use virtual space in the form of a projected images because it enabled us to work within the confines of the project; those of budget and time. For this project, we had no budget and a limited time period of two weeks to create the installation performance. The still photographs were taken in a period of hours during one day. The collection of the imagery into a series of related moments and the manipulation of those moments into a string of connected events that transitioned automatically was the most time consuming part of the creation of the virtual world. The designers worked collectively to gather, select and arrange the images, and then separated tasks for the completion of the virtual space; the making of the film. They used iMovie software and connected the still images together into a film. The sound track for the film was the music of a toy piano being played. The toy piano was a highly integrated element of the presentations. It was audibly and visually part of the virtual and real spaces.

In addition to meeting our project constraints, working within virtual space also allowed the team to make quick and easily executed changes to the space created. Adding and removing an image or repositioning a

sequence of images was done with a mouse click. The more time consuming aspect of the changes were the perceeding discussions around the decisions that led to these adjustments. Furthermore, working with virtual space activated our creativity as we sought out new methods to create and use space in live performances. We tested several transitions between the images, as they changed for one to another, and worked to synchronize particular sections of images with the musical selections. Collectively, we worked together to select the various types of projection screens on which to project the virtual space.

### **3. THE SCENIC DEIGNER AS VISUAL MAKER AND PERFORMER**

As designer/performers, we worked with Albee's text and created virtual and real spaces of experiences in order to provide an interpretation of the play. Our approach to the challenge was to tell the story as designers, to visually depict the story. Similary as Jean Genet, the 20<sup>th</sup> century French novelist, playwright, poet, essayist and political activist, did with his play *The Screen*. Genet thought and created much like a scenographer. For his play, *The Screens*, he "instructs the directors to draw on the screen and asks the spectator to interpret the meanings of the space and the action. In one production of the play in 2002, director Fisbach project(ed) film onto vast screens lining the back of the stage. This create(d) the same effect, whereby spectators must believe that light on celluloid bec(ame) place, objects, or people, with which the characters interact(ed)." [Finburgh 214]

For Genet, "....a realist set consisting of household furniture, or a naturalist backcloth featuring a receding scene in perfect perspective, presents the audience with a completed illusion. Identification enables the public readily to project itself into what appears to be a reflection of its own world, as the referent on stage and the referent with which it corresponds coincide to a maximum degree. Genet's early screens on stage "require(d) his reader or spectator to observe and to interrogate this process of sign formation." [Finburgh 214] This can be comparable to the use of virtual space in the presentations of *The Sandbox*, both in the performance installation and the art installation. The designer/performer saught to provide enough visual information or clues for the spectator to interrogate and to draw meaning from; rather than indicate or dictate the story word by word as in the recessation of a play's script.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The Sandbox project allowed us to create and use virtual space in live performance. We found that the use of virtual space worked well with budget and time constraints and was a flexible medium to create with. The virtual and real spaces created for these exhibitions provided visual reference, story telling method, location, and character. The two spaces are different yet connected to each other, just as the two exhibitions were linked to each other without being the same presentations. The costumes on the designer/performers and the properties they used linked the two spaces and helped the audience to connect to the virtual space by being tangible relics of the virtual space; emblematic of another space.

In addition, the role of these spaces changed between the two exhibitions in relation to the presence or absence of the designer/performers. In the performance installation, real space performers bridged the gap that exists between the virtual and real spaces. Whereas in the art installation, the absence of the real space performer forced the virtual space to take on the role of the "primary theatrical player." Hence, in the art installation, the spectator was responsible to make connections between the real and virtual spaces on their own, as they gathered and drew meaning from the action of virtual space and the objects of the installation that inhabited the real space.

Through the various exhibitions of the project, we challenged the spectators' imagination, attention and thought process, by providing a mixture of visual clues throughout the virtual and real spaces. "A naked area does not tell a story, so each spectator's imagination is free and unfettered." [3] Unlike a naked space, the visual clues we provided in The Sandbox project were selected specifically to evoke those of the real world; our spectators. We found these clues were more effective when the designer/performers were present and bridging the gap between the virtual and real spaces.

## 5. AUTHOR ARTWORK



Figure 1. Still photograph of designer/performer



Figure 2(a) The Performance Installation; (b) The Art Installation

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# SPECTATOR'S INTERACTION:USE OF THE SMARTPHONE ON PERFORMANCE

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**Abstract:**In the contemporary theatre the staging is growing in strength of successive sequences of interaction with the environment, expressed at times that are born and die before the actor, in apparent disorder, as a dislocated images that need repairing. Interactive digital technologies, have played a fundamental role in all this, although it is important to note that their role is limited to the channel, the medium of expression. In other words, the commitment to a common language towards a viewer 2.0, and the technical characteristics of the medium favors the fluid between actor and spectator capacity to decide on all the formal aspects of the show in real time.

This article examines the use of *smartphones* on the stage, as a interaction instruments of the audience in contemporary performance. Audience participation in performance goes back millennia to tribal rituals and communal dances, and the futurists were the first in the twentieth century to systematically initiate performance that relied upon direct interaction from their audience, typically using conflict and provocation to incite the spectators into action. This article insists on the historicity of such relationships and traces how they have changed from the 1980s to a contemporary moment that sees experimental performance in a closer relationship to the art world than ever before. The integration of *smartphone* as interfaces is a natural evolution of the *game at theater* prompting new questions as to the place of experimental performance amongst the mediums of art practice.

**Keywords:** experimental performance, game, theater, spectator's interaction

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Theatrical audience participation has a long history. Audiences adopted participatory roles in Happenings in the 1960s, at the celebrated 1968 *Magic Theatre* performances at Kansas City Museum, and ever since in numerous experimental performance. Interactive technologies may be used to enhance more traditional forms of performance, for example sensing and responding to the movements of dancers on a stage. In this case, use of the technology may only be a small supporting part of the overall performance.

For Andy Lippman it is “mutual and simultaneous activity on the part of both participants, usually working towards some goal...but not necessarily, and Simon Penny's more technological definition equally emphasizes real-time response: “ An interactive system is a machine system which reacts in the moment, by virtue of automated reasoning based on data from its sensory apparatus...Interactivity implies real time. The second type of interaction is most important for theater.[1]

The relationship between performer and spectator is connected to the employing of technology on the stage. In works that operate on a “conversational<sup>1</sup>” interactive paradigm, there is often a complex relationship or negotiation established between the user/audience and the work, which is reliant on such issues as trust, cooperation and openness.[1] Such notions have been central to live interactive theater and performance since 1960s, and a interesting example is provided by *Valie's Export's* famous live street theater performance *Tapp and Tast Kino* (Touch Cinema, 1968). In 1996 with the presentation of Bruno Cohen's interactive installation we observe a charming digital remediation of theatrical audience participation. It uses a miniature theater complete with stage lighting and dressing room in conjunction with infrared transmitters, movement sensors, video technology, laser disc players and a CD –ROM. Chris Hardman's Antenna Theater equips audience members with headphones through which instructions are relayed to them. In its “ Walkmanology” interactive walk-through performances, such us *Pandemonium* (1997), audience member are not intimidate by the demands...Audience members for Golan Levin's *Telesymphony* (2001) preregistered their cell phone number and theater seat number. New ringtones were downloaded onto the phones by Levin and his nine

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<sup>1</sup> In “The Digital Doubles” are presented different categories of performances and interactive arts and the relative types of user interaction: Navigation; Participation; Conversation and Collaboration.

collaborators, who used custom-software to dial the phones in different prearranged sequences during the performance to choreograph and create a complex symphony, with as many as two hundred phones ringing simultaneously. As each audience member's phone rang, individual lights above each seat come on, and their physical presence as part of the performance was highlighted.

## **1.1. Interaction in Performing Arts**

All art is an interaction between the viewer and the artwork, and thus all artworks are interactive in the sense that a negotiation or confrontation takes place between the beholder and the beheld[1]

Performers' actions around their interfaces may also be more functional. They have to engage with and disengage from interactive technologies, for example, when approaching an interface, picking up an interaction device or donning a wearable technology such as a head-mounted display. The movements and gestures involved in approaching the technology, such as moving into sensor range or putting on an interface, may be publically visible and hence part of the performance even though they may not directly result in intentional input to the system.

### **1.1.1. Spectator's interactivity**

Related to spectator interaction is the performer's general awareness of spectators (...) A performer's awareness of spectators may be also a negative impact on a performer who may feel pressure. Performers as being the primary users of the interface, it is possible for spectators to interact as well, either deliberately or accidentally. In a typical performance (such as theatre, music or stand- up comedy), a performer is highly aware of spectator (audience) reaction; a performer's awareness of spectators in such situations is often fundamental to the flow of the performance. Even where audiences are more restrained, the manifest presence of an audience is clearly critical to the sense of 'liveness.' Techniques for aggregating spectator input ranging from audience voting systems to video-tracking crowd behaviour have been employed in a range of interactive experiences [2].

Another important possibility to consider is whether spectators can themselves interact with the display, albeit as a secondary form of interaction[3]. And in this case change the form to interact in the theater, is not simply a passive interaction but is an active experience. The audience can participate into the performance using her PDA, personal display o

smartphone as a joystick like as a video game. Also pervasive gaming guarantee audience interaction since there is not spectators but players from the very beginning and this is probably an important issue to share with performative arts, the discourse regarding audience engagement.

It's a revolutionary change normally for the contemporary theater that's consequence of the advance of technology and his portability. Such as Jaron Lanier says: "Interactivity is a style of concrete conversation with the media".

## **1.2. Use of *smartphones* in performing arts and pervasives games**

Recent mobile performances on the city streets have introduced a quite different twist to performer awareness of spectators. Uncle Roy All Around You is a game-like performance in which members of the public, equipped with wireless PDAs, search the city streets for a mysterious character, guided by remote online players, encountering live actors and even interacting with members of the public as they go [2]. The experience is carefully designed to give street players (the performers in the sense of this paper) the unnerving but exciting sense of being involved in a conspiracy that potentially implicates everyone around them, even casual bystanders. The key here is a performer's experience of interaction in public space is greatly enhanced by an implied awareness and involvement of spectators [2].

### **1.1.2. Pervasives games**

Pervasive games is a term coined at the beginning of 2000 decade, for defining games that defied the usual boundaries of time, space and social context in play. This category emerge in the intersection of phenomena such as mobile technology, network communication and performing arts, in order to produce new play experiences [5]. They are built from the combination of certain technologies that help to extend the gaming experience, in some cases from digital to the real world, combining both virtual and real world elements, in other cases amplifying the player's skills, connecting them, etc. They are games with elements that use technology to deliver a gaming experience that changes according to where they are, what they are doing, and even how they are feeling [6].

One of the most important technologies for amplifying the experience have been mobile devices (*smartphones*), together with wireless

communication and location-finding technologies that help detecting where and what the player is doing. This is the standing point to locate the performance outside the traditional stage, so *smartphones* are in this case not only facilitating interactivity but moving the performance from the regular stage to new spaces.

There are lots of pervasive games using mobiles devices in order to improve not just players interaction with the game but the whole player's performance. Blast Theory games are probably one of the most significant cases on the performative arts peripheral context. *Can you see me now?* (2003) or *Rider Spoke*<sup>2</sup> (2007) are successful mobile phone-based pervasive games with wide acceptance among players, audiences, media and academia.

## 1.2. References in contemporary theater

### 1.2.1. Game based theater: Ad Infinitum–Purdue's School of Visual and Performing Arts (2011)

The interdisciplinary performance 'Ad Infinitum,' from Purdue's Patti and Rusty Rueff School of Visual and Performing Arts, opened the 2011 Prague Quadrennial's 'Disk Stories' series. This team was co-directed by Cunningham-Sigman; Richard Thomas, professor of theater; and Joel Ebarb, an associate professor of theater. "Our team's goal was to integrate the audience into the performance by using interactive technologies," said Cunningham-Sigman. This original interactive performance, which allows audience members to play the role as gamers and use their **smartphones as joysticks** to generate avatars on performance screens that will interact with the performers [7].

"The 45-minute interactive performance art event brings the audience into the production as both characters and variable forces through their use of avatars created on a wi-fi equipped cell phone. Performers engage the audience in both the visual and auditory sense with audience controlled projections and sound. "Rick Thomas, professor of Purdue University said: "We developed the game part of the theatre experience for the iPhone/iPad/iPod and Droid smartphones/PDA's. The programming made extensive use of HTML 5 programming language, which at the time was relatively new. Our programmers, Michael Wilga and Andy Muehlhausen, had to develop unique and proprietary ways for our main computer to interface

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<sup>2</sup> Originally premiered at the Barbican, one of the most important stages for performative arts in London.

with each player using this language in real time. They also made extensive use of Cycling 74's Max/MSP/Jitter program and JavaScript.

The *game* like performance is composed by three acts:

In Act I when the audience enters the theatre, they are greeted by a cast member who helps them connect their phone to our own private wi-fi network. They are led into a large open space, and stand in front of a projection screen where they soon discover their "avatar" bounded by a virtual, projected box. They cannot exit the box, but are free to move their avatar inside the box, to get used to the joystick controls. They can press another button that makes a sound on their phone and through the theatre sound system that is unique to their avatar.

When the play begins, the bounding boxes disappear, and the audience is free to manipulate their avatars over the entire projection screen. If they run into another avatar, they eat them, and grow larger. If they are eaten, they have to wait five seconds, but can then press a "regeneration" button and come back to life. These "families" are very powerful, because they can eat others, but cannot be eaten themselves. Winners and losers emerge, but all of this becomes relatively unimportant when the Creature<sup>3</sup> arrives on the scene.

In Act II, three families survive, and all players are rebirthed into one of them. The families resuscitate the creature, and attempt to seduce the creature into their family by playing a game we called "Get in the Shape!" A shape appears on the screen, and family members need to move their avatars, which are rubber banded together, into the boundaries of the shape in a certain amount of time. Each family plays the game twice in competing rounds. At the end of the game, the creature decides which family is most successful, and chooses them. As Act II ends, the individual tribes or families all join together to form a society.

In Act III the players-phone screens now show four distinct color buttons that they can choose. All of the avatars are grouped into a primordial "city" on one of the screens. In order to stay in this "society" they must press the color button on their interface to change their avatar color to match the colors on the screen. That avatar becomes the basis out of which a whole new society evolves, and the game begins all over again.

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<sup>3</sup> The Creature is a live actor who is "birthed" in an elaborately staged scene. It immediately sets out to attack the individuals. It controls its avatar using motion capture technology provided by infrared light emitting diodes (LED's) mounted on a glove on its hand.

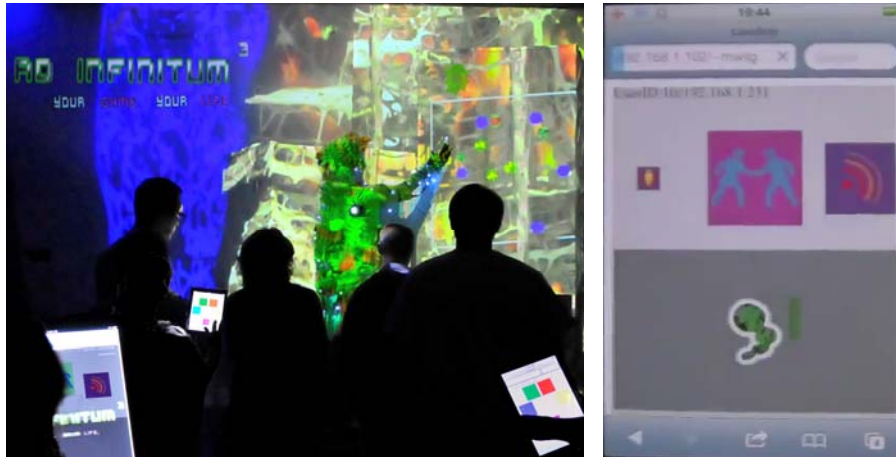


Figure 1. (a) Ad Infitum (2011); /photo: David Sigman (b) screen flow of smartphone's app.

### 1.2.2. Interactive theater: PSEUDO. From Platon's cave to smartphones.

*Pseudo* is inspired by the previous performance *Cotrone*, a theatre play that Antúnez produced in 2010, which was based on *The Mountain Giants*, and where the fourth and non-existent part of this play was created. And now, with *Pseudo*, the stories that where part of this final and invented part, are added to a new act. And all this scenes are deconstructed and reorganised in order to create new stories in a kind of theatre kaleidoscope that runs thanks to new technologies [8].

This play will not take part in a conventional auditorium, on the contrary, audience will be part of the performance, moving around, surrounded by dreams, images, detectors and other mechanisms.

The second part of *The Mountain Giants*, the last and unfinished drama form the writer Luigi Pirandello, leads us to a place where dreams come true: The Arsenal of Appearances. This is one of the rooms from the Scalogna, the house of the magician Cotrone, the protagonist of the play. In fact, the Arsenal of Appearances is a sophisticated display of other instruments such as the mechanism that shows shadows inside Platon's cave, the magic lantern, the cinema, the *smartphones* or the mecatronic spaces that Marcel·lí Antúnez uses in his performances.

There are a lot of technology systems used in this *interactive performance*, such as:

- *Tapestries sensors*. Physical action on the six sensors in 3 scenes. Kung fu, and Mara mara Smembramento. The tapestries are sensors on / off and trigger sound samples i change the images on the screen. The first use was in the fitting DMD Europe.
- *Dynamic video*. Recording images that are used as collective dynamic scene funds Duccio Doccia;
- *Augmented Reality 2D*. Use in the scene and Diamond Conde symbolic images (postcard size drawings or magazine) that dynamically responds with animations to the front of the camera position either + or - segon great proximity to or changing the animation camera, postcards are 4 animations many as edges of the drawing;
- *Tracking face mask*. System FaceTraking Spizzi stage, which recognizes the viewer's face and mask assigned a semitransparent 3DF;
- *Voice volume*. Reading range the voice of a viewer to "make a tit singing" Diamond in the scene;
- *Gun cam*. Recording the faces of the spectators at the scene Genealogy Cotrónica, the animation of their face becomes the face of the character on screen, this technique is used since 2004, this will use a device called Gun Cam.

*Smartphones* are used in this work as an alternative to the control system as dreskeleton and animation player through a overhead-projector, a device called light Mental as a types of interaction of the viewer in the work.



Figure 2. (a) Pseudo. Marcell Antúnez Roca (2012); / (b) Pseudo-Duccio Doccia (2012). photos: Carles Rodriguez .

## 2. CONCLUSION

The use of the PDAs, and mobile device as *smartphone* raises significant and important new challenges for contemporary theater, one of which is designing the spectator interface, with the key question being: *how should be a spectator experience and a performer's interaction with a computer?* Even a brief review of existing public interfaces in areas such as mobile personal displays, interactive installations and *game based performances* reveals that there are very many valid approaches to this question, and we have therefore developed a taxonomy that expresses the essential differences between current examples and the connections with a typical language of contemporary dramaturgy.

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# INTERTWINED (INTERCONNECTED) SPACES

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this paper is to analyze the relation between virtual and real spaces as reflections of lifestyles, social context, human needs and personal expression of individuals in their virtual-real environments.

Specifications in relation to 'person-space' communication have since long become common knowledge. Complexity of different layers and creation of three dimensional sensation of a real experience has almost always been typical for this 'person-space' relation. Space is no longer merely a physical barrier and an existential need; it becomes a tool for transferring and storing emotions. A multidisciplinary approach taken in this research encompasses research directions that examine virtual spaces that are home to non-verbal communication. Also, the paper addresses the topic of what is required to turn a space into a scene through digital art and to which extent are new social norms willing and adaptable to bring this digital scene into their life and home. This paper is founded in the research of the phenomenon of virtual connection of physically remote locations presented in the project Being Together by John Clang. This project was conducted through analysis of a series of photographs illustrating family portraits. The use of new media, removing the issue of absence of a family member, results in the abstraction of physical distance as a basic prerequisite for personal alienation in modern society.

A need innate to humans, to connect and identify with others, becomes ever more emphasized with technological advances. Virtual reality and its built-in environment offer the individual the possibility to stay in touch with his/her family and friends in a digitalized world, irrespective of the actual physical distance, via adapted and intertwined (interconnected) spaces.

**Keywords:** intertwined; interconnected; alienated space; Skype; virtual space; connection; digital scene

## **1. INTRODUCTION: INTERCONNECTED SPACES IN THE CONTEXT OF ALIENATION**

Alienation is, by definition, a deviation from a natural state, a spiritual derangement, in a sense. [1] Therefore, alienation of man proposes a state of an individual caused by external factors as well as an inner feelings. As such, alienation offers a possibility of multifaceted perception of the state of society and depicts it in a certain time and place, in a somewhat broader sense.

From a historical point of view, there have always been attempts in art to engage space and time in a symbolical manner; it has even been the case that there is a single symbol/moment present that bears multiple implications as well as an inspiration for artists' further development, the possibility for new production. We might even say that it was precisely this manner of non-verbal and verbal communication that produced the same ideas in art, merely realized in different methods, irrelevant from time and place. Through a rise of alienation as a topic of interest for artists, we can perceive the evident correlation between the civilization's development i.e. a rise in technology and the rise of its effects on individuals.

## **2. ALIENATION AS AN ARTISTIC INSPIRATION**

Alienation as commonplace in modern lifestyle inspires artists to portray an individual in his everyday surroundings, where an alarming number of simulacra is immanent, as according to Baudrillard's description of the modern age as a certain distance between the real and the imaginary. [2] Deeply provoked by the irony that people have never before been so physically apart, yet so close in a virtual world, modern artists express the need that meeting points in an (un)real time and space be marked as a symbolical reflexion of today's époque. The goal of every artist is for the public to understand and, ideally, deeply experience his creation with all senses. The method for conveying this is, however, differing and innate to different artists, as is the vast concept of data and information transfer. However, the essence has stayed the same. Internet today brings an option for blending into a different time and space, a reality different to the present one.

*"We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present."* [3]

## **2.1. Previous Research**

A large number of today's artists is trying to identify the core of modern alienation in their creations. Artist Levi van Veluw emphasizes that, although family members may be physically together, none of them is actually present; this he does in an installation of a family positioned in abstract space whose members, coated in wooden tiles, are sitting at the dining table. [4] Each is away with his own thoughts and in his/her own alienated life. The installation emphasizes that physical presence is not a guarantee for spiritual one. Artist Jihoon Yoo seeks to express the feelings of isolation and alienation in the modern world, by using digital media, text, images, voice and music in his work; these he generates from digital scripts in order to form his own definition of the term humanity. [5] The artist emphasizes the absurdity of the fact that he is a product of technology driven alienation, whereas his art wouldn't exist without virtual spaces and innovative technologies. On the other hand, Robin Eley, a hyperrealist, chooses to portray the problem of isolation of an individual in the modern society by wrapping his models, naked human figures, in cellophane. [6] As the artist himself claims, it is 'a seductive existence where quantity trumps quality, where a smile is supplanted by a like button, and the accumulation of friends seems more important than our interactions with them.' Huan Muñoz, a Spanish artist and sculptor, accentuates the quality of isolation in a modern metropolis in his installation named 'Double Bind'. [7] He seeks to present alienation in space, even when the space is previously known to the visitor, by using spacious dynamic figures, spaces divided in two and cleverly positioned grey clay figures. By introducing mirrors as exhibits, Muñoz guides the visitor towards the essence of the architecture of alienation. In this manner the observer becomes a live figure in an (un)known space which surrounds him, making him into a tourist in his own city.

## **2.2. Analysis: Being Together by John Clang**

As an artist that researches the topic of the arising issue of social alienation, John Clang, a modern photographer and visual artist, has strived to unite physically detached individuals and spaces in the project 'Being Together'. [8] This project has been realized through a clever use of an open-source software package for online audio and visual communication and the creative input of the artist and photographer John Clang.

John Clang was born in Singapore in 1973. Today, he lives and works in New York and Singapore. He enrolled the Lasalle College of the Arts in Singapore at the age of 17, only to leave it after six months to become assistant to a fine-art photographer, also based in Singapore; this inspired him to a great extent to begin practicing photography himself. He has hosted 6 solo exhibitions, in New York, Los Angeles, Paris and Singapore and a large number of group exhibitions across the world. He won the prestigious 'Designer of the Year' Recognition Award, on the Annual President's Design Award 2010, held in Singapore. One of the most recognized works by this artist must be the Being Together Project, a collection of 40 photographs of families gathered in the same time at different places. On a single photography Clang manages to create a unique collage of intertwined spaces of blood-related individuals that live scattered across the world.

Clang started the Being Together Project primarily because he felt he should express his personal feeling of being a tourist and a stranger in a big city and to lessen the feeling of loneliness; this he did primarily by staying in touch with his family via Skype. He came up with the idea to create 'live' photographs of families, using this online service, by photographing the Skype video call projection with the person receiving the call, creating a joint picture of them in space. In this manner, the photography becomes a material proof of the family's gathering, having not even met outside of the virtual. Clang's photos overlap distant spaces, they intertwine, forming a unison, an (un)real perception of the real moment. Such spaces are not intrusive, they are subtle but must fit in perfectly with the surroundings in order for the illusion to seem real. The correlation of space and man (his stance and movement in space) next to the projected image, was an additional factor in creating this fictional image. By projecting an image, a space and the participants in it, and fitting it all with another space and participants, the artist created a third space, an entirely new ambiance, the product of the simulated data transfer. The participants are visible and real in this dimension but physically do not belong to the same dimensions. These different atmospheres are the deciding factor in affecting the events – the story, the individuals – visitors. [9]

In this project, Clang managed to solve the general problem of separated, nostalgic and close families that are physically apart in distant corners of the world, due to employment, obligations or other political, economical or social reasons. Clang sees the solution to this problem in joining the families on a virtual level; this could probably be defined as a primitive form of teleporting. In this way, the space also became portable but still innately personal, because it corresponds and belongs to a person.

Alienation in Clang's project has resulted in multiplication of space i.e. the creation of a 'super space'. [10]



Figure 1. John Clang – Being Together; (a) Tokyo and Singapore; (b) London and Singapore

'Ultimately, a good photograph is one that brings us face to face with our own existence. It pulls the stranger standing next to us into the intimate radius of our life. It collapses the beauty and strangeness around us into one. It bridges the gap between the two families that are apart. It connects.' [11]

### 3. POSSIBILITIES OF IDENTITY PERCEPTION IN INTERTWINED SPACES

A person today is faced with massive potential for acquisition and transfer of data, information, messages, slogans, personal standpoints and interest. This enables him to advance and grow, to continue his education. On the other hand, presenting the public with more or less intimate details of one's life and sharing it with strangers, creates a paradox in which one's identity becomes available to all and often redundant as information. A person's need to find himself and his alter ego in these piles of information, transfers to the space and time he/she lives the real, 'non-simulated' life. The amount of time a person uses to satisfy certain needs has changed throughout history, so 'the changed relationship towards time always implied a changed relationship towards space'. [12]

Due to mass alienation, a person today has the opportunity to assert relevance of his/her simulated (virtual) identity by integrating himself/herself in a connected space, in which there are other such identities. However, although unaware of that, the user ascertains his/her alienated identity in the same manner. Whether a space will be alienated or connected depends on how users regard it, i.e. spatial perception and reception. Such an alienated

space can simultaneously be connected. Such a correlation of environments and their interactions creates an atmosphere that the present individuals are connected, however distant they physically might be. Alienated spaces interconnect, creating a fine line between 'the real' and the 'perceived' ambiance. [13]

Speaking of a 'simulated' life, commonly known as 'virtual', it is principally important to note that such a reality takes place in a world open to manipulation and illusions. In virtual reality, where everyone can enter as they please, spaces join, intertwine and separate and are fairly easy to manipulate. The user is given the possibility to personify his (alienated) identity, and (spatial) constraints of the real world cease to exist. In a virtual world, teleportation is an easily feasible cheap entertainment and a method to bridge personal alienation via a simulation of connecting (intertwining) spaces. The user of this virtual space may, and often has the need to modify this environment to himself/herself and his/her personal preferences; this has been enabled. Customization (gender, race, age, clothing, colours, background specifications etc.) provides the user with an ambiance he/she feels comfortable in and which he/she consciously chooses to return to. It is through this personal interpretation of the simulated environment that a person struggles with alienation, consciously recognizing it or not. The user's level of alienation from real life is commensurate with the intensity of personification with the simulated environment.

#### **4. CONCLUSION: THE NEXT LEVEL**

These new spaces enable a synergy of virtual space designers – architects, designers and the end users - participant, player. An individual in a simulated environment might have a complete home and a family, when in reality there may be nothing more than a computer and a chair. By inverting the real and the simulated, an individual affects the atmosphere in which he/she spends the most time in. This leads us to the conclusion that we must not be restricted merely to the virtual world. This newly generated, virtual space, merges with the one where the connection takes place: a living room, a children's room, an office, a conference hall, a playroom or an Internet cafe, a park, public transport, a solar charger and Wi-Fi hotspots. Precisely like the spaces in Clang's photographs. In addition, a number of virtual spaces have inspired architects, and vice versa. The users of the physical and the virtual space experience and use the space in a different manner; however, further

technological development will enhance the symbiosis of the virtual and the real, increasingly forcing the designers and the programmers to define the rules and set boundaries of such spaces. Also, an interesting aspect of intertwined spaces might be the creation of virtual metropolises, of virtual communities, a virtual economy, of parallel cultures and public spaces, where an image of future cities in real time and space might be hiding. The effects of the real space in real time on the virtual one are ever-changing and growing. We are offered a platform, a 'place to play', where, same as architects in a real life experiment with new technologies and construction, a game designer in virtual world must acknowledge social responsibility. [14]

As the real space, the city, offers the people freedom of choice of spectacle, a memento of a scene, the simulated reality offers the freedom without restrictions, rules or surveillance. Both worlds have the positive and the negative aspects of social experiences, from deep belonging to personal alienation.

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# RECEPTION OF THE STAGE DESIGN FOR THE THEATRE SHOW “DUBLING” OF THE STUDENTSKO POZORIŠTE BANJALUKA

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**Abstract:** The entire impression of a theatre play does not depend only on one component, that is to say only on the performance of actors or the lyrics but it is rather a symbiosis of all different components involved in the creation of this work of art. The relations between those components are not only, among those who create the play but nevertheless are reciprocal and complex relations among all of the participants as well as the audience who experiences that play. Stage design holds a great deal of the overall impression about a certain play. The starting point of research in this area is a stage design of a theater play “Dubling” (Irish musical) directed by Aleksandar Pejaković and in the production of Studentsko Pozorište Banjaluka. With the lack of existence of public, scientific and professional critics in the field of theatre arts in Banja Luka, which also relates with the stage design, the author of the stage design of the play Nevena Milašinović worked on the audiences’ perception of the stage design. Besides the part dealing with the fact whether the perception of the audience coincides with the main objectives of the author, the work also explores identification of some social and other factors, which affect the perception of the audience, that is the formation of their point of view, and in this way we can reach the conclusion whether the audience can be a relevant critic. The work in its theoretical point of view refers to the theory of reception, which was brought from the area of literature into the domain of theatre arts by Susan Bennett.

**Keywords:** stage design; theory of reception; audience; theater

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Theatre play, as a complex creation, involves a great number of artistic segments. Acting, staging, scenario, music and set design are its main elements that put together create a theatrical performance. However each of them uses its own language and is subjected to separate practise and analysis. This study coexists in the area of set design art that is her practical and theoretical analyses. Language is a central part of the theatre and we use the set design to discover the text and the action hidden behind it, according to the famous designer, artist and professor Pamela Howard [1], and the main objective of the research represented in this study is to discover in which way the audience perceives the set design as well as the impact it has on the personal experience of the play.

The subject of this study is set design for a theatre play, Irish musical "Dubling", directed by Aleksandar Pejaković, performed by Banjalučko Studentsko Pozorište, according to the film "Once" by John Carney [2]. The premiere of the show was held on July 23<sup>rd</sup> in the Podrum scene/stage in Gospodska street, and the set design was done by Nevena Milašinović.

Firstly, the limited budget of the Studentsko pozorište, conditioned the minimalistic scene design, leaving to the audience a lot of space for imagination. Further development of the idea followed precisely that direction, with a little remark that the theory of reception had also a very big influence on the final concept of the set design.

We refer to the reception theory of the literary critics Wolfgang Iser and Hans Robert Jauss, led by Susan Bennett in the domain of theatre art with her work inside her PhD thesis. Thus, the initial theoretical and conceptual starting point of this scenographic project is a dissertation "The Role of the Theatre Audience: A Theory of Production and Reception," Susan Bennett [3], which is introduced to the readers in the form of a book titled "Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception". [4]

Although the work of Bennett refers to the way in which the audience receives the entire play, this study follows only a scenography as a text that communicates with the audience.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

The data presented and analyzed in this study were collected through surveys, on paper, containing 36 questions with a combination of open and closed type. The survey contained open type questions which had to be completed and multiple choice questions. The sample counted 33 high school students, who have seen the show. Thus, the average age of the audience surveyed was 16 years old, of which 73% female and 27% male. All participants answered most of the questions, but during the evaluation we revealed the lack of understanding of some of the questions, as is evident from the responses received. This segment is taken into account in the presentation of the results and significantly influenced the conclusions of this research.

## **3. STARTING POINT:THE SPACE**

According to the idea of the director, the set design of the "Dubling" was supposed to include a number of smaller scenes. Since the space of Podrum scene is adequate for transformation, the common objective of the director and the set designer was to visualise, with minimum budget, several scenes where the action of the musical took place. Pub, room, musical instrument shop, music studio which were set as the draft scenes, at the first reading of the text. The director had a clear idea of what the role of certain scenes in full musical would be, and almost completely defined arrangement where each of these little scenes, should be located. Some of this changed in a moment, during the work on a play, in rehearsals, depending on the course of action, actor's movement, the need to move a scene, to "rewrite" it from one space to another. Although in this way, the guidelines, that define the space "set design action", were clearly defined from the very beginning, they were not limiting. There was enough space left for creation and the improvisation, which are always bigger than in the work of a theatre with a bigger budget, irrelevant of the fact how seriously all members of the ensemble approached their work.

The space of a Contemporary theater, that does not leave the viewer aside, but actively involves him in the course of the play, is certainly a field where set design plays an important role. In "The Emancipated Spectator" [5], referring to Artaud's (Antonin Artaud) understanding of the theater, Jacques Rancière states that the viewer from the audience must leave the position of

the spectator, must not be sitting facing the spectacle, but surrounded by the show, drawn into the circle of action, which will bring his collective energy back. Set design can really make it possible for the viewer to feel the energy flow, which was one of the main intentions of "Dubling". The energy of the musical, besides being based on music and the dance is also formed from the flow, the movement of the actors from one scene to another and activation of the audience in that way. These little hints of action, if we call them like that are a huge incentive to the audience to get involved into the action. The audience has to be awake all the time, to follow the moves in the space, to watch from one to another end of the stage, to jump out of their seats to see the action if needed, and to be surprised by dramatic beginnings and stops, musical and dance intervals. The audience itself is a part of theatre set design, and not at a safe distance of the row in the darkened room (even though in "Dubling" the seats are in such an order, that there is a part of the audience that is nearer and the other little further away from the performers).

This study tried to examine how this kind of approach in the importance of set design is more interesting and different. This is not a new concept in theatre, but the fact that the audience has the possibility of transformation is very rare on Banja Luka theatre scene. Only the theatre scene of the Studentsko pozorište, out of 6 theater scenes in Banja Luka, is entirely mobile (stage and the auditorium are not entirely separated). It resembles mostly the black box whose chair arrangement and setting of scenography in different ways offer the possibility of transformation and closer contact between the audience and the actors.

To the question whether a space separated into more little scenes is a well designed scenography solution, 43.7% of the examinees said that it is, 40.6% does not consider it to be a good solution, and 15.6% answered that it is partly true. From these answers we can see that the audience is divided in opinions, but to the question where we wanted to find whether the audience could actively participate in every scene and follow the course of the play 64.5% gave affirmative answers, 22.5% said it was partially true and 12.9% gave negative answers.

67.7% of the examinees have never before seen a play in "non-traditional" space, outside the theatre building, but still 54.8% considers that the choice of a scene where the play is performed can entirely affect the atmosphere, and 93.7% considers that stage design is very important for the overall experience of the play.

#### 4. EMANCIPATED SPECTATOR

One of the greatest problems between the audience and the performers is their relationship based on the superiority and inferiority. According to Rancière [5] the audience is devaluated because they do not perform a thing, while the actors are the ones doing something with their bodies. By reversing the perspective the audience has the possibility to experience the performance, think about the ideas, to anticipate and interpret. Anyhow one party can not do the things that the other one can. The emancipation actually begins with the principle of equality.

*Emancipation starts from the principle of equality. It begins when we dismiss the opposition between looking and acting and understand that the distribution of the visible itself is a part of the configuration of domination and subjection. It starts when we realize that looking is also an action that confirms or modifies that distribution and that "interpreting the world" is already a means of transforming it.*

*The spectator observes, selects, compares, interprets. He connects what he observes with many other things he has observed on other stages, in other kinds of spaces. [5]*

In 36.4% cases the examinees often go to the theatre, in 42.2% occasionally and only 21.2% rarely.

With this study we wanted to discover if the audience finds any prior information about the play (certain information about the plot, director, the actors), very relevant. The answers were following: completely correct 9%, partially correct 45.5%, partially incorrect 9% and totally incorrect 36.4%. A large percentage 71.8% of the examinees did not find important which theatre (theatre house) is performing the play, but they pay a lot of attention to the genre of the plays when choosing which play to see, 63.6%. 69.7% has never seen a play before "Dubling" with which they could find certain similarities, some parallels to comparison which is on one hand surprising because a large percentage of 75.8% of high school students has already seen some of the other plays performed by Studentsko pozorište. It could be because of the different genre of the play or because "Dubling" in its form and approach is quite different than some previously seen plays, but this study did not give us the answer to this. We discovered an interesting statistic that 74.2% of the audience has already seen some musical before "Dubling" and that a large percentage 90.6% likes and occasionally likes to watch them also on TV,

which is somewhat unusual since the musical is not a kind of genre that is often present in the theatre and film.

Regarding the fact whether the audience is willing to participate more actively in the core process of the play creation, that is to like a different kind of theatre where it would have a greater role, the given results show that 45% of the examinees would accept to participate more actively while 38.7% would maybe do it.

These result show that this interest group goes to the theatre and that they do not care very much about the choice of the theatre house. It must be stressed that all the theatres in Banja Luka are really full, which implicates that the audience is turning more to the theatre than to the cinema, because of the more diverse repertoire and that with careful selection of the genres and texts which are more appealing to this age group as well as with more interesting scenographic solutions their participation could be highly improved ( not only the physical interaction, but also the development of imagination and already mentioned emancipation).

To support the theory of reception we will quote the conclusion of Sofie Pantouvaki, scenographer and researcher, stated in the end of her research titled "Visualising Theatre: Scenography from Concept to Design to Realisation":

*... [S]cenography is completed only at the point of presentation of performance to audiences, when, by means of visual perception of the theatrical action, it transforms in the head of the spectator to anything possible. [6]*

## **5. PROCESS OF WORK ON SET DESIGN**

Instruments and props used to present certain scenes in the play were very modest. To present the pub we used corner table, two chairs and empty bottles; inside the room of the main actor, there was nothing except the bed, lamp and a hanger; musical instrument store, has been integrated with some additional elements into one corner of the basement, which is actually a slightly elevated podium for the musicians and the instruments where they perform music for the play. They also had a part in some dialogue scenes so that they did not only have the static form and the role of the musicians. It was considered that in this way, with the minimal budget, only the basic features necessary for understanding the plot can be drawn up, and that by using

some relevant additional elements such as the light, background music and the very choice of the space the viewer can be absorbed into an interesting, dramatical and playful event. It is important for the theatre set design to have the balance between what is intended to be said and what is only given as a slight hint. (6) In this study we tried to discover if this was enough for the audience for the complete experience of the play or did they have some greater expectations regarding the set design.

When questioned whether the set design solutions gave enough indications in which space the actions is taking place at the moment (was it a room, pub or a street), the study showed that the examinees/participants considered that it is partially or entirely correct in 87.8% of the cases while the rest 12.2% did not feel it.

Such result is a consequence of the fact that 69.6% examinees considers that a good set design can be made with the small budget while in the case of "Dubling" the opinions were divided and the audience considered that the visual experience of the show would have been more complete if more budget was set aside for the design of the musical studio, pub, the apartment, as well as for furniture and the props used on stage. The percentage of answers: 30.3% positive, 33.3% negative and 36.3% said maybe.

The lightning also had a very important role and in some ways tripped with the elements of light and darkness. A great part of the play is set in semi-darkness, where the greenish light of the reflector, visualized the streets of Dublin, pub and the dance podium for the choreography. The very basement, with its damped lightening has become the place that enabled the viewers to feel part of a more intimate act than the theatre play. It becomes entirely enlightened only in certain moments and the usage of flashlights or chandeliers help especially in highlighting the dramatic and comical moments of the play. Examinees recognized the importance of the role of light in the complete set design and 71.8% responded that the enlightenment rounded their experience of the play.

Naming some other aspects important for the theatre reception we have to mention the book of Susan Bennett [6], already cited in the introduction, that largely explains the reciprocal relations of the production and reception, along with other elements that affect it.

The viewer can be affected a lot by the sense of belonging to a certain group, with respect to the case when the theatre has very small number of the

viewers, where they can even feel at ease so exposed to the views of each other and the very perception can be easily inhibited or changed.

Many producers use exactly that kind of psychological moments of the audience and specific spaces where the plays can be performed. One of the many examples is the theatre play "Tanc im Quadrat", directed by Jan Mocek, performed at the theatre festival in Brno - Příští vlna/Next Wave 2010. [7] The play figures a kind of physical theatre with strong display of man/woman relation, brutality, movements, real/projected bodies, nudity and liberation. Beside the feeling of being closed in a cube (the play is performed in a smaller gym) with nude bodies that are literally thrown on the floor and walls in certain moments, and from which you have nowhere to escape, the audience is additionally provoked when at certain stage of the play, until then covered mirrors on the opposite wall are uncovered and the audience becomes aware of themselves and their "nudity" in that same space. They become the active participants of the theatre play - "unmasked voyeur".

The seats inside the theatre that are fixed and have the form of single, numerated chairs and are divided in "better" and "worse" seats of front and back rows, parters and balconies can also represent the measure of social status. Formerly, the separate lodges of monarchs and prominent representatives of the government directed the attention from the play to the audience.

Bennett emphasises the importance of the foyer in the theatre. Socialization before the show, where the audience meets each other, communicates, pays attention to the dressing (especially on the premieres, when the tickets are the most expensive and where there are a lot of celebrities), is something that often turns into a kind of fad, and can impact theater reception.

Theater building itself, its environment, or in case of ambiental theatre, an alternative theater space or outdoor site-specific, can in some kind prepare the viewer for the beginning of the upcoming theatrical act and atmosphere. Even before the beginning the audience enters into its "role", in a certain way.

All these pre-production elements most often coincide with the ideology of the very theatre companies, theatre groups and again the difference must be made between mainstream and alternative productions. The mainstream ones can be affected a lot by the political factors, the need to follow the ideology of the current one, the dominant trend, while the alternative ones can be more affected by the lack of finances, adequate

space and conditions for realisation of the projects as well as the need for something innovative, alternative.

The act of the musical "Dubling" begins in the street in front of the Studentsko pozorište, where tickets are sold, in the way that the main character plays the guitar and waits for the random passer-by to give him some coins, until all, even some of those who did not have intention to come and see the play, are gathered. The above mentioned socialisation has been used here positively as a kind of prelude for the play. The audience always spontaneously gathered in front of the entrance, which is located in the passage of the main walk in Banja Luka, because the theatre does not have the foyer, and the foyer in this case was the street itself. The producer used this moment as a kind of interesting and attractive way to entertain and introduce the play to the audience. The large number of people in front of the entrance during the premiere as well as during the replays demonstrated that the idea was very good.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

With this study the scenographer managed to gain the return answer from the audience, which is very important element in the final summing up of the work on a particular project, and which is unfortunately, often omitted. The audience, without which the play could not "revive" has been ignored in the entire process of production, not so much just in the sense that it has not received sufficient attention in the theatrical literature and research, but in the sense that no one is "listening" to what they really have to say. It all ends with the comment from the theatre critics, if there is one, about the positive or negative perceptions of the play. Form of conversation between the audience and the participants of the project after the show, about show, and also about the scenery could be the solution along with the education of the schoolers to express more freely their critical opinion about a play, so that the theatre can become a form of self-education (that surely awaits them in their further education) and not merely a form of entertainment.

Although this was experimental study, which actually represents only a prelude to some further analysis of the reception, and the scenography work, and also the continuing search of the scenographer in this direction, we did manage to obtain certain results. High school students, were examined with the intention to see how a theater performance can be used as the

instrument of a communication and what the reception is at that age. From their willingness to answer questions (some of the examinees even used the empty space to note some of their impressions), we can conclude that they are interested. However we have a very low percentage of the answers to open-end questions. In most cases they did not write their opinions about the set design in the show (what they liked, or what would be innovative and interesting to see in the theater). For some further research it would certainly be good to introduce the interview also, where by the personal contact the examinees could have some clarifications and could provide us with more complete answers.

Public opinion is always a reflection of the work of art, and no matter of the expertise of the critics, the one which sets foundations, studies, and puts the play within certain limits comparing it with the other works of art, the theatre show still continues its life cycle through the audience.

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# SOME MEANINGS OF ARS THEATRICA FROM HUGO OF ST. VICTOR TO LEONE DE' SOMMI

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**Abstract:** We owe the first definition of *theatrica* as art known to the scholastic medieval tradition to the 11<sup>th</sup>-century writings of Hugo of St. Victor, who referred to it as an ancient "science of entertainment". In this paper, we are referring to Tatarkiewicz's account on the notion of *ars theatrica*, which, he believed, fell into oblivion after the 13<sup>th</sup> century to be revived only in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. We would like to note that Tatarkiewicz was wrong, and that the ancient notion of "ars" as an organized body of knowledge was still current during the Renaissance. We would like to propose that the very notion of *ars theatrica* did not change neither with the revival of the ancient theatre architecture, nor with the invention of the perspective stage. In their writings Leone Battista Alberti, Pellegrino Prisciani and Sebastiano Serlio treated only the "scientific" grounds of theatre architecture. Leone de' Sommi, on the other hand, treated the art of theater close to the medieval *theatrica*, basing it in the performative abilities of actors, but more importantly introducing a new art, that of *production*. He limited the problems of *production of plays* to acting, costuming and lighting, leaving the problems pertaining to architecture and stage design to architects and painters.

**Keywords:** ars theatrica; Hugo of St. Victor; Leone Battista Alberti; Pellegrino Prisciani; Leone de' Sommi

## 1. HUGO OF ST. VICTOR ON ARS THEATRICA

*Theatrica* was an art known to the scholastic medieval tradition that aimed at an exhaustive classification of all knowledge, of the *artes*. The first mention of *ars theatrica*, as one of the seven mechanical arts, appeared in the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in Hugo of St. Victor's "Didascalicon", in which he explained how he understood this art: "Theatrica is the term describing the science of entertainment; the name is derived from the theatre in which people assembled for recreation... Certain types of entertainment took place in theatres... with the use of masks called 'larvae', 'oscilae' and 'personae'... At banquets poetry was recited, music played, odes sung... " [1] Hugo referred to *theatrica* as an art of the ancient past, not a contemporary phenomenon, although neither the term nor the idea of "theatrica", or "ars theatrica", appeared in either Greek or Roman traditions. *Theatrica*, as he understood it, was a practical art, a "scientia ludorum" that is, which comprised a set of rules of acting, playing musical instruments, of dancing, etc. It consisted in action of the performers and it aimed at the satisfaction of the spectators. It provided the consolation and pleasure, which meant that it was not productive, and that it was even less theoretical.

Nevertheless, the notion of "ars" traditionally implied (during Antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Renaissance) both general knowledge and rules. From St. Augustine onwards it was defined as a habit of the mind based on "principles and rules", and it implied a *purposeful action*. So, Hugo could interpret "theatrica" as an art based on certain rules which he did not attempt to define, although we may assume, taking the above into consideration, that he had in mind the existence of special rules of practical theatrical arts such as acting, playing music, dancing, wrestling. During the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, art was understood as knowledge necessary to attain an end (knowing how). In this case, it was knowledge how to sing, to recite, and to organize games and spectacles.

However, *theatrica* as science did not imply that it could be studied *ex post*, and that a theory could be added to it (as it was a practical art); there was nothing that could be added to it to generalize its rules – the one who possessed this science was the performer himself. One more thing is of interest and will be referred to in this essay: as opposed to *theatrica*, fine arts, painting and sculpture, so important for the creation of illusion of reality, as understood in the later 16<sup>th</sup> century practice (when the visual and mechanical aspects became more important than drama) were not counted among *artes*.

This notion of practical art, the low standing of theatre during the Middle Ages, changed with the "discovery" of Aristotle's *Poetics*, with its emphasis on the fable, the "drama", and its moral and educational role in society. [2] The Renaissance critics turned their attention to interpretation of *Poetics*, and the practical, artistic, issues were somewhat neglected, in a manner of speech. However, it is interesting to note that the practical issues of the stage design and the very entertainment were what attracted the most of the public attention.

*Theatrica*, Tatarkiewicz argued, lost its place among arts in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, although it appeared as the lowest mechanical art in Petrarca's "Invectiva contra medicum" of 1353. According to Tatarkiewicz, the notion of *theatrica* appeared again, as one of mechanical arts, in an encyclopedic work known as "Margarita Phylosophica", by an anonymous author in 1496 [1:269-271; 3]. In the chapter dealing with *theatrica* there appeared older definitions, taken from Hugo, but with an addition to the definition that more clearly defined *ars theatrica* unnoticed by Tatarkiewicz. Namely, the anonymous author revealed an aspect of scenic arts omitted in earlier writings, stating that, "Scenic entertainment took place in theaters where, on special constructions called stages, comedians, tragedians and mimes performed..." [1: 270], thus introducing *stage*, as an architectural form endowed with special features which provided setting for theatrical performances. Let us note that Tatarkiewicz stated – wrongly – that "Margarita Phylosophica" was the only work of any interest in *theatrica* until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, neglecting the revival of ancient architectural, Vitruvian, tradition in Leone Battista Alberti's "De architectura" written between 1443 and 1452, [4] on one hand, and the first treatise on the art of theater (*theatrica*) by Leone de' Sommi, a 16<sup>th</sup>-century Mantuan humanist and director, titled "Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche" on the other. [5]

## **2. LEONE BATTISTA ALBERTI AND PELLEGRINO PRISCIANI'S WRITINGS ABOUT THEATER**

In the "Book Eight" of his treatise on architecture, written in Latin, Leone Battista Alberti wrote about the adorning of theatres and other places for public shows, and of their usefulness. At the beginning of the *Chapter VII* of the book, Alberti reminded that the "pontifs and those people whose business it is to set good examples to others abolished public shows, no doubt with good cause", and that there were "many reasons to grieve that so

excellent and useful entertainment has been disused, for as of these public diversions some were contrived for the delight and amusement... and leisure", others for the "exercise of war and to revive and keep up the vigour and fire of the mind", and other to improve the strength, and so forth. After summing up the ancient history of theatrical performances, Alberti goes on to name various buildings, i.e., architectural types in which these "divertimenti" took place, the most excellent of which (played by the "poets": comic, tragic and the like) were shown in *theatres*. Following Vitruvius strictly, providing *the practical rules* for the construction of theaters, Alberti gave a thorough explication of their architecture and measurements, neglecting the problems of stage design and the creation of illusion of its space. Let us not forget that Alberti had already written a treatise on painting, in 1435, in which his most important contribution to the history not only of painting but of all visual arts, is the set of rules he prescribed for the creation of illusion on a flat two-dimensional surface, i.e. the use of mathematical perspective which was to be employed in the perspective stage only almost a century later, in famous Baldassare Peruzzi's illusionistic constructions (judging by their contemporary descriptions).

The first Renaissance treatise on theater fully dedicated to its architecture was "Spectacula Panini" written in volgare in 1501 by Pellegrino Prisciani, a prominent humanist from the court of Ferrara. Prisciani, who had no architectural background, based his writing heavily on both Vitruvius and Alberti, citing them often and simply translating the chapters from their treatises, using their concepts and phrases uncritically, and following their formats. Thus, the first issues Prisciani addressed were the history and definitions of various ancient types of public entertainments and their architectural settings, and only then he set off to prescribe the strict rules for theater architecture, based on measures and proportion, often repeating himself in the long discourse on the architectural matters. Albeit, this was an important piece of the late 15<sup>th</sup>-century scholarship, that added not only to the notion of *theatrica*, based on the architectural rules of measure and proportion, but because it appeared at the first Early Modern European court at which the restoration of ancient drama appeared: Ercole d'Este ordered the performance of *Menaechmi* in volgare in 1486, which represents a turning point in the history of European drama and theater. [6]

Both these treatises, with their antiquarianism, reflected the need to revive ancient architectural types that were not "in use" during many centuries after Antiquity, as there was no need for them. With the revival of ancient drama, in the age of renewed interest in antiquity as historical phenomenon,

there appeared the need to revive also those architectural spaces in which the dramatic texts had been performed. Thus, the role of architecture, in this humanist antiquarian setting, was to present these ancient plays to the contemporary audience in the manner in which they were performed when they were written. This antiquarianism was characteristic of the later 16<sup>th</sup>-century design as well, as demonstrated by Serlio's representations of the stage designs for comedy, tragedy and pastoral, based, as we know, on the interpretation of ancient models, but in contemporary architectural settings.

### **3. LEONE DE' SOMMI. ARS THEATRICA AND ART OF PRODUCTION**

One of the most exciting, and still quite unknown, writings on theater is Leone de' Sommi's treatise "Quattro dialoghi in materia di rappresentazioni sceniche", written in Mantova ca. 1565. [5] Leone de' Sommi, himself a playwright and a director, serving at the Gonzaga court. This treatise represents an invaluable commentary on stage practice and on acting methods. In his introductory address to the readers he clearly stated that his attention was to present a set of rules, "or at least (...) what must be done (...) in producing any dramatic poem (...) in due order (...) and more necessary precepts". He promised to deal with the "issues of the production of plays". What is interesting in de' Sommi's "Dialogue" is that its main character is Veridico, a tailor, i.e. a costume designer, a craftsman/artist that started to be appreciated in the 16th century, [7] who plays an important role in the newly established art of theatrical production. In the Prologue, Leone de' Sommi showed himself as true Aristotelian, noting that the aim of all dramatic performances is to "reveal those virtues which are to be imitated and those which are to be avoided".

In the first two dialogues he offered an unavoidable summary of the history of theatrical performances, as well as lengthy descriptions of the kinds of plays and their settings according to the well-established tradition: the tragic, the comic and the pastoral. Although one would expect to find a unified discourse of all the issues pertaining to theatrical performances, the author, after a long discourse on Aristotle's "Poetics", turned to the most important qualities of plays that would satisfy the need for the decorum – to costuming and acting. He stated that acting was his most important subject. However, he also recognized the importance of stage settings because, "the stage (...) is the trial of the play and many things delightful in the reading will be insipid

when produced, and vice versa (...) [this matter is, A.M.] of much greater significance than most people realize (...) Hence the great master of poetry [Aristotle, A.M.] well admonishes us that we ought rather to attempt a description of the impossible or unnatural things than endeavor to introduce them physically on the stage". [5: 238-239]

The Third Dialogue is dedicated to the actual issues of production as de' Sommi understood it, to the rules of acting, the "method of costuming, and everything that appertains to the stage (...) matters of production [rather, A.M.] than (...) those of play-construction." [5: 244] The main character, Veridico, immediately informs us about the main concern of this dialogue – the actor who "has to try as hard as he can to cheat the spectator into the belief that what he sees on the stage is true". The following pages are dedicated to the reading of scripts and to the methods of acting and costuming that de' Sommi considered to be the most important parts of the production crucial for the observation of decorum. He also singled out the importance of the length of plays, with a gentle introduction of what will be the chief topic of the fourth dialogue, the description of the magnificent intermezzi done (by de' Sommi it seems) for the Gonzaga family in Mantova.

Leone de' Sommi ended the Third Dialogue with a promise to talk about the matters of stage design, about architecture and painting that are necessary for the creation of illusion, in the Fourth Dialogue. He did not keep this promise, though, as he proceeded with the issues of production, touching upon the problems of lighting of the stage, and leaving the stage decoration and architecture to the visual artists.

He assumed that the pictorial devices were already worked out well enough by his age. At the beginning of the last dialogue, Veridico summoned his companions to show them "the excellent effect" of perspective stage, created by a painter, but he immediately compares it with, already mentioned, actor's skill to create an illusion, "Assuredly this art of painting is a wonderful thing when it is in capable hands (...) I am completely cheated by the illusion. Though I know, of course, that there is only a flat cloth in front of me, I (...) see a real street (...) Precisely the same power is at the command of the accomplished actor. Though you are (...) aware that he is only play-acting...".

Not only that de' Sommi compared the creation of illusion in paintings with acting, but he compared the stage design, i.e. the settings depicted on the stage – with the costume design. He, actually Veridico, refused to speak about the "special qualities of the scenery" because his "business is not that of architect or painter". He stated that "manners and styles of the painters

vary considerably, and the material they work in is infinite; equally varied are the settings which they may devise – house fronts, squares, porticoes, streets embellished with arches, columns, statues of diverse kinds... However, just as I said that the actors' costumes should be rich in appearance, so I say that the sets ought always to be based on the finest possible models. The details of such matters I leave to those who practice such arts, but I may remark – with all due deference to the moderns – that the sets of which we have so full descriptions among the ancients must have possessed an almost absolute beauty (...) From these accounts we may deem that our modern sets, lovely as they may seem, are but shadows to those of that more glorious time."

If we take into account the definition of *ars* as a set of rules, Leone de' Sommi's "Dialogues" introduced an understanding of theatre in its wholeness, as the union of architecture, stage design, setting, plot of a drama, with special attention to acting, costume design, and lighting as crucial for the achievement of illusion, the *sine qua non* term of this first modern treatise on the art of theatre.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

It seems that *ars theatrica*, as a notion that implies the existence of set of rules, as a purposeful action that aims at production of "something", like a play, had not lost its original meaning as *the art of acting*. It did not refer to other arts, such as architecture, scene design and production of stage machines (not until Baroque, which relied on the synergy between all the media, used in order to create perfect illusions in theatrical performances). Until the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, *ars theatrica* pertained to the action of the performers and everything else that it implied, as is shown in Leone de' Sommi's "Dialogues", aiming at the satisfaction, consolation and pleasure of the spectators, the issues that were of the utmost importance in the process of *production* of the plays, *production* as an art in its own right, which owed to the interests and the concerns of the 16<sup>th</sup>-century aristocratic culture.

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# SUBVERSIVE POTENTIAL OF SCENE DESIGN - A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

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**Abstract:** In this work a notion of scene design will be explored in the context of postmodern and contemporary society. Inquiring Guy Debord's concept of the Society of spectacle, Jacques Lacan's definition of the symptom in psychoanalysis and the concept of melancholy as it is defined by Miško Šuvaković. There will be offered a standpoint at which a concept of scene design will be seen as a subversive instrument in regards to the spectacle, as a symptom of malady of the Late Capitalism, and at the same time as a key factor in solving that malady.

**Keywords:** scene design; society of spectacle; postmodernism, psychoanalysis



Figure 1. Francesca Woodman; From Angel series, Rome, 1977.

"Ever since Rimbaud, everyone repeats that 'the true life is absent'. Philosophy is not worth an hour's effort if it is not based on the idea that the true life is present. With regard to circumstances, the true life is present in the choice, in distance and in the event." [1]

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Alain Badiou said that the 20th century was the century of theatre. The legitimacy of this view is based on the fact that in the last century theatre was established as an autonomous form of art that has not been involved anymore in representing narratives, but in creating those narratives itself. In that way theatre has entered the political and social space primarily as a means of gaining a power. The same process, of course, have not remained without the contra-influence. What has been recognized as a theatralization of social and political developments, at the same time has led to a politization of art.

What we can read as the symptomatic character of theatre arts in the 20th century is inscribed in a regulation of relations among the narrative, actor, space and audience. This structural formula has been exploited in social relations, political practices, and cultural events, primarily because of the inherent control mechanism. In period of modernism it served within the political and ideological programmes. Opposed to that, period of postmodernism monopolized and materialized these relations in that what we know, since the period of sixties, as a Society of spectacle. Actually, it could be said that since then some kind of misuse of structural relations in social and political life, directly extracted from the theatre, has been in progress. This situation is evident, first of all, because the structural code inherent to those relations in its essence implies a directing, spectacularization and aesthetization.

Thesis that has been set here is that scene design could be viewed as that structural code, which emerges in contemporary moment as its immanent tool of regulation of social and economic relations, as a tool of aesthetization, commercialization and ideologisation of those relations. On one hand, the notion of scene design could be seen as an instrument of the contemporary neoliberal paradigm, and on the other, as an object misused by the current capitalistic project.

In Lacanian terms, the scene design is seen as a symptom, as a subversive element of the contemporary neoliberal frame at which "only sword which caused (you) the wound is able to heal it"[2]. Therefore, this study will explore the potentials of scene design as a weapon of overcoming the melancholy of postmodern subject, likewise the melancholic sadness

caused by commercialization of the form and content of scene presentations, primarily using the approach of distancing from that content.

### **1.1. Scene Design in Society of Spectacle**

Scene design as a contemporary art form has evolved from a stage architecture, and it is defined as a deliberately directed audio-visual articulation of space. However, the concept of scene design is wider than the concept of stage design because it is not solely connected to stage or drama. Theatrical logic inscribed in the concept of scene design, also underscored here, is viewed through two important aspects: the aspect of presentation practices and the aspect of establishing spatial relation performer-observer. These aspects could be important, if scene design was seen as an entity within social, economic and political realities. The first aspect is present in critical analysis as a potential for imposing certain programmatic (political) systems, while the second aspect emerges as an additional factor of stabilisation and guarantee for imposed programmes. According to that, the very essence of scene presentation is its ability of proliferation of spectacle in the contemporary society.

In order to talk about scene design as an instrument of improvement and development of spectacle, firstly, we should be precise about the major features of this term. Historically, the term of spectacle is present since the very beginnings of civilisation, but its use in the context as it appears today in social critics is known only since the middle of 20th century. The particular context Guy Debord attributed to it in his book *The Society of Spectacle*, where the spectacle is presented as a law, as a big Other which governs emptied relationships among participants in social movements. The relationships among participants are emptied because they are mediated merely through images, and because of the logic immanent to this mediation that is purely economic. In this obscure situation everything becomes the semblance in service of the Spectacle. Therefore, the montage of semblance and strengthening of spectator's passive position are becoming the main productive apparatus at which the function of scene design must be only servicing. Scene design becomes a tool, a pure aesthetic form, and ideology of the society of spectacle.

At the beginning of the 21st century, scene effect has been exploited more than ever. Some additional mechanisms that encouraged exploitation of the scene resources in the postmodern capitalism are the processes of

aesthetisation and commercialisation of public life, likewise the advent of technical and technological means of presentation. Nevertheless, what contributes the most to positioning of scene presentation and scene design at the paradigmatic level is relationship between the real and reality. Since the beginning of the 20th century there could be followed a society's strong "passion for the real", but at the same time also a radical abolition of link between the real thing and its signifier. Today, this abolition ends up in the ultimate hyper realistic society. Fantasmagoric character of the contemporary reality is obvious, but that is precisely what opens up a space to the scenic art for re-actualisation of the reality, for reconsidering of its own positions and responsibilities. Scene design in this light emerges simultaneously as a means of active participation in society of spectacle, and as a latent subversive energy oriented to that society, likewise to the possibilities of its changing.

## **1.2. Melancholy**

Previously, there has been introduced the thesis about a constitutive role of scene design in the phantasmagoric society of spectacle. Also, there have been listed some of the main reasons of scene design's exploitation as a means in overall communication. Nevertheless, because of its importance, what will be presented in particular is one of the basic links between the society of spectacle and scene design as a model of functioning of that society.

Miško Šuvaković says that melancholy emerges at a collective level as a "post-historical sadness for absent meaning"[3]. This melancholic sadness is a characteristic of postmodern times where the idea of God is already dead, and the most of great ideological projects are vanished. The period of postmodern times is marked with the appearance of symbolical subject on one side, and on the other, with the demise of classical subject that was dominant through the former social discourses. The notion of postmodern subject appears as a variety complex of distinct positions whose meaning is not determined in advance. This subject, at first place, has melancholy as a primary feeling in relation to the general state of things. "The subject is not opened up to a horizon of possibilities, as in the moment of love or artistic creation, but closed down and locked into an introspective condition that constitutes a form of living death." [4]. However, in order to maintain such an entity as a manufacturing / consumptive unit in the company, it is constantly kept alive due to occasional interruptions during the "living death" by so-called

"poses of the spectacle." [3]. Scene design as the instrument of spectacle and the melancholy as a collective spirit of contemporary epoch stay in a kind of dialectical relation, simultaneously opposed, but at the same time interdependent. Spectacle interrupts the melancholic nature of contemporary society using a various artistic forms of scene presentation and keep it alive in that way, but also never breaks the limits of that situation that would mean placing a society in the proactive state. Eventually, this is the core of the critique of contemporary scene art, performed inside the theatre institutions or into independent production. The critique is focused to this state of scene design at which it is trapped in servicing position to the ideology of spectacle, where it wastes its own subversive potential. In this way, scene design stays imprisoned within the formal loyalty to the profession, elitism of art, and ideology of spectacle.

### **1.3. Scene Design as a Symptom**

For better understanding of scene design's critique and an affirmative attitude related to it, here will be shown a psychoanalytical interpretation of scene design as a symptom. Namely, in Lacan's RSI system the Symbolical order is everything which is close to language, and expressible through it. Reality at which the Symbolical order refers to is not completely readable. Actually, there is always something that could not be symbolised and Lacan calls it the Real (with capital R). The Real is not a physical reality; instead, it is a hole and an ontological gap. To be more precise, it is an empty space of existence that is shown only through the symptom, or through the place which indicates that something in the structure of reality does not function properly.

Interpreting the scene design as a symptomatic place within the symbolic structure of social, political and economic discourses has its goal in affirmation of scene design's critique and emphasising its role in contemporary society. Moreover, scene design as a symptom of disturbed social causality is seen in the relation real-imaginary as a place of great potential for understanding and changing of this social disruptions.

Scene design has a potential for intrusion into the network of symbolic order, and it comes from the fact that in the field of scene presentation there is always a kind of conflict between imposed symbolic readings and something as "a real flow of reality". The real flow of reality does not mean a simple reaching of substantial identity of the real, but more that what Badiou calls subtracting the real from reality. "To purify reality, not in order to annihilate it at its surface, but to subtract it from its apparent unity so as to detect within it

the minuscule difference, the vanishing term that constitutes it." [5] Breaking through the Symbolic order requires the additional effort of distancing against the symbolic narrative and seizing the empty space of the Real. Eventually, we could recall Žižek in following: "only radical alienation (of subject) from direct substantial richness opens up the space for articulation (of its own) subjective content". [6]

The critique of scene design, as it has been established in this work, is not interested in occupying the real/authentic space, but instead, the empty space from where actualisation of subjective meanings is only possible. The empty space could be occupied only through distancing from one's own substantial content. Therefore, it means that not integration in the symbolic network of spectacle, which is offered as an authentic place of healing "the sadness from absent meaning", but a radical distancing against to it is required.

## **2. CONCLUSION**

Scene design's critical analysis has been based on two key concepts or theory presumptions. Scene design has been seen as a concept which at different levels of usage establishes relations spectator-observer, uses distinct narratives (texts) and high level of aesthetisation of scene presenting. Spectacle is a second concept which has been perceived as an ideological project of contemporary society, where the scene design is used as a tool of communication at almost all levels: social, political, artistic, cultural, or commercial. Interdependent relation of those two concepts has led to the establishing of the general thesis: scene design contributes to the developing of neoliberal project by being in its service, but because of the central position that scene design has in the contemporary society it appropriates a certain amount of subversive potential, whose highlighting becomes the essence and obligation of scene design's critique, and also the critique of contemporary society of spectacle.

The theoretical criticism is based on comprehension of the principles of creating the psychoanalytical subject in order to make the position of the speaking subject clearer. The critique is oriented to the responsibility of subject who speaks in the society of spectacle using the language of scene design, and in that way taking responsibility in relation to the place where the social phantasms are produced and where the symbolic network of spectacle

is made. Thus, the only possible way of breaking the current "symbolic dungeon" is from inside of that very place, the place of extreme subversive energy.

In conclusion it must be underscored that the highlighting the subversive potential of scene design implies some kind of methodological distancing from its own substantial content. It refers to something like a philosophical distancing in order to make a critical comprehension of its own position and required position in relation to the wider social context.

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# INTERACTIVITY IN ART AS A FORM OF COGNITION OF ARCHITECTURAL SPACE

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**Abstract:** This paper analyzes term “interactivity“ and its’ meaning in art and architecture. In addition, it explores human behavior influence on the level of interactivity in architectural spaces designated for performing arts.

In everyday life, we are constantly interacting with the world around us. Since every action causes a reaction, we are continuously adjusting to environments and changing them to suit our needs. In the past, much more passive, interaction in the modern world that is characterized by speed and availability, is becoming more immediate. Architectural spaces have several layers of components that reach beyond purely physical or functional. An important feature of the architecture is the experience of the space we occupy. Interactivity in architecture brings union of space and experience to the next level, freeing the space of passivity.

Art is an integral part of the architecture and thus in many cases difficult to distinguish these two concepts and areas of activity. Elements of interaction are more likely to occur in contemporary art installations incorporated into the architectural space, than architectural buildings that have very distinct elements of functionality and structure. Architecture designed for the performing arts is adequate for interactive spaces since events within them are certainly characterized by high levels of dynamism, interaction and experience. The goal of interactive environment is to create a digitally enhanced social space that invites people to interact with the environment and with each other. Interactive spaces seem to resist strictly virtual or physical definitions. They are constantly moving between the two areas and pushing barriers between them. If the answer to our interaction reaches us in real time our relationship with space deepens; the space begins to function on the biological and psychological level of our cognition.

**Keywords:** architecture; art, interactivity; time; space; experience

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Our relationship with information technology is a socio-economic, cultural and formal. Socio-economic, because the whole society functions within the framework dominated by information. Cultural, because creation is today almost impossible to imagine without information technology. And formal, because technology shape and conceptualize space. Information is becoming a main element of the new architecture and technology central paradigm of a new phase in its development.

In the second half of the twentieth century architects and artists was given access to multimedia technologies that enable them to enrich the architectural environment with digital information. Integration of information technology in everyday settings has the potential to transform architectural space in the interface between humans and digital information. Changing the way people interact with each other and with the environment, the architectural spaces develop increased level of socialization.

## **2. DEFINING THE CONCEPT OF INTERACTIVITY IN ARCHITECTURE AND ART**

Interactive system is a system that functions in two directions on the principle of action and reaction and allows continuous transmission of information between members of the system. Interactive systems are not designed to function in a linear sequence, but circular, because there is always a feedback.

### **2.1. Interactivity in architecture**

Architectural structures are designed as static forms with distinct sense of permanence. Change or re-design of these spaces to meet the human needs is always a challenge because not only are people's needs changing over time but also does environment. Architecture must be responsive, sensitive and with the ability to facilitate the rapid changing, not only the spatial requirements.

Interactive architecture is extension of what is already happening in non-interactive spaces. The constant movement of people and constant change of environment give the dynamic dimension to architectural space. Digital systems and the flow of information through them simply increase the effect of the dynamic, using kinetic, video, audio and physical

responses. If the answer of interaction is received in real time, the connection of user with the space is increased; the space starts to work on the biological and psychological level of users cognition. [1]

Ruairi Glynn defines four components of interactive architecture:

- Digital technology and the virtual experience connected with tangible physical spatial experience
- The human physical experience is based on decisions made by intelligent digital space in relation to himself
- Interaction is the mutual relationship between the space and the user in which both sides perceive the presence of each other
- Interaction is present only when the spatial changes induce users cognitive perception

Another way of looking at interactive architecture is that it adds a fourth dimension, time element, to the traditional three-dimensional architecture. Modern technologies are changing our understanding of space as static and unchangeable in a dynamic, reactive and communicative. Therefore interactive architecture should represent architectural design capable of demonstrating reactive behavior in relation to the individual, social and environmental changes.

## **2.2. Interactivity in contemporary art**

Art represents an integral part of the architecture and thus in many cases difficult to distinguish between these two concepts and areas of activity. Elements of interaction are likely to occur in contemporary art installations than architectural buildings. One reason is that the art installations do not contain elements of functionality and structure and therefore are more accessible for the application of modern technology and the concept of interaction.

Interactive art is a form of art that involves the spectator in a way that allows the art to achieve its purpose. Unlike traditional art forms where the interaction of the spectator is merely a mental event, interactivity allows for various types of navigation, assembly, and/or contribution to an artwork, which goes far beyond purely psychological activity. Interactivity as a medium produces meaning. [2] Though some of the earliest examples of interactive art have been dated back to the 1920s, most digital art didn't make its official entry into the world of art until the late 1990s. [3] Since this

debut, countless museums and cultural institutions have been increasingly accommodating digital and interactive art into their productions. There are many different forms of interactive art. Such forms range from interactive dance, music, and even drama. [4], see Figure 1



Figure 1. Art3fact - an interactive dance performance around the relationship between Human and Machine, Nantes, France

### **3. INTERACTIVITY AS EXPERIENCE IN ARCHITECTURAL SPACES OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS**

Architectural spaces have several layers of components that reach beyond their purely physical structure and function. An important feature of the architecture is the experience of the space we occupy. Interactivity in architecture brings a unity of space and experience to the next level, freeing the space of passivity, allowing him to “experience” users. At the same time, the user experience is improved by interaction with conditionally “intelligent” space. [5]

Recently, the concept of experience has become extremely popular in development of cultural institutions. Today architectural spaces of cultural institutions beside primary functions include various additional social contents that will produce unique experience; flexible spaces for contemplation, inspiration, communication, innovation and interaction.

Experience environment is a space that enables dialogue, access and transparency, a process of co-creation in which both parties are more or less in a balance.[6] At one end is passive participation, in which users don't affect the performance at all and experience the event as observers or listeners. At the other end is active participation, in which users play key

roles in creating the performance or event that yields the experience. At one end lies absorption, at the other immersion.[7] Individual's personal experience is essentially a form of behavior, a process in which feeling plays an important role. The logic of emotions determines how an individual deals with both his or her environment and the people in it, while looking for experiences that will give meaning. Experiences occur in a process in which interactions take place in a certain setting, between the individual and other people and this makes experiences, just like culture, intangible.

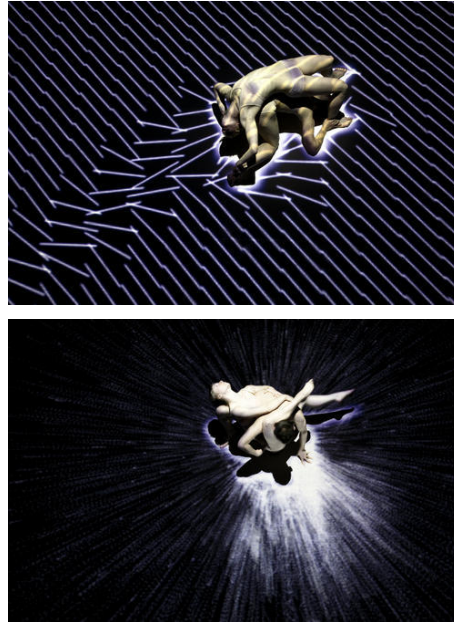


Figure 2. Chunky Moves - Mortal Engine - Interactive scenography

Performing arts now occupies not strictly space of auditoriums or time of play duration. Performances with a strong element of socialization and interaction occupy atriums, lobbies and corridors, making the entire architectural space become scenery. Between the virtual and the real lies space of experience, personal and mutual and constantly changeable where every individual has active part in its creation. see Figure 2

#### **4. COGNITION OF THE ARCHITECTURAL SPACE**

The social context of mutual co-existence stems from architecture and the people who occupy the architectural space. Human communication

is a basic example of interactive communication. Accordingly, many conceptualizations of interactivity are based on anthropomorphic definitions. With that in mind, interaction includes responses to human physical manipulation like movement, body changes or psychological condition. In the context of communication between human and artifact, in this case architectural space, interactivity refers to the behavior of an interactive space as it is experiencing by a human user. This is different from other aspects of the space, such as visual appearance, inner functioning and meanings of characters that can be shown. Interactivity of architectural space is best viewed through use, because of the kinetic nature of the interactive experience.

Most important characteristics of interactive space are:

- The interaction of humans and the environment
- Physical means of achieving interaction
- Active behavior
- Respond to individual and social needs
- Connection with space

With these characteristics in mind, we can notice the different criteria for the classification of interactive space, which can be divided into five groups:

- The criteria in relation with whom the space is in interaction: external environment, internal factors, or with a person.
- The criteria in relation with architectural element on which interactive applications are implemented.
- The criteria in relation with form of initial information (which comes from user): Dynamic indirect (movement), dynamic direct (touch), audio, visual or a combination.
- The criteria in relation with character of the reaction of space: Visual, audio, dynamic, thermal, smell or a combination.
- The criteria in relation to the requirements that the system satisfies: Functional, aesthetic and informational. In other words: Pragmatic (adaptability, optimization) and psychological (human behavior, perception of space, understanding of space, control and attachment to the space)

Reaction of interactive space on initial information from the user must evoke users wish to continue communicating. Only through the circular flow of information exchange interaction exists. Based on the manner in which an interactive system causes further communication with user we can distinguish three levels of interactivity:

Table 1. Three levels of interaction

| Level of interaction | Description                                                                                                                                                                                       | Further communication                                                                                            |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1st Level            | An interactive system describes the environment, showing the happenings in the surrounding user in the pre-defined way.                                                                           | Induced by the desire of user to observe their own behavior in various forms and techniques of representation    |
| 2nd Level            | An interactive system defines and changes the environment in relation to the behavior of the user.                                                                                                | Caused by the desire of user to adapt system to its own needs.                                                   |
| 3rd Level            | An interactive system that communicates directly with the user, in the form of "learning" and improving their performance in accordance with the reaction of users ie. system changes themselves. | Caused by unpredictability of the system and feel of communication intelligence ie. understanding of the system. |

Experiences are inherently personal, existing only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual, or even spiritual level. Thus, no two people can have the same experience, because each experience derives from the interaction between the staged event and the individual's state of mind. The goal of interactive environment is to create a digitally enhanced social space that invites people to interact with the environment and with each other.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Interactive architectural space occurs at the moment when the reactive one turns to the people instead of the external environment and manages to challenge the repeted reactions of user affecting their cognitive perception of space. Each architectural space is at a certain level interactive, connected with its environment. The interaction of the architecture is going extremely slow. Architecture should simply increase the speed of these changes to become evidently interactive. One way to achieve this is to implement interactive art installations in architectural spaces that will increase the level of socialization and allow it to evolve

along with users. Art creates a bond between people and space. This bond will remain constant only if changes are simultaneous. Art is not anymore in the achievement of the formal shape of the work but in the design of the rules that determine the evolution of the shape according to the quality of the interaction.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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# BREAKING THE IMAGE OF URBAN SPACE

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**Abstract:** A modern city is often compared to a stage, composed by gathering spaces and spaces for artistic expression, for different types of spectacle. In this respect, under the term 'artistic' we do not refer only to an individual or a group professional art creation. On the contrary, as 'artistic' we see the need for expressing personal standpoint through public space.

This paper focuses on inappropriate public conduct bordering on anarchism and eccentricity. On the other hand, this phenomenon can also be considered as an artistic critique of the authority. On the subject of 'creative activism' it will be analyzed from two points of view: (1) motivation of unruly public conduct; (2) result of activism that breaks the image of urban space. The image of urban space is altered for a moment, as such a gesture creates and urban scene. Attack on authority modified into artistic activism becomes a spectacle, and people caught in the moment at a particular place become audience.

Could this type of action, considered as an ideology, fall under scene design? The paper will prove that the need for social change and attack on authority is artistic activism, through several case studies referring to aspects of scene design. Although the actors of the event are not artist in the full sense of the word, this form of activism is indeed true scene design.

**Keywords:** architecture; urban scene; authority; activism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Public space, as a space open and accessible to all, is a place of social contact and spectacle. Urban public spaces offer a richness of experiences and possibilities for action [1]. If we consider urban space as a literary piece that enables different interpretations, people experience its influence in different manners. [2].

A modern city is often compared to a stage, composed by gathering spaces and spaces for artistic expression, for different types of spectacle. In this respect, under the term 'artistic' we do not refer only to an individual or a group professional art creation. On the contrary, as 'artistic' we see the need for expressing personal standpoint through public space.

According to Pamela Howard, space is "*..everywhere where there's a certain meeting point between the actors and their potential audience. It is precisely there, in the limited space of this encounter and, through establishing of such a contact, that scenographers build their art* " [3]. This paper will consider the audience as actors and participators in spectacle, and scenographers as artists that express through their attitude.

If we consider inappropriate behaviour bordering on different types of anarchism and eccentricity, as an artistic critique of authority, it may be ascribed to creative activism. Under the term *activism* we consider a behaviour intended to reach social or political goals through activities such as raising awareness, forming of coalitions, managing political campaigns, production of promotional material, generating publicity and performing other actions in order to affect social changes. It is precisely through this method of expression that the artists attack the authorities, which becomes a spectacle through modification into artistic activism; individuals caught in the moment become the audience. In this way, the common image of the urban space changes because this gesture creates an urban scene.

Creative activism can be observed from two perspectives:

- Motivation of inappropriate public behaviour;
- Result of activism that generates the image of urban spaces.

The paper will illustrate case studies that will show that this sort of activism is indeed scene design, although the actors in the spectacle may not be professional artists; the analysis will take into consideration different scene design aspects.

In order to analyse these case studies based on the previously established criteria, we must first define the terms used. Under the term *authority* we consider the capability of an individual or a group to express their standpoint in a way that all trust him/her unconditionally. When there is discontinuity in this process, there comes to inappropriate public behaviour i.e. vandalism. *Vandalism* in arts is a protest against the governing system of values i.e. a fight against authority.

Participants in such actions are individuals or groups that want to express their point of view through different means of communication. They strive to convince the public directly of the necessity to change their attitude and behaviour, rather than to turn to the authorities in changing legislations.

## **2. CASE STUDY**

Observing activism as a form of unruly public behaviour, expressed through the means that can be considered artistic, two main directions come to mind.

The case studies will therefore be divided in two main groups:

- Vandalism as a form of artistic expression and
- Urban guerilla as art.

### **2.1. Case study 1: Vandalism as a form of artistic expression**

The following examples illustrate the thin line between vandalism and art. In their fight against authority, people express their stand through artistic methods that later become art themselves.

#### **2.1.1. Churchill Cherokee**

May Day has been celebrated in London since the 1880s. It has been a unique bringing together of trade unionists, workers from the many international communities in London, pensioners, anti-globalisation organisations, students, political bodies and many others in a show of working class unity. The whole theme of May Day is unity and solidarity - across the city, across the country, across the world [4].

During the anticapitalist protests in London in 2000, in the course of the so called MayDay, hundreds of protestors came into conflict with the police.

As a direct opposition to authority, one of the protestors put a grassy mohican patch on the head of the Winston Churchill statue in Parliament

Square in London (Figure 1a). The actor of this installation was not an artist, but the context in which this vandalist act was realized speaks volumes of a very clear position expressed in a scenic method.



Figure 1. (a) Churchill mochican; (b) Banksy cover

What makes this case study interesting is that there are numerous interpretations of this work. British street artist Banksy did a cover of this vandalist act and interpreted it on canvas (Figure 1b). Photographs of this Churchill's monument, covered in snow with a Cherokee headpiece made of snow on its head can also be found on the Internet.

Unruly public behaviour, expressed through vandalism, implies that it is indeed a form of art. Expressing attitude and ideological standpoint in public spaces, as actors and creators of these spectacles, a scenic image is consciously created. These individuals, although not artists, become an inspiration to many other creators.

#### 2.1.2. **Viona**

In June 2010, in Sankt Peterburg, a russian group named *Viona*, organized a vandalist action. The meaning of the word *viona* in Russian is war, which implied a group of artist known by their provocative and politically, filled artist work and performance art.

This group drew an image of a falus on a moving bridge, in the immediate vicinity of the former KGB headquarters, leaving them a very explicit message. Their goal was to show that not even the police is untouchable, which was the direct cause for sending this message to the authorities.

This action had been planned two weeks in advance, and the realization itself lasted whole 30 seconds. The authors had to become

acquainted with all traffic functional models on the bridge in order to coordinate the action successfully.

The coordinated action is a vandalist activity in itself, but the process of creating a scene offering a clear message to the authorities, is scene design indeed. The methods of preparation for this action as well as the effect that the work makes on the observer, have created a scenic image (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Scenic image of Sankt Peterburg

## **2.2. Case study 2: Urban guerilla as art**

The previous case studies have established that vandalism borders on art. Tracking modern tendencies, the line between vandalism and art has been somewhat lost. Contemporary artists use guerilla actions as means of expression and in that way develop fresh urban images, creating new spaces we can consider scenographies.

### **2.2.1. Guerilla gardener**

A series of misterious scenographies located along the streets of London in 2010 created incredible intrigue among passers-by. The so called 'guerilla pothole gardener' is Steve Wheen, who distributes his small green instalation throughout London, installing them in the cracks on the road. The concept of this creative activist project is to emphasize the lack of greenery and parks, especially pointing out the issue of partially or completely devastated road infrasrtucture (Figure 4a ).

Partly an artistic project, partly created out of love, partly an experiment and in part a mission to illustrate the current state of road infrastructure, these reduced scenographies built in the urban context have the task to bring smiles to the faces of passers-by, as well as to warn them of cracks and holes in the road. This idea developed further into an international guerilla action. People from all over the world have been joining this pothole gardener and created 'green scenographies' with the same motive.

As Pjar Lajak in the book *Urban Spectacle* claims "street art is becoming urban scenography. They use the city as material and engage it to become more than merely a context" [5].



Figure 4. (a) Green installation as scenography; (b) Green scenography in a wider context

Located in a real space and time, observed in a wider context, green installations become a scenography for the observers (Figure 4b). Means of expression that Steve Wheen is using are explicitly scenic. Although there are no actors in the scenography, accidental passers-by become observers and simultaneously actors of the following spectacles:

- Accidental visitors that stop and react to the scenography admiring it,
- Accidental passers-by unaware of the installation and
- Passer-by that tread over it.

If we define scenography as a term used in theatre and as a "syntax that articulates the place and performing"[6], on the example of guerilla gardeing it becomes clear that the image created is scenic and that it bares resemblance of its theatre roots, where the city and its space are considered a theatrical space.

### 2.2.2. Painting reality

A dutch-born, performance artist Iepe Rubingh executed a guerilla action in 2010, together with his crew, which was executed anonymously. 500 litres of waterbased environmentally-friendly paint was dumped on asphalt on Rosen theater Platz in Berlin, which was spread by 2000 cars (Figure 5a). The cars drove over the paint and become 'paint brushes', spreading the paint in every direction. Their motivation was to leave a visual history of their movement and create an eye-popping visual to make people smile.

Is this art or attack on public space?

The image of a public space shatters for a moment. The entire space gets a different connotation: a public square becomes a performance space. The activities that takes place in it, aided by its actors and accidental passers-by that turn actors themselves and cars as means of creating a spectacle, all dramatizes the space. (Figure 5b).



Figure 5. (a) Motor-buckets dropping paint ; (b) Painting reality

### 2.2.3. "KUT" – Oh Joy !

Guerilla Creative Collective 'Kut' is a group of artists from Latvia, and in August 2012 they brought unexpected weather conditions to the Streets of Riga.

This action was executed in a city where it never snowed. With the use of a single medium – throwing of bulrush, the weather suddenly changed and passers-by and observers were obliged to become active participators in this event (Figure 6).

To revive the grey concrete, to break the routine and give you a moment to reflect on what we are and where we are going. Sometimes surprises just happen and we have no influence over them but we do have influence over our perception [7].

Apart from normal reactions such as surprise and unease, most of the present reacted with amazement, especially the younger population.

Through the use of a single means of expression, the entire space become scenic and poetic, even if only for few moments.



Figure 6. Normal image of the streets of Riga -shattered

### 3. CONCLUSION

Analysing the proposed case studies, we may conclude that activism as a form of unruly behaviour must not necessarily be considered wither vandalism and guerilla initiatives. The differences between them are scarce, because vandalism and guerilla have practically no differences. The example of the Russian group Viona clearly implies that their initiative borders on vandalism and urban guerilla. This example might be a guerilla action, but the message it sends to the authorities and the means in which it was performed is certainly vandalism.

All these initiatives have succeeded in changing the image of the city for a moment. The means of expressing and techniques used in space, use of a pre-defined public space, establishing of contact with the audience and actors who clearly devise their activities in advance, clearly indicates that this method is indeed scene design.

"A space is dead until it is inhabited by performers and they become mobile elements of the scene image, interpreting the story that is emphasized precisely through the use of the space" [8].

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# ALEXEI GASTEV: RECONSTRUCTING THE SOVIET BODY

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**Abstract:** Theme of this paper is the notion of the Soviet Revolutionary Body as perceived and constructed in the 1920s, discussed through the work of Russian artist, poet, journalist, engineer and factory worker, Alexei Gastev, and the impact it had on popular culture. *Central Institute of Labor*, supported by Lenin and founded by Gastev in 1920, was an organization set up in Moscow and dedicated to the study of work improvement of industrial efficiency. Its official philosophy was that of *Taylorism*. Gastev dedicated his full energy, as well as his life, to the task of the new Soviet proletariat in the *Taylorist* method of organizing industrial labor that will consequently lead him towards creating the prototype of what we today know as installation and set of body movements that will become known as *Biomechanics*. It is my intention to elaborate more on the events that led up to this point.

**Keywords:** labor; hammer; body; machinist; Taylorism

## 1. INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of the October Revolution modern technology was central to the Bolshevik plan whose aim was to construct a new type of human being, to transform the people into, what they called, scientific beings – people able to understand and control machines of the modern age rather than being enslaved by them. One of the most interesting and surely the most controversial experiments that emerged out of Russian Revolution was the *Cult of the Machine*. Advocates of this cult, anguished by the deadlock and inefficiency of the Russian factory, inspired by American industrialists, Henry Ford [1] and Taylor Winslow[2] dreamed of remodeling the (workers) body as well as the (workers) psyche and the state of (Russian) society as whole. Although the *Cult of the Machine* that consequently produced *Soviet Taylorism* was not designed for a utopian society as such, it was itself profoundly utopian. The key figure of this period was, among others, Alexei Gastev, Russian artist and an engineer, who, with the support of Vladimir Iljič Lenin, founded the *Central Institute of Labor* (Центральный институт труда) to which he referred as *his last work of art* and whose power lied in the perfect blend of the skills of an artist, engineer and a factory worker.

The main objective of this paper is to give an overview of Alexei Gastev, the work he conducted at *Central Institute of Labor* (ranging from 20 years in the period from 1918 until 1938) and the impact it had on popular culture. In regard to this, I would like to start this paper by introducing, what I believe was crucial in building up the fertile ground for things that will procreate across Russia in the 20s - Gastev's poetry and the obsession he had with industrialization and the machine. He was guided by the idea of using Russian peasants in order to create an army of ironworkers that will help rebuild the weakened, impoverished and ruined country. It was about solidifying Russia. And what better way to solidify Russia than through a written word that will spread across the country like a virus infecting every member of society who at this point desperately needed someone to look upon, someone to guide them. And when we are at it, what better man for the job than the Iron Messiah of the mechanical age, Gastev himself? Needless to say, Gastev's poetry, as the announcer of the era of new type of human being, served the purpose, with the next logical step being to act upon it.

## 2. CULT OF THE MACHINE

Two significant events emerged from the end of October Revolution that led Gastev to the point of enabling him to found the *Central Institute of Labor*: (a) he was elected to Central Council of the Petrograd Works, which (b) subsequently led him to become the First Secretary of All – Russian Metal Workers' Union. [3] This is important because Gastev was originally known as the most popular of the *worker-poets*, a position which was one of the prime factors that enabled the establishment of Central Institute of Labor, and furthermore, at the time he was the leading member of *Proletkult*, a mass cultural organization consisting of almost half million members who wrote *proletarianfactory poetry*. The primary goal of this particular genre of poetry (if I can call it a genre) was to arise positive feelings, particularly among Russians, toward the technical modern age and emerging industrialization. Gastev's most famous work, praised by the members of Proletkult was a poem *We Grow out of Iron*, written in 1914. Deeply metaphorical it embodied "the essence of philosophy of the industrial proletariat" (Kalinin, 16) .

### 2.1. We Grow Out of Iron

*Look! I stand among them: machines, hammers, furnaces and forges  
and among hundreds of comrades.*

*Atop the wrought – iron expanse. To the sides were beams and  
girders. They went up ten lengths.*

*They bent to the right and to the left.*

*They connected to the rafters and cupolas as the shoulders of a giant,  
sustaining the whole iron construction.*

*They were swift, they flourished and were strong but they still required  
greater force. I look at them and stand up straight.*

*In my veins flowed the blood of a new railway. I grew myself higher.*

*Began to sprout firm hands and immense steel shoulders. I merged  
with the iron construction,*

*I arose.*

*My shoulders stuck out of the rafters, the headers and beams, and the roof. My feet stood on the ground, but my head soured above the building.*

*Still chocking from this superhuman effort, I only cried: "These words I ask of you, my friends, these words!"*

*Iron wove the echo of my words, the entire building vibrates with impatience. And so I went even higher, accompanied by trumpets.*

*Neither story, nor speech, but only one iron word I'll shout: "We will win!" [4]*

The poem is clearly about the transformation from once human, from flesh to metal - idea that was ubiquitous and widely spread throughout Russia at the time and in all spheres of life, carrying within laborer's self-identification with the tools he is using concurrently pointing out that one, newfound, identity (of a tool) negates the other consequently leaving the laborer to lose his individual to the mass, in a collective. Rolf Hollebust gives a religious connotation to the poem when he points out at the beginning "I stand among them" and the end of the poem "We will win" seeing the speaker as a Christlike figure that ascends toward a heaven of hammered metal leaving his consciousness lost among his fellow workers ("iron echo") thus becoming a mass-man, in a collective (506). Julia Vaingurt on the other hand hears it "as the primal scream of a human being in pain, a human being in the throes of recreating himself" putting Gastev in a position of a believer who knows that once you have given in to the machine, once you have made love to it, a new being, a new iron man, would emerge as creation of this unity (218).

And while I do agree on a religious part seeing a speaker as Christlike figure, rising above the worldly, the religion he preaches is not a worldly one. This man is not a Russian Orthodox and the salvation he seeks is not the one he'll find in a church. This is a man of mechanical age, iron messiah, who believes in his tools and whose sacred soil is that of a factory in which he becomes whole. "A long time ago they gave us hammers instead of bread and made us work. They tortured us. ... But clutching the hammer, we called it a friend. Each stroke added iron to our muscles. The energy of steel penetrated our soul. And we, slaves once, encroached upon the world." (Gastev, 1918: 139, qtd. in Vaingurt, 218). Hammer is his friend; it is an extension of his soul. Iron blood of a railway flows in his veins and with each new stroke he grows himself higher. This is a man who derives his strength from the iron around him. This is a man who seeks new ways of restructuring the human body, who

wishes to “expel everything he associated with Russianness (disorder, weakness, wastefulness), transcending the concept of nationality and replacing it with the universal identity of the machine” (Vaingurt, 210). He wants to be heard. This man is Gastev himself and he is eager, willing and above all ready to lead his comrades into a brave new world. He discards nature as such in favor of technology, with a body as its focal point and as a mechanism of immense potential, which will, once you give it a hammer, in the process of amalgamation merge with it creating a “machinist” [5], a superhuman.

## 2.2. Machinist

Gastev was not the only Russian who believed in such a cause. Vertov, Gastev’s contemporary, believed his concept of Кино-Глаз (eng. “Cine Eye”) would help contemporary man evolve from a flawed creature into a higher, more accurate form, respectively, a machine. “I am an eye. I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, I am showing you a world, the likes of which only I can see” (Vertov, 93) a quote often associated with the name DzigaVertov, who, as pointed out nicely by Vaingurt, in her essay *Poetry of Labor and Labor of Poetry*, “imagined technology as armor, or a prosthesis, for the incapacitated human being” (214). While both artists believed that in order to achieve its full potential human body needs a prosthetic, artificial “organ” - Gastev saw it in a hammer as being a natural extension of an arm, Vertov in a camera as extension of his eye [6] – there is this one single moment where their beliefs vigorously diverge - Gastev gave more credit to a human body. He believed that a human body in itself has enormous potential that could help facilitate the transformation from human to an armor following the logic of a machine which man should use as model and a prominent example. Man does not need a tool in order to survive for man himself is a tool. “The body is man’s first and most natural instrument, or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man’s first and most natural technical object, and at the same time his first technical means, is his body” (Mauss, qtd. in Vaingurt, 214).

And if technology stands for “making the tools” and “studying the crafts” then to say that the best tool man has ever created is another man is not an overstatement to say the least. This is exactly what Gastev’s work was all about. It was about bringing man back to his own instrumentality (Vaingurt, 214).

### 3. SCIENTIFIC ORGANISATION OF LABOR

*Central Institute of Labor* (further in the text ЦИТ) was an organization set up in Moscow and dedicated to the study of work and improvement of industrial efficiency. Supported by Lenin and founded by Gastev in 1920, its official philosophy was that of Taylorism. For Gastev, Taylor was modern industrialism's greatest theoretician, and Henry Ford its greatest practitioner [7].

The movement propagated by ЦИТ became known as *Scientific Organization of Labor* (abbreviated HOT for *Научная Организация Труда*), which is essentially a Russian version of the American term *Scientific Management*, rendered and appropriated of course, and possibly created in order to avoid the negative connotation of Taylor's doctrine replacing the word *management* with the word *organization*.

The institution developed scientific approaches to the organization of work where some simple repetitive operations, like the cutting of materials with a chisel and a hammer, were studied in great detail. And even though the origin of these techniques, of this experiment, lies in *Taylorism* and the American division of labor, their end game was quite different. While *Taylorism* performed as a device whose primary goal was to reduce the cost of production with little or no interest in the worker's wellbeing, further exploiting the working class, the socialist idea, although rooted in the notion of discipline, control, repetition and mobilization, was to set the worker (as well as the entire Russian population) free from the enslavement of capital, fatigue of both body and soul, ultimately increasing their overall efficiency. Another diversity in these two approaches, possibly the most important one, lies in the fact that Gastev's curiosity was deeply scientific yes but above all it was essentially artistic, whilst Taylor's was merely utilitarian. [8]



Figure 1. (a) Gastev's Studio, Central Institute of Labor; (b) Academy of Work: Gastev's Studio, WYSPA Alternativa 2012, Gdansk; designed by Monika Ponjavic (PartizanPublik) and Arne Hendriks (photo by Arne Hendriks)

#### 4. ARTIST – CONSTRUCTOR | ARTIST – ENGINEER

Looking at the greater picture of what was going on in post-revolutionary Russia it becomes clear that one of the goals of the October Revolution was to give an answer to the vehement question of how to revolutionize art. One of the answers provided came along with the constructivists who “proposed the ideals of the *artist –constructor* and the *artist – engineer*, arguing for a functional and engineering –oriented approach to design, prefabricated housing, standardization, modular coordination, efficient building methods, new materials, and industrial production” (Guillen, 687). The constructivists tried to create works that would make the viewer an active viewer of the artwork and furthermore, they were trying to create the art that will serve the social purposes, otherwise put, art that will serve the revolution.

In retrospect, the work Gastev did at ЦИТ, even though often rendered as purely just scientific, was concurrently profoundly artistic, based in art and embedded within the ideas of the constructivist movement. He himself referred to ЦИТ as *his last work of art*, something that is obviously quite often overlooked and neglected, as I understood from the articles and books I came upon while doing my research. I don’t want to come of as unclear, this sentence always exists in these texts but, very often, it exists as just that, a sentence, stating merely a fact and without further exploring *his lastwork of art* as what it is, a work of art. This strikes me as odd because, while looking at the scarce archival documentation we have at our disposal today, in attempt to reconstruct his studio for *Alternativa*[9] in Gdansk, I couldn’t help but notice the existence (as well as Gastev’s approach) of four recurring elements that dominate his work and are pretty much self-explanatory: the hammer, [10] the grid and the costumes that come hand in hand with the choreography. [11] In order to fully understand the significance of these elements and what they (possibly) meant for Gastev a new term must to be introduced – *Biomechanics*.

#### 5. BIOMECHANICS OF A STROKE

Contrary to the popular belief, *Biomechanics* is a term coined, not by Vsevolod Meyerhold, but by Alexei Gastev in the series of exercises he developed at the ЦИТ.[12] Gastev believed that *Scientific Management* should be performed in everyday actions of the body, meaning that all aspects of life

should be mechanized.[13] To achieve this, every citizen should master the two fundamental aspects of the work performance – “*the stroke and the thrust*” (Bedian and Phillips, 30). He believed that this process of learning, adopting the mechanized movement, adjusting your body to the machine, and not vice versa, should begin at the early age, if possible in childhood.[14] Gastev was searching for a certain core movements that would train the worker under simulated factory conditions (see *Figure 2*). The program of these movements was suppose to be highly economical in the sense that it should be precise, comprehensive and that it would require a minimum amount of time (for the worker) to learn it.[15]

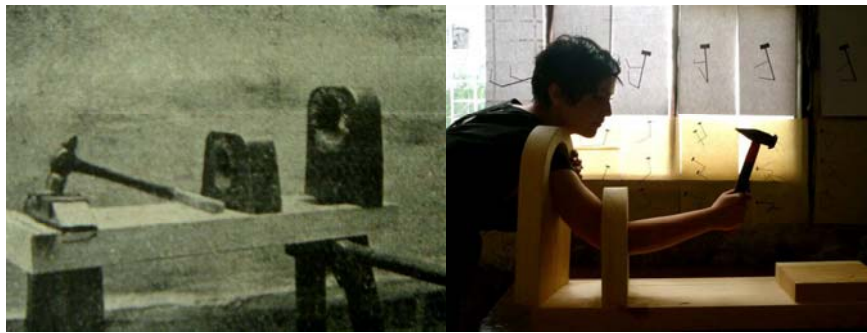


Figure 2. (a) Hammering Machine, designed by Gastev; (b) reconstructed Hammering Machine designed by Monika Ponjavic and Arne Hendriks (on photograph: Monika Ponjavic; photo by Jolan van der Wiel, *Alternativa* 2012, Gdansk)

In 1922, Nikolai A. Bernstein, Russian neurophysiologist, was invited to join LQIT, along with other researches, and help with the cause. Bernstein's main focuses of study were: *cutting metal with the chisel* and *the stroke of a miner armed with a heavy hammer*. He used cyclographic techniques (see *Figure 3*) to track the human movement and his research showed that most movements, like hitting a chisel with a hammer, are composed of smaller movements and that, if altered, they would affect the movement as a whole. Furthermore, in the analysis of a *miner's stroke* he discovered that miners use two strategies in the working process: the *abductive* stroke, where the arm is moved in a lateral direction; and the *vertical* stroke, where the arm is moved in a forward and upward direction. The aim of the biomechanical analysis was to identify the strategy that would help minimizing muscle energy consumption whilst increasing the overall productivity. [16]

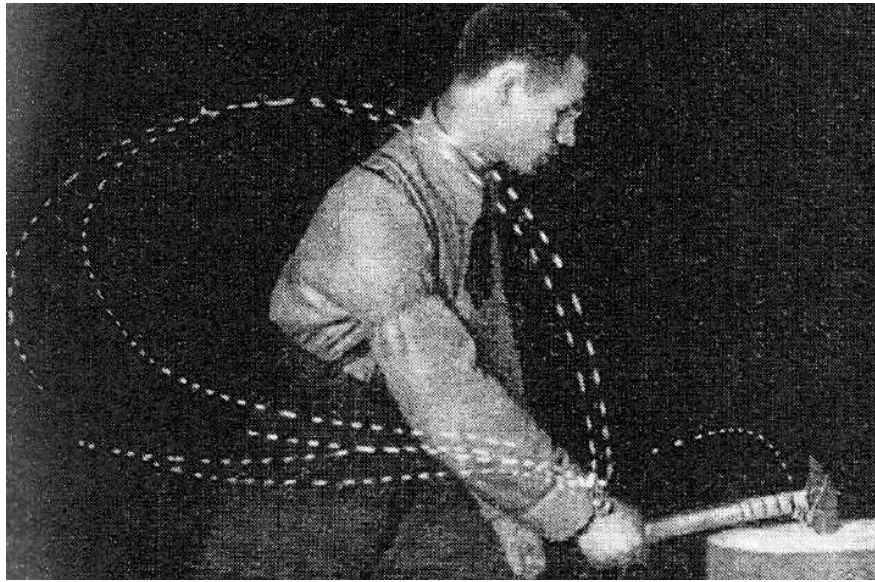


Figure 3. *Time and Motion Studies* conducted by Nikolai A. Bernisteinand performed by Alexei Gastev (on the photograph) *The Stroke and the Thrust* exercise, Central Institute of Labor

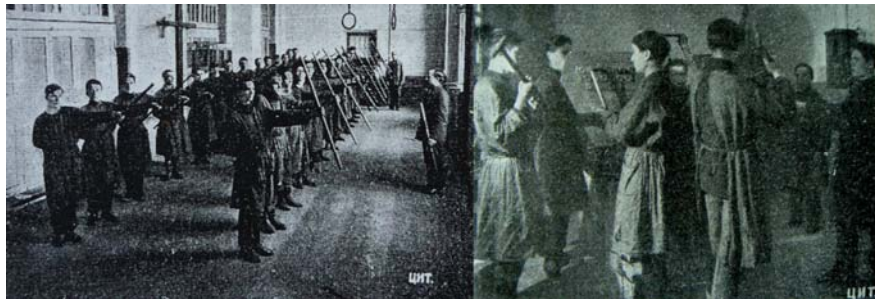


Figure 4. Biomechanics of a Stroke, Central Institute of Labor ; Figure 5. Workers performing in their costumes, CIL

*Stroke and the thrust*, designed and conducted as set of exercises, became integral part of the program performed at the ЦИТ. One of these exercises would begin with the workers entering the workspace, one by one, subsequently assuming a certain position - with their feet apart in a set stance, which would mark the onset of the performance (see *Figure 4*). The exercise starts with small and simple movements such as exercising the fingers, hands, elbows, and arms with the aim of gradually reaching the point when the entire body is involved in motion. This is what Gastev called

"*biomechanics of the stroke*". It was a pedagogical device that aimed at developing and strengthening the body intelligence. After the bodies were warmed up and ready for work, they would assume a new position, again all as one body. The next step was the striking motion of hitting the hammer, which was paced by a metronome. On the sound of metronome they would all, *as if choreographed*, start striking a hammer, in a rhythm. Each worker had its own observer who would follow and take notes on the movements performed by his worker-subject.

Ford believed that theater is an instrument of social change and cultural progress. Gastev believed in Ford. Therefore, it comes at no surprise that the origin of Meyerhold's theater lies in Gastev's *Stroke and the Thrust* for *Stroke and the Thrust* is the theater in itself. The workers would move in the space in such a strange way not *as if they* were choreographed but because *they were* choreographed. Every single movement, every stance they would assume, the setting, the division (of space) between the one who is doing and the one who is watching, all of it was carefully planned and executed. In this way the workspace became a workshop and the first installation (установка) was created. Furthermore, the clothes they were wearing were not the usual clothes we would expect in a worker (see *Figure 5*). These clothes worked on the principle of transformation, as any other costume does; for once you put it on, you simply become someone else. And needless to say it also served as the visual enhancement of the mise-en-scene.

The grid was another element, integral to the scene, a repetitive part of, and in the space: drawn on the surface of a working table, on pieces of paper put on the wall, as a three-dimensional object... (see *Figure 6*) He was obsessed with it. But he was not the only one. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period of (re)discovery and the artists who are considered as the avant-garde like Malevich or Mondrian, Gastev's contemporaries, were the ones who "discovered" the grid. Of course the grid already existed but "one has to travel a long way back into the history of art to find previous examples of grids" (Krauss, 1979: 52). The examples that Krauss is talking about date back to fifteenth and sixteenth century and are tied to Leonardo da Vinci or Albrecht Dürer and their study of perspective. So, logically speaking, the grid is a "stereotype that is constantly being paradoxically rediscovered, it is, as a further paradox, a prison in which the caged artist feels at liberty" (Krauss, 1986: 9). Needless to say, it is in its nature to be a repetition, repeating itself in space, extending, in all directions, endlessly. The grid marks the beginning [17] and likewise it is both the beginning and the end of any movement, of any object. It is the first step architect takes in confronting the white blank sheet of

paper, the first and the hardest one. It stands for measure. And everything around us, the space we move in, houses we live in, streets that we walk...all of it is man made. And all of it is made in human proportions. It is a module, a trace, a formula that sets you free, it separates the perceptual screen from the real world and what is striking about it is “that while it is most effective as a batch of freedom, it is extremely restrictive in its actual exercise of freedom” (Krauss, 1986: 9).



Figure 6. (a) Gastev's Studio at *Central Institute of Labor*/detail, the grid; (b) Gastev's studio at *WYSPA, Alternativa 2012*, Gdansk; design by: Monika Ponjavic (PartizanPublik) and Arne Hendriks; (photo by Monika Ponjavic)

With all this being said one has to ask the question: what was the main objective of *Central Institute of Labor*?

## 6. CULTURAL CONSTRUCT

With the term *vita activa*, Hannah Arendt proposed a triad of fundamental human activities: labor, work and action. They are fundamental because each corresponds to one of the basic conditions under which life on earth has been given to a man (7). Labor is in this sense repetitive, never-ending activity comprising only those activities which are necessary to sustain mere life such as obtaining food, water, shelter, and reproduction with nothing beyond that. In other words it is sheer biological life, life that is consumed with necessity alone, consumed as soon as it is produced leaving nothing behind. Work, on the other hand, leaves an enduring artifact behind such as tool for example. Work has beginning and an end. It is an activity that corresponds with the world. Action is a third, and last activity that can take place only in the public realm and it can, potentially, lead to the only form of immortality that of creating something lasting consequently transcending death.

Gastev's work embodies all three aspects of human condition for it started as *work* but it was meant to be a *labor* that within time became *activity*. It was labor in a sense that it was supposed to become an integral part of everyday life where the idea was that if we incorporate labor, order and discipline in a daily activity human psyche would be altered - become the hammer and you become free(see *Figure7*).It was work, first of all because it revolved around the tool. There was always an object at play that was left behind once the repetitive sequence was finished. And in this sense it had a beginning and an end. However, if we are to talk about the *activity* part of this story we have to go back where I started, back to the outset that marked this single idea because what started as a task of remodeling the body, the psyche and the state of Russian society in general somehow gradually transversed from scientific model of bodily engineering into some sort of non – utilitarian perfection. This work, this ongoing social experiment that has been performed and conducted at the *Central institute of Labor* was not a secretive act, to say the least. However, despite the fact that during the active work of the institute its primary objective was (supposedly) driven by the idea of increasing overall efficiency and body engineering, rooted in Taylorism, which, by definition, aims to produce, oddly, or on the other hand, quite expected, depending on how you look at it, they never produced anything. This, of course, raises all kinds of different questions but the obvious, the most important one is simply why? Why have they never produced anything material or tangible? The answer to this question is also rather simple - it was never about the production. Or at least not in the same fashion Taylor or Ford were producing. Quite the opposite, he was producing a way to live life and in order to achieve that the body needs to be thought how to think and rely not on its anatomy but upon the possibilities the body can achieve utilizing the movement.

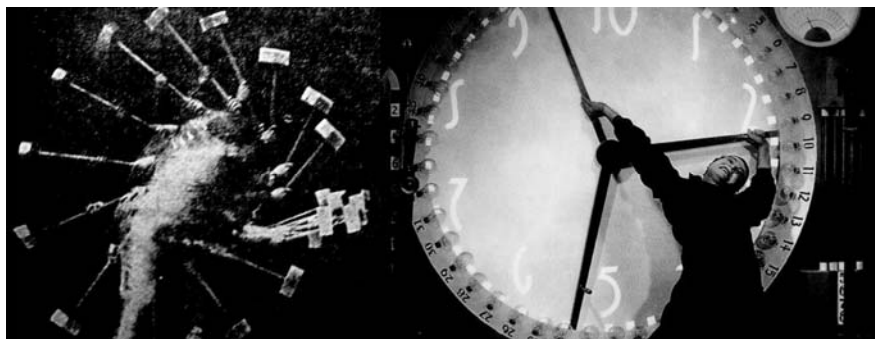


Figure 7.(a) Hammering Man, *Central Institute of Labor*(b) the notion of 8 hour shift, *Metropolis* (1927) dir. Fritz Lang

In 1921 Gastev wrote an article where he defined the goals of ЦИТ, explaining how *machinism* provides a new environment for *the development of the human* where the task is, in fact, to foster certain reflexes without the presence of external stimuli (Vaingurt, 222). *Biomechanics*, being a unique method of body engineering falls directly into this category. Using *Biomechanics*, Gastev didn't try to solve the problem of production (or not *only* the problem of production) but the problem of culture and according to Mauss "bodily techniques are learned and habitual, and as such they are cultural constructs" (qtd. in Vaingurt, 222). Gastev imagined *scientific organization of labor* as a spatial arrangement that leads to economy of gestures: "The movement of a working human is a combination of lines, points, angles, and weights, all working with a certain tolerance, with habitual efficiency" (Gastev, qtd. in Vaingurt, 223). His hybrid Biomechanical man, tempered virtual stronghold of culture, a mechanism of order and a symbol of modernist aesthetics is therefor a construct of art rather than reality (see *Figure 8*).

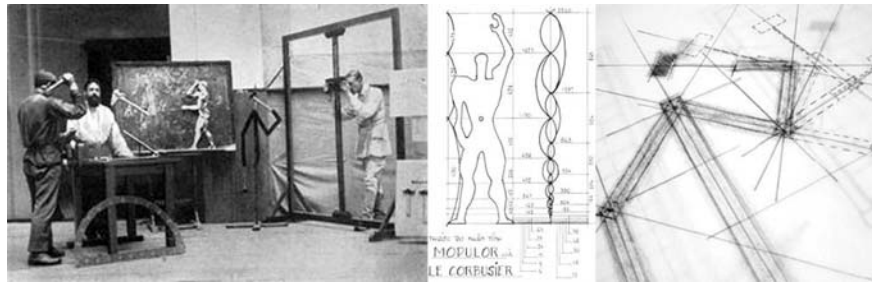


Figure 8.(a) Gastev's Studio (the emphasis in the room should be on the existing, black Hammering Puppet); (b) Modulor by Le Corbusier; (c) Hammering Puppet re-construction for *Academy of Work*, drawing by Monika Ponjavic

## 7. CONCLUSION

With all this being said, the very fact that Gastev has been kept away from us, for so long, comes as no surprise and what is so fascinating, so extraordinary about him, lies in the certitude that many works, which became integral part of our lives and education derive from the poetry Gastev wrote and the work he conducted at *Central Institute of Labor*. Concurrently, the cognition of how little people are aware of that is so defeating.

Not many people are aware of the fact that Zamyatin based *We* on Gastev[18] which later on inspired Orwell and Huxley to write *1984* and *Brave New World* [19] which further on marked the beginning of satirical futuristic dystopian genre. That his pedagogical device (*Biomechanics of a Stroke*) had

a special impact on Meyerhold who adopted the term *Biomechanics* and created his own set of movements that would later become integral part of *The Meyerhold Theater* where mechanization and machine were given a threefold composition – the bodies of the actors, the construction of the set and the audience. In other words, it anticipated the concatenation of human organs, technical apparatuses and social machines that constitute the machine for Deleuze and Guattari. [20] Not many people know that one of Meyerhold's actors, Ilia Shlepianov, was in fact Gastev's worker-trainee at the *Central Institute of Labor* and that one of Meyerhold's students took a special interest in *Biomechanics* and *Scientific Management* shifting his focus from theater to film so he would apply these methods experimenting with the division of image that would later become known as *Soviet Montage Theory*. This student was Sergei Eisenstein.

And although one can argue that all of these works derive from the ideas of Winslow Taylor, the father of *Scientific Management*, it was Gastev who pointed out at the other possible ways of using it, outside of the factory realm taking the artistic approach to it. And the names like Huxley, Zamyatin, Orwell, Eisenstein, Meyerhold, are the names that need no further explanation for the impact they had on popular culture is so vast and so valuable, which is precisely what ensured Gastev's immortality for he continues to live on forever, through these works, in fragments of our memory, stoking our imagination enabling the further procreation.

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[1] Henry Ford (July 30, 1863 – April 7, 1947) was an American industrialist, the founder of the Ford Motor Company and sponsor of the development of the assembly line, technique of mass production. His introduction of the Model T automobile revolutionized transportation and American industry. He is credited with "Fordism": mass production of inexpensive goods coupled with high wages for workers as well as introducing a 5\$ workday (120\$ today).

[2] Frederick Winslow Taylor (March 20, 1856 – March 21, 1915) was an American mechanical engineer who sought to improve industrial efficiency. He is regarded as the father of scientific management (also known as Taylorism, was a theory of management that analyzed workflow. Its main objective was improving economic efficiency, especially labor productivity. It

was one of the earliest attempts to apply science to the engineering of industrial process and to management.

[3] See Arthur G. Bedeian and Carl R. Phillips, *Scientific Management and Stakhanovism in the Soviet Union: A Historical Perspective* published in *International Journal of Social Economics*, 17, 10, p. 30 - 31

[4] Alexei Gastev, Мы растемо из железа (eng. We Grow Out of Iron), 1914

[5] Term borrowed from the French – speaks of “the iron demon of the age with the soul of a man, nerves of steel, and rails for muscles”, of “iron friends”, and of man growing “out of iron” and becoming a machine. (see Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1989, p 150)

[6] The human eye, according to Vertov, is weak, flawed, and primitive in contrast to the camera, and he constantly emphasizes its “imperfections” and “shortsightedness” in comparison to the infinite perfectibility of the camera, which he continually celebrates and exalts. “The weakness of the human eye is manifest” he declares. “We cannot improve the making of our eyes, but we can endlessly perfect the camera” (Dziga Vertov, *The Council of Three*, qtd. in Malcolm Turvey, *Can the Camera See? Mimesis in “Man with a Movie Camera”*, October, Vol. 89, MIT Press, 1999, p 32)

[7] Ford was a heroic figure for many in the Soviet Union during the 1920s for his contribution to assembly-line production and his rationalization of labor practices. Gastev, however, took this much further, going so far as to align Ford with Karl Marx as compatible (and indeed complementary) thinkers in his 1927 article *Marx and Ford*.

[8] Investigating each work unit on a production line, Taylor came to the conclusion that the workers' physical movements were among the least efficient in the entire factory. While performing his prescribed task, the worker would often engage in superfluous and awkward motions, causing a premature strain in his muscles and generally lowering his work output. Analyzing the execution of each task according to precise motions, which he timed and regulated within fractions of a second, Taylor sought to find the most efficient movements and gestures for each kind of work. Calling his study *motion economy*, Taylor had soon to take into account such nonlinear and un-mechanical factors as work-rhythms, balance, muscular groupings, fatigue, and “rest minutes.” (see Mel Gordon, *Meyerhold's Biomechanics*, The Drama Review: TDR, Vol. 18, No.3, MIT Press, 1974, p. 73-88)

[9] <http://www.partizanpublik.nl/1279/hammer-porn-at-alternativa/>

[10] <http://www.partizanpublik.nl/1288/gastevs-studio/>

[11]

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMUnoOZin3E&feature=share&list=UU7Pk8T4MCMPjNi\\_XOiwwlOA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMUnoOZin3E&feature=share&list=UU7Pk8T4MCMPjNi_XOiwwlOA)

[12] For further reading see: Richard Stites, *Revolutionary Dreams: Utopian Vision and Experimental Life in the Russian Revolution*, Oxford University Press, 1989; Jonathan Pitches, *Science and Stanislavsky Tradition of Acting*, Routledge, 2006; Allan M. Ball, *Imagining America: Influence and Images in Twentieth Century Russia*, Rowman & Little Field Publishers Inc., 2003

[13] The Czech writer, Karel Čapek, in the play R.U.R, published in 1920, introduced the word *robot* to the public. The play begins in a factory that makes artificial people called *robots*, though they are closer to the modern ideas of androids, creatures that can be mistaken for humans. They can plainly think for themselves, though they seem happier to serve. The word *robot* comes from the word *robota*, meaning literally labor, and, figuratively, "hard work" in modern Czech (in Slovak, Russian, Serbian, Polish and other Slavic languages a similar words means simply "work")

[14] A belief that was widely recognized, adopted and practiced in Socialist Yugoslavia through various movements such as *Pioneer Movement* for example - an organization for children operated by communist party. Typically children would enter the organization in elementary school and continue until adolescence. The adolescents would then join the *Young Communist League* and so forth. The members would wore uniforms that consisted out of red scarf, navy blue hat (Titovka) that bore a red star in the front, white shirt and navy blue pants for boys or skirt in the same color for girls. The induction ceremony took place in school for children aged 7 in the autumn of their first year in school, as part of the Republic Day celebrations. All Pioneers would then take an oath to their country reciting the Pioneer Pledge. Last generation of Pioneers was born in 1982. I was the last generation of Pioneers.

[15] This is the scientific part of his project - applying and appropriating Taylor's *Scientific Management* for the Russian cause.

[16] In 1922 Gastev wrote a pamphlet titled "How work should be performed" where he wrote series of rules to be followed by the workers: work

should be performed at a steady pace, workers should not become heated during breakdowns, unnecessary objects should not be allowed to clutter a workspace etc.

[17] Krauss distinguishes two types of grids: (a) for those for whom art begins in a kind of originary purity, the grid was emblematic of the sheer disinterestedness of the work of art, its absolute purposelessness, from which it derived the promise of its autonomy. We hear this sense of the originary essence of art when Schwitters insists, "Art is a primordial concept, exalted as the godhead, inexplicable as life, indefinable and without purpose." And the grid facilitated this sense of being born into the newly evacuated space of an aesthetic purity and freedom. (b) While for those for whom the origins of art are not to be found in the idea of pure disinterest so much as in an empirically grounded unity, the grid's power lies in its capacity to figure forth the material ground of the pictorial object, simultaneously inscribing and depicting it, so that the image of the pictorial surface can be seen to be born out of the organization of pictorial matter. For these artists, the grid-scored surface is the image of an absolute beginning.

[18] For further reading see Patricia Carden, *Utopia and Anti-Utopia: Alexei Gastev and Evgeny Zamyatin*, Russian Review, Vol. 46, No. 1, Blackwell Publishing, 1987

[19] George Orwell began *Nineteen Eighty Four* (1949) eight months after he read *We* in a French translation and wrote a review of it. Orwell is reported as "saying that he was taking it as the model for his next novel. He also claimed that Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) must be partly derived from *We*. However, in a 1962 letter to Christopher Collins, Huxley says that he wrote *Brave New World* as a reaction to H.G. Wells' utopias long before he had heard of *We*. According to *We* translator Natasha Randall, Orwell believed that Huxley was lying. Kurt Vonnegut said that in writing *Player Piano* (1952) he "cheerfully ripped off the plot of *Brave New World*, whose plot had been cheerfully ripped off from Yevgeny Zamyatin's *We*. Whatever is the truth, one thing is certain, all three novels bear striking resemblance with Zamyatin's *We*."

[20] For further reading: Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, Continuum International Publishing Group, University of Minnesota, 2004

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# **TITLE: TRANSPARENCY - ART IN PUBLIC SPACES IN POST-COMMUNIST EUROPE**

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**Abstract:** On one hand, my attempt is to analyze the variety of artistic practices that use transparency in artistic creation and its impact on aesthetic reception. In my paper I'll present one or two art projects in public spaces that are by FORM (e.g. temporariness) or by MATERIAL (substances like glass, air, water, sound, etc.) related to transparency. Many times artists by employing category of transparency in their works are aiming to find the most neutral, "empty" or even intangible means of expression. Another times by conceptualizing transparency in artistic practice, they want to explore different, non-anthropocentric or hybrid attitudes. What is so important is that it has also a certain role and impact on both public and private life. Similar to Jacques Rancière, I consider the category of transparency as the one which allows us to explore and analyze limits of what can be seen and unseen, perceptible and no perceptible, normal and subversive, political and non-political, active and passive.

The main goal of my paper is to present and explore public spaces which I understand as a very specific agora, a scene where performative acts can be fully realized (in case of transparent forms and/or materials, it's more complicated, for me also interesting). In my presentation I would like to explore those spaces within the field of contemporary art and theory that would:

- (1) reflects upon the changes of public post-communist spaces introduced within the political, cultural, artistic and economic thoughts (especially in concern to Poland)
- (2) engages in rethinking whether the artistic project(s) that use(s) transparency can be considered as aesthetic experience (if they are often "unseen")? What relationship do they constitute in case of post-communist citizen-actor-performer?
- (3) speculates about great popularity of presenting art in public spaces to make it more inclusive, democratic and open to discourse. By manifesting

their presence, artists are “seizing” space for their own needs and purposes. Can we concern it as a act of symbolic violence on space? If so, what notion of appropriation transparent projects do create?

(4) seeks to find an answer to the question whether there is any public activity that is not annexing public space/that cannot be seen as a ‘scene’. Is there a performative and/or emancipative dimension of such an art? What is the difference, if any, between manifestation of power and violence in areas of urban culture?

**Keywords:** space; public art; transparency

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Every public space can be understood as a place, agora, a scene, where performative acts are (or least should be) fully realized by its citizens [1]. Over a time, the whole different types of spectacles and performances took place on the streets of our cities. Depending on time and place, these scenarios were created by different types of actors-performers-citizens, who were forming and re-forming a new meaning of both, public and private spheres.

In my paper I would like to reflect upon a public project entitled Oxygenator that was in summer (July-September) 2007 produced in Warsaw by polish female artist Joanna Rajkowska in collaboration with the Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle. In the middle of the lawn, a 140 square metre-large and one metre-deep pond was arranged. It was surrounded by greenery, shrubs and water lilies and equipped with air-ozonating and fog-creating equipment. I recall this project to reflect upon issues such as:

- how the artist is using public space to talk about political, cultural, economic and visual status of modern-day city?
- in what way presenting art in public space makes it more inclusive, democratic and open to discourse? Has such an art a performative and/or emancipatory dimension?
- in what sense Joanna Rajkowska designed the given public space for the purpose of creating art project? In which extent she imposed or violated it?

- whether the artistic project that is made of transparent material (in case of Oxygenator it is air), can be considered as aesthetic experience (if it is basically “unseen”)?

Oxygenator was a pond installation on Grzybowski Square that was part of the Warsaw Ghetto, a plaza in the centre of Warsaw. It was an enclave of fresh air in the heart of the Polish capital. On one side of the square there is a monumental All Saints church, in the basement of which once was a bookstore, famous for its anti-Semitic literature. Next to it - Jewish Theatre, the Synagogue and other buildings that belong to the Jewish community. Nearby, some modern office skyscrapers and financial institutions. In close neighborhood lots of small hardware stores. Around, hundreds of people live in drab high-rise apartment blocks, which are the remaining symbol of modern, post-war Warsaw.

### 1.1. Identifying problems

In the middle of all that area consisted of many strange and contrast places, a forgotten kind of park or a square with some trees and a couple of branches in it. Being at Plac Grzybowski, one can feel all the tensions, conflicted narratives or oppressive stories that are located in this space. You cannot feel very comfortable; it's obvious while being there that this is a space full of aversion, oppositions that are not necessarily negotiable. The whole array of different stories and identities are arguing with each other: old ladies with their pets versus the local winos, petty shopkeepers versus businessmen, young people versus old people, Poles versus Israelis, Catholics versus Jews and so on.

*The place's identity is fragmented, no single narrative exists. The atomised present is based on those different, incompatible layers, it is fragile, there are gaps in it, places that need to be filled, in which there sometimes flashes some afterimage of the past. The past is a sensitive subject, usually perceived as history, a duty, a form of our thinking about the past.<sup>1</sup>*

Grzybowski Square is a space where all these scenarios meet, but they are not really connected, just suspended between different temporal orders, architectural layers, social groups. Being in the same time actors and

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<sup>1</sup> Joanna Rajkowska, *Oxygenator. Grzybowski Square in Warsaw*.  
<http://www.artmuseum.pl/filmoteka/?id=1380&l=1>

performers, the residents of that given space pass each other every day but they do not communicate - their common space virtually does not exist.

What makes this project valid and proves that it has a fundamental political significance is that Rajkowska, by recognizing the competences of all these ordinary users, legitimized them as members of the community [2]. The artist always tries to act in the name of those who cannot be seen. In the case of the palm tree project – one of her flagship interventions in public space - in the name of the murdered community of pre-war Polish Jews. While thinking about the Oxygenator - about the elderly residents of Plac Grzybowski that are excluded from political discourse. In the case of the Minaret – project that was originally designed for the city where my home university is situated – in the name of one thousand Muslim community. Thanks to many of her interventions, our Polish sphere of visibility consists not only of objects that are visually seen, but it extends on our cultural and physical environment.

## 1.2. Performative dimensions

On one hand Rajkowska claims that she sees the city as a space, which should be left alone to its residents' discretion. How we organise the world and our being in it, depends on us - the residents of the house, the city, the country, the globe... On the other hand, as an artist but also as a Pole, by working in a public space, she always annexes, subordinates or just uses places for the purpose of her art projects. And every act that is present or appears in a common space is a manifestation, can be understood as a kind of symbolic violence on a space. Besides, following to Guy Debord's [3] thought, Rajkowska's art project by itself can be understood as nothing else than an instrument or a commodity.

However, I would say that the Oxygenator (besides being a temporal over two month existence project), it possesses a fundamental component, that other works of public art might be missing – the suspension of a meaning and a certain promise of freedom.<sup>2</sup> As Magda Raczynska, an art theorist and curator writes, the artist draws our attention away from what should be and how, seducing us instead with a momentary mirage, immersing us in a

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<sup>2</sup> K. Szreder, *Art of Being in Public*, in: *Oxygenator*, Obieg nr 1-2(81-82), ISSN 1732-9795, Warsaw 2010, p. 162.

different, modified intensity. As a result, we can feel as if we were somewhere else, even though we are still in the same place<sup>3</sup>

Living in the era of all-encompassing and omnipresent spectacles, we should not fall into counterproductive conclusions or monstrous visions of the "system". Changes are possible, as well as co-creation and participation in a given space is inevitable and essential for our existence. In this sense, vision of the human subject and his freedom can still be materialized. The only thing we have to acknowledge is that there is no ready schemes or recipes. While the promise of the freedom remains valid, the only thing that is needed - and Rajkowska points it out by her *Oxygenator* - is our pure physical presence.

### 1.3. Designing a scene...

For Rajkowska a community means nothing else than *a group of people clustered around a specific location, confronted with the reality it imposes on them*. What draws my attention to her projects was that the artist invited people to practice *differently*, in a multiple various ways, on the basis of intuition and not necessarily for the purpose of creating a communion among members of the community. The artist's tactic is a kind of *social praxis* in which she turns the members of the given space into facilitators.

The artist, by herself becomes nothing more than a midwife for social potential and social possibilities. The issue of shifting responsibility onto the residents is a crucial point for each of Rajkowska's projects. To realize it, she succumbs the given community with a powerful means of *vision*, which is an almost utopian situation [4]. This vision always concerns people's relations with a given place. To transform it she is using an art and performative power of images.

Her vision of a particular public space is very much absorbing the body of a human and works on the level of strong, even physiological needs. In case of the *Oxygenator* it is the need of breathing. People are gathering around the pond to experience nothing else than just sitting and breathing. She points out that: *A key stage in this practice is the attaining of a state where your whole self - your body, the projection of it, its needs - overlap so precisely that you can finally say: 'I am. Here and now'*.<sup>4</sup> In such a state,

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<sup>3</sup> M. Raczynska, *The Body Borders. All Possibility*, in: *Oxygenator*, Obieg nr 1-2(81-82), ISSN 1732-9795, Warsaw 2010, p. 131.

<sup>4</sup> Joanna Rajkowska in Conversation with Artur Żmijewski, *Art of public possibility*. <http://www.rajkowska.com/en/teksty/43>.

people feel powerful and are able to make decisions and accept responsibilities that they are usually afraid of. This is how some of them become facilitators for their own community and this is what makes the whole group of Grzybowski Square residents more inclusive and open to dissent.

What attracts my attention to Rajkowska's project is that she reacts strongly to places that appear for her as sick ones. No doubt Grzybowski Square - with white-collar workers, old ladies, their dogs, Israeli tourists, a pope figure in front of the church - is one of such a places. The artist created in the centre of the city an enclave or a kind of oasis fulfilled with fresh air, a place that was free from the dominant conventions and that allowed them to radically change their perception of the place. By doing and thinking about the most apparent and ordinary activities differently, we question its obviousness. And this is what creates the greatest potential for change.

Without any pre-adopted script, Rajkowska left her project, so that it could live its own life, outside her control. She created a space that was open for all accidental events that will take place around it. *I tend not to propose solutions, but rather changes of perspective, a shift in group identification, in the identity of the place, the appearance of change. All that to pave the way for energy that will help people to reset the way their relationships function.*<sup>5</sup>

## 1.1 The omnipresence of air

The last and probably the most prominent aspect of this project, which drew my attention, was the decision made by Rajkowska to use so ephemeral and elusive material as AIR. Many times, by using transparent forms or materials (like sound, glass, water, air, etc.), artists are aiming to find the most neutral, "empty" or even intangible means of expression. Another times by conceptualizing transparency in artistic practice, they want to explore different, non-anthropocentric or hybrid attitudes. In case of the Oxygenator, both of these perspectives are present but not only. Air is present in Rajkowska's art as a materia, an object for artist to work on. How does it function and what for?

Although the material like air is basically not seen, it has an undeniable impact on aesthetic reception, spreading out all ranges of

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<sup>5</sup> Joanna Rajkowska in Conversation with Artur Żmijewski, *Art of public possibility*.  
<http://www.rajkowska.com/en/teksty/43>

meanings. In combination with visible aspects of Grzybowski Square: architecture, people, trees, etc. it is very easy to overlook or confuse ourselves that by being invisible, air is often associated with empty space or void. In the meanwhile, the material aspect of that project – oxygen - is the key element and the most powerful aspect of it.

Almost always we are not even aware of the fact that air is constant motion, endless transformation. Air ensures the continuity, a constant becoming. Thinking about performative aspect of this phenomenon, a great strength of the Oxygenator lies in the notion that it is constantly producing the present. Every breath is a symbol of participation and being in now. The Oxygenator shows us that physiological function of breathing situates us forever in here and now.

## **2. CONCLUSION**

The banality of the project allows us to be present in something greater, in something that is beyond our rational sphere of existence. Whether we could see it or not, whether we wanted it or not, the process is going to be continued...

The Oxygenator was an intervention situated in a very specific space and context. Thanks to its twomonth existence the suspension of everyday rituals and patterns was possible. Rajkowska created a potential space that was at the same time, very much here and now. Instead of presenting or imposing a different point of view, these intense combinations of here and now become a clean, open field, a kind of new beginning.

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Figure 1. The Oxygenator, photography by Konrad Pustola



Figure 2. The Oxygenator, photography by Joanna Rajkowska



Figure 3. The Oxygenator, photography by Joanna Rajkowska



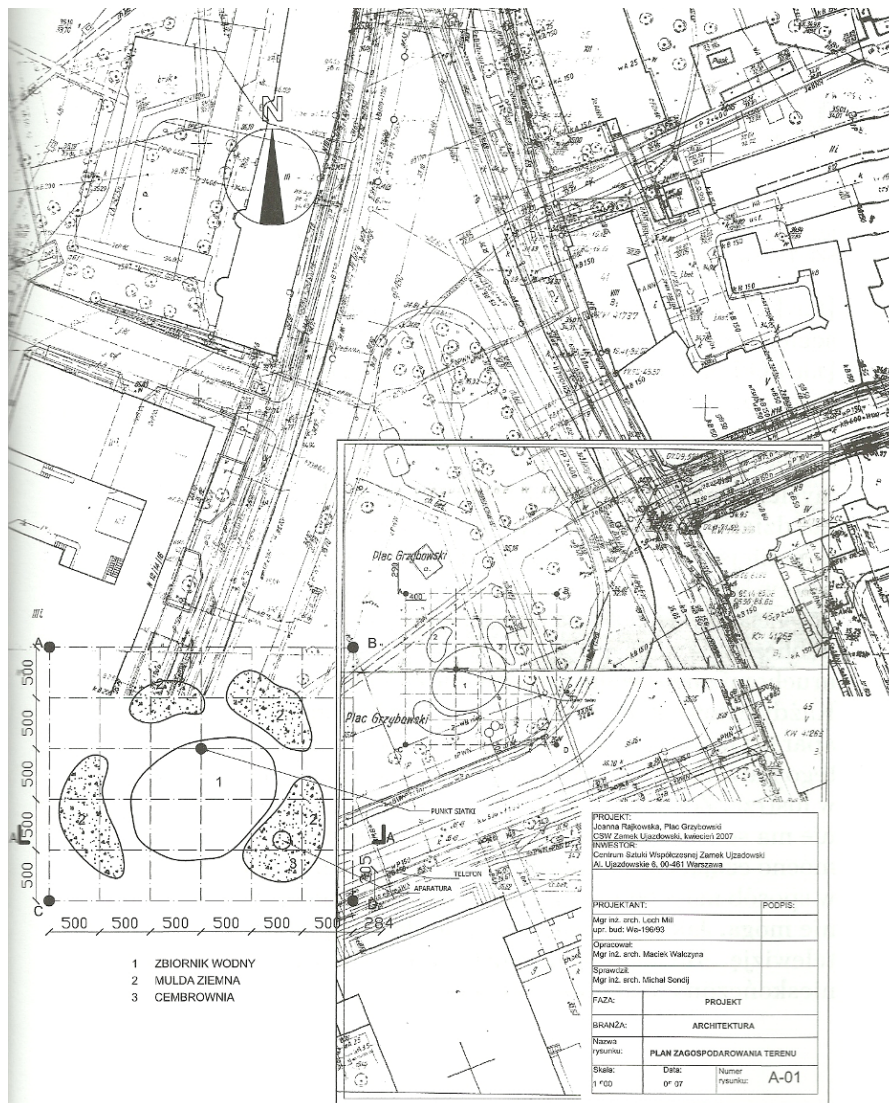
Figure 4. The Oxygenator, photography by Joanna Rajkowska



Figure 5. The Oxygenator, photography by Joanna Rajkowska



Figure 6. The Oxygenator, photography by Joanna Rajkowska



## BASNABOSNA IN THE MAY 25<sup>TH</sup> MUSEUM

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**Abstract:** BASNABOSNA is play on words - a portmanteau word made by blending "BOSNA" and "BASNA", meaning "Bosnia (for Bosnia & Herzegovina, hereafter Bosnia)" and "Fable", respectively. It is used to entitle artistic research of the author defended at the University of Arts in Belgrade from the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, group for Scene Design on 19<sup>th</sup> of January 2012 and exhibited through a one day spatial intervention in May 25<sup>th</sup> Museum in Belgrade on 19<sup>th</sup> of September 2011.

Artistic work BASNABOSNA presented in a form of 12 (2-minutes) videos, was placed in the context of two ongoing exhibitions - "Golden Album" and "Comrade a la moda" which, in itself was already a challenge. The act of exhibiting within the exhibition implied taking into consideration the subjects and topics of the documents presented but furthermore, it contextualized the videos I introduced profoundly, consequently deepening the question of relation of space and performance. It also created new situation of experiencing the exhibited through the constant movement in spatial and mental positioning within the content revealed in both the relation between the documents and videos, and the ideology presented and the visitor's (author's) personal self.

Videos, both performed and acted sequences of the author's reflection on space-time of *bosnia*, are a kind of utopian truth about the time-coral constructed through ideology of the build space. Re-instating the *bosnia* ambient in the Museum opened possibility of creating an authentic ambience performance with the roles changed – space as the author, author a host.

BASNABOSNA show-cased interrelation of space for living and exhibiting in relation to our own life and the life of protagonist. Presented in the Museum BASNABOSNA got new critical role to the system of building big narratives.

**Keywords:** recording of space-time; bosnia; fable; time-coral

- *How do we call a story in which animals sound like people?*
- *Fable! («basna» in serbo-croatian)*
- *And how do we call a state in which people sound like animals?*
- *Bosnia! («bosna» in serbo-croatian)*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

BASNABOSNA is play on words - a portmanteau word made by blending “BOSNA” and “BASNA”, meaning “Bosnia (for Bosnia & Herzegovina, hereafter Bosnia)” and “Fable”, respectively. It is used to entitle artistic research of the author defended at the University of Arts in Belgrade from the Center for Interdisciplinary Studies, group for Scene Design on 19th of January 2012 and exhibited through a one day spatial intervention in May 25th Museum in Belgrade on 19th of September 2011.

BASNABOSNA is a thematic skeleton of an art project that has its interest in conceptualizing space-time totality of BASNABOSNA representing a set of ideas about Bosnia with a man (human) immersed in it. Although it is a story, a concept, it is using the experience and knowledge from within concrete public spaces of Banjaluka, Bosnia. These analyzed spaces appear chaotic, unplanned, in architectural sense as spaces of fragments without any totality in an urban matrix.

Space-time of BASNABOSNA is a mirror of a life after the wars, falls of walls (Berlin's wall) and advent of the logic of capitalism in it. To trully understand it one has to embodie this experience into consciousness and to picture it with narrative (written, audio, visual, performed) in time-space, populace space, time – corral. Time-corrall is time in the space. That is a *milieu* for living, staging time in the space. It is a cycle proces of reinstalling yestadays-ness into today-ness, so that the actual time (present time) never can take place. Future, consequently is not a welcoming cathegory! That is how space assume characteristic of a corral.

In this paper I will try to briefly go through the research process necessary for the final piece to be understand.

## 2. SCENES READING: BASNABOSNA AS RESEARCH

When I have decided to entitle my PhD artistic research as BASNABOSNA I gave myself ungrateful task to deal with my personal anxiety of a life in Bosnia, and to tell (through a performance piece – an ambience event) this story to people, audience. Coming from Bosnia, town of Banjaluka, where there was no tradition in architectural, nor research in arts (for its geo-political and historic situation oriented its material culture to hard- and electronic-industries, and where we *imported* architects from around Former Yugoslavia to build public spaces, buildings and the state), it seemed appropriate just to construct **a story** about space-time of BASNABOSNA **ambient** and people living in it at the crossroads of two ideologies – socialism and early capitalism. This decision also joined my interests as performer (former dancer) and an architect. Therefore I have organized my researched to be based in both fields - architecture and arts, to be more precise, research based to follow causal relation between human body (my own) and physical and mental space of living and, later, exhibiting.

The whole research process was aimed at understanding theoretical discourses of recording and reading space-time, ideas about the Bosnia region and the Balkans through dominant documents of culture – works of art, and programmatic (ideological) logic behind the emergence of some public spaces in Banjaluka. This unique mixture of ideas, *architectural field* – study research of a chosen public spaces in Banjaluka - documented in time span of 5 years, and *artistic* - spatial embodiment - was captured in words, drawings and videos and later performed as an ambience event in the *May 25<sup>th</sup>* Museum in Belgrade.

When talking about scene design, we are actually talking about scene inscribing into spatial and time contexts for a kind of performance. *But how do we find story worth telling if our true passion is space!? How do we make performance out of it!?*

To tell a story about this **space** (since architectural knowledge about space is abstract to most of the people) and a person, *small man* immersed in it, one has to research the space, simplify it, abstract it almost, so/for it would be understandable to the common audience.

To tell a story about this **space-time** and a person, *small man* immersed in it, demands listening and patient waiting for the time to reveal itself.

First, one has to understand its position in time and space. To make it happen one has to look carefully around, record small changes in space, patiently in time. This process of reading documented is a dramaturgy for performance of living. I will not write a lot about this step, since that is plentiful material for this paper, but will introduce spaces of my interest.

Next step is to leave all the researched and analyzed documents aside and go back to your own body, your own experience of living there. You have to be silent and patient. This embodiment of space-time helps you articulate – **write scene** and stories of space and body in it.

This paper is, therefore, based on a case study and it is questioning the process of making scene design in an authentic architectural and ideological environment.

### 3. SCENES RECORDING IN SPACE OF LIVING

#### 3.1. I research space

I chose Bosnia and Banjaluka where I was born and lived ever since. In the last five years I carefully followed crucial public spaces in the town and documented it through photographs also researching its urban matrix and spatial and architectural development and its destruction:

- Space 01: former state property and an industrial giant *Incel* built in 1956<sup>th</sup>, that employed 10 000 people from Banjaluka. Now abandoned from its previous function and pulled down via private interests, parceled with a lack of an integral idea for its rehabilitation and reconstruction, slowly but surely loses its industrial qualities by not its urban qualities as *city in a smaller scale*. Its previous industrial reference – huge steam tower still resonates as its city centre. Its integral process production now fragmented, privatized. Deserted by groups, crowds.

This space belongs to MOUSES, especially for its scale.

- Space 02: main pedestrian *Veselina Maslese* Street, the most frequent public space, social promenade, built during Austro-Hungarian period as trading street, now shopping street. In spatial sense a 150 meters long corridor framed by trading houses and shopping windows. Articulated by starting point – Square *Krajina* and the end point – Church of *Redeemer Krist* with a clock tower.

Space for SHEEP – crowd animal, all dressed the same.

- Space 03: Administrative center of Republic of Srpska, build in 2007<sup>th</sup> on the plot of a former military barracks *Mali logor* (meaning Little Cantonment), but thought and designed as the center of *Telecom Srpska*, and later spontaneously extended on to surrounding objects (constructed as residential buildings). Building facilities' immediate surrounding is transformed by lap-dog-like decorative trees in an urban park without its prime *function of leisure, rest and recreation*.

Space for WOLFS all hidden behind uniformed suites.

- Space 04: former military barracks *Vrbas*, established during the Austro-Hungarian period occupied by the University facilities since 2003<sup>rd</sup>; building with an 5 meters deep pool designed for exercise of releasing from a parachute in the water; demolished in 2012<sup>th</sup>. The pool, open-box form two meters below the ground level in its full elevation (five meters of blue concrete wall plus four meters of the accessing floor) released the sense of a playground, imaginary space.

This space is for FOXES, paradise of clever, a room with a unique view.

- Space 05: a classroom. Intentionally choose at the University facilities, yet filled with furniture for primary school. Typical frontal organization of space (*ex-cathedra* model) organizing bodies of students into columns and rows. This building was previously used as repairing garage with classrooms for tank unites.

This space is for DOGS, obedient animals.

- Space 06: Single family house in a residential, *Koste Jarica* Street in Banjaluka; smaller world in already small and divided world; newly build house in the *transitional* architectural style, yard totally walled from public space – street and its immediate neighbors in physical space. Yard loses its previous function as a semi-public space, becoming yet another housing, storing space.

This space is for HEDGEHOGS, introvert animals.

### 3.2. I research time

As mentioned before, ideological change from socialism to early capitalism is a point of my departure. I look for and follow spatialing time in the choosen spaces, in the sense as Kwinter Sanford<sup>1</sup> claims that by spatialing time through different kinds of instruments we actually tame time.

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<sup>1</sup>Sanford Kwinter, *Architectures of Time: Toward a Theory of the Event in Modernist Culture*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, England: MIT Press, 2001.

- Space 01: This space is an area of a small town and is articulated by the huge tower as its focal point. Time was spatialized by the working shifts and by this tower smoke intervals as a kind of sun-watch. Now the physical qualities wear and tear, yet the remains stay in the echo.
- Space 02: This space is articulated by two clocks. One – at the point A - stopped in the time of catastrophic earthquake in 1969th (and replaced by its decorated replica in 2004th). Other – at the point B – church tower with a clock bells framing time each 15 minutes through sound distribution in all directions. Space framed by motion from point A to B, time spatialed by medievall totallity and postmodern mimic.
- Space 03: This space has multiple time game. One in its use of architectural language from the 80s (yet the complex was built in 2007th) for facades and neoclassical 19th century eclectic shapes and decoration for the interior. Time here is spatialed through speakers, bugs in the falus-shaped fountains, used to reproduce classical music as for space for leisure, but acctually space of total control. Time articulated by employees coming in and out at specific time of the day, crossing «public» spaces mostly empty.
- Space 04: Concrete (ment as water container) and freezing cold pool in its quality of light and blue shadings provided place for imagination, dreaming. No place, universal place. Time here was framed by echo, your own echo - personal totallity containg universal time.
- Space 05: The ideology of total control and obedience presented by primary school furniture, and formal spatial order is not questioned at Academia as well. Spirit of former use (military barracks) remained in the space. Time spatialed through universal ideology of order.
- Space 06: Newly built space in the *spontaneous* urbanisation discloses the fear for material belongings, hidding and marking demarcation line between neighbors. The excusse for this act, that of protecting our own, private is clumsy since our privacy is totally public through social networks, yet in phisical space these walls may provide protection but also lack of sun, air and acumulation of heat. Time is spatialed by incidental (neighbor's) tree shades on the plot walls.

### 3.3. I write scenes: EMBODIMENT of SPACE-TIME

To work in an ambient is to play between mirrors where space becomes a mirror to human, and human to space. When using the word *space*, non-objective reality, cultural sphere and imagination beyond material and physical spatial reality should be taken under consideration. One has to listen to space in order for its nature to be revealed. The echo of the space comes to be a narrative, whilst action comes to be a performance, i.e. abstracted state of human in it.

The portmanteau BASNABOSNA framed the work in many ways – as for the form of telling it obviously bounded it to fable (known as instructive and universal story with moral teaching, but the teaching is always hidden behind banal notion; story about people and their nature) but also introducing already from the title **play** on words and a verbal and visually metaphorical illustration. Metaphor is used as a mechanism for unmasking the way in which design treats culture, setting itself as a filter in relation to design as the production of meaning, design as text. *And what is better then joke on your own expense!?, so typical for people living in Bosnia.*

*Becoming aware of demarcation lines, between private and public, man slowly but surely loses freedom, consequently a common sense as well, because he is lacking space-time referential points, he loses the different angle overview, paralaxes. (Parallax is a concept taken from Steven Holl<sup>2</sup> that refers to constant change of any space based on motion of a body through space in the constant shift of lighting and illumination). Incaged in the same fragmented space his living reduces to bared being, his body and the law of the mightiest (strongest). Being the only furless animal, man bearing is faced with the constant fear for his safety.*

*Being confronted with a change of time – transition, some people got captured in the previous, some live the same cycle over and over again so they get dizzy and cannot distinguish and think sharply. Some became visible and live only in these times, but many reinstate their own corral, small introvert space where they hide, dream and wait. Existence in this time-corrall inevitably emphasizes distinctive characteristics among its inhabitants, since they live in the fragmented world, they see and live fragments, designed without*

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- <sup>2</sup> Steven Holl, *Parallax*, New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2000.

*possibility of seeing the whole. That is how some people became animals.*

#### *Time-coral*

*This is a story about a human captivated in its own body and its impotence (disability) to understand time. It is a story about an experience of a body affected by inactivity. Formerly working body hit by the transition becomes an observer, an inactive body, an object.*

- *How did a man become an animal?*
- *He didn't! He has always been one!?*



#### *Space 01:*

- *How did a man become a mouse?*
- *They suggested he was small, so he pictured himself as a mouse and became one!*

#### *Space 02:*

- *How did a man become a sheep?*
- *He realized how he would be warmer in a flock and grew some fur!*



**Space 03:**

- *How did a man become a wolf?*
- *He became frightened of everything, of space and time, and began seeing rivals in everybody. / Mornings, he woke up with ravenous hunger, and it never stopped, not even through the night or in his sleep.*

**Space 04:**

- *How did a man become a fox?*
- *He was born one! / He realized the world consisted of hunters and game and decided to propose a new game (cast lots)!*

**Space 05:**

- *How did a man become a dog?*
- *He got tired of constant fighting and gave in to people trying to put him on a leash. That is how he secured almost certain survival, with a little or a little more obedience.*

**Space 06:**

- *How did a man become a hedgehog?*
- *He realized naivete was paid for with one's life so he built a house with spikes and holed in! / He realised naivete was food for greed, so he grew some spikes to make tough game!*

- *How did a man become an animal?*
- *He locked himself in a cage! / His senses laid a trap, only to catch him in it!*

Scenes which are depicting the notion of space-time were documented through videos while meticulously scene - wrote this relation of body, human and its space. In each video I am the performer in the 2:00 – 2:30 minutes action, performance documented. Videos are in pairs, two for each animal – one in the real space of Banjaluka, another in an no-space, my mental space as aesthetically abstracted representation of embodied experience of living here.

#### 4. SCENE RE-WRITING: ENCOUNTERING TITO'S SPACE



There are just a few purpose-built museums in this region. One of them is the Museum *May 25<sup>th</sup>* that belongs to complex of Museum of Yugoslav History together with the House of Flowers and the *Old Museum*. It is designed by the architect Mika Jankovic, built in 1962<sup>nd</sup> as a gift from the City of Belgrade to Tito and on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. It is also one of the rare true memories to Tito, old regime, especially comparing it to Banjaluka and Bosnia where devastation and erasure was radical. Therefore I challenged myself to exhibit my work here.

Rewriting scene does not mean repeating them, in scene design one should never try to repeat the ambient - it is pointless without its *milieu*. One

either merely presents work or tries to set in motion experiential potential of the found space.

Space of *May 25<sup>th</sup>* Museum brought many layers to the whole intervention, but most importantly its architectural quality necessary to position and size my work, coming from the most conflicted state of Bosnia, to its ideological capital of Former Yugoslavia.

#### **4.1. \_Encounter with documents**

Videos are both performed and acted sequences of the author's reflection on time-space of *bosnia* - a kind of utopian truth about the time-corrall constructed through ideology of the built space, presented through looped 2-minutes videos of a human (author) forever captured in transition. They came from within the researched concepts and set of ideas of total space of living. Taking this totality into another space – exhibiting it - asked for the story, scenes to be re-written. My introductory statement that every space has its story coincide with my work (further explained below) and helped building only at this point a temporal performance piece – an ambience event.

Presented in a form of 12 (2-minutes) videos, (six animals repeated once in a real space of Banjaluka, second time in the no-space, my mental space) were placed in the context of two ongoing exhibitions - “Golden Album” (Fashion of Yugoslavia's first couple 1952-1968, authors: Dušica Knežević and Momo Cvijić, production: Museum of Yugoslav History, held: 02.07.2011. -3.10.2011.) and “Comrade a la moda” (Apparel and fashion in Zagreb between 1945 – 1960, author: Ante Tonči Vladislavić, production: Museum of Contemporary Arts in Zagreb and Museum of Yugoslav History, held: 16.07.2011. -3.10.2011.) which, in itself was already a challenge. The act of exhibiting within the exhibition implied taking into consideration the subjects and topics of the documents presented but furthermore, it contextualized the videos I introduced profoundly, consequently deepening the question of relation: space - occupant, visitor and protagonist.

First layer of exhibited documents (divers in medium - from photographs, videos, clothing and other accompanying objects) gave both ideological context – one of the presidential couple, the other of mass industry and media.

#### 4.1.1. IDEOLOGY : BASNA

In the left *wing* of the building historical documents meticulously chosen as “Golden Album” presented (in an order consumed from the staircases) *Tito in the following situations*:

- reception room (print on textile) : **HEADHOG in the house (Space 06)**
- president posing for his bust to be sculptured (photographs) : **MOUSE in the Incel (Space 01)**
- president's evening suits (suits exhibited) : **WOLF in the puddle park (Space 03)**
- protocol and etiquette of diplomatic visits (photographs) : **DOG in the classroom (Space 05)**
- ladies and tea parties (photographs) : **SHEEP in the shopping street (Space 02)**
- on his ship (prints, models, suitcases, furniture) : **FOX in the pool (Space 04)**



#### 4.1.2. IDEOLOGY : BOSNA

This last room - space representing Tito's ship with accompanying objects led to the exhibition “Comrade a la moda” presenting documents in order of appearance to the exit/enter point:

- cover pages of a fashion magazine “Svijet” (meaning *World*) and printed excerpts from the Book of Etiquette : **SHEEP in white no-space**
- a small room with a working desk and a chair with prints of comrades on the wall : **DOG in white no-space**

- photographs of “Fashion Followers & Fashion Parlours Style” : **WOLF in white no-space**
- photographs from Inter-republic Hairdresser Competition in Zagreb in 1952<sup>nd</sup> : **MOUSE in white no-space**
- photographs illustrating women in everyday situations: “Back to nature”, “Leisure time”, “Sport games” etc. : **HEDGEHOG in white no-space**



#### 4.2. \_Encounter with architecture: **SPACE : PERFORMING**

So, there was I walking through these white rooms, circulating for hours and contemplating the exhibited. The size of the space mesmerized me. I liked the scale of human juxtaposed to the size of walls, geometrically straight and perfect.

I have decided to underline the scale of the space by introducing twelve 7-inches portable DVD players to contrast the scale of rooms. DVD players were to be placed on twelve white bases around the museum, aesthetically perfectly fitted to the ongoing exhibition. The relation among ideologies presented emerged between the spaces chosen in the videos and documents encountered in the ongoing exhibition as described above. In the case of six pieces with a white background (representing my personal, mental space) they rivaled with similar background in the documents presenting mass ideology of a role of women and fashion. In the case of six videos with the authentic Banjaluka's background they rivaled the rich backgrounds of the many situations of the most important couple in our recent history. This

movement of spatial and mental positioning transforms this museum of memory and history (place of meaning and illustration) into place of event with its unique experience.

Every time we enter the space it is an encounter of body and space. If we stay enough unmasking begins. Your freedom is controlled not by me, author of this spatial intervention, but by the space. This play on roles coincides with time-space of the museum, and the invitees.

*You are not moving just to see, it is a part of your bodily experience. Watch where you have entered, where you started, BASNA became BOSNA and vice versa.*

*Steps to the Topcider's hill...more steps...To reach exhibition halls you take more steps...Expectations are growing... Then a wall...to enter halls you make choice left or right...Basna or Bosna, "Golden Album" or "Comrade a la moda"*

*You look for animals...small people in it...it is difficult to be noticed among such huge ideological narratives...the language of the stands and small scale of the videos helps you make a map...but the constant rivalry is inevitable - Tito over bosnia, Fashion over me, small man.*

Space is never neutral, and if one wants to build an ambient, one has to set in motion the qualities and memories of the space occupied. It is an unpredictable, lively experience for the space performs by itself and you have little control over it, if any.

*Listen. The acoustic of transitional room (with documents of Tito's ship), the silence of spaces, with its potential to echo audio from ambience sounds and text performed.*

*Slowly but surely totality of the ambient, inevitable spatial corral emerges. Levels of meaning unfold in your consciousness.*

This is how we (you and me, visitor!) created new situation of experiencing the exhibited through the constant movement in spatial and mental positioning within the content revealed in both the relation between the documents and videos, and the ideology presented and the visitor's (author's) personal self.

This is how I made an event – ambience reinstating, adding life to the exhibition, not merely showing pieces.

*I moved, I was not there. No entry speech, no big narratives. You never notice small man in the crowd, and you have to look to see. But they came as well...guardians – former officers, cleaning ladies... no curators, their names are not even printed in the ongoing exhibition, no directors, either. If you are alone you get warm faces and polite company of these people.*

*I let it happen.*

The presence of old regime and respect and ideology of Tito was evident, yet it happened to be almost my private party.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Where is the FOX?

Who is the constructor of this environment? Whilst the curators' names of the ongoing exhibitions were not even accentuated, the overwhelming Tito's presence was revealed through the whole atmosphere of the event. BASNABOSNA played with it, used it also titled without author of the event, introducing directions and titles into existing ones subtly : direction BASNA same as for "Golden Album" and direction BOSNA same as for "Comrade a la moda"

Where did performance happen? In the motion of your positioning, visitor! You have entered where you have exited. Whether you choose bosna or basna you'll end up in its mirror. This experience of looking, seeing and understanding the exhibited comprehend - one layer on top of another layer, constant spatial and mental positioning changed, acts like dramaturgy of the event. Experiencing the exhibited actually stands for the performance event spontaneous and live.

You cannot watch BASNABOSNA without Tito's fashion or fashion industry documents. You understand it in physical and mental motion back and forth, one layer on top of the other.

BASNABOSNA show-cased interrelation of space for living and performing, acting, exhibiting in relation to our own life and the life of protagonist. This complete project with the intention to sketch the notion of space-time milieu for living or exhibiting, explained the importance of designing the whole open process and using scene design praxis for design of total space – an ambient. Presented in the Museum BASNABOSNA got new critical role to the system of building big narratives.

# SCENOGRAPHY IN THE THEATRE AND EXHIBITION SPACES: AN APPROACH BEYOND REPRESENTATION

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**Abstract:** Scenography plays an important role in the contemporary context of museums; however, there are some misconceptions and prejudices concerning the outdated idea that limits scenography to representation, simulation, and theatricality. At present museums increasingly invest in flexible spaces that can be modified and adjusted to any new curatorial project. The scenography of exhibitions is a resource built in a space to offer the visitor a sensitive experience of a chosen content through color, pathways, and images. This article analyzes scenography in its historical dimension presenting a panorama of its development in theater and its contemporary use in museology.

**Keywords:** scenography; expography; museology; museums.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concepts contained by words become modified over time and with the complex changes of the societies that create them. Words sometimes retain remnants of past ideas or preconceptions that have for some reason imposed distortion and misunderstanding. The word scenography, for example, was for a long while in the history of western theatre identified with the pictorial representation of three-dimensional space. Nowadays, scenography is not just an instrument for representing spaces, places and objects, and neither is its application restricted to the language of theatre from which it stemmed.

The contemporary museum is increasingly a flexible space that is adapted and changed with each new curatorial proposal and therefore seeks resources from different fields of knowledge. Terms like Exhibition Scenography, Exhibition Architecture or Exhibition Design are used to define the work of organising the space and ways of displaying the content of an exhibition. Yet from the museological point of view these terms seem overburdened by the specificities of their origins in theatre, architecture and design, to the detriment of the field of museology. Another term, this time specific to the field of museology, coined by Desvallées in 1993 [1] to replace “museography”, is “expography”. Such a wide range of terms shows to be no consensus about what to call the job of putting particular content into exhibition form. This essay aims to analyse scenography specifically in its historical dimension and its contemporary application within museology.

Although scenography can be seen to play an important role in the museum context, the term has attracted a series of misunderstandings and preconceptions connected to an outmoded idea that limits scenography to representation, simulation and theatricality. To be able to understand scenography beyond the idea of representation we need to readdress, albeit briefly, its historical origins and evolution throughout the main changes in the language of theatre. This article proposes reflection within the fields of museology, visual arts and theatre.

## 2. SCENOGRAPHY, TRADITION AND PRECONCEPTIONS

Scenography was for many centuries synonymous with pictorial representation. With the urgency of events in the 20<sup>th</sup> century its conceptual scope was silently and radically transformed.

In theatre, the notion of representation may apply to the actor when interpreting a character, or also to the space of the stage. Representation is something that is put in the place of an absence, “it is the more general phenomenon that allows the spectator to see ‘by delegation’ a reality that is absent, in the form of a replacement” [2]. A represented object or space can be understood as an evocation, therefore lacking in some of the qualities of what is being replaced. A theatrical rock, for example, has no weight or marks of time. Its texture, colour and temperature are mere imitations of some distant original.

In scenography, representation is not confined to substitution of an original. It is also a narrative element, an aid to the spatial and temporal situation of the theme addressed by the theatre script or an exhibition.

Like every foundation of western theatre, scenography originates in the theatre of ancient Greece. Greek theatres were built on hillsides to form the *theatron* (the place for the audience, “watching place”) and the *orchestra* (the circular area where the chorus performed). Early theatres had a tent facing the audience, which was called a *skené*. The *skené* “was the first structural element to be introduced into the stage space, to be followed throughout history by a growing number of resources aimed at demarcating the area of representation” [3]. This tent was used by the actors as a changing room and as a place for storing costumes. Later it evolved into a stone structure, to be followed by other architectural elements. During the period when the *skené* was still a tent, the canvas was painted with *graphos*, which everything points to having represented the façade of a palace or temple. *Graphos* added to the word *skené*, will produce the word scenography.

In the Middle Ages, the theatre as a specific building for drama disappeared and settings of the lives of saints and other religious events took place inside churches; when they later left the confines of the church these scenes were enacted on carts arranged in the streets or in town squares.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century the theatre building acquired its longest-lasting and best-known form with the invention of Italian theatre. Here the theatre

auditorium is constructed in a horseshoe shape, with the king at the centre having a full and privileged view of the stage. The arrangement of the audience in Italian theatre, with boxes, galleries and later chairs, established a social hierarchy. Each spectator's view of the scene was related to their economic and political power. Supported by the renaissance invention of perspective, the theatrical scenography produced for these spaces involved the pictorial illusion of three-dimensional space. The complete flatness of a screen at the back of the stage represented natural landscape or the façade or inside of a palace.

In the late 19th century, Appia [4] publishes *Music and stage setting*, in which he states that painted screens were a poor resource which did not exploit the potential of the space of the stage. Appia believed that scenography should be a system of real forms and volumes which would require the actor to find plastic expressive solutions for acting upon the scenographic space. His designs abolished the painted backdrop and created spaces formed of ramps, steps and raised floors, which forced the body to overcome the difficulties created and transform them into expressive forms.

In the 20th century, scenography was gradually released from the obligation of representing indoor or outdoor spaces, and the field expanded to include a wider range of possibilities. But the notion of pictorial representation and the limits it established still remained fixed to the concept of scenography, so some systematic theoretical reflection is now needed to show that consideration of scenography as synonymous with representation is a misunderstanding that should no longer exist.

Barish, in *The antitheatrical prejudice* [5] notes that we often borrow art terms to add positive qualities to small everyday things, with terms like "poetic", "lyrical", and "musical". The exceptions involve terms from the theatre, such as "melodramatic", "acting", "making a scene" and so on, which are used to antagonise, deprecate or express disapproval. Similarly, the word scenography is used to indicate the superficiality of a place. It is common to hear pejorative statements that something is very scenographic or "pure scenography".

Fried's 1967 essay *Objectuality* [6] identified the malign presence of theatre on the work of minimalist artists. Something pernicious that he believed came from theatre was compromising the art. The author states, "theatre and theatricality are at war today, not simply with modernist painting (or modernist painting and sculpture) but with art as such." [7]

The theatre and theatricality that Fried indicates as a malign aspect in minimalist works is firstly a quality inherent to theatre. We might be able to trace the development of the idea of theatricality both inside and outside the theatre throughout history, but it is important to consider that the term did not exist before 1837, when Thomas Carlyle introduced it in his book *The French Revolution* [8]. For Roland Barthes [9] theatricality is theatre without the text:

A density of signs and sensations that are constructed on the stage starting from the written argument; it is that ecumenical perception of sensuous artifice – gesture, tone, distance, substance, light – which submerges the text beneath the profusion of its external language".[10]

According to Fried, theatre and theatricality were responsible for contaminating the "purity" of modernist art. The argument was provided by Morris [11] when the artist recognised the importance of the space surrounding the works and the presence of the spectator as an "ongoing immediate present". Minimalist works formed a dialogue with the surrounding space, which artworks had not done before: "The better new work takes relationships out of the work and makes them a function of space, light, and the viewer's field of vision" [12]. The work exists in a context of relationships that includes the place and the observer, in other words the surroundings of the work operate as a setting and therefore cast values onto the exhibited works that are external to them. Fried writes about this as follows:

Unless the pieces are set down in a wholly natural context, and Morris does not seem to be advocating this, some sort of artificial but not quite architectural setting must be constructed.[13]

It is interesting that half a century later and after the text has been criticised countless times and provided support for important debates in the visual arts, it is still possible to find thinking along similar lines to Fried's. Preconceptions about scenography still apply today each time we use the word pejoratively to describe simulation or imitation.

### **3. EXPANDED SCENOGRAPHY**

We can see that the words used in French and English to refer to scenography, *décor de théâtre* and *set design* respectively, are being replaced by the terms *scénographies* and *scenography*. The French word *décor* – decoration, painting, backdrop – has for a long time been the usual

term for scenography. The word *décor* reflects the thinking of a period when scenography was just a painted screen to fill the background of the stage.

Recent theoretical reflection on scenography has sought to understand the breadth the term has acquired. Not by chance did the 11<sup>th</sup> Prague Quadrennial propose a symposium called *Scenography Expanding* aimed at stimulating interdisciplinary discourse about the concept of scenography. The symposium title can be related to the concept of *Sculpture in the Expanded Field* developed by Rosalind Kraus in 1979, [14]. Kraus was investigating three-dimensional works of the time which did not fit into the traditional definition of sculpture.

Over the last ten years rather surprising things have come to be called sculpture: narrow corridors with TV monitors at the ends; large photographs documenting country hikes; mirrors placed at strange angles in ordinary rooms; temporary lines cut into the floor of the desert. Nothing, it would seem, could possibly give to such a motley of effort the right to lay claim to whatever one might mean by the category of sculpture. Unless, that is, the category can be made to become almost infinitely malleable. [15]

The development of new practices by visual artists since the 1960s demanded an approach that could consider an expanded concept of sculpture that was linked to the modern idea of purity of means of expression and technical specialisation. Contemporary scenography finds a similar problem when addressing its trans-disciplinary engagement in different contemporary cultural manifestations and segments.

How can one classify the scenography of theatrical experiences produced especially for specific places, such as prisons, hospitals and churches, which are places with their own untransferable semantic, sensory and imagistic baggage? These are performances considered for their chosen places and in no way could they take place on a conventional stage. In this case scenography chooses and determines certain areas for action and selects and produces objects; there can be no doubt that scenography here does not imitate or simulate. The term site-specific, which comes from the visual arts, can appropriately be applied to these kinds of experiences. Borrowing words incorporated into the vocabulary of the visual arts is beneficial here, because it demonstrates an affinity between categories and can help to break down strict conceptions that identify scenography solely with the representation of a place or thing.

#### 4. SCENOGRAPHY AND THE MUSEUM

Expography, the term coined by Desvallées in 1993 [16], has frequently been used to define a specific quality for designing the space of an exhibition and the complementary forms of displaying its content, but it seems to add nothing to what is already covered by the terms Exhibition Scenography, Exhibition Architecture or even Exhibition Design.

The term was suggested in 1993 as a complement to the term *Museology*, to refer to the design of the exhibition and everything connected with how it is laid out, therefore everything around the exhibition (except for other museum activities, such as conservation, security, etc.) and these latter take place in the museum or in a non-museum space (Desvallées, 1996: 74). It aims to find an appropriate language for interpreting the scientific programme of an exhibition. It differs here from decoration, which uses the objects on display according to aesthetic criteria, and from scenography which, apart from some specific applications, uses the objects connected to a scientific programme as instruments in a spectacle, without their necessarily being the central topic of that spectacle. [17].

In this definition we can note the author's concern to distinguish expography from decoration and scenography. The two latter terms would address the exhibition misleadingly and superficially; the first highlighting the aesthetic aspect of arranging objects in the exhibition space, and the second underwriting the position of the first, aggravated by the fact of imposing concepts from the theatre onto the space and the exhibited objects, such as theatricality, dramatization and representation, all of which are connected to the idea of spectacle.

The same glossary contains the word "scenography", which the author defines thus, based on its Greek origins: "from its Greek etymological origin (*skené* = tent, a rustic shelter erected on the Greek stage set), scenography is the art of representing in perspective, therefore the art of the stage,"[18]

The definition is correct in relation to the Greek roots, but erroneous in stating that scenography is the art of representing in perspective. Through this mistake the authors Bary and Tobelem are using the word as if it still referred to a specific procedure from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Gob and Drouguet, in *La Muséologie, histoire, développements, enjeux actuels*, [19] recognise that scenography is often considered as purely a decorative element. The decorative aspect of scenography is important

because it makes an exhibition visit into a pleasant experience and increases the visitor's attention and interest. Yet within an exhibition-design project the function of scenography goes beyond the purely decorative. The exhibition is three-dimensional media open to sensory exploration by each visitor, whose discourse is constructed in the space. Scenography introduces the conceptual dimension of the space, suggesting rhythms and atmospheres generated by spatial organisation, lighting and sound.

Contemporary scenography designs and sets up new spaces to be experienced directly by the body, as the Portuguese scenographer Ribeiro states [20].

The various aspects of the work of the scenographer are driven by the question of *habitability of the space*, in the sense of its experimental and/or experiential nature and consequently from its repercussions in the perception of the body and the space.[21]

This essay has sought to build an argument which demonstrates that scenography has in recent years made major technical and conceptual progress and is nowadays no longer confined to forms of representation and simulation. It is *understandable* that general understanding retains an archaic notion of the concept of scenography and this is not without reason, since many important artists have helped to keep the historical concept of scenography intact through their works, and particularly by incursion into fields distant from the theatre. Robert Wilson was invited by the *Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum* in Rotterdam to mount the exhibition *Portrait, Still life, Landscape* in 1993, with a selection of works from the museum collection. Wilson's work for this museum illustrates the often negative relationship between scenography and art-exhibition projects, due to the fact of using museum objects as scenographic or decorative elements. In *The End of Art History*, Hans Belting [22] states:

Not long ago one could discover Robert Wilson in Rotterdam as the third attraction of such a programme that seeks literally to transform the museum spaces into stages on which the "exhibited" works from the collection are no longer recognisable. For a short while there appeared a baroque theatre that decorated the art history personified in ancient works and discarded it again in a brilliant "performance". The three static genres, portrait, still life and landscape (according to the title of Wilson's exhibition) supplied what one might call the repertoire of pieces for scenic presentation, sometimes going too far, such as when an August Rodin bronze, for example, is displayed as a still life in an artificially lit autumnal woodland. There is some

revealing sense in putting the museum into the hands of a genuine theatre director, and offering him a historical stage with historical accessories for a temporary mise en scène.[23]

The vulgarisation of the works in the exhibition clashes with the cult status that the museum always imposes on appreciation of the works in its collection. Instead of the cult object, a transitory fictional space was mounted as a connective centre for the curatorial proposal. The first impression is negative. How is it possible to display a Rodin sculpture as if it were some character in an “autumnal woodland”? How could a key work from the history of modern sculpture be treated simply as a piece of set design? After the initial reaction it is possible to analyse Wilson’s proposal with different eyes, considering the role of the space that shelters, protects and displays the icons of a culture. Belting, who acutely criticised the theatre director Robert Wilson’s exhibition *Portrait, Still life, Landscape*, as we have seen, writes of the museum:

The museum has always been a privileged oratory of a collection of originals that have just one place in the world. Inside, the power of the present has been broken and changed by the time of history. The place of the museum has always been like that, beyond the time of its visitors and with everything in the spatial experience of their bodies [24].

This concept of the museum tends to position it as a “symbol of an unchangeable place and suspended time”[25]. It is a concept that is increasingly hard to sustain, because contemporary museums wish to respond to a world of immediate events with temporary spectacular exhibitions, which attracts the media and a wider audiences.

## 5. CONCLUSION

It might be possible to read Wilson’s exhibition *Portrait, Still life, Landscape* as a proposed reflection about the cult position established by the museum throughout its history; a place where everything on display is crowned by an aura of being untouchable, rare and valuable. It is worth recalling that, having overcome the initial impact, we now venerate a commonplace porcelain urinal, produced completely anonymously and multiplied for immediate consumption. The shock produced by this vulgar object displayed on an ordinary plinth changed the direction of art history and

we are now live in the echo of that shock caused by Duchamp's work in 1917. Maybe the Rodin sculpture that Robert Wilson placed in false autumnal woodland, outside the safe and comfortable space protected by the aura of the untouchable, allows us to see its fragility or, in contrast, its powerful expressive force, that is if art can dispense with the complex system that supports it, of course.

The controversy about the correct and respectful way of displaying objects in the museum proposed by Robert Wilson with his *Portrait, Still life, Landscape*, is not an isolated occurrence. Other similar proposals have addressed the adaptation of exhibition design and the value and supremacy of the works and objects chosen for the exhibition.

Yet there is some consensus about the exhibition of art and rare objects. In most cases the person responsible for the design, who might be scenographer, architect, artist or designer, has to retain a degree of sobriety in the selection of materials, colours and spatial organisation for housing and displaying the chosen items in the best way possible. The most desirable contemporary ideal, advocated particularly by artists and curators, continues to be a space with little interference: perfectly smooth, high walls and collection of connected elements to offer the audience a reading focused on the works on display.

If scenography creates a fictional space for art exhibitions which might compete with the objects, devalue them or position them on a secondary level, as in the case mentioned, on other occasions it is scenography that presents and provides access to the content of an exhibition. The problem lies not in preferring one term over another, nor in considering that scenography, architecture or design involve diversion or superfluous excess in exhibition design. The important thing is to understand that over time a discipline can change its conceptual scope and expand its possible applications. This is a fundamental premise for considering scenography in the expanded field and its contemporary application to areas such as museology.

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# SCENOGRAPHIES OF THE REAL - SELECTION AND DISLOCATION OF EVERYDAY OBJECTS ON THE SCENE IN RIO DE JANEIRO

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**Abstract:** The present article, interested in the contexts and behaviors of the scenography nowadays, approaches the use of everyday objects in contemporary scenic devices, focusing on the theatrical production of Rio de Janeiro. The *everyday* term presented here means that the object is “ordinary, from daily life”, having two meanings. It refers to the deviation from the trivial object to the scenographic compositions, but it also refers to the everyday characteristic of the objects in the rehearsals: they are foundations of work and narrative resources; they accompany the actors during dramaturgic and scenic creation laboratories. Based on this perspective, and in relation to some questions already presented by Nicolas Bourriaud in *Postproduction*, we intend to shed light on the practices of selection, consumption and dislocation of industrialized objects for the scenic space, approaching the relations between the scenographers from Rio de Janeiro and the Saara marketplace (the main supplier of scenographic materials of the city). Therefore, there exists the perception, in some local practices, of a growing tension between theater and life, of a certain invasion in the scene by elements *of the real*, in this case, by everyday objects. Thus, the investigation of these *Scenographies of the Real* identifies a surrealistic heritage and underlines reality itself as a contemporary issue. However, as was already presented by Hal Foster in *The return of the real* and José A. Sánchez in *Prácticas de lo real*, this appropriation of the real does not presuppose a realistic aesthetic. Actually, it seems to be a response to the postmodern sense of loss of a basic reality.

**Keywords:** contemporary theater; scenography; objects.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Luiz Fernando Ramos indicates the occurrence of surrealist theatrical events before and after the homonymous avant-garde movement (located between 1924 and 1953), stating that the surrealist language (that goes beyond real - "sur -real ") configures a theatricality, ie, it is transversal to the linear and progressive story. This allows the author to assert that some contemporary stagings dialogue with Surrealism without necessarily continuing its project - being thereby surrealism a "cosmovision, not school or ism" [1].

For Susan Sontag, Surrealism also goes beyond the movement inaugurated by André Breton in 1924. It is an artistic heritage that seeks to deconstruct conventional meanings and explore other symbols through "radical juxtaposition" [2]. Approaching psychoanalysis to investigate the reality which takes shape as traumatic, surrealistic gaze notices an oneiric symbolism in things that inhabit daily life. In this way, the Surrealists changed the conventional sense of the objects by symbolic interpretation, and started to worry about subversion and decipherment of the "real" world. Citing a testimonial from Simone de Beauvoir, Sontag signals that the surrealist movement left a symbolic "tradition" for artists and intellectuals, influencing both their artistic practices as daily activities:

"[...] On all sides ordinary things like walls and doors and flower vases were breaking free from human restraint. I don't think surrealism had any direct influence on us, but it had impregnated the very air we breathed. It was the surrealists, for instance, who made it fashionable to frequent the Flea Market where Sartre and Olga and I often spent our Sunday afternoons." [3]

In other words, Surrealism transformed the way artists are related to everyday objects, once considered useless and banal. When the object gets a significant depth, the very act of seeking, selecting and buying things is viewed with interest, and the day-to-day is construed as oneiric and not as a reality finalized and "dry".

Hal Foster [4] also discusses a surrealistic inheritance in art, pointing to a connection between some aspects of Surrealism and Contemporary Art noticeable in the affirmation of the subject and the fetishization of the object - not highlighted as an artifact, but as exacerbated merchandise. The author emphasizes that, while the historical vanguard operated automatically trying to exceed the level of the real through repetition of its elements mode surreal,

contemporary super-realism, for example, uses a certain "trick of the gaze" presenting a surface that confuses the viewer when he is faced with the reality presented. The appropriation art, on the other hand, would exploit less the illusion of the subject and more the repetition of real world, asking the viewer to stare at objects that are part of everyday life via a critical look at society. According to Foster, these two artistic modalities would be, along with obscene and abject art examples of the return of the real in the contemporary context, already initiated with the pop art of Andy Warhol. It is no more a real that can be reproduced by merely painting or photography, but a traumatic real, which conflicts with the subject.

When quoting the postmodern theorist Fredric Jameson to signal a change in the global configuration, Foster understands that handcrafted artifacts and industrial objects (respectively, *objet trouvé* and *readymades*) have been replaced by post-industrial ones, especially by plastic products:

"We need only juxtapose the mannequin, as a symbol, with the photographic objects of pop art, the Campbell's Soup can, the pictures of Marilyn Monroe, or with the visual curiosities of op art; we need only exchange, for that environment of small workshops and store counters, for the *marché aux puces* and the stall in the streets, the gasoline stations along American superhighways, the glossy photographs in the magazines, or the cellophane paradise of an American drugstore, in order to realize that the objects of Surrealism are gone without a trace. Henceforth, in what we may call postindustrial capitalism, the products with which we are furnished are utterly without depth: their plastic content is totally incapable of serving as a conductor of psychic energy." [5]

Plastic is the title of a chapter in the book *Mythologies*, in which Roland Barthes also makes a critique of the superficial material capable of producing "the finished, human object". [6] According to Barthes, the man is proud of his ability to manipulate nature, measuring its power through the transformation of plastic - a material that is completely altered and artificial, which in a miraculous (almost divine) way is transformed without leaving any marks of that process. For the author, the plastic object inserted into contemporary fashion regime exceeds the cost-benefit of plastic in the domestic daily life and also the myth of *simili* - which historically marked the concern of the bourgeois class in using products and wearing garments that appeared to be noble, but that would cost little. Thus, we can state an alliance had occurred in contemporary times, highlighted by Barthes between industry and plastic: this material was not only absorbed by its practicality and

durability, but by the simple act of consuming - called by Barthes as "using". [7]

This consumer capitalist system is approached by Nicolas Bourriaud in *Postproduction*, a book in which he presents some contemporary artists who criticize this structure. Their practices associate production and consumption while playing (through mixing, collages and citations) with notions of originality and authorship, and also with what is considered authentic in Art History. The scenario presented by Bourriaud for this dynamic of postproduction art is a flea market, an ample space, plural, heterogeneous, with items (shapes, colors, words, objects) from various places and times - a space like the market frequented by the Surrealists, as described by Simone de Beauvoir. A place destined to the consumption of objects not necessarily new, which portrays, in a way, the interest of some contemporary artists in past creations:

"Why has the market become the omnipresent referent for contemporary artistic practices? First, it represents a collective form, a disordered, proliferating and endlessly renewed conglomeration that does not depend on the command of a single author: a market is not designed, it is a unitary structure composed of multiple individual signs. Secondly, this form (in the case of the flea market) is the locus of a reorganization of past production. Finally, it embodies and makes material the flows and relationships that have tended toward disembodiment with the appearance of online shopping." [8]

The flea market is presented, thereby, as an alternative to the e-commerce of the 21st century and to the clean and organized projects of shopping centers. It is a place where things are found and where things can obtain other meanings - surrealistics and theatricals.

## **2. THE SAARA MARKETPLACE**

Thinking about the scenographer from Rio de Janeiro in contemporaneity, it is interesting and possible to analyze the image of the SAARA market in parallel to that flea market presented by Bourriaud as, "since the early nineties, the dominant visual model [...] closer to the open-air market, the bazaar, the souk, a temporary and nomadic gathering of precarious materials and products of various provenances." [9] The Arabic word "souk" used in this quote means "market" and makes direct reference to the practices of street market, typical of the Middle East - and the SAARA

from Rio. Its space and surroundings (as well as the antiquarians from the Lavradio Street) could be considered, thus, a source of new and used objects which earn scenic potential by the selection of the scenographer.

Besides being frequented by theater scenographers, SAARA sells materials to Television companies and Samba Schools. It has indeed a strong relationship with Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, and is its main supplier of materials. This relationship is not only economic but cultural, with a geographical and historical root. According to historian Paula Ribeiro, the area of Praça Onze, near SAARA, was inhabited by African immigrants between the turn of the nineteenth and beginning of twentieth century, being called "Little Africa of Rio de Janeiro." Ribeiro says that:

"Praça Onze (which was partially demolished) and a set of huge residential and commercial blocks were destroyed in the Cidade Nova neighborhood for the construction of Presidente Vargas Avenue, by mayor Henrique Dodsworth in 1940. This project not only changed urbanistically the location, but subverted socially the urban landscape to the 'expropriation' of thousands." [10]

Towards this urban transformation, we think that the relationship between SAARA and Carnival is, in a sense, a remaining memory of black culture in the central region of Rio de Janeiro.

Besides this African presence in Praça Onze, area contiguous to the limits of the SAARA, identified in this an ethnic mixture mainly marked throughout the twentieth century by Arab (Syrian and Lebanese) and Jews traders - hence the intelligence of the acronym SAARA - Sociedade de Amigos das Adjacências da Rua da Alfândega (Society of Friends of the Adjacencies of the Alfândega Street). Currently, there are also Indian, Chinese, Italian, and other immigrants, sometimes just tourists who are passing by, shopping. This cultural mix gives the space cosmopolitan plural characters that, when added to fast-food restaurants and street vendors selling counterfeit goods, creates a vision of a great contemporary marketplace: heterogeneous, popular and full of images.

The question of falsification is legitimate in SAARA, and any fashion toy, watch or handbag can be found with lower prices, generally in non-original versions. This offer does not seem to configure a political conscious position, but an alternative business practice of groups with lesser purchasing power. Anyway, we can, from this fact, interrogate both the overproduction of things in the system of capitalist consumption as with the fashion industry

dynamics. What value do we give to things? What is the necessity of an original product? What does it mean buying the props ready in the SAARA? Or spoofed? Or spoofed, in plastic and with the pattern of Mickey Mouse ®?

### **3. SCENOGRAPHIC PRACTICES IN RIO DE JANEIRO**

Obviously we are not here to discuss the financial constraints of theatrical productions (which, anyway, is a reality of the scenographers), but conceptual questions about the possible consumption of scenographic objects. Certainly the scenic object has more than one layer - a conventional utility level and a symbolic level acquired during scenic manipulation [11] - and it is interesting to analyze the selection process of these objects before the consolidation of the spectacle, especially during the rehearsals.

Let us return to the problematization of the plastic material to think about the scenographic production in Rio de Janeiro nowadays. With regard to a theatrical scenographic tradition that still refuses to assume on the stage that their objects are ready bought (regardless of whether it is a naturalistic proposal scenic or not), the producing of objects is usually finished with an art treatment. Such treatment (usually an aging with sandpaper or with an application of bitumen) aims to provide some "experience" to the objects, especially the very shiny or synthetic materials, disguising that they came straight from SAARA to the stage. When plastics or metals are handled on the scene, for example, their surfaces in most cases are worn out or painted, preventing the stage lighting from being reflected in the eyes of the spectators. However, beyond this concern with the comfort of the audience and with the atmosphere of the scene, there is a belief in the treatment of art as a step that concretizes the role of the scenographer. I mean, that elevates the creative work of scenography and distinguishes it from a mere production purchase.

The question is if the artisan finished props constitute a rule that must be applied to all the scenographic creations. How to think of the contemporary practices in which the use of everyday objects constitute a choice combined with a dramaturgic creation laboratory? We can recall the stage production of *Avatar* in the space of the Museum of Modern Art of Rio de Janeiro in 1974, in which the environmentalist work of the director and scenographer Luiz Carlos Mendes Ripper, as Lidia Kosovski points us, "did not accept the forged ornament, seeking in real world the elements that, when displaced, would be

able to form the necessary environment, as spirit, as atmosphere". [12]. That is, its scenic ambiance emphasized "the 'transcription' of the real, since there was no 'naturalistic' attempt in the form of disposition and utilization of such elements. In this case, the reality handled was the nature, transformed into a 'supernature' by its theatricality and scenic epiphany". [13]

Considering some current practices, in which objects are not always selected by the scenographic team, we can question whether the illusionism of the art treatment (and denial of the brightness of plastic) manages to keep alive the traditional role of the scenographer. We realize in these performances that the actors participate fairly in the creative process and also collaborate bringing materials chosen by them - a point that makes all the difference in the analysis about what we intend to call contemporary *scenographies of the real*.

#### **4. SCENOGRAPHIES OF THE REAL**

According to José A. Sánchez in *Prácticas de lo real en la escena contemporánea*, as Hal Foster addresses a return of the real in the Visual Arts, it is possible to signal a return of the real in the sphere of the Performing Arts - largely due to a suspicion about the media images after the digital revolution and the postmodern debates about mass communications (mainly the work of Jean Baudrillard that talks about a loss of the basic reality). Sanchez perceives that the postmodern sense of loss of reality influenced some contemporary practices that attempt to recover it through visual or verbal reports, but avoiding certain preestablished points of view. Importantly, such return of the real does not mean a preference for a realistic aesthetic, because, like Foster, Sánchez differentiates repetition and representation. Repetition does not have as its goal the compression of subjective realities, but "an artistic practice directly committed to the political and social". [14]

The author highlights that "[...] largely due to the peculiarities of the medium, the real appears always associated with the individual, the individual body or the perspective of the individual that contemplates, that interprets, that translates" [15]; during some contemporary scenic processes of creation associated with the performer who transits between theater and life, by inserting autobiographical texts in dramaturgical constructions both under the form of narrative or imagetic text. Thus, we think that selection and use of objects from the performers' quotidian constitute scenographic resources for communication and expressiveness of those on the scene.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

The scenographies of Rolf Borzik for performances of Pina Bausch in the '70s, for example, delimit a type of work that realizes not only the theatricality of the real, but the inclusion of the interpreter in certain reality, which makes it extremely important transposing this reality (which is not a basic reality, but a memory space of the performer) to the scene:

“They both agreed that the stylisations typical at the time were not appropriate for the new dance theatre pieces, which needed to be anchored firmly in reality. At the same the scenography needed to open up free, poetic spheres for the audience, allowing room for their own associations. Staying close to reality was something Pina Bausch had learned from Ausdruckstanz, or 'expressive dance', practiced by her teacher Kurt Jooss at the Folkwang School.” [16]

In these contemporary practices of the real, we are faced with scenographies that originate from the real itself, or rather from subjective realities of the performers and not just from the "mind's eye" [17] of the scenographer. In this context, one who signs the scenography (be it scenographer, architect, visual artist, designer or the actor himself) faces a working dynamic close to the one already idealized by the director Georges Pitöeff in 1924, in which "the actor determines the choice of objects which needs "[18] - banal everyday objects very easy to find in stores and street vendors from the SAARA marketplace.

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# TURN ON COLOR: STUDYING A COLOR TOOL FOR SET DESIGN

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**Abstract:** This research aims to study a color tool for set design. On stage, the set design surfaces are painted (pigment colors) and illuminated by artificial and colored light from projectors while the environment is dark. We are investigating both RGB light and CMYK color systems to study a tool to simulate this interaction. The approach involves two key moments: (i) Color spectrum analysis of “apparent color” by the combination of the additive and subtractive color systems (RGB and CMYK); (ii) Creation of an application to simulate the apparent color resulting from the combination of the RGB and CMYK systems; systematic observation, recording and analyzing the phenomenon on stage. The main goal of this study is to clarify and understand the interaction of color (light and matter) as well as its relevance on stage. The lack of specific studies makes this research relevant.

As a result we will present a graphical diagram with color results for start future investigation: testing and showing the relevance of these tools. The next step of research should focus on their development as a support for design thinking process.

**Keywords:** Set Design; Interaction Color; Visual Literacy

## 1. INTRODUCTION

*From the beginning I have always worked with light and color. In starting a new work that is the first thing I do. Without light there is no space. With light, there is color.*<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Wilson interview, Dec.2010*

The study of the interaction of color through the systems of RGB and CMYK color aims to obtain a graphic diagram color as a useful tool for understanding the interaction of the light's color with the color pigment of the Set Design.

The color has no material existence and is translated into sensation produced by the nerve centers of vision driven by light. Etymologically it is associated with the appearance caused by surfaces. Without light we don't receive stimuli and without organs of vision we do not detect colors.

Most studies about the interaction of color are fragmented into specialties, and do not explain what happens when we actually join a colored light onto a colored surface.

Set design work is an ephemeral process, which implies a capacity for immediate response, intuitive and above all creative. For a designer, it is essential to know the potential of materials depending on the light's color change to which they are exposed. With that meaning of apparent color is it easier for a set designer to work on the dramaturgy of the performance. The dramaturgy of the performance is a shared work between all areas and includes set designers, costume designers, lighting and sound designers, performers, and production (production executive, image and stage management). Color is one of the common links of this multidisciplinary nature of creation and requires a special focus on its interaction.

In the theoretical basis of color we only can read color in ideal environments: color pigment is viewed in daylight, on a white surface and the light's color, although presented by Newton in a light beam, viewed on a white surface. Why do we not create an ideal environment for interaction of color? Before recognizing the attributes of the interaction of light on objects studied by Kurnar and Choudhury [1], it is necessary to understand the nature of color.

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<sup>1</sup> Email interview with Robert Wilson Director (<http://robertwilson.com>). December 2010.

A tool that facilitates learning the interaction of colors may lead students to this subject in order to understand these attributes. To be informed of the results of "apparent color" is the best way to be able to provide the reflection and refraction of colored light colored surfaces.

Max Keller [2] in *Light Fantastic*, presents a selection of photographs of white cubes illuminated with colored light. Clearly we have exemplified the principle of light but set surfaces, in most situations, are not white and need to be designed considering the color of the materials depending on their exposure to colored light.

Richard H. Palmer [3] provides some analysis parameters for the design of light compared to each of the surrounding areas in a performance, where color is one of the common links of the elements of stage design in the area of performance. In terms of relationship between the lights and scenography he considers the notion of inter-dependence between areas

*Certainly these two design areas depend heavily on one another and, even if one person does not undertake both productions, the scenic and lighting designers must remain in close communication with one another. [3]*

In *The Lighting Art*, Richard Palmer equates the processes of perception and composition in the interaction between light and material (the result of a color) resulting in the perception of form and space aspects of texture, surface profile and contrasts. The concern of the author focuses on the perspective of the external observer (the phenomenon of perception). He adds that the current problem of scene design is the inability to unravel the relationship between light and scenography as interactive elements, from their common physical characteristics and not as isolated phenomena, though their creative processes, for various reasons, are developed at different times. Palmer is interested in the relationship between form and content, from the contributions of other fields of visual arts beyond the concerns of scene initiated by Appia [4] and Craig [5] where changes of light in three-dimensional shapes alter their appearance. He concludes by saying that the experience is not just in the moment of sending the light but in the instant response of bodies in terms of reflection, absorption and refraction.

Faber Birren [6], in *Light, Color & Environment*, suggests that colors should be analyzed and studied at the application site to be fundamental "to the art of seeing." Through this, Birren, points to the need to join the two color systems, to analyse and study color at the application. Birren [7], in *Principles of Color*, reinforces the importance of visual and psychological effects caused

by color and devotes a chapter "to the new perception of color" which states that the focus should be on how colors are perceived and what effect they cause. Already in the century. XVIII Portuguese physicist Diogo de Carvalho and Sampayo [8] concluded the same in his Dissertation on the primitive colors, with a short treatise of the composition of the artificial colors, sensitizing us to the nature of the materials.

Merleau-Ponty [9] in *The Eye and the Spirit* tells us that the important thing is to feel light and surroundings that we know only by appearance. Here the eye and spirit bind because they understand the mechanisms of perception given by the experience of the senses.

Gibson [10] in *The Ecological Approach to Visual Perception*, through a deep study on surfaces, establishes the relations of intensity and color to the perception of surface color of an object and adds that the influence of light incident on various illuminated surfaces in a particular place produces in us the understanding of three-dimensional space.

Israel Pedrosa [11] in *Da cor à cor inexistente*, produced a study on the effect of Goethe's physiological color and the contrast of color of the Commission Internationale de l'éclairage (CIE) where technically he could control the phenomenon and frame it within basic practices according to the distance where the observer positions himself through the shades of painting observed, which had also to comply with standards of established form. The field of nonexistent color revealed the essence of chromatic harmony, through systematization of data that influences color perception induced and general relations that determine the chromatic mutations. Also he classifies colors according to the type of luminic stimulus that causes and sets the "paróptrica" color, an apparent color or accidental one which "is the color of the surface of the body, which appears so fleeting, but sometimes more enduring."

Hard and Sivik [12] report that the visual environment consists of perceptions of color (color perceptions) and all the visual stimuli that activate the sensors are recognized as retinal colors.

Goethe [13] in *Traité des Couleurs* already stated that light, shadow and color are the factors that distinguish one object from another object and one part of an object from another. Swirnoff [14] in *Dimensional Color*, wonders about the fact that 150 years after Goethe had written his treatise on colors the issues of color and shape are still being studied separately.

Osborne [15] in *Color Influencing Form*, states that the shape is defined by the relationship of the place it occupies, distribution and color balance.

Arneim [16] in *Art and Visual Perception*, questions the relevance of studying the two systems of color and points to the example of the color pigment in motion (kinetic) which becomes additive synthesis because of appearance; he suggested visual categories, to facilitate the teaching of seeing and reading. The author believes that perception is also thinking, all reasoning process is also intuitive and all observation is also invention.

Fletcher [17], cited *Nicholas* Humphrey in terms of the way that color is the organizer of visual stimuli.

Mathematical models developed by CIE that help predict change in color appearance given by the different viewing conditions, consist of various color spaces and serve to evaluate distinct color differences in light, pigment, imaging and computing. Just as there are diagrams showing additive and subtractive systems *with* the results given by mixtures in their ideal conditions we aim in this study to obtain a new graphic diagram which in a similar way can explain what the mathematical models can predict and finally compare whether these forecasts coincide with the reality of a theatrical stage. Like the graphic computational image these values will eventually simplify the matter of color reproduction and in this way convert different color spaces without major color changes, in this study we propose to compare the results of the color mixing of RGB and CMYK systems: first by studying the spectrum of the illuminant and obtaining a new scheme spectrum, and second, through the simulation of color resulting in an application/software for a mobile device and finally in a real environment through observation, recording, analysis, evaluation and comparing the results of these three situations.

After this we *will* draft a proposal for a graphic diagram which facilitates the understanding of this mixture.

We will need to go to the basic understanding of color, to develop a useful tool that simplifies and contributes to color literacy just as schematized additive and subtractive systems are and which relates the three-dimensionality, including key issues such as absorption, reflection, refraction without stimulating the understanding of a colored light on a colored surface.

In this context, the aim of this work is to contribute to the literacy of color through joining the RGB and CMYK systems.

### 1.1. DEVELOPMENT

In the history of the theater and around the time of the emergence of electric lighting on stage, we found an article from 1920 (fig.1) published by the Journal Times that acquainted us with the work of Adrian V. Saimoiloff, based on theories of physics which he used in his magic tricks. Today we use the term "effect Saimoloff" when we refer to an optical illusion of "making things disappear or camouflage" or refer to a radical change of color in set and costume. This is achieved through the combination of contrasting colors between the surfaces of the objects, as lit with a light of a complementary color.

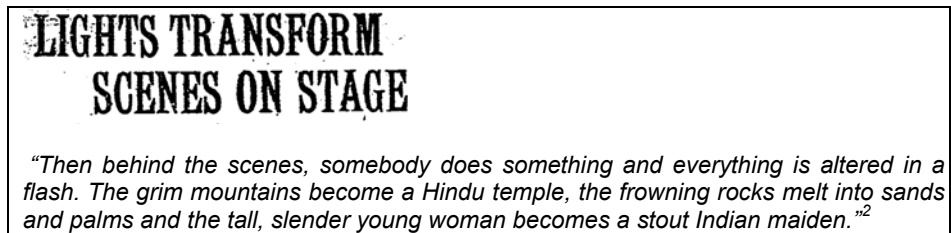


Fig. 1: Article in the New York Times, 1920

With the increasing popularization of light sources that combine the 3 colors of the light spectrum (aka RGB system), such as lighting systems LED RGB on the market, there are some emerging issues that are important to reflect upon and directly embrace the object of study of this research.

Leaving for a moment the contextualization already described concerning apparent color and the result of the interaction between light and matter, in the various disciplines of the performing arts, we find that, until recently, the light sources available in the market were characterized, generally speaking, by two types of color temperature: the "light-cold" and "light-hot." It is common sense that the light-cold tones corresponds to "blue" as well as "hot light" the yellow tones. Therefore, this unique partitioning of the luminous sources in hot or cold tones generalized the idea that the illuminated surfaces in addition to a small variation of tonal color correspond directly to the material or paint applied.

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<sup>2</sup><sub>In</sub>

<http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archivefree/pdf?res=F40C13FC3B5A1B7A93C2AA178BD95F458285F9>  
(08/05/2012).

As evidenced by the recent studies perpetrated by Philips Research <sup>3</sup> (Atmosphere Flipbook, 2007), these paradigms are being fundamentally altered by the growing possibility of using light sources whose spectrum is unlimited (RGB). The room that was hitherto white or red (for such was painted or decorated) this time may, by overlapping these new light sources, be of any color. This opens a new field of possibilities for all creatives whose action is confined to the study of space and light, where perception of the joining of the two systems is given to us through this experience of color.

The work by artist James Turrell in North American Skyspace Goldstein / Roden Crater Project or Chichu Nagoshima Art Museum in Japan (in collaboration with architect Tadao Ando) address in a relevant way the issues of chromatic juxtaposition of the two systems<sup>4</sup>. In this temple dedicated to light and light perception, the artist shows us a deep and true foundation: this considers that perception is a tool you can use to make their own reality.

Also relevant is the work of the Department of Digital Media Arts Avery Caldwell, in particular the experiences of chromatic variation of Tara Avery<sup>5</sup> (evidencing the differences in the apparent color change (that is perceived) by the incidence of light spots of different colors (fig.3).

*The Color experience from FILTHERAPY/ DMA 140 Color Theory. Project by Amanda Schoepflin and Tara Avery.*



Fig. 2: Tara Avery, Fall Quarter Dec 20, 2010

## 1.2. METHODS AND RESULTS

In the first stage of the work will be employed the following methodologies:

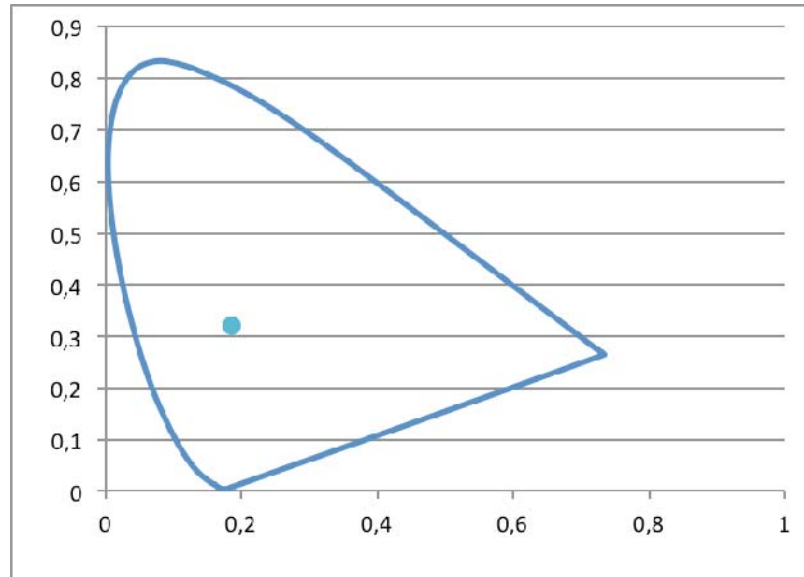
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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.research.philips.com/technologies/shoplight/atmosphere.html> (10-02-2010)

<sup>4</sup> through his link: <http://vimeo.com/5929848> can be viewed online a short documentary produced by BBC (10-02-2011)

<sup>5</sup> in this regard, see this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=No6r5QjBq8Y> (10-02-2011)

1. Mathematical calculations and resulting graphs and description of the illuminant spectrum of the mixture of RGB to CMYK systems;
2. Measurement of the illuminant spectrum of a colored surface exposed to an RGB light (physics laboratory);
3. Simulation-mix additive and subtractive developed as an application for a mobile device (fig.4) as applied from the same mathematical models (CIE). ;



*Example of color space: interaction between RGB and CMYK*

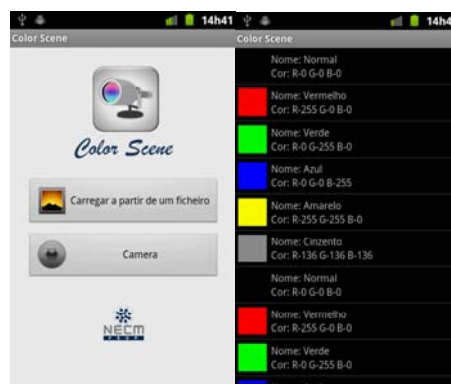


Fig.4: Screenshot for mobile phone developed in FEUP (jun.2011)

-observation of the interaction of color of painted surfaces illuminated by RGB spotlights on a stage in a theater.

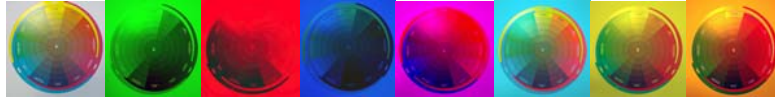


Fig.5: Experience: color wheel chart illuminated by RGB spotlights at Light laboratory in ESMAE (Nov.2010)

The proposed methodology will be develop quantitative and qualitative assessment and show the results still awaiting confirmation.This work will be offered in the form of a graphic diagram of the interaction of systems RGB and CMYK the results of which will be confirmed at a future date.

In obtaining accurate results and confirmation of color this diagram will be completed with the results of apparent color:

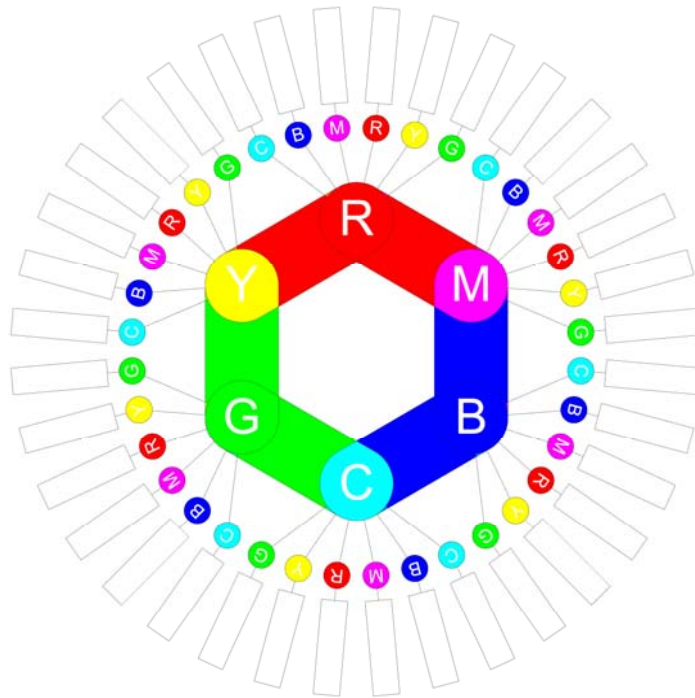


Fig.6: Diagram of Interaction of two colors systems (RGB anda CMYK)

## **2. CONCLUSION**

We still have to finalize the study of the practical application of this diagram and apply the "calculator" color on a mobile device, to conclude whether or not this tool contributes to literacy of the interaction of color or even encourages learners to develop more complex scenographic compositions and thus contribute (through this interaction of color) to the dramaturgy of a performance.

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# SCENIC DESIGN - A DIMINISHING ART-FORM OR POTENTIAL INTERACTIVE CANVAS

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**Abstract:** As we as a society become increasingly reliant on an automated digital life, we ask how deeply this integration might infuse such a long standing tradition such as set building, in particular in traditional theatre.

The progress over recent years with media servers and video is widely acknowledged. These technologies have developed to such an extent that they have moved away from their almost ubiquitous use in concert touring to becoming more common in traditional theatre in place of individual painted set pieces.

Integration can take many forms: from comparative long standing protocols such as DMX(DMX512-A, the ESTA (Entertainment Services Technology Association) Standard for controlling lighting equipment and related accessories), MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) and RS232 (*Recommended Standard 232*), to motion and audio sensors. However how far might this go in the near future?

How long will it be before we see Twitter or Facebook integration for, perhaps, audience interaction?

**Keywords:** Scenic Design; Media Server; Interactive; LED Scenic elements; MIDI; 3D; Computer Intergration

## 1. INTRODUCTION

From the early days of western theatre in Greek and Roman amphitheatres, the 'set' has often played a massive part in the overall staging of any theatrical production. Whether it be in the now historic amphitheatres of days gone by, a custom built theatre or recycled fringe theatre venue.

Scenic design has often been influenced by the creative movements of the time. For instance perhaps one of the greatest innovations seen was in the early 20C in direct response to the Bauhaus Movement [1].

In more recent times, the computer age has started to directly influence scenic design. This not in a 'behind the scenes role' for CAD and 3D modeling, but more in the use of media servers and automated control systems for staging and flying.

Such innovations started with the use of MIDI, a development from the mid 1980's which allows various pieces of equipment to be linked together in a way that allows for one machine within the chain to trigger another into action. While this is a system more commonly associated with electronic synthesizers, recently it has been becoming more prevalent within production design through the use of such software solutions as Midi Show Control (MSC) [2].

MSC is effectively just an expansion of the more traditional MIDI format, however rather than sending simple MIDI notes, it sends CUE Information[3] such as 'F0 7F <device\_ID=1> 02 <command\_format=lighting> <GO> F7' This will trigger a lighting console with the MIDI ID/Address of 1 to 'Go'.

MSC as a system is not just relevant to lighting but can be used to trigger lasers, sound, audio playback equipment, video equipment, automated rigging and flying equipment, pyro and even hydraulics, making it at times a seemingly perfect bed fellow for the more elaborate scenic designs, which might call upon numerous cues from other disciplines in order to bring out the best in a particular set change.

Given the complexities of such a multidiscipline change, often the whole system is laid out and governed by MTC (MIDI Time Code).

Prior to MIDI, such systems designers were limited to the now somewhat antiquated RS232 (*Recommended Standard 232*) protocol. This

system, though, was generally only built into certain pieces of video and audio equipment and as such never really took off in theatrical practice.

Lighting as a discipline has always been at the forefront of theatrical technology. From the "Grand Master" (the first type of lighting desk) at the advent of electric light to the programmable lighting desk with the availability of affordable computers. In this way it is not so surprising that one of the biggest recent additions to theatrical technology is the media server; a system primarily designed to help lighting designers bridge the gap between lighting and video by offering them a system that allows them to use existing technology (a computerised lighting desk) to control elements of video playback.

In some ways this could be said to be a logical step as this has in effect created a hybrid technology, which allows various technologies to work in total synergy with one another.

Such systems in particular come into their own when coupled with the inroads that have been made with video equipment. In recent years the manufacturing costs and brightness attainable with LED (Light Emitting Diodes) has led to a huge influx of LED screen technology literally flooding the entertainment markets. This can especially be seen within the concert touring market where it has become de-rigueur for each act / show to have some form of video active backdrop / set made with LED modules of some form. At the same time the abilities to gain greater brightness and higher resolutions from the DLP (Digital Light Processors) used in almost all of the high end projection equipment has also led to bolder and literally brighter designs.

These elements have started to become so much part of everyday scenic design that it was recently reported that one manufacturer of media servers donated one of their servers to RADA (Royal Academy of Dramatic Art) in London so that their students might gain a better understanding of the technology itself [4].

Media servers are very much the key to the whole change that appears to be afoot for the genre of scenic design. It is not so much the ease with which they are able to cope with numerous screen types and sizes, often having numerous types, sizes and shapes of screen been 'driven' by a media server at the same time, but they also allow for so much more to be controlled at the same time.

In essence a media server is simply a computer containing various media files (usually film clips / loops) that allows these to be played directly to

a screen: be it LED or projection. The media server itself can be operated either directly through its own user interface (stand alone) or via DMX, ArtNET or another protocol often through a lighting desk.

This is the manner in which media servers have tended to be used for a number of years now, however many media servers have always had far more abilities built into them. For instance the ability to trigger or be triggered by MIDI and RS232 devices as well as Time Code and custom scripts and presets. This in particular is a great advantage when you wish to control a robotic camera or trigger a preset on a video matrix.

More recent inroads in the technology industry have fueled an increase in the interest of micro electronic hobbyists, such as the programming language 'Processing'[5] and breadboarding kits such as Arduino[6] and Rasberry Pi[7] becoming more available and surprisingly inexpensive, such projects as a cat sending a Twitter feed by simply using their 'cat flap' only hints at a more abstract style of integration.

At the same time as these systems have been developing, some more adventurous designers have been merging such technologies with existing production technologies, such as media servers and projection, to create some incredible interactive designs: the vertical interactive wall in Cirque du Soleil's Las Vegas production of "KA" , which integrated motion sensors to control flying and projection equipment to give just one example.

As innovation has been fostered by consumer manufacturers, they have released such incredible devices as Microsoft's "Kinect". This technology is already common place and reasonably priced for us to be able to literally map our physical presence and use our gestures and movements to trigger pre recorded sequences whether these be stage or scenery motion control, lighting, sound or video cues.

## **2. CONCLUSION**

It is my belief that scenic design has always been in effect the conduit for a patron's imagination into the production / show that they have come to watch being staged. As such set designers are always striving for original and unique ways to reach a greater audience while at the same time paying due homage to both the stage show and their fellow designers, so that at the end everything might come together in total harmony.

For decades, if not a century, the term "set design" conjures up images of beautiful and intricate sets and backdrops, done with such staggering detail that at times you are had pushed to differentiate from the real thing.

Now with the global adoption of 3D (from projection building mapping, to cinema, to our own front rooms) and advances in technological imagination, it is perhaps of little surprise that these almost "Sci-fi" style systems are finding their way into the world of scenic design, a former bastion of paint canvas and timber.

Quite simply, is back-projecting a high resolution image onto a screen a lazy man's backdrop or do these technologies have a valid place on the scenic designers pallet? Or rather are these technological innovations simply a fad only to be replaced in the near future by the next newest development?

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# TEMPORALITY IN ABANDONED SPACES THEATRES IN WILD SPACES- A SCENE FOR ANARCHITECTURE

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**Abstract:**Annexing abandoned spaces and temporarily arranging the old ones, the remnants were always an important part of independent culture. Wild architecture or rather anarchitecture constantly plays with correct aesthetics, also in the field of theaters. Anarchitecture of theaters is the view of incredible creativity between crumbling walls, stage design reaching for background in squats, abandoned factories, irrelevant places in the middle of nowhere. Exploding urban fabric, they enrich and stimulate public activities. New context of abandoned places gives them a new life, sometimes even more intensive than before. Free and easy flow of ideas contributes to pose new questions and innovative solutions. Places without a master plan are today necessity, showing how much meaning we can find in urban space just around us, trying to create ourselves independent units, without tinsel, clichés or money.

It is said about anarchitecture that the city is as a network of mutual human connections and not dead and closed neighborhoods. This is a reflection of "social care", randomness and resourcefulness. Developers and residents need to be expressed by a relaxed, comfortable with outlook and chaotic architectural attitude, word association, game material functions is in response to a particular need. Perhaps, but not necessarily a threat to aesthetics, but through skillful dialogue between users of a shared space. It is "The result of an emotional approach".[1]

**Keywords:** anarchitecture; alternative spaces; abandoned spaces; temporality; independent theater; alternative theater;

## 1. ART IS NEVER FINISHED, ONLY ABANDONED – LEONARDO DA VINCI

The 20th century was the age of changes and revolutionary ideas of creating theater and performance spaces. Domination of typical box- scene- started to be replaced by more spatial opportunities. Variety of theater practices and new dramatists techniques needed an extension and modification. Engaging new spaces and hunting for unknown spots became a reality. Contemporary theater life was not an exception but fact, involving both classical and independent theater environment.[2]

Performance actions are open for non- theater spaces in order to remove distance between presented world and the audience. Nowadays, it is easier for people to commune with art in well-known areas such as streets, factories, supermarkets or rail stations, where they can feel comfortable. Performing in public or not adapted places, bounds with the definition of time. Fleeting, interim flash actions and temporary stoppings are creating new views of every place. Problem of space for contemporary theater can be expressed in the general definition: **temporality annexing spaces**.

## 2. OLD/NEW SPACES

Nowadays, in the age of globalization and incredible fast, paced environment, all new investments seem to be determined by economic factors. In the context of architecture it means that it's much easier to destroy existing structure, than to adapt the old one (even if the function is still the same). Cultural functions and creative districts are frequently located in industrial areas as one of the fundamentals of revitalization process. Old industrial spaces are willing to be filled and occupied mainly by independent cultural institutions. This process usually appears earlier than an interest and reaction of potential business investors. The main aspect of revitalization is the respect for unique character, ambiance and atmosphere of spaces. Therefore, it fits more to creators and activators of independent culture, who derive from non-imposed spaces and free cultural activities, such as: contemporary creators, representatives of alternative culture or generally - people performing just above cultural mainstream but being its important component.[3]

**One of the ways to redefine old spaces is to use anarchitecture as an innovative view for creating space.** Used in context of abandoned

spaces, it opens new possibilities for contemporary theater and exceeds even existing frames of creating independent theater in alternative places. Fresh influence of it pushes the distance between art and its consumer, who starts to be a creator, too.

### **3. ANARCHITECTURE MEANINGS**

Definition of anarchitecture was brought to life by Belgian architect Lucien Kroll. His famous work – MeMe – medical student dormitory in Bruxelles is a manifesto- building, which interrupted utopia for democratic architecture. Every part of it was made by its customer, so finally it appeared as an enormous mosaic of needs, tastes and opportunities. An icon of participant architecture is “the fruit of an assemblage by empathy of its diverse parts. An open process becomes the motivation for its form complexity”. [4]

Wild architecture and architecture anarchy, exhibited at cities suburbs, constantly attends in notorious game with general trends and aesthetic. Assembled in chaotic way frames made of carton or wood, squats, car wrecks, inhabited carriages or “nomadic architecture” - are unsocial aspects which degrade the city tissue - but all of this- on the other hand, they introduce an interesting colors pallet and a mosaic of activity. Objects that are the result of requirement are created without any plan, often without presence of an architect. This kind of places are clearly representing deep human needs and authenticity in crashing the social, architecture barriers.

Popular definition of the city says that it's a place of dynamics, place of meeting, exchange of thoughts, ideas, needs. It's obvious that the city should be a living organism made by the inhabitants, not the opposite. Anarchitecture says that it's the resultant of emotional treating city organism as a web of human interrelationships, not dead and closed neighborhood. [4]

Thanks to independent environments, which are quite often an extension of typical social needs, abandoned spaces are recovering their lives or even start to exist and function more intensive than before.

Spontaneous places, improvised architecture or re-use of existing structures, created by different social groups are every time an important voice about temporary, spatial situation, always reacting quickly for all the changes.

### 3.1. One man's trash is another's man treasure – Martin Kaltwasser

One of the examples for interesting variation about anarchitecture in the field of theater, is Jelly Fish in London, created by Martin Kaltwasser and Folke Kobberling. The first in the world performance space made from wastes and donated recycled materials, such as: reused shipping pallets, old doors, recycled nails, old furniture and donated wood scraps. "Building" is promoting idea of sustainable construction – through itself and also ecological subject of performed pieces. This architecture of improvisation (there was no particular plan or project) reminds a dramatic improvisation in theaters or films – trial and errors method. Only one part of Jelly Fish is a standard one – steel skeleton, which is a constructive frame. Except that, everything else is improvised- MDF, pallets, plywood. What is important, Jelly Fish provides all safety standards, provision of construction and fire.



Figure 1. (a) main facade, (b) back facade

Jelly Fish is a total theater. Not only architects, but also directors, dramatists and stage designer, were engaged to suggest the final appearance. Thanks to that theater is already made scenery and set design. Builders were: students, inhabitants and employees from neighbourhood, who became after an audience of theater they build. In total, 81 volunteers, using 800 pallets, 750m<sup>2</sup> plywood and working for 4200 hours, built for free ecological theater in anarchitecture method. "We're a completely open stage, trying to prove that local people can create their own public projects.(...) You can do it, too, without developers, quangos, huge professional teams – and with anyone taking part." – Bryan Savery from Red Room Theater in London. [6]

### 3.2. Theater of Fly by Assemble



Figure 2. main facade of theater

Other inspiring project of temporally theater was formed 2 years ago in London on the occasion of Chichester Festival. Building was made from reusable and recyclable materials donated in-kind, such as: “waterproof plastic exterior, exposed ropes, pulleys, spotlights and scaffolding platforms”. Created in close collaboration of architects, directors and volunteers space reveals and plays with various techniques of theatre- making. Theater form was based on the fly tower- used to hoisting and lowering set design during the performance. Building, thanks to specific materials, shows, normally hidden from view mechanisms creating differential form, capable to open for outdoor performances, provides the surrounding of a beautiful park. “Detailed with tall, structural seams that fix back to the scaffolding sub-frame with cable ties, this material is almost silent in wind and rain and it contributes to quiet exterior structure.” [7]

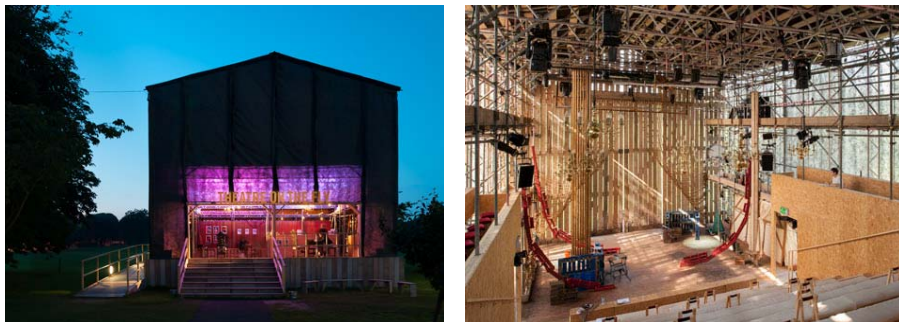


Figure 3. (a) main facade in night, (b) interior

### 3.3. Folly for a Flyover by Assemble



Figure 4. (a) spot during the day, (b) performance in the evening

Anarchitecture is not only palettes, re-used woods. Another project of team Assemble shows that also bricks of clay supported by scaffolding can create alternative space for art and theater. Located again in London city, nearby Olympic site spot, under the motorway was a hand-built by donated materials. Visible inspiration of surrounding red- brick buildings were used to stay in the same spatial atmosphere and it shows that anarchitecture can be used in very sensitive method scale, as a signal to sketch the space. Brick construction under and between existing structure of road was enriched by animations of films or light shows surrounding and incapacitating all space. [8]

### 3.4. Colt Island in Bialystok (PL) - Center of independent art – Anna Siwik

Old military repository from 1936 is an extraordinary place on polish, architecture map – hidden between high trees, mercilessly forgotten. The area is almost 9,6 hectare of wild space, but located in close neighbourhood of the city center of Bialystok. The entire complex is composed of dozen scattered halls: monuments of military architecture, mixed with contemporary, cheap halls from concrete, closed railway sidings, etc.

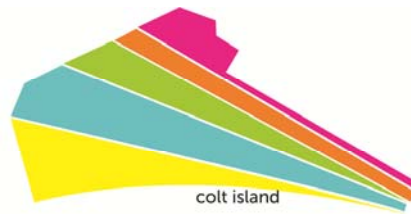


Figure 5. logo

Nowadays, the buildings are occupied by differently activities, without any idea, and they are slowly getting destroyed. Deficiency of master plan caused a strong defragmentation of this part of city, which is really important for cultural identity of town. Bialystok is an important center on theater map of Poland (Theater Academy with puppet theater specialization, many independent theaters: Wierszalin, Doomsday, Hotel Malabar). Unique location of Bialystok (eastern part of Poland) causes that it's a great platform for dialog between neighboring countries: Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania. Unfortunately, there isn't any suitable scene to organize so important multi-cultural meetings on a great scale and for all those reasons Colt Island matches.

Present tenants are very spontaneous with all the problems related with old magazines, they use. It looks like it additional propels energy and creativity in organization of space. Only last year in magazine nr 10 took place over a 30 music shows, theater performances, exhibitions with participation of artist from Poland, Belarus, Russia, France, England and Italy – all of them in one spirit of independence culture. Place is open for everybody on all possible levels. Even now the spot is unique but it needs a basis and certainty to realize permanent projects.



Figure 6. views

Project involves to complement existing structure with additional spaces for performances: one main scene 850m2 with all capabilities of scene- change and one impresario scene 200m2. Present halls were recreated with use of anarchitecture method, based only on imposed grid of facades.

Materials used are: brick (from other building structures), industrial glass, rails elements and typical industrial polycarbonate.



Figure 7. views

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Trash buildings are nothing new, because people always were building from simplest, available materials. The problem is that construction from wastes reminds us only hut from slums, build be poorest. Presented examples show new opportunities for “temple of high art” in ecological environment, between embarrassing old stuff, palettes, re-used bricks.

Therefore architecture should not always be interpreted as an alien on our planet. It can be more like a nest, built here and now, using whatever materials that was at hand, to completely vanish in the natural surrounding after it expires. Every new transformation is a natural cycle of changes, causing lively existence in social consciousness. It also an important signal to develop other activities in specific area and stimulate to live new districts. Abandoned spaces like these have opportunity to evolve and develop, creating mosaic of city life, with all the respect for inevitability of time,

temporality and changes. Places related to independent culture are closer to an average consumer of art.

**Alternative culture happens just around us, very near us and as a direct replay for existing needs. And it's worth to remember.**

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# CO-PERFORMATIVE FUNCTION OF ARCHITECTURE: THE CORRELATION OF SPACE AND BODY IN THE FUNCTION OF MERGING INTO A UNIQUE SCENE EVENT

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**Abstract:** The need for researching and defining co-performative function of architecture relies on the theory that every architecture is multi-functional, and that it is being realized through its *functions*, from the very beginning of the design process. These functions always coexist in a certain hierarchy, which is established for each individual project.

Co-performative function of architecture refers to a function which describes the potential of space to become not only the cause or envelope, but above all, an actor of an event, in correlation with the body.

The process of defining begins with the term *complicité*, introduced by Jacques Lecoq, which represents one of the essential assumptions of a successful scene event. It can be translated as togetherness, complicity, a form of collusion between celebrants (Michael Ratcliffe), where the term collusion suggests a lot more than just a neutral working together. The basic question is: is it possible to establish *complicité* between architecture/space and action/body?

This paper aims to define the co-performative function of architecture through the study of the performance *Man walking down the side of a building*, by Trisha Brown, 1970. The way in which the body establishes a relationship with space, and the moment in which the space becomes the basic component of an action, rather than a neutral envelope for an action, will be analyzed through the treatment of space in this example, and also through the direction of mutual conditionality of meanings between body/movement and space.

**Keywords:** space, body, complicité, function of architecture, performance

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Richard Sheckner said: "I believe that there is a true correlation between body and space, as well as space through which the body is moving. Most of the time in theatre workshops and on rehearsals is dedicated to detection of these relations, which are changeable and almost invisible". [1] These hardly visible, but implicit relations between body and space make an important component in creation of meaning [2] inside the theatre – and outside – in any scene constructed by an event in space. Scene design, as a theoretical platform which makes us able to evaluate almost any phenomenon which surrounds us, on one side, and the fact that "nothing can happen without happening somewhere" [3] on the other, makes studying of architectural space from the position of scene design legitimate and necessary. If the whole being in the world today is articulated through the logic and means of a scene, it is expected that this research finds the support in theatre theory.

"The secret of theatre is inscenation", as Meta Hočevár states trying to list all possible relations which establish between space and event, "each time it slips again" [4]. Although these relations are hardly visible and above all changeable, we are aware of their existence. "I felt that my body was trying to expand in order to fill the space of the room" [5]. Coming across this Sheckner's note, I must remember the levels of existential space introduced by Christian Norberg Schulz. They were established from the level of hand, to the geographical level [6], and supplemented with levels of room, neighbourhood and universe. [7] This made the level of body and the level of room came to adjacent positions. As Sheckner reminds us that a body establishes a dynamic relation with space, it is possible to assume that this series of levels could be supplemented with new in-between levels after detailed analyses of body and space. "True and alive" relations between space of a body and space that surrounds it are numerous, above all because it is assumed "that both human beings and space are alive". [8]

In this dynamic body-space correlation, it is important to stress the role of architecture in constituting a scene event as a whole. "I strive to make the space a function of drama which is discovered by actors. Of course, it establishes the reciprocity between space and idea, movement and characterization". [9] If everything has to occur somewhere, and the "somewhere" necessarily affects the way event establishes, the drama develops, and further, the way body moves, at the same time it can be

claimed that that the space itself (or its meaning) changes under the influence of body, drama and event. An event “has to manipulate the space, and not vice versa. As soon as I wrote this, I also have to write an opposite claim: the space manipulates a figure, an actor, an event”. [10] If the space is in the function of drama, and simultaneously stands the opposite, we are approaching the essential aspiration of creating a scene space: “The space of play has to lack something: the play” [11]. Since the mutual contextualization of body and space is implicit, that means that, ideally, space and body complement one another, merge, and in synergy build the entity of a scene event – understood in its broadest sense. Does the space I enter influence the way I move in it, or I influence the perception and meaning of the space by the way I move? [12] It is clear that in different imaginary outcomes that could be summed up into an answer to this question, it is possible to establish a large scale of roles of space in this relations – from neutral frame that envelopes an action, to the space which independently takes over the role of an actor, and which doesn’t need the body or the movement anymore. What also becomes clear, is the existence of one point in this whole series in which the action is not complete without the space, nor is the space complete without the action. In this point body and space function equally and in a perfect interaction.

Transferred in the context of architecture, and taking into account that out-of-theatre space is a legitimate initiator of the scene practice, consideration of interaction between space and body inevitably establishes a (new) function of architecture.

## **2. THEORETICAL FRAME**

### **2.1. Multi-functionality of architecture**

Multi-functionality of architecture refers to a theory of multiplicity or plurality of functions through which every architecture is being realized, rather than multiplicity of utilitarian possibilities of spaces and buildings.

Every building fulfills a number of functions, “independently of their precedence to the needs, or answering to them”. [13] All functions of architecture, from the very beginning of the definition of a project brief, always “exist parallelly and simultaneously, independently from our awareness of them, or the ability to use them”. [14] A certain hierarchy in which these functions coexist is established individually for each architectural project. It is important to stress that functions of architecture in plural, make “an open collection” [15] so it is necessary to have an “active relation” [16] to them,

since the once established hierarchy of functions easily changes, depending on the changes of context.

Opening the awareness that functions of architecture exist, in order to be able to use them in design processes, has been the main goal and subject of architectural design teaching process in Novi Sad in the last few years. In an attempt to define another function of architecture, this paper relies to that tradition.

## **2.2. Complicité**

In a process of defining a function of architecture which describes the potential of space to become one of integral parts of an event as a whole, it is necessary to articulate the recognized quality of interaction between space and body. Talking about interaction between space and body, we are talking, in a certain way, about synergy, merging or togetherness of architecture/space and body/movement, in which case the space can simultaneously become not only an occasion or frame, but above all actor of an event.

The unity of individual elements, participants and parts of a performing event has been a central topic of many theatre practitioners, who tried to describe, establish, define and apply these qualities that link all into a successful scene act. In the practise of Stanislavski, the unity was achieved on the level of “collective experiencing of what was happening”, [17] while Branko Gavella calls it an “emotional play (Mitspiel) between actor and actor, actor and spectator, spectator and spectator.” [18] Jacques Lecoq, on the other hand, introduces a triad of terms *le jeu – disponibilité – complicité* which represent essential presumptions of a successful scene event. Most general translations of the terms could be play, openness (availability) and togetherness. However, the qualities that Lecoq assigns to these terms refer to the meanings much broader than those given by the basic translation. The most important for this research is the term *complicité*, which remains in its original form even in English speaking areas, since the meaning which Lecoq assigns to it is hard to translate. The term could be explained as complicity, “a form of collusion between celebrants” [19], where the term collusion suggests a lot more than neutral cooperation or working together.

The basic question that remains is whether the collective experience or emotional play (Mitspiel) is transferable to a spatial level? Is it possible to establish *complicité* in correlation of architecture/space and action/body?

Transferred to the field of body-space research, complicité can be recognized precisely as the quality that establishes in synergy of body and space, and, as an outcome that this function of architecture realizes.

Paradigmatic example of this relation can be found in performance *Man Walking Down the Side of a Building* by choreographer Trisha Brown.

### **3. CASE STUDY: MAN WALKING DOWN THE SIDE OF A BUILDING**

Performance *Man walking down the side of a building* was performed for the first time in 1970. in Soho, New York, by Richard Nonas and Jed Bark. Trisha Brown placed both of performers on the rooftop of a seven-storey building. While one of them was in charge of the security and a rope, the other one, tied by it, slowly walked down the side of a building. Throughout the entire process of walking down, his body remained parallel to the ground (Figure 1).

The way in which the body establishes a relation with space, and the moment in which space becomes the basic component of an action, rather than a neutral envelope for it, will be analyzed through the treatment of space in this example, and also through the direction of mutual conditionality of meanings between body/movement and space.

#### **3.1. Treatment of space**

The facade of the building in Soho was used as a spatial frame of the performance. Choosing this sort of space for environment, place and even stage where the piece is performed, was in many ways atypical. First of all, for Trisha Brown this choreography was a starting point for exploring of different out-of-theatre places for performing. Use of a vertical surface as a stage in a literal sense, made the relation between the event and spectators atypical even for outdoor performance places. At the same time, by using precisely the facade as a scene space, and specific position of the body conditioned by the “stage”, the most common human movement (simple walking) has been contextualized in the most dramatic possible way.



Figure 1: Peter Moore: photography of the original performance *Man walking down the side of a building* from 1970.

From 1970, this performance has been re-performed several times, on different locations. Some of them are the Whitney Museum, New York, in 2010, and the Tate Modern, London, in 2006. Since this performance establishes only in relation to the morphology of space (which is determined by a high facade, developed in one surface), we could talk about the so-called site-sympathetic treatment of space. Site-sympathetic approach to space refers to recognising and using, above all, morphological characteristics of a certain location or place. A scene event therefore, establishes in relation to space, using only its morphology. That means that one performance can be transferred in a number of other spaces which fulfill morphological demands, without losing any of its meaning.

### **3.2. Direction of mutual conditionality of meanings**

It is clear that the question of spaces' influence on movement of a body, and bodies' influence on perception of space implies two possible extremes, and many in-between states. That is why, the analyses of the

direction of mutual conditionality of meanings between space and body is essential for defining the function that architecture achieves in this case.

Orientation of the body, dictated by the orientation of the “stage” makes the essence of dramatization of this scene. At the same time, the surface of the facade is perceived as a stage precisely due to the body and the way it uses it. By the way the space contextualizes the movement, or the action of the body, everyday action (walking) receives the quality of essential constituent of this scene event. Observed separately, neither of components have the importance close to one they have when being connected – every day we pass by many people that walk, every day we pass by many facades. Complicité is established. That means that conditioning of meaning between space and body in this example goes in both directions, parallelly and simultaneously.

#### **4. DEFINITION**

In the analyzed choreography, space and body appear as elements which build the performance, equally, simultaneously and dependently. In that sense, it can be claimed that the space performs as much as the body does, or more precisely, the space performs in interaction with the body. Since the space doesn't perform on its own, this function of architecture can be named *co-performative*.

The potential of architecture to become an integral part of a scene act – under the influence of a body – could be defined, analogically to Lecoq's theory, as *disponibilité* for realization of a co-performative function of architecture. Co-performative function of architecture, therefore, refers to the state of architecture which builds the essence of a stage event, in synergy with the movement of a body. The outcome of realization of co-performative function of architecture is *complicité* between body and space.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

Either the place of performance is the highly appreciated architectural design of the Tate Modern Gallery in London, representative public facility of the Whitney Museum in New York, or the (architecturally) “unidentified” housing building in Soho, *Man walking down the side of a building* is successfully performed, each time. That directly means that, in this specific example, architecture doesn't realize its performativity, or the co-performative function through the design of the very buildings, but through the way a body

uses those spaces, contextualizes them and initiates their mutual dialogue. At the same time, the body achieves to initiate a dialogue precisely due to the way the space influences its movement. Complicité between space and body, as a result of realization of architecture through its co-performative function, shows a complete merging of the two components, where each is being essentially determined by the existence and presence of the other.

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