PERFORMING SPACE

Edited by
Eftichis Pirovolakis, Maria Mikedaki and Pablo Berzal Cruz

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Front cover photograph: performance in the ancient theatre of Epidaurus by the students of the 14Km Teaching Unit, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, April 2014. Photograph by Eduardo Pérez Gómez.

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Alba Balmaseda Dominguez - Pablo Berzal Cruz -
Triantafyllos Bostantzis - Evangelia Danadaki -
Katerina Kosti - Andrea Moneta -
Alberto Morell Sixto - Eftichis Pirovolakis -
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Introduction

Eftichis Pirovolakis, Maria Mikedaki and Pablo Berzal Cruz

Since the emergence and institutionalisation of performance studies in the 1960s, interest in the human activity called "performance" has spread to numerous disciplines such as archaeology, anthropology, theatre studies, philosophy, architecture, social sciences, cognitive sciences, the fine arts and dance. As Marvin Carlson points out, the term "performance" has become so popular and its use has grown so widespread that it has become necessary to generate "a complex body of writing about performance, attempting to analyse and understand just what sort of human activity it is".[1] According to Richard Schechner, one of the founders of performance studies,

> a performance is an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group. [...] Even where audiences do not exist as such —some happenings, rituals, and play— the function of the audience persists: part of the performing group watches —is meant to watch— other parts of

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1. Marvin Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 13.

> the performing group; or, as in some rituals, the implied audi-
> ence is God, or some transcendent Other(s).[2]

Some authors stress that this activity is characterised by the dis-
play of certain skills,[3] while others, such as Schechner, believe
that it is distinguished because of the use of restored behav-
iours.[4] However, there are numerous examples of activities com-
monly referred to as performances in which the performers do
not display any skill or restored behaviour. Erving Goffman,
whose work had a crucial impact on the foundation of perfor-
mance studies, points to the intention with which this kind of
activity is executed as the key that distinguishes it from any oth-
er activity: "A 'performance' may be defined as all the activity of a
given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in
any way any of the other participants".[5] Goffman's definition
broadens the scope of performance to include social interaction
rather than restricting it to an activity proper to the arts. In this
sense of performance lies the interest that so many disciplines
find in it, for performance is not only an artistic phenomenon but
also extends to any area of everyday life. From this point of view,
just as in theatrical performances the space, the stage, has a tre-
mendous importance to the intention to influence the audience,
the same holds true for any kind of performance. Space is part of

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2. Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 29.

3. Carlson, among others, argues that what makes the performing arts per-
formative is that "these arts require the physical presence of trained or skilled
human beings whose demonstration of their ability is the performance"; see
Carlson, *Performance: A Critical Introduction*, 14.

4. Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction* (New York: Rout-
ledge, 2013), 34-36.

5. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Edinburgh: Univer-
sity of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956), 8.

the performance; it conditions and influences the performance. Thus, performances use space to influence the audience, or are conditioned by space in situations such as "everyday life—cooking, socialising, 'just living'—in the arts, in sports and other popular entertainment, in business, in technology, in sex, in rituals—sacred and secular—in play".[6]

This explains the great interest performance has aroused over the last few decades in all the aforementioned disciplines and the great number of publications on the interaction between performance and space. However, given the distance that separates these distinct disciplines from one another, the existing literature on the subject lacks articulation, and interdisciplinary references and debates are regrettably rare. Insofar as the same holds for discussion fora, it is difficult for researchers to find interdisciplinary platforms where they may be able to share ideas and experiences from different approaches, both theoretical and practical.

In an attempt to contribute to the interdisciplinary study of performance and its relation to space, an international online conference was co-organised in 2021 by the Department of Theatre Studies at the University of the Peloponnese, Greece. The event was titled "Performing Agora" and sought to bring together researchers working on performance and space from various disciplinary backgrounds. That event formed the basis for the organisation of "Performing Space", an annual international event comprising a conference and a workshop. The first instalment took place in August 2022 in Nafplio, Greece, with remarkable and encouraging success. Among other findings that emerged from the conference discussions and collaboration, we were able to verify the affinities and divergences among approaches emanating from disciplines such as theatre studies and architecture, and

6. Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, 31.

we appreciated the salience of philosophy and theory when it comes to structuring and enriching our discourses. The volume *Performing Space* includes a selection of essays presented to the 2022 conference and further developed by the authors. *Performing Space* comprises two sections. The essays included in the first section, "Performance, Theory, Space", endeavour to reflect on theoretical and epistemological issues that concern the status and conditions of artistic performance, space or both, by having recourse to writings by Friedrich Nietzsche, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Hannah Arendt and Jacques Rancière, among others. The second section of the volume, "Performing Space: Applied", comprises essays focusing on case studies of actual performances and evaluating the outcome of specific performative events. The essays in question acknowledge and analyse the significance of particular spaces and their evident impact on the corresponding performances.

In the opening essay of the first section, "Nietzsche's Labyrinthine Spatiality: Body, Place, and *Stimmung*", Nikolaos-Ion Terzoglou undertakes an investigation into the notion of "place" in Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy and explicates how the value of "embodied thinking" depends on real and actual places or spaces, whether natural or urban. Focusing mainly on *Ecce Homo*, Terzoglou offers an illuminating analysis of Nietzsche's conceptualisation of place, and demonstrates the close relation between place and inspiration, *Stimmung*, and the body, arguing in favour of a new philosophy of spatiality.

Eftichis Pirovolakis, in "Vertiginous Performances: Iterability in the Performing Arts", has recourse to Jacques Derrida's "iterability" in order to argue that performance originates from a vertiginous and even anarchic structure which complicates the ordinary association of performance with the values of presentation, singularity, eventhood and immediacy. Pirovolakis provides a

detailed philosophical analysis of what exactly "iterability" designates in the case of artistic performance, and discusses the function of similar motifs in the writings of theorists of the performing arts such as Antonin Artaud and especially, more recently, Daniel Mesguich.

In "Performative Design and Aesthetics in Samuel Beckett's Writing Spaces", Thomas Symeonidis' starting point is Jacques Rancière's "aesthetic regime of the arts" as a way of capturing the type of artistic production that moves away from the logic and the restrictions of representation. The transformative operation of the elements within the aesthetic regime of the arts is related to the idea of performative design, which, in turn, is exemplified in Samuel Beckett's writing process and writing spaces, whose spatial formations give rise to a certain "schematic language".

Next, Pablo Berzal Cruz, in "Performativity in Ritual Space", examines spatial performativity, understood as the influence that space exerts on the behaviours and mental states of its occupants. The essay focuses on ritual space as the space in which spatial performativity is most intense within the built environment, and proposes studying ritual space by applying the categories of ritualised activities enunciated by Catherine Bell.

Lydia Polykandrioti, in "Emerging Performativity: Repetition and Singularity", approaches performance as a generative process, whereby structures and desires find themselves in a constant exchange of information, forming new actions in a rhizomatic way. Drawing upon theorists such as Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Manuel DeLanda, as well as on the work of numerous architects and artists, Polykandrioti uses the idea of "emerging performativity" in order to study the conditions that enable performance to generate action and to unlock new potentialities of the interaction between bodies and space.

In "Performance as Political Action: The Creation of Public

Sphere and the Recreation of the Self", Evangelia Danadaki explores the connection between contemporary performance and the political through a close reading of Hannah Arendt's theory of action, with particular attention to its aesthetic dimension and implications for artistic practices. Danadaki examines Anne Imhof's strongly collaborative performance practice with a view to demonstrating how the space of performance can constitute a public sphere, where performers can exercise freedom with others, become recognised and redefined, while also contesting the given and creating the radically new.

The second section of the book opens with Andrea Moneta's "Scenarchitecture: A Methodology for Investigating the Role of Genius Loci in the Reading, Understanding, and Interpretation of Architecture and Heritage". Moneta unravels the Scenarchitecture methodology, which he created and developed through repeated tests in academic and professional contexts. Scenarchitecture consists in reading, understanding and interpreting the internal character (*genius loci*) and performative attributes of architecture. The essay is illustrated by presenting a series of site-specific performances produced by Moneta in Italy and the UK.

In "An Archaeological Museum as a Performative Space for the Elderly", Katerina Kosti, motivated by the idea that performance is not something happening exclusively on stage, used the Archaeological Museum of Megara (Greece) as a performing space, where she invited fourteen elderly members of the local community to perform their life drama without a script. The participants were encouraged to play roles in scenes from their childhood and youth, a process through which they perceived and understood the museum exhibits on the basis of their own life experience. The whole activity inspired in them a willingness to learn, which was particularly important given their low educational profile.

Alberto Morell Sixto's essay "Architecture as Space of Consciousness" explores the capacity of architecture to heighten human consciousness and how performance can help us become aware of this process. In order to understand how the architectural environment affects us, he proposes the use of performance by focusing attention on each of the senses and by attending to the relation that each sense has with the elements, as established in Samkhya metaphysics. The essay is illustrated by several experiments carried out by the author in the course of his teaching activity.

Vassiliki Sirakouli, in "When Jan Despo Met Jazz: The Athens Conservatory and the Athens Festival", outlines the construction history of the iconic "Bauhaus" building of the Athens Conservatory in the city centre of Athens, which was designed in 1959 by the renowned Greek architect Ioannis Despotopoulos (also known as Jan Despo), was partially constructed in 1976 and was finally completed in 2017. Although it originally functioned as a musical institution, the Conservatory is nowadays a cultural centre, especially after its performance and music spaces have been utilised by the Athens Festival, and since 2018 it has also hosted the jazz scene in Greece, a main representative of which is the Aqua Jazz Festival.

In "The Delphic *Prometheus Bound* (1927, 1930): Jesus Christ's Golgotha Transforms into Neo-Romantic Aesthetics", Triantafyllos Bostantzis focuses on two Neo-Romantic performances, as he suggests, of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, which were produced by Eva Palmer-Sikelianos and Angelos Sikelianos in the framework of the Delphic Festivals. The author analyses the semiotics of the scenery, which was altered between the two stagings (in 1927 and 1930) in order to present Prometheus as a crucified Christ, and sheds light on all other pioneering production aspects (dance iconography, costumes, Byzantine music and dramatur-

gy) which were influenced by Palmer-Sikelianos' expertise and research on ancient Greek culture.

Alba Balmaseda Dominguez, in "Bathing Waters as Urban Activators: Observing Ongoing Practices in Inland European Cities", identifies bathing waters as urban activators due to their political, social and spatial impact. The essay presents and compares various current, organised citizen mobilisations in favour of urban bathing in public spaces in order to understand the underlying motives behind them. Specifically, three cases are identified and analysed: the preservation of existing public bathing spaces, the transformation of existing open urban waters into bathing waters, and the reinvention of former public bathing scenarios.

In "Performance, Space, City: 'Delivery Theatre' Experiences During the Covid-19 Pandemic", Katia Trifirò and Cristiana Minasi focus on the so-called "Delivery Theatre". The latter was initiated in 2009 in Italy by the actor Ippolito Chiarello, who delivered small performances on the street or in non-theatrical venues, and has inspired, since December 2020, the Carullo-Minasi Company to perform in specific urban spaces of Messina, during the closure of theatres due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The essay explores how this extraordinary artistic format succeeded in maintaining an open dialogue between actor and spectator at a time of crisis, bringing theatre outside the theatre and in direct contact with the city and its inhabitants.

The essays collected in *Performing Space* are intent on moving forward the discussion about the relevance and significance of the interrelation between performance and space. Besides, in virtue of the fact that the contributors to the volume have different disciplinary or artistic backgrounds, this collection is aimed to make a positive contribution to initiating an interdisciplinary examination of performance and space, to foster a mutually en-

lightening dialogue among areas as diverse as philosophy, architecture, performance theory and practice, theatre studies, anthropology, literary theory and pedagogy, among others. *Performing Space* establishes an international forum, where the provenance, the conceptuality and the contemporary potentialities of performance are discussed and brought to bear on the built environment, both past and present. Finally, as editors of the volume, we would like to thank all members of the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of the Peloponnese, Greece, and its head, Angeliki Spiropoulou, for their support. We would also like to express our sincere gratitude to our colleague, Christina Zoniou, who played a major role in the organisation of the 2022 conference and workshop, and who has always been a valuable member of the *Performing Space* project.

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PART I.

Performance, Theory, Space

Nietzsche's Labyrinthine Spatiality: Body, Place, and *Stimmung*

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ABSTRACT

Friedrich Nietzsche's labyrinthine way of thinking has an inherent, structural capacity to produce new questions and challenge our established notions. One of the main issues that spatial design disciplines face within hypermodernity is the growing deterritorialisation of events and human interactions—the insurmountable distancing between bodies in space. It seems that place, as ground, earth, or territory with a specific character and *genius loci*, does not function any longer as a stable focus or point of reference in a globalised world. Digital technology creates "spaces of flows" that transcend communities, regions, places, localities, and persons, inaugurating an exponential dematerialisation of social and human relations. Although there are strong indications that Nietzsche's nomadic way of life and thinking would perhaps endorse the digital turn, I argue in the present essay that, if we read his textual corpus closely, attentively, and slowly, a new possibility emerges: the great value of *embodied thinking*. My basic working hypothesis is that thinking through

the body, in a Nietzschean sense, needs proximity—real places or spaces of the outside, whether natural or urban—in order to unfold itself. More specifically, it seems that an important topic has been relatively neglected so far within the vast secondary literature of Nietzsche studies: his concept, idea, or notion of place. The essay aims to offer an introductory analysis of Nietzsche's conception of place, as elaborated mainly in *Ecce Homo*. I try to show the close relation between place and inspiration, *Stimmung*, and the body, arguing in favour of a new philosophy of spatiality.

Architecture for Thinkers

In *The Joyful Wisdom* (*Die Fröhliche Wissenschaft*), Book 4, § 280, Nietzsche writes: "There is and probably will be a need to perceive what our great cities lack above all: quiet, spacious, extended places for thinking".[1] What are these "places for thinking" ("*Orte zum Nachdenken*")? How could we imagine an "architecture for thinkers" ("*Architektur der Erkennenden*")? My basic working hypothesis is that *thinking through the body* will create those real "places for reflection" the philosopher was desperately looking

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1. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Nietzsche Source", Digital Critical Edition of the Complete Works and Letters, based on the critical text by G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 1967), ed. Paolo D'Iorio, accessed December 26, 2022, my translation, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/FW-280. A different version of the translated text can be found in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, ed. B. Williams, trans. J. Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 159: "expansive places for reflection".

for. If we read Nietzsche's textual corpus closely, an original philosophy of spatiality and locality emerges, showing the great value of *embodied thinking*. In what follows, I aim to offer an introductory analysis of Nietzsche's conception of place, as elaborated mainly in *Ecce Homo*. I try to show the close relation between place, thinking, inspiration, *Stimmung*, and the body.

Nietzsche's Concept of Place in *Ecce Homo*: An Interpretation

Ecce Homo is supposed to be an "autobiography" of Nietzsche. In fact, it is something much more: a reconstruction of the self. The book was written in October, November, and December 1888, under tense excitement, with constant oscillations, additions, and revisions. Nietzsche is probably the most "architectural" philosopher. He builds himself through writing. In *Ecce Homo*, writing produces the experience; it does not simply represent its recollection.[2] I would call this a work of abstraction and concentration, schematisation, moulding, and compaction. The "I" or "ego" becomes an accumulation of exploding forces. David Parry writes: "The tranquil and solitary 'I' of Descartes is replaced by the ecstatic 'I' of the Nietzschean 'great health'".[3] In this light, Nietzsche's

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2. My references to *Ecce Homo* use two English translations: 1) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, ed. A. Ridley, J. Norman, trans. J. Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), hereafter cited as EH C; and 2) Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Case of Wagner, Twilight of the Idols, The Antichrist, Ecce Homo, Dionysus Dithyrambs, Nietzsche Contra Wagner*, vol. 9 of *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. Alan D. Schrift, Duncan Large and Adrian Del Caro, trans. Adrian Del Caro et al. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021), hereafter cited as EH S.

3. David M. Parry, "Reconstructing the Self: Philosophical Autobiography in Vico and Nietzsche", in *The Personalist Forum* 10, no. 2 (1994): 100-101.

Ecce Homo is a radicalised version of modern Cartesian subjectivity, where the focus is on the repeated oscillation between health and illness, ascent and decline: physiology replaces method.[4] In this book, the problem of the *importance of place* is inextricably linked to the crucial role of the living, organic body (*Leib*).

What I would call the meteorological, atmospheric, topological, and geographical metaphor of thought already strikes the mind of the reader of the "Preface". Stephan Günzel calls this predominance of geographical landscape and mountaineering metaphors in Nietzsche a "geophilosophy", borrowing the term from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. He rightly observes that Nietzsche's depiction of these theatrical, allegorical landscapes focuses less on their visual attributes and more on tactile and somatic descriptions: climate, temperature, humidity.[5] Nietzsche constantly talks about the health of humanity: how it depends on the "strong air of the heights", the special atmosphere that blows in his texts (especially in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*),[6] which is a product of philosophical life in the snow, ice, and high mountains.[7]

In the first part of the text, which consists of eight paragraphs, entitled "Why I Am So Wise", these initial predispositions are gradually developed and unfolded in an impressive fusion of their metaphorical meaning with the literal, real reference to places: Basel, St. Moritz, Naumburg, Genoa, Weimar, Sils-Maria, Bayreuth. Nietzsche constructs here a new topological ethics, based on the physiology of the body. He medicalises thought and

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4. Parry, "Reconstructing the Self", 89-90 and 97-99.

5. Stephan Günzel, "Nietzsche's Geophilosophy", in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 25 (2003): 78-91.

6. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra. A Book for All and None*, ed. A. Del Caro and R. B. Pippin, trans. A. Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

7. EH C, 72-73.

reduces psychological behaviour to physiology, which is now or-ganically related to meteorological-geographical "metaphors" *as literal references*.

Good physiology, the health of the body, is closely related to time and place, geographical location, and atmosphere. While, on the one hand, Nietzsche emphasises the process of being cut off from the stimuli of his environment, the control of reactions, as a condition of good physiology, and the overcoming of disease (§2), on the other hand, this sensual contact with the outside place-world, the fatalistic surrender or immersion in it, acts ther-apeutically, restoratively, and beneficially in the creative life and in health. We are presented with a field of intensity, of constant vacillation between openness, "being-outside-yourself" (*Auss-er-sich-sein*), and withdrawal, a "return to myself"[8]: a strange, *real space of contradiction*.[9]

This paradoxical fusion is exacerbated in the second part of the text, entitled "Why I Am So Clever". Nietzsche moves on to a specific thematisation of the issue and question of place as it re-lates to climate and creativity. It is worth quoting an extensive passage:

> Most closely related to the question of nourishment is the ques-tion of place and climate. Nobody is free to live everywhere [...] The influence of the climate on metabolism, slackening or ac-celerating it, is so great that a mistake in place or climate can not only alienate people from their task, but can completely rob them of it [...] The tempo of metabolism (*Das tempo des Stoff-*

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8. Jeremy Fortier, *The Challenge of Nietzsche. How to Approach his Thought* (Chi-cago: The University of Chicago Press, 2020), 155-156.

9. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter, *Nietzsche. His Philosophy of Contradictions and the Contradictions of his Philosophy*, trans. D. J. Parent (Urbana and Chicago: The Uni-versity of Illinois Press, 1999), 7-22.

wechsels) stands in direct relationship to the fleetness or lame-
ness of the spirit's feet; for the "spirit" itself is just a form of this
metabolism. If you list the places where there are or have been
brilliant human beings, where happiness included wit, refine-
ment and malice, where genius almost from necessity made its
home, they all have excellent dry air. Paris, Provence, Florence,
Jerusalem, Athens – these names prove something: that genius
is conditional upon dry air, a clear sky – in other words, on rapid
metabolism and the possibility of repeatedly supplying oneself
with great and even massive amounts of strength.[10]

Nietzsche complains that he spent much of his life in unsuitable,
forbidden, destructive places for his physical and bodily constitu-
tion (*Unglücks-Orte*, *verbotenen Orten*).[11] I would like to call
Nietzsche's view a kind of "climatological regionalism", whose
basic assumption is that place has a decisive influence on the
rhythm of the human body. If this influence is negative, then
some protection from the place, a distance, an economy in the
"abuse of extraordinary energies" is desperately required.[12]
Nietzsche juxtaposes diet, place, and climate, the "petty matters"
of a "casuistry of selfishness", as he calls it, with the fantasies and
illusions of the opposing concepts (*Begriffe*): God, the soul, virtue,
the beyond, truth, and eternal life.[13] Nietzsche contrasts these
"lies" with the basic concerns of earthly life (*Grundangelegenheiten
des Lebens*).[14]

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10. EH C, 87-88; EH S, 233-234.
11. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzsche-
source.org/#eKGWB/EH-Klug-2.
12. EH C, 88-89.
13. EH C, 98.
14. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzsche-
source.org/#eKGWB/EH-Klug-10.

Is it possible that the effect of the place on the body and its metabolism is positive? This is an important question. A quick look at the third part of *Ecce Homo*, entitled "Why I Write Such Good Books", may provide an answer. As he analyses and evaluates all his published books up to 1888, the German thinker always refers to the place (and time) in which he conceived and wrote them, in great detail, as if they bear the seal or the stigma of the unity of the *chronotope* in which they were created. Books become "places" and locations to record thought, but also indicators of where that thought took place. I argue that place in Nietzsche is never a simple location, never a simple background for an activity: place is so organically amalgamated into the creative action of Nietzsche's body and mind (either negatively or positively) that it is the protagonist—almost, we could say, *a mask of himself as a narrator*.[15] Nietzsche's place attachment (or detachment) is always passionate; it has the intensity and poignancy of an erotic attraction or repulsion.

It is obvious that the concept of place acquires organic significance for Nietzsche's argument about the need for self-preservation, the renewal of the energies of the organism (*Organismus*, *Kraftersatz*), the enhancement of life and the "natural instincts", and the strength of the body (*Kraftsteigerung des Leibes*), in contrast to putting the "salvation of the soul" first as an ideal.[16]

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15. See Toni Llácer, *Nietzsche: El Superhombre y la Voluntad de Poder* (Barcelona: Batiscafo, 2013).

16. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/EH-M-2; EH C, 122.

Place, Creative Inspiration, and *Stimmung*: Structural Interrelations

We saw that a thread begins to emerge which illuminates and guides the question of whether place can have a beneficial effect and influence on the "great health" (*grosse Gesundheit*), which is geographically and topologically related to an "ideal Mediterranean".[17] Let us read the following passage carefully:

> The following winter, under the halcyon sky of Nice that shone into my life for the first time, I found the third Zarathustra [...] Many hidden spots and heights in the landscape of Nice have become sacred to me by unforgettable moments; that decisive section bearing the title "On Old and New Tablets" was thought up as I climbed laboriously from the station to Eza, that wonderful Moorish aerie – my muscular agility has always been at its greatest when my creative energy is in full flow. The body is inspired: let's leave the "soul" out of it [...] You could often have seen me dancing.[18]

There are two pivotal conceptual indicators in *Ecce Homo*: place and body. There is a kinaesthetic correlation between them, for the sake of creative inspiration. But should we interpret this interrelation in the light of the immediately preceding paragraph (§3), where Nietzsche develops his notion of "inspiration"? I quote:

> You feel completely outside yourself, with the most distinct consciousness of countless faint shivers and tingles right down to

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17. EH C, 125.
18. EH C, 128; EH S, 283; "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/EH-ZA-4.

> your toes; you have a feeling of deep bliss where what is most painful and upsetting does not have a contradictory effect but instead acts as conditioned, demanded, as a necessary colour within such a superfluity of light; an instinct for rhythmic connections that spans forms of vast extent – the length, the requirement for a wide-spanned rhythm is almost the measure for the power of inspiration, a sort of compensation for its pressure and tension.[19]

Inspiration is presented here as an ecstasy of the human body oriented towards the outside, a kind of "opening" to the environment, the place. According to Nietzsche, inspiration has two main features or attributes, which I reconstruct as the deterministic necessity of a quasi-natural phenomenon (metaphors of lightning, torrent, storm) and the architectural metaphor of the freedom of a rhythmic instinct of spatial relations and connections (*ein Instinkt rhythmischer Verhältnisse*) that bridges, like an arch. It has contradictory properties: necessity and freedom, nature and architecture. The body surrenders to the place, to its "power", as we would call it, and "dissolves" to the outside. At the same time, the physiology of the rhythm of this co-stimulation, this *attunement*, gives birth to a constructivist impulse, a counter-instinct of order that connects and affiliates, balancing this external pressure. It is like seeing the Dionysian-Apollonian struggle, as shown in *The Birth of Tragedy*,[20] adapted to a psychology or physiology of creativity. We observe a constant movement, a confrontational oscillation between the outside and the inside, the place and the body, the opening and the closing.

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19. EH C, 126-127; EH S, 282; "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/EH-ZA-3.

20. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and Other Writings*, ed. R. Geuss and R. Speirs, trans. R. Speirs (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

However, and this is especially worth emphasising, the Dionysian stage cannot offer creative crystallisation, rhythm, tone, or symbolism. The second moment, that of Apollonian delineation, is the rhythmic shaping and schematisation of body-place coordination. It is clearly a process of distancing oneself from affective wild excitement, abstracting from stimuli, and regaining control. But what exactly is this "rhythm instinct"? We can find an answer if we refer to the fourth paragraph (§4) of the section "Why I Write Such Good Books" in *Ecce Homo*, where Nietzsche talks about the "art of style" (*Kunst des Stils*):

> To communicate a state, an inner tension of pathos (*innere Spannung von Pathos*), through signs, including the tempo of these signs (*tempo dieser Zeichen*) – that is the meaning of every style […] Every style is good that really communicates an inner state (*innerer Zustand*) – that is not wrong about signs, about the tempo of signs, about gestures (*Gebärden*) – all laws of rhetorical punctuation are the art of gesture […] I was the first to discover how to make the art of great rhythm (*grossen Rhythmus*), the great style (*grossen Stil*) of rhetorical punctuation into the expression of an immense ebb and flow of sublime, superhuman passion.[21]

The supreme purpose of "rhythmic instinct" is, therefore, the birth of the art of "great style", which is based and founded on the "great rhythm" of bodily gestures that communicate internal states of passion externally, through signs. I argue that the "rhythm of style" is somehow reduced to that initial "rhythm of metabolism", which binds and anchors the body to the place that surrounds it.

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21. EH C, 104; EH S, 252-253. See also: "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/EH-B%C3%BCcher-4.

Another important passage from the *Twilight of the Idols* further clarifies that process of physical, metabolic, topological, and rhythmic redefinition of creativity. This is the tenth paragraph of the "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man".[22] Here, the process of inspiration is clarified under the category of Dionysian intoxication, as described in *Ecce Homo*. The word *Affekt* replaces the term *Pathos*. The "big rhythm" that the later Nietzsche aims at is, therefore, derived from a holistic stimulation of the bodily scheme, of corporeal empathy, which does not primarily reward vision and ocularcentrism, but the overall affective system of the human organism. The word *Affekt*, as an influence and effect, as a passion of moods, compresses this "dancing", theatrical, bodily philosophy of creativity.[23] The totally activated body will deliver its topological charge by expressing an inner mood, an affective state, through a correspondingly total art-gesture, the art of great style. Let us remember the aphorism of Ludwig Wittgenstein from 1932-1934: "Remember the impression made by good architecture, that it expresses a thought (*Gedanken*). One would like to respond to it too with a gesture".[24]

According to Stanley Corngold, the concept of *Affekt* replaced, in Nietzsche's later work, the word and concept of *Stimmung* (mood),[25] which the German thinker "rejected", due to the need

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22. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 196-197. See also: "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/GD-Streifzuege-10.

23. Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 191.

24. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value. A Selection from the Posthumous Remains*, ed. G. H. von Wright, in collaboration with H. Nyman, revised by A. Pichler, trans. P. Winch (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1998), 26-26e.

25. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human, Parts One and Two*, trans. H. Zimmern and Paul V. Cohn (New York: Prometheus Books, 2009), 450.

for a harder, harsher language for the "will to power".[26] As Corngold observes, the early Nietzschean romanticism of moods shows the anti-intellectualism of a constant outward movement, where consciousness is always emotionally and affectively attuned, as it suffers the external pressure of world events.[27] However, let us note that the weather, meteorological (stormy conditions) and biological metaphors for the correlation of internal and external elements and conditions of the experience of place[28] are common to both terms, *Affekt* and *Stimmung*, which proves that there is a greater coherence between the early and later Nietzsche than Corngold admits. Later Nietzsche replaces *Stimmung* with *Affekt*, allowing the intimate, functional, and structural interrelation between body, place, and space (environment) to emerge while retaining the exceptional variability and instability of this relation as a deep, fundamental property.

The German thinker-poet's interpretation of the concept of "place" is ambiguous, vacillating, uncertain, and precarious: it is governed by the oscillation that characterises the dialectical conflict between the body and its material environment, the self and place, the I and its environment, as described and reconstructed in *Ecce Homo*. It is a dynamic, kinetic, ever-changing dialectic of attraction/repulsion, fusion/distance, identification/alienation. This ambiguous dialectic (diffusion/excision) shows that, for Nietzsche, place is not something static (nor is the body/ego). The body/ego relation with place shows a dynamic, conflicting, agonistic character, sometimes more peaceful, sometimes more pugnacious, expressed as strife between opposing forces: a

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26. Stanley Corngold, "Nietzsche's Moods", in *Studies in Romanticism* 29, no. 1 (1990): 67-78 and 85-87.

27. Corngold, "Nietzsche's Moods", 71-77.

28. Corngold, "Nietzsche's Moods", 74-75.

struggle between control and determinism, freedom of choice and necessity.

In his early work *On Moods* (*Über Stimmungen*, 1864), Nietzsche formulated a war (or war-like) model (*Streit, Kampf*)[29] of the interrelation between the individual human psyche and the material/atmospheric environment.[30] According to my reading of that remarkable literary text, "mood" is a battle between memory (thought) and desire (lust-for-life), in which inner affective feelings and external experiences merge. The "soul" here is already of the same substantial order (*Stoff*) as the event (*Ereignis*), something which leads to the collapse of the Cartesian dualism between mind and body (extension). The body and the mind converge on things of the outside place, to the point that the interrelation between internal and external reactions disintegrates. This is perhaps what Graham Parks called "radical hylozoism", or "panpsychism", namely, the idea of a continuum between human and organic spheres.[31]

For Nietzsche, in the agonistic model he proposes, a universal, spiritual-mental harmonisation with the environment is something forbidden. The architectural "spatiality" of this model refers to *a correlation of forces*, not entities, things (objects) or distinct, structured, constituted individualities (subjects). Intensity, attraction/repulsion, the tendency of "forces": should we look for

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29. For the meaning of "struggle" or "contest" in early Nietzsche, see his text *Homer's Wettkampf* in "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, Nietzsche Source — Digitale Kritische Gesamtausgabe Werke und Briefe (eKGWB), CV-CV5.

30. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Über Stimmungen", in Karl Schlechta (ed.), *Werke in Drei Bänden. Dritter Band* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1997), 113-116.

31. Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul. Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 47-48.

Nietzsche's epistemological model in engineering, chemistry, or thermodynamics?

What is worth bearing in mind is how, for Nietzsche, as shown in paragraphs 1064 and 1067 of the *Will to Power*, the essence of power is fluid and constantly changing, but, nevertheless, the world is placed in a *definite space*, as *defined force*.[32] What does this mean? It means simply that there is an internal, organic correlation between power and the meaning of "place" in Nietzsche: designated, definite, determinate space means "place". This connection is clearly demonstrated in one of the surviving fragments from 1877 (22 [117]), where Nietzsche writes: "Power (force) resides in a certain object, is tied to a locality (*Die Kraft wohnt in einem bestimmten Gegenstand, ist an eine Lokalität gebunden*)".[33] I claim that every living body (*Leib*) is such a definite centre of power.

We have to look for the Nietzschean model of the above intensive, wavy, energy body-place function in chemistry and thermodynamics: it is like watching gas or fluid dynamics, where the boundaries between them sometimes harden and sometimes become porous.

Spatial Metaphors and Nietzschean Architectures: Future Perspectives

What are the consequences of the above philosophy of place, spatiality, and locality for architectural theory and practice? I attempt to answer this question by briefly examining the spatial

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32. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books Edition, 1968), 547-550.

33. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, my translation, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1877,22[117].

and architectural metaphors found in Nietzsche's texts. We have seen that, for Nietzsche, place is part of a dynamic, dialectical function and structural interrelationship with the body and its moods (*Stimmungen*) as an affective totality. This movement of the pendulum is captured by Nietzsche in a series of architectural/spatial metaphors, which seem to crystallise the polemics of forces into image-thoughts. At the same time, they shift the corporeal boundary, the body/place interface zone, to an architectural correspondence forming a "shell", where this area acquires materiality: body and "building" exchange properties. "Architecture" is understood here as a mood of the body which has acquired a material expression in the place and the nature of the boundary between the ego and the world. The tendency of the body to distance itself from the environment for defence, protection, isolation, and absolute control of the outside thus corresponds to the architectural metaphors of the tower,[34] the pyramid, the fortress, the *palazzo*, or the obelisk: a closed structure which is self-sufficient, defensive, and concentrated, with minimal permeability in relation to the place of the outside.

The architectural and spatial metaphors of the labyrinth,[35] the cave,[36] the conduit, or the stoa[37] correspond to the opposite tendency of the body to merge with the place, creating proximity, diffusion and wandering, and to the exploration of the ego. The

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34. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzsche-source.org/#eKGWB/JGB-26.

35. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzsche-source.org/#eKGWB/JGB-29; http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/M-169.

36. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzsche-source.org/#eKGWB/JGB-289; http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/SE-3.

37. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzsche-source.org/#eKGWB/GM-III-8; http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/FW-280.

first three metaphors symbolise the wane of visual control, the fatalistic submission of the ego to a continuous, holistic, materialistic, deterministic rhythm, as well as the debility of orientation and the inability to escape, to exit: obscure, dark, interior realm. As Anthony Vidler has shown, Nietzsche's dominant metaphor of the labyrinth connotes a subterranean, interior, invisible space, with no façades and no outside, and with maze-like passages: a "prototype of a nonvisual monument, to be experienced haptically rather than optically".[38] The fourth architectural metaphor, the stoa, describes a partially controlled, protected opening and freer route and passage to public space: the filter between the private and the public. These architectural forms/types, which constitute spatial archetypes, should not be seen as Nietzsche's realistic or literal proposals for real environments; this would be a positivist fallacy, a simplistic epistemological realism and reductionism.

The spaces we have mentioned codify metaphorically the affective moods and the opposing tendencies of the dual, polemical, body/place relationship in architectural image-thoughts, body-schemes, gesture-types, or, better, architectural archetypes. Architectural spatial archetypes act here as metonyms or metaphors for a corporeal, performative, and gestural involvement with the place, the environment (milieu).[39] I argue that they are allegorical crystallisations of the issue of *space control*. Moreover, I do not believe that Nietzsche ever decided in favour of one or the other spatial model. The oscillation between a hiding place/

38. Anthony Vidler, "The Mask and the Labyrinth: Nietzsche and the (Uncanny) Space of Decadence", in Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth (eds), *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of Our Minds"* (Los Angeles: The Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1999), 61.

39. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/JGB-242.

tower[40] (cut from the local surroundings: vertical structure) and a prison/trap[41] (identification with the local surroundings: horizontal structure) shows the limits of his thinking.

Influenced by Otto Liebmann's essay "About Instinct" ("Ueber den Instinct"), published in 1880, Nietzsche is preaching a way of life (*Lebensform*) based on the life of drives (*Triebleben*) that must remain "true to the Earth".[42] I claim that the Earth is the place of the body. Moreover, I could argue that, within Nietzsche's radical immanence, *the place is considered to be a body*. The here-now is the body. The living body took the place of the Hegelian absolute spirit. Nietzsche's vitalism is a radicalised enlightenment, a local, regional, nomadic,[43] bodily enlightenment. Its spatial symbol is the labyrinth.

Nietzsche's Labyrinthine Spatiality

We have seen that place in Nietzsche's thinking is not the indifferent background or neutral setting of creation. It is an active factor in the creative process. Ego (body) and place are not two external entities that are listed geometrically or metrically. They do not add up spatially, as modes of extension. The fundamental finding is that, on the contrary, each of the two has developed the idea (meaning, concept) of the other *as its inner moment*. Peter Sloterdijk reached similar conclusions in his book *Nietzsche Apos-*

40. "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzsche-source.org/#eKGWB/FW-291.

41. Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human*, 299-300; "Nietzsche Source", accessed December 26, 2022, http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/M-117.

42. Andreas Urs Sommer, "Nietzsche: An Immanentist?", in *Performance Philosophy* 3, no. 3 (2017): 616-630, https://doi.org/10.21476/PP.2017.33185.

43. Nietzsche, *Human, All-Too-Human*, 36 and 233-234.

tle, claiming that subjectivity in Nietzsche becomes a "reso-
nance-body" that drifts towards an "inexorable exteriority", abol-
ishing the borders between the ego and the world.[44] This intense,
agonistic, labyrinthine interdependence, intertwinement, and
intersection between the self and the other, body and environ-
ment, in order to gain life and expression, needs an affective *ar-
chitecture*, which, as a third, empathic element of the above com-
plex function, will be able to attune the body and the place in a
conflictual harmony of opposites: a spatial/topological organisa-
tion of a sequence of moods and a dynamic narration of mean-
ingful events.

   Dorita Hannah, in her search for a "Nietzschean architecture",
opts for a dynamic, participatory, "performative spatiality", where
event, act, and becoming transcend object, work, and being, cre-
ating a dancing place of sensorial immersion of the audience.[45]
Another possible version of a Nietzschean architecture, accord-
ing to my interpretation, would do just the opposite of the "Inter-
national Style": the building-object would recede, "open" towards
the urban or natural landscape, to allow the place to play a lead-
ing role as a foundation and grounding, to emerge as a myth, a
character, and a personhood. I would like to call this Nietzsche-in-
spired architecture an attuned, eurythmic architecture of the
Stimmungen: affective, regional, empathetic, and *synaesthetic*.
Nietzsche writes in *Daybreak*: "If we desired and dared an archi-
tecture corresponding to the nature of our soul (we are too cow-
ardly for it!) – our model would have to be the labyrinth!"[46]

   44. Peter Sloterdijk, *Nietzsche Apostle*, trans. S. Corcoran (Los Angeles: Semi-
otext(e), 2013), 40, 55 and 81.
   45. Dorita Hannah, "What Might Be a Nietzschean Architecture?", in An-
drew Filmer and Juliet Rufford (eds), *Performing Architectures. Projects, Practices,
Pedagogies* (London: Bloomsbury, 2018), 19-34.
   46. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality*

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Vertiginous Performances:
Iterability in the Performing Arts

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, I argue that a "performance" cannot be experienced immediately or fully in virtue of the fact that it originates from an intricate and anarchic structure. Following Jacques Derrida, I designate that vertiginous provenance of performance as "iterability". Initially, I discuss the institutionalisation of Performance Studies in the 1960s, which led to an enthusiasm for the performative dimension of artistic practice. Consequently, theorists and artists accentuated the values of presence, singularity and immediacy. Such a valorisation of presence is still a persistent attitude in performance studies and the performing arts. The aura attributed to the present event of performance constitutes a simplifying gesture that underestimates the complex provenance of performance. Derrida introduces the term "iterability" in "Signature Event Context" in order to problematise John Austin's speech act theory and his distinction between constative and performative utterances.

Next, I apply Derrida's objections to Austin to the concept and

event of performance. I explicate iterability as the necessary possibility of repetition in the absence of text or context, and I analyse the structure whereby every performance remains repeatable and independent of its text or context, although a performance may always be linked to a certain text or context. Iterability introduces alterity into the heart of performance, thereby preventing its identification in terms of presence and immediacy. Derrida uncovers a similar motif in Daniel Mesguich's iconoclastic theatre, which has recourse to a "paradoxical presentation of the unpresentable". Derrida and Mesguich understand the relation between performative presentation and the unpresentable in a vertiginous way: each performance, in order to be singular, must be radically distinct from any element contaminating its presence; simultaneously, it is always possible to associate a performance to something outside itself, to something unpresentable that may have an impact, nonetheless, on the event of presentation.

Keywords: performance, performing arts, iterability, deconstruction, essential repetition, the unpresentable, alterity, speech act theory

I am tempted to begin with two provocative statements: "there is no such thing as performance", "there is no performance as such". By making those outrageous statements in the context of a collection of essays devoted to performance and titled *Performing Space*, I do not mean to say, of course, that there are no artistic performances on the level of actuality, reality and experience. Everyone can attest to the fact that numerous performative events of theatre, music and dance are organised and take place every day in many different manners and in a variety of venues.

What I mean is that an artistic performance cannot be identified as such in a strict and rigorous way, nor can it be judged, criticised and even perceived univocally and definitively as one unambiguous, singular and fully present event. The thesis I defend in this essay is that what is called "performance" cannot be experienced immediately, presently or fully but, rather, constitutes something more intricate, more elusive and revolutionary, perhaps something more vertiginous and even anarchic.

As a matter of fact, Antonin Artaud, who must have understood something about performance and the performative dimension of theatre and the arts, deploys precisely the term "anarchy" in order to portray the primordial origin of theatre: "Wherever simplicity and order reign, there can be no drama or theatre, and that true theatre, just like poetry but by other means, is born from organised anarchy".[1] "Anarchy" here does not refer merely to the historical, empirical origin of theatrical performance in ancient Greece. It refers to a necessary complication at the heart of the allegedly singular and unequivocal origin of performance. If theatre and artistic performance in general are indeed born from anarchy, one ought to respect that anarchy, one ought to avoid simplification and the inclination towards simplicity and order, one ought to be cautious about hastily identifying performance with presence, immediacy, embodiment, singularity and public space, and about excluding repetition, absence, mediation, meaning and private space. If those values are usually arranged into neat binary oppositions, Artaud's "anarchy" signifies that one ought to avoid valorising either of the poles of those binaries, one ought to respect the originary complexity that gives rise to the phenomenon and event of performance. As the argument I

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1. Antonin Artaud, *The Theatre and Its Double*, trans. Victor Corti (Richmond: Alma Classics, 2013), 36.

will put forward is indebted to the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, I will designate that originary anarchic and vertiginous provenance of performance as "iterability" or "repeatability". However, before turning to an analysis of that intricate structure, I will focus on the opposing tendency to underestimate complexity and to simplify.

When Artaud, in the 1920s and 1930s, undertook to revolutionise the world of theatre by granting priority to the material, performative and corporeal aspect of theatrical praxis, the word "performance" was hardly present in contemporary theoretical discourse. It was in the early 1960s that the term "Performance Studies" emerged to refer to an area of study which soon thereafter was institutionalised into an academic discipline in the USA, initially at New York University and later at Northwestern University. It is now common knowledge that Richard Schechner and Victor Turner, among others, are credited with the inauguration of that new field of research and artistic practice. The institutionalisation of Performance Studies in the USA and elsewhere led to a certain enthusiasm with respect to the performative dimension of all artistic practice. As a consequence, several theorists and artists accentuated the positive aspects of presence and presentation, spontaneity, corporeality and physicality, singularity and immediacy at the expense of other values taken to be their opposites, such as absence, repetition, universality, mediation, content, context, etc. Elinor Fuchs, in an article published in 1985, draws attention to that tendency, citing specific examples of that situation in the USA: the theorists Timothy Wiles and Michael Goldman, and the theatre practitioners Schechner, Joseph Chaikin and Peter Brooks.[2] All of them extolled, more or less, the

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2. Elinor Fuchs, "Presence and the Revenge of Writing: Re-Thinking Theatre After Derrida", in *Performing Arts Journal* 9.2/3 (1985): 163-173.

motif of presence, which came to function as a metonym for all the aforementioned positive values associated with performativity and the act of performance. Fuchs writes: "The physico-spiritual 'aura' of theatrical Presence, to use Benjamin's term, may always have been an effect of theatre, but became an *absolute value* only as recently as the late sixties and early seventies [...]. In this period both practitioners and theorists became passionate advocates of Presence, and nowhere more enthusiastically than in the United States".[3]

I believe that such an enthusiastic and perhaps one-dimensional valorisation of presence, singularity and eventhood is a persistent and ongoing attitude among several of those involved in performance studies and the performing arts. Nowadays, sixty years after the inauguration of performance studies and the acknowledgment of the significance of performance, after sixty years of theoretical debate and artistic experimentation with performance, it is my impression that performance studies and the performing arts are still, to some extent, under the spell of presence and unmediated presentation. My argument is that the aura attributed to the present event of performance, the idealisation of presence amounts to a hasty and simplifying gesture that depreciates the complex and anarchic provenance of performance. As already stated, I will designate that anarchic origin as "iterability" and I will endeavour to explicate the way in which it functions and renders problematic and insufficient all recourse to relevant binary oppositions such as presence/absence, immediacy/mediation, performance/text, singular/universal, public/private, form/content, body/mind.

Derrida introduces the term "iterability" in 1971 in a famous

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3. Fuchs, "Presence and the Revenge of Writing: Re-Thinking Theatre after Derrida", 163-164 (my italics).

conference presentation later translated into English as "Signature Event Context".[4] One of Derrida's subjects of discussion and critique in that essay is the speech act theory put forward by philosopher John L. Austin about ten years earlier, in his influential 1962 book *How to Do Things with Words*.[5] One of the fundamental tenets of Austin's speech act theory is the distinction between constative and performative utterances. Whereas constative statements just refer to or describe the world and, therefore, can be proved to be either true or false, performative statements do not merely portray an already existing reality but constitute utterances "in which to *say* something is to *do* something; or in which *by* saying or *in* saying something we are doing something".[6] Some examples of performative statements, which do not simply refer to reality but actually bring about the state of affairs they name, are: "I pronounce you man and wife", "I name this ship the *Queen Elisabeth*", "I declare the Olympic Games of 2004 open", etc.[7] These utterances, when pronounced by the right person in the right circumstances, lead to a concrete event in the real world: a couple is married, a ship is named, the Olympic Games begin. Austin's speech act theory is complex, and a detailed discussion of it lies beyond the scope of this essay. It suffices here to point out that Austin's theory presupposes several binary oppositions, of which I will single out three.

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4. Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context", trans. Samuel Weber and Jeffrey Mehlman, in *Limited Inc*, ed. Gerald Graff (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 1-23. The original paper was presented to an international congress on "Communication" organised by the "Association des Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Francaise" (Montreal, August 1971).

5. John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962).

6. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 12.

7. For some examples Austin gives, see *How to Do Things with Words*, 5.

The first opposition Austin endorses, initially at least, is that between the constative and the performative, between theoretical description and event or praxis. Using language constatively in order to describe a given state of affairs is one thing; using language performatively in order to bring about an event in the world of experience is quite another. It seems that several theories of performance would subscribe to that distinction, which Austin developed and expounded in the context of his philosophy of language. After all, the very idea of artistic performance is grounded in the belief that performance constitutes an event of actual and immediate presentation rather than a merely mimetic, secondary and largely theoretical act seeking slavishly to represent a pre-existing text or content.

A further binary opposition that Austin presupposes is the one between text and context, between a linguistic utterance and the pragmatic context in which the utterance is pronounced. This is a very complex relation and Austin's interpretation of it is equally complicated. He places considerable emphasis on the significance of context and actually posits that the successful completion of a performative statement depends ineluctably on its context, on the fact that the statement must be uttered in the correct circumstances. The text/context distinction is presupposed by performance theories too. However, the relation between the two poles is approached differently in the performing arts, in the sense that the value of context is diminished and an almost exclusive priority is assigned to the event of artistic performance itself. Accordingly, in some performance theories, there seems to be considerable emphasis on the present instant of performance while its context is demoted to a secondary and perhaps insignificant factor, owing to what is taken to be its absence from central stage.

A third binary opposition, crucial for Austin's theory, is the dis-

tinction between the serious and the non-serious. Although one may be tempted to think that a performative statement is similar to a theatrical performance in virtue of the fact that they both constitute conventional procedures, Austin categorically excludes from his theory theatrical speech as a non-serious and parasitic way of using language. Performative utterances have to be serious, they have to reflect the serious and sincere intention of the speaker, and, evidently, this is not the case when an actor says something while performing on stage.[8] Perhaps, this is one of the reasons why Austin's theory of performative utterances does not feature much in the discourse of performance theorists. Nevertheless, if we replace Austin's serious/non-serious dichotomy with the truthful/non-truthful distinction, I believe that several performance theorists would subscribe to it and would associate truthfulness with the radical singularity and unrepeatable eventhood of the performative act rather than, like Austin, with the values of ordinary and serious sincerity and normality.

With respect particularly to performance theories and the performing arts, all three of the above binary oppositions can be subsumed under the overarching dichotomy of presence and absence, or, which is practically the same thing, of presence and representation. On the one hand, the dramatist, the text and the context may be associated with representation, mimesis, theory, description, background and content; these motifs are deemed to be secondary because they imply a certain absence from central stage. On the other hand, performance, performativity, stage presentation and the eventhood of performance are associated

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8. See Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*, 22: "A performative utterance will, for example, be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage [...] Language in such circumstances is in special ways [...] used not seriously, but in ways *parasitic* upon its normal use".

with the positive values of presence, action, truthfulness, immediacy, singularity and an alleged purity of manifestation, without medium, without context, without any anteriority or repetition.

My argument is that the critical points Derrida raises against Austin's speech act theory and its corollary distinctions are relevant and applicable to the oppositions endorsed, consciously or unwittingly, by performance theorists and practitioners. "Iterability", one of the motifs Derrida deploys to deconstruct Austin's theory, is probably related to the word "itara", which signifies "other" in Sanskrit, and refers to the necessity that every sign and every syntagm of signs, in order to be able to function in language, must be iterable or repeatable in the absence of at least one of the elements contributing to its constitution.[9] In "Signature Event Context", Derrida initially makes this claim with respect to writing. In the case of writing, it is obvious that a sign or a sentence functions even in the absence of the reader, who, by definition, is not present at the moment when the writer of a letter decides to address a letter to them. Similarly, when the reader receives the letter and starts reading it, the sentences must be repeatable in the absence of their producer in order to be meaningful for the reader. If it were not for such repeatability, the writer would not be able to address a letter to anyone absent at the moment of writing, and the reader would not be able to understand the letter in the absence of its sender.

Derrida goes on to argue that iterability is not applicable only to writing but also to spoken discourse. By means of an argument I cannot fully reconstruct here owing to its complexity, he maintains that iterability constitutes an irreducible feature of all language, both spoken and written. Any linguistic element, in order to be minimally meaningful and functional, must be recognisa-

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9. See Derrida, "Signature Event Context", 7.

ble, which means that it must be able to be repeated as minimally the same even in the absence of its referent, its signified content or its sensory signifier. Derrida insists that the iterability of all linguistic elements and of all language, in the final analysis, is not merely an empirical eventuality or possibility. Rather, iterability is a necessary possibility, an absolutely irreducible structure without which there would be no language and no communication at all.

Far from being simply dismissive of Austin's philosophy of language, Derrida acknowledges its patient, open, progressive, productive and self-transforming character.[10] However, one of the criticisms he levels at Austin is that he "has not taken account of what – in the structure of *locution* [...] – already entails that system of predicates I call *graphematic in general* and consequently blurs all the oppositions which follow, oppositions whose pertinence, purity, and rigor Austin has unsuccessfully attempted to establish".[11] "Graphematic" is yet another term by which Derrida designates the iterable character of language as the structure that disrupts all of Austin's distinctions. Let me reiterate that iterability is the general structure according to which all linguistic elements have to be minimally repeatable in order to be identifiable and meaningful. In this light, iterability precedes the distinction between constatives and performatives, and renders impossible a rigorous and clear-cut demarcation line between those two types of utterances. Similarly, it is impossible to distinguish definitively the serious and the ordinary from the abnormal or the parasitic in language to the extent that both are subject to the law of repeatability, which is valid even in the absence of the speaker's serious intention or sincerity. The same holds for

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10. See Derrida, "Signature Event Context", 14.
11. Derrida, "Signature Event Context", 14.

Austin's distinction between linguistic utterance and context, to which I will return below.

I will now focus on performance in the arts with a view to explicating how Derrida's objections to Austin may be applicable or relevant to some performance theories *mutatis mutandis*, which is not to say, of course, that the latter are to be identified with speech act theory. What is iterability in the case of artistic performance? Iterability is not merely repetition, nor does it designate simply an empirical or actual event, so it does not refer, for example, to the numerous repetitions of a performance. As in the case of language, iterability is an irreducible structure without which there would be no event of artistic performance, but which has also consequences for the nature of that event and its construal. Iterability is an *a priori* structure or force which crosses the borderline between the *a priori* and the *a posteriori*, the theoretical and the practical, insofar as it influences the way in which one perceives and understands the practical, the real and the empirical. Iterability could be defined as the "necessary possibility of repetition in the absence of something", on which I will now shed more light.

First, I will focus on iterability as the necessary possibility of repetition in the absence of text. Every performance is capable of being repeated in the absence of the text on which it otherwise depends, more or less. This is an idea widely acceptable nowadays in the performing arts to the extent that it gives rise to the possibility of a singular performance independent of the sovereign and often oppressive authority of the text and its writer. Nevertheless, iterability, in Derrida's sense, is not simply that. The necessary possibility of repetition implies that a performance remains always repeatable and, in principle, radically independent of the influence of the text or the dramatist, although, in fact, the performance may always be linked to a certain ante-

rior text, in the more general sense of this word. The first part of the last sentence gives rise to the actual repeatability of a performance as well as to the theoretical possibility of an absolutely singular and unique performative event. The second part gives rise to the necessary impossibility of rigorously isolating the performance from a certain text, from something pre-existing and somehow influencing the performance, even minimally.

The *de facto* necessary impossibility of distinguishing performance from text is evident in most of the cases. After all, the majority of theatrical performances, for example, are based on a written text that has been adapted to a script. What happens, however, if we take the extreme example of a single improvisational performance, in which everything is unplanned and unscripted? If such a performance utilises linguistic elements, the latter necessarily depend on their previous use by other language users, so language use may be regarded as a type of text. Even if there is no language at all and if the performance simply consists in the stage action or presence of a single performer, still one could argue that the performer is inevitably a historical person and a member of social life who undertakes to put on a performance and play a role on stage or in public space. The historicity of the performer, their social characteristics, even their relation to their own body and existence, all these may be interpreted as the background against which a performance is staged. A performer's past socio-historical existence may be regarded as a type of text pre-dating and having an impact on the performance; the latter, therefore, cannot be said to take place in a simple, immediate, unproblematic and undivided present moment.[12]

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12. Giorgos Pefanis, in *Adventures of Representation: Scenes of Theory II* (Athens: Papazisis Publications, 2013, in Greek), 225-230 and 333, convincingly demonstrates the naivety of the idea of a simple or immediate presence on stage, and

Second, iterability may refer to the necessary possibility of repetition in the absence of a specific context. Every performance may be repeated in the absence of its context. In order to avoid confusion with the word "text" discussed above, let us limit the meaning of the term "context" to those factors and elements related to each singular presentation of a spectacle. Again, the context may be interpreted in various ways and may be narrower or wider: it may be the body sponsoring a performance, the production team, the institution hosting the performance, the venue of a performance, etc. Even in the extreme case of an improvisational performance with neither sponsors nor production team nor director, there is always a space or a venue where the performance takes place. It does not matter whether the context is overdetermined or underdetermined. What matters is that there is always and necessarily a context, which somehow communicates with and has an impact on the performance. In this case, iterability refers to the necessity that there is not a single and identical context that a performance may be linked to, and to the simultaneous necessity that each performance may always be associated with a context each time. In other words, there are only *contexts* for a performance, but not one, fully identifiable and fully determinable context.

The necessary possibility of repetition in the absence of a specific context has three consequences. First, there is no performance without a context. Second, each performance cannot be definitively associated with a single and self-identical context. Third, if a performance cannot totally be separated from the con-

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argues that, even when nothing is being said or done during a performance, the actor's or performer's elementary relation to their own body in the context of their selfhood is being represented, so there is still some minimal representation.

text, different each time, the borderline separating performance from context is unstable and, as a result, no value of presence can be assigned exclusively to the performance itself; there is no performance as such in the strict sense.

Third, iterability may also refer to the necessary possibility of repetition in the absence of a specific audience. One must be able to see that there is a common underlying logic in the cases of iterability discussed so far. The third case concerns the peculiar relation between a performance and its receivers. By definition, a performance is presented in front of an audience, no matter how much the audience is required or wishes to become itself part of the performance; so there is no performance without an audience. That audience, nevertheless, is not specific or determined, which is why every performance is essentially repeatable in front of different audiences. The corollary here is that there is a certain distance or "spacing", following Derrida, between a performance and its receivers.[13] According to the aporetic logic of this spacing, there is no performance without audience, but, at the same time, no performance is necessarily linked to one specific audience, hence its iterability. As was the case with the performance/context distinction, the motif of spacing entails that a performance cannot radically be distinguished from its audience, which is not identical with the performance and which, moreover, is different in every single performance. As a result of such a differential relation between performance and audience, an element of difference or alterity is introduced into the supposed presence and identity of the performance itself.

By now, it should be clear that iterability and its concomitant repetition introduce alterity into the heart of the event and concept of performance, thereby preventing the definitive identifi-

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13. See Derrida, "Signature Event Context", 9-10.

cation of any performance in terms of presence, immediacy, singularity, activity, eventhood, etc. Apart from "Signature Event Context", the structure of iterability is prominent in other texts by Derrida, whose thematic focus is specifically theatre or performance. In his 1966 essay "The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation", he undertakes to provide a radical reading and interpretation of Artaud's *Theatre and Its Double*. Admittedly, Artaud "*wanted to erase repetition in general*" and to assign a strategic priority to the purely present event of performance without difference and without repetition.[14] Nevertheless, Derrida persuasively reveals another strand in Artaud's thinking, according to which Artaud was well aware that the origin of tragedy and theatre in general is a certain "original repetition", a primordial complication. This is precisely the theatre's "Double" in the title of his book, and this is why Derrida comments that Artaud knew very well that, as far as tragedy is concerned, "what is tragic is not the impossibility but the necessity of repetition".[15]

In another context, in a later essay titled "Sacrifice" from 1991, devoted to theatrical performance and, in particular, to the iconoclastic theatre of Daniel Mesguich, Derrida uncovers a necessity of repetition in Mesguich's directing work, in which there is emphasis on non-presence, the unrepresentable and the unpresentable, whose function is similar to that of iterability.[16] Derrida

14. See Jacques Derrida, "The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation", in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1978), 245 and 249.

15. Derrida, "The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation", 248. For a more detailed discussion of Derrida's essay, see Eftichis Pirovolakis, "The Impossible Event of the Theatrical Act: Derrida, Artaud and Certain Theories of Performance", in Giorgos Pefanis (ed.), *Philosophy on Stage: Theatrico-Philosophical Foci* (Athens: Papazisis Publications, 2019, in Greek), 183-205.

16. Jacques Derrida, "Sacrifice", trans. Rick Elmore and Perry Zurn, 1-15, available online at academia.edu, cited by kind permission of the translators; pub-

draws attention to a paradoxical theatrical temporality evident in Mesguich's theatre and writes: "One of the most provocative aspects of Mesguich's theatre [...] is thinking that theatre has, as its essence, a certain repetition. Not the repetition as rehearsal that readies the premiere, but a repetition that divides, that hollows out and makes crop up the unique present of the first time [...]. In theatre, we have to think the event as repetition".[17] Next, Derrida goes on to cite an extract from Mesguich's book *L'Éternel éphémère*:

> Never is there theatre if it is produced only once. Theatre is always put on in a series – even if actors play only a single representation of the play. In each representation, its *essential repetition* vibrates. In every representation, all the representations, all its past selves and those to come, sing [...]. One theatrical manifestation and one alone [...] would imply totality, plenitude, irreversibility. One theatrical manifestation and one alone would not be theatre.[18]

Both Derrida and Mesguich have recourse to the concept of "essential repetition". In Mesguich's theoretical discourse and theatrical practice, such an essential repetition is similar to iterability and results from the inevitable fact that in theatre there is always a "paradoxical presentation of the unpresentable".[19] The unpre-

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lished in French as "Le Sacrifice", in Daniel Mesguich, *L'Éternel éphémère* (Paris: Verdier, 2006), 143-154. Derrida's speech was initially delivered on 20th October 1991 at La Métaphore/Théâtre national de Lille, on the occasion of Mesguich's direction of Victor Hugo's *Mary Tudor* (Amsterdam: Fredonia, 2001).

17. Derrida, "Sacrifice", 10.

18. Quoted by Derrida in "Sacrifice", 11-12 (my italics, slightly modified translation); see also Mesguich, *L'Éternel éphémère*, 54.

19. See Derrida, "Sacrifice", 10.

sentable, what is not actually present or visible on stage, can take various forms. In ancient Greek proto-tragedy, for example, the actual sacrifice of an animal was unpresentable. No actual sacrifice takes place, there is no real tragedy in theatrical proto-tragedy. Rather, the sacrifice and tragedy are only put on stage and in play by the dramatic performance. Mesguich emphasises that vertiginous relation between the "taking place" of tragedy and the "putting in play" of tragedy in a theatrical act: "True tragedy never takes place in theatre. In theatre, tragedy is put in play".[20] Under the umbrella of the "unpresentable" one may subsume all elements distinct from what is naively called "the performance itself": the text, the dramatist, language, the context, the audience, reality before or after the performance. One may prioritise any of the above elements at the expense of the event of performance, which is what the Western aesthetic tradition has done, from Plato and Aristotle to Hegel, Marx and beyond. One, by contrast, may also valorise the performance itself while disregarding the salience of the other elements, which has been the tendency of some theorists and practitioners in the performing arts since the emergence of performance theory and performance studies in the 1960s.

Derrida's iterability and Mesguich's essential repetition point towards an alternative, non-hierarchical, non-binary understanding of the relation between performative presentation and the unpresentable. According to a first necessity ensuing from that understanding, each performance, in order to be authentically singular and unique, must be repeatable in the absence of any element contaminating its singularity and purely performative presence; it must be radically independent of any such element.

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20. Quoted by Derrida in "Sacrifice", 5-6; see also Mesguich, *L'Éternel éphémère*, 118.

However, according to a second necessity, it is always possible, in principle and in fact, to associate a performance to something outside itself, to something unpresentable or even non-visible that may have an impact, nonetheless, on the event of presentation. The structure of iterability is paradoxical and aporetic. It leads to the point of vertigo as it problematises and complicates the pure identity of all factors involved in the event of performance. The repetitious force of iterability prevents knowledge, assuredness and certainty about what a performance actually is, about any supposedly present performative event. This is why there is no "performance itself" and no "performance as such". There are only vertiginous performances, open-ended and non-totalisable events of performance, and I believe that this is what Artaud means when he links the essential drama with the Double and originary anarchy. I will conclude with a phrase on the necessity of repetition and iterability not by Derrida the philosopher but by Mesguich, a man of theatre and performance, although both of them concur that the dividing line between philosophy and theatre is vertiginous too: "Theatre renders the past in the present, and, by the same token, it causes us to understand that everything, in what we took for the present, was a repetition. Theatre offers us, in what comes for the first time, what has already come. And, with this gift, with this presence outstretched, with this offer in tension, it produces a spectacle, raw and already cooked".[21]

21. Quoted by Derrida in "Sacrifice", 11; see also Mesguich, *L'Éternel éphémère*, 19.

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Performative Design and Aesthetics in Samuel Beckett's Writing Spaces

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ABSTRACT

In "The Surface of Design", Jacques Rancière relates the act of design, the act of assembling by means of drawing a line, to his well-known formula of the distribution of the sensible. From an aesthetic point of view, design refers to the creation of a new topography of experimental associations between the senses, thought and what has remained unthought in other configurations. On these grounds, aesthetics can be seen as a mode of thinking, but also as a crucial dimension in the making of a work. Rancière proposes the concept of the "aesthetic regime of the arts" in order to capture the landscape of artistic production that moves away from the logic and the restrictions of representation. The idea of performative design can be seen in relation to the metamorphic operation of the elements within the aesthetic regime of the arts. In addition, it can be associated with an aesthetics of (dis)assemblage by taking into account the particular attributes of the sensible and the thought processes in the aesthetic regime. In my analysis, this idea of performative design will be

related to processes of writing spaces in the works of Samuel Beckett. The concepts of figure, apparatus and stages, within the thought of Rancière, will be of particular interest. By highlighting the architectural dimensions of these concepts and by addressing the notion of figure and its aesthetic, design and performative dimensions, I maintain that a "schematic language" is implicated in the spatial formations generated by Beckett's writing process.

Keywords: performative design, aesthetics, spatial experimentation, writing space, Samuel Beckett, Jacques Rancière

Aesthetics and the Idea of Performative Design

It may be a paradox to talk of performative design. Design often brings to mind a plan we should follow for solving a given problem or an accomplished object that has been designed taking into account specific considerations. Wherever there is design, there is the aspiration of a solution. But design is not only the ability to set a plan against a problem or to present a functional object. Design can be seen in relation to aesthetics and space too. In "The Surface of Design", Jacques Rancière relates the act of design, the act of assembling by means of drawing a line, to his well-known formula of the distribution of the sensible: "By assembling words or forms, people define not merely various forms of art, but certain configurations of what can be seen and what can be thought, certain forms of inhabiting the material world. These configurations, which are at once symbolic and material, cross the boundaries between arts, genres and epochs".[1]

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1. Jacques Rancière, "The Surface of Design", in *The Future of the Image*, trans.

From an aesthetic point of view, design refers to the creation of a new topography of experimental associations between the senses, thought and what has remained unthought in other configurations. This point can be made more explicit by taking into account how Rancière approaches aesthetics in an essay devoted to Gilles Deleuze: "Aesthetics does not refer to a discipline. It does not designate a branch of philosophy or a knowledge of works of art. Aesthetics is an idea or thought, a mode of thought that unfolds about works of art, taking them as witnesses to a question: a question that bears on the sensible and on the power that inhabits the sensible prior to thought, as the unthought of thought".[2]

Aesthetics can be seen as a mode of thinking, but also as a crucial dimension in the making of a work. Rancière proposes the concept of the "aesthetic regime of the arts" in order to capture the landscape of artistic production that moves away from the logic and the restrictions of representation. Gustav Flaubert, according to Rancière, is an exemplary figure of this transition towards the aesthetic regime. The same applies to the work of Stephan Mallarmé. In both cases, Rancière identifies processes of substitution and paths of equivalences that lead to reconfigurations and redistributions of the sensible. This particular design and redesign potential inherent in the artistic and aesthetic domain becomes evident if we follow the way Rancière describes the aesthetic regime of the arts as characterised by "its multi-temporality, the unlimitedness of the representable and the metamorphic character of its elements". In addition, an essential feature of the aesthetic regime is what Rancière calls "exception-

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Gregory Elliott (London: Verso Books, 2009), 91.

2. Jacques Rancière, "Is There a Deleuzian Aesthetics?", trans. Radmilla Djordjevic, in *Qui parle* 14.2 (Spring/Summer 2004): 2.

al sensible", that is, "a self-differing sensible weave that is inhabited by a self-differing thought".[3]

In this context, the idea of performative design can be seen in relation to the metamorphic operation of the elements within the aesthetic regime of the arts. In addition, it can be associated with an aesthetics of (dis)assemblage by taking into account the particular attributes of the sensible and the thought processes in the aesthetic regime, that is, the self-differing aspect captured by the notions of "dissensus" and "perceptual emancipation".[4] These notions, in their architectural, design and spatial implications, signify a kind of disagreement with an actual or dominant state of things, a displacement in the form of an aesthetic configuration of a new space-time. Dissensus does not mean the disappearance or definitive imposition of one space-time over another. It is, rather, the staging of "a conflict between two regimes of sense, two sensory worlds".[5] The displacements are material as well as symbolic. In *Aesthetics and its Discontent*, Rancière maintains: "What the term 'art' designates in its singularity is the framing of a space of presentation by which the things of art are identified as such. And what links the practice of art to the question of the common is the constitution, at once material and symbolic, of a specific space-time, of a suspension with respect to the ordinary forms of sensory experience".[6]

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3. Jacques Rancière, *Dissensus. On Politics and Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. Steven Corcoran (London: Continuum, 2010), 218.

4. For an analysis of these concepts, see Jacques Rancière's *Dissensus* and *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. G. Elliott (London: Verso Books, 2011), especially 48-49.

5. Jacques Rancière, "Aesthetic Separation, Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art", in *Art and Research. Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods* 2.1 (Summer 2008): 2.

6. Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and its Discontent*, trans. S. Corcoran (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), 23.

The performative is associated with the creation of this specific space-time and, at the same time, with the suspension of ordinary forms of sensory experience. It is a process of aesthetic weaving that stems from a double and oppositional movement of articulation and disarticulation, of assembling and disassembling. To understand better this oppositional movement at the heart of the aesthetic regime, we can turn to the concept of the "figure", to which Rancière attributes two contrasting functions: the general and perhaps more widespread one, according to which the figure denotes a semantic displacement rather than the invocation of a visual form; and, on the other hand, the function whereby the schematic interpretation is an interpretation that reveals an abstract meaning in a sensible presence.[7] Therefore, by extending the notion of "figure", we could speak of the presence and work of a "schematic language". Its work would be that of displacing words in relation to their meanings, of producing disagreement between what they seem to mean and their sensible presence. What is created here is not a situation of negation or of constant evasion of meaning. It is more about the creation of possibilities for new relations and connections between words, meanings, spaces, discourses, between heterogeneous elements.

Schematic language, as Rancière understands it, is interwoven with an experimental use of language and the production of displacements, creating new formations of heterogeneous elements, tissues of a common world. Displacement, as a result of the performative operation of an experimental use of language, is ultimately linked to the question of the possible and the impossible, the questioning of the consensual logic that leads to an

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7. Jacques Rancière and Javier Bassas, *Les mots et les torts* (Paris: La fabrique, 2021), 86.

agreement on what is possible and what impossible. The shift to the possible/impossible axis presupposes the existence of a "space of metaphorisation of the word", where "metaphor" does not refer to an imaginative way of formulating things but, rather, to the contribution to the constitution of a way of being.[8] The creation of a community of heterogeneous elements is structured on the grounds of an experimental quest for the material capable of performing the task of connectivity, the aesthetic tissue that will ensure new compositions of the heterogeneous. The displacement of words within a space of metaphorisation of the word creates new zones of relevance between different images of the same word, different meanings and connections of the same image. This is a new architecture of the senses generated by the operations performed over the heterogeneous.

Spatial Experimentations: Architecture, Stage, Apparatus

Aesthetics as design idiom has a distinct architectural dimension. Design and the making of a space can be seen as parts of an architectural procedure. The idea of architecture within the aesthetic regime has to do mainly with experimentation, with the transgression and displacement of functions, with the use of architectural features and methods outside the traditional field of architectural activity. Following Immanuel Kant, Rancière supports the idea of possible architectures of the sensible, that is, the existence of various kinds of the sensible, various configurations between different types of sense. From this point of view, we could establish, following Rancière, a framework for considering

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8. Rancière and Bassas, *Les mots et les torts*, 94.

the ontology of art under the aesthetic regime as a process of designing and redesigning sensible worlds by instituting the dissensuses weaved by the inventions of art, by "placing one sensible world in another".[9] Performative design is about world-making and aesthetic structures that construct new ways of seeing. Rather than designing an actual space-time, performative design is about topology.

The idea of topology emerges in the discussion with Mark Foster Gage, in which Rancière dissociates the aesthetic from the artistic: "The aesthetic is not the same as the artistic. The artistic is about the implementation of an idea [...] Instead the aesthetic means that you don't exactly know what will be the effect of what you are doing".[10] The possible here arises by maintaining the undecidable dimension in a cause-effect or intention-effect relation. Performative design as a form of aestheticised spatialisation establishes a relation of topography to topology, that is, the actualisation of an array of possible topographies from a given topological configuration. It is in the same discussion that Rancière conceptualises architecture in aesthetic terms: "Architecture is not only supposed to construct units for inhabiting, but really constructing new senses of seeing, working, acting, feeling".[11] On these grounds, architecture within the aesthetic regime is displaced towards a more experimental and dissensual function: on the one hand, architecture can be considered to be a concrete assemblage, the effectuation of a topography; on the other hand, architecture can be regarded as a topological image, a "to-

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9. Rancière, *Dissensus*, 219.

10. Jacques Rancière, "Politics Equals Aesthetics: A Conversation Between Jacques Rancière and Mark Foster Gage", in M. Foster Gage (ed.), *Aesthetics Equals Politics. New Discourses Across Art, Architecture and Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2019), 17.

11. Rancière, "Politics Equals Aesthetics", 18.

pos" of heterogenous elements available to operations of assembling and disassembling along multiple lines of temporality.

Different meanings of an element can arise from a change of perspective, from a change of position within a topography, an experimental apparatus of elements. From the point of view of performative design, and attempting to set a framework for understanding the creation of spaces through writing in Beckett's work, it makes sense to introduce the concept of "stage", as suggested by Rancière, together with the concept of "apparatus": "The concept of apparatus says: this is what is produced, what you perceive and what you think. The stage is more what exposes the different ways in which a thing can be perceived: it is always for me the moment when things can be displaced".[12]

What is interesting in the relation between the experimental apparatus and stage is how they are designed and how they acquire a function within a work which manifests itself in a suspension of expectations. Rancière connects the idea of the stage with the idea of a cut-off from a given reality and the presentation of its architecture. What is provided within the visual limits of a stage is also an attempt to delimit the architecture of a situation to be described and thought about. The stage therefore is "a construction of thought that appears as a kind of momentary intersection in the partition of the sensible".[13] The stage, as a version of an experimental apparatus, changes the relations between words and images, the said and the seen.

The lines that connect the elements on stage ensure new configurations of the senses. In fact, the general scheme that

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12. Jacques Rancière and Adnen Jdey, *La Méthode de la Scène* (Paris: Lignes, 2018), 31.

13. Jacques Rancière, *Le travail des images. Conversations avec Andrea Soto Calderòn* (Dijon: Les Presses du Réel, 2019), 50.

Rancière posits as a model for analysing the transformations produced by the working of a schematic language is that of a relation between two types of sense: "Sense as a mode of perceptible presentation and sense as the meaning that must pass through this way of presentation".[14] Thus, architecture, as part of the writing process, refers also to the creation, organisation and arrangement of different parts and functions into a new aesthetic form, a new community of senses. The outcome of this creation process could be spaces, images, voices, distinct objects that participate in new configurations, where the involvement of the spectator is crucial. According to Rancière, art invites the spectator "to enter into the ongoing process of creating these communities of senses".[15] The idea of a performative design cannot be functional without presupposing the spectator's imaging and imagination. A common feature in the work of Beckett is the explicit address to the reader or the spectator to imagine, to see, to be part of.

Figural-Schematic Writing in Beckett and Spatial Design

In its broader sense, designing space through writing is a displacement of an existing space-time within a new configuration. In Beckett, it is very common that especially his later production and works for television have simple geometrical forms (circle, square, triangle, rectangle) as a kind of diagrammatic topography for the spatial setting. In these cases, there are notations for marking the positions and movements of the characters, for the

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14. Rancière and Bassas, *Les mots et les torts*, 78.

15. Jacques Rancière, "The Work of the Image", in *Esther Shalev-Gerz*, exhibition catalogue (Paris/Lyon, Éditions du Jeu de Paume/Fage Éditions, 2010), 21.

sources of utterance of one or more voices, or for the area des-
tined to receive the projection of one or more faces or fragments
of these faces (such as the mouth in "Not I" or the faces in "What
Where").[16] All these, we could say, are part of a logic of topology
in the sense of assigning properties to geometric elements and
generating orientation signs. In Beckett, a line may denote the
movement of a character, a network of points may denote the
network of displacements or the network of avoiding one or more
points and areas, as is the case with the centre in the square plan
of "Quad".[17]

A key feature of Beckett's design practice is the composition
of spaces through multiple levels of spatial reference and origin.
This methodology of multiple reference can take the form of a
spatial assemblage of fragments that can be concepts or objects
or distinct spatial entities. According to the theorical framework
presented in the first part of our analysis, Beckett's design meth-
odology bears the crucial elements that Rancière locates within
the aesthetic regime of the arts. There is an existing space-time
that is disarticulated, having some of its constituents displaced.
And then, there is the proposition of a new sensible reality, a new
spatio-temporal disposition in the form of an aesthetic commu-
nity of sensible elements. But given that Beckett's principal de-
sign device is writing, we could link Rancière's idea of a figu-
ral-schematic language with Beckett's writing as an exemplifica-
tion of figural-schematic writing, not merely in the sense of giv-
ing an exact shape but also in the sense of unfolding a space via
the metaphorisation (the possibility of an array of meanings) of
concepts and words. Performativity meets figuration-schemati-

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16. Samuel Beckett, "Not I" and "What Where", both in *The Collected Shorter
Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 213-224 and 307-316 respectively.

17. Samuel Beckett, "Quad", in *The Collected Shorter Plays*, 289-294.

sation at that point by signifying a move away from the logic and outcomes of a representational process. The figural-schematic writing attributed to Beckett is an instance of performative design, for it has to do primarily with the implementation of a space for permitting the experimentation with new relations and combinations, new assemblages of concepts and objects rather than with a process of copying and reproducing.

An example of combining concepts with specific objects can be found very early on in Beckett's production. The concept of stillness and/or an intention for self-isolation along with the questions "how can it be shaped spatially?" and "how can it be connected with object and space entities?", are at the design core of the play *Eleutheria* (unpublished during Beckett's lifetime, written in 1947).[18] In this play, we have a hero, Victor Krapp, whose act of desire to be cut off from his family is spatially indicated through a floor plan, where Victor's room appears as the place of fulfillment of this desire for dissociation. In this case, the aesthetic function of architectural configuration is found in Beckett's choice of focal points. In the first act, we see Victor's room on stage as a distinct part (organically integrated) in the apartment of the Krapp family. In the second act, we see Victor's room again, but from another angle, which still provides visual access to the interior of the apartment. The modification of the point of view is equivalent to a spatial shift, which can be perceived as a reflection or indication of a shift in the plot line too.

Another example is *Waiting for Godot*, where stillness is expressed through the choice of setting a tree as a stage object.[19] However, the concept of stillness is also dialectically invested with the concept of movement as expressed through the spatial

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18. Samuel Beckett, *Eleutheria* (Paris: Minuit, 1995).
19. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot* (London: Faber, 2010).

object that is the road but also the passing of time expressed by the movement of the moon, which changes position as we move from the first to the second act. Moreover, movement is reflected in aesthetic objects such as the echoes, the stones, sand and bones, objects that define the diagram of a circular movement identified as such through the recognition of the intertextual function of the story of "Echo and Narcissus" in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.[20] In *Endgame*, stillness is expressed through the condition of confinement, disability and also the inventive use of the dustbins, inside which Ham's parents (Nag and Nell) are placed. In *Happy Days*, we have Winnie's forced immobility, as another way of stillness: most of her body is inside a hill.[21]

Beckett's Design Idiom: Typologies of Spatial Assemblages and Archi-spaces

From the cases above we could sketch a typology of Beckett's spatial assemblages. First, individual objects or groups of objects have a common principle of origin, which evolves, within the work, into a morphological principle of integration and a wider spatial configuration – this is the case of *Waiting for Godot* and the staging of objects from Ovid's "Echo and Narcissus". Second, architectural parts, such as a room or an enclosed living space (see the example of *Endgame* or *Eleutheria*). Third, fragments of the natural landscape (*Waiting for Godot*) or paradoxical configurations of it (*Happy Days*). In addition, Beckett's texts on painting

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20. Ovid, "Echo and Narcissus", in *Metamorphoses*, trans. D. Raeburn, (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), 361-369.

21. Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days* (London: Faber, 2010), and *Endgame* (London: Faber, 2009).

and the visual arts but also his attempts to formulate an aesthetic theory through his first novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and his essay and poetry criticism offer valuable insights into the origin of specific spatial configurations and types that we come across in changing forms in his works.[22]

Schematically, I could convey here two such spatial formations, which function as model or "archi-spaces". The first case of such an archi-space is "no man's land", as Beckett calls it, an intermediate space between a world and a subject who attempts to connect perceptually with that world.[23] There are two entities, a radical dualism, the individual and the world, a radical heterogeneity stemming from the fact that the world is a set of schematisations by the man and for the man, which leaves inevitably a part of the world untranslatable. Therefore, this no man's land is the topological space that welcomes within it the untranslatable element of life and world. The second case of an archi-space is that realm of non-being from which being originates or ends up or exists in forms that again exceed the possibility of human perception. Non-being is made known only analogically, through the manifestations of being. That space of non-being signifies the pending, vulnerable, incomplete character of existence. The author as creator is far from omniscient, the situations that the author invents and directs are far from known to the author.

The visual arts, literature and even philosophy provide ready-made architectural objects and shapes that Beckett incorporated into his work, either as such or with some modifications. First, from Dante's *Divine Comedy*,[24] perhaps the most representative

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22. Samuel Beckett, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (London: Faber, 2020).

23. Samuel Beckett, "Recent Irish Poetry", in *Disjecta. Miscellaneous Writing and a Dramatic fragment by Samuel Beckett*, ed. Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 70.

24. Dante, *Divine Comedy*, trans. R. Kirkpatrick (London: Penguin Classics,

example of this kind, Beckett extracts architectural elements and spaces while at the same time he forms correspondingly the figures that inhabit these spaces (human figures usually, in between life and death, or beyond death). Second, from the pre-Socratic tradition and the history of cosmology Beckett also draws schemas – abstractions of the world, starting from a cosmological picture, where earth and sky were presented as the floor and ceiling of a box, and then from Anaximander, who believed that the earth was a cylinder. Those two geometries of the world served as the main design patterns that directed Beckett's conceptions especially during the 1960s and 1970s. In *The Lost Ones*, for example, we have the experimental observation of a community enclosed in a cylinder.[25] In *Imagination Dead Imagine*, the architectural reference is the rotunda, as is the case in "...but the clouds....".[26] In *All Strange Away*, there is a diagrammatisation of the architectural reference: in the beginning, a cube, then, a rotunda. The dimensions are very minimal from the start so that there is only a limited amount of room for a human body.[27] In *Bing*, we have a body in a rectangle again.[28] The repetitiveness of utterances and abstraction (verbs, articles, sentences) ultimately aim to create an alternative mechanism of perception. The minimisation of space, the synthetic function of imagination and memory but also the design logic of merging the scale of the world with the scale of the individual allows Beckett to design an apparently simple space which amounts, however, to a new sensible architecture.

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2014).

    25. Samuel Beckett, *The Lost Ones* (New York: Grove Press, 1972).

    26. Samuel Beckett, *Imagination Dead Imagine* (London: Calder, 1966), and "...but the clouds...", in *The Collected Shorter Plays*, 255-262.

    27. Samuel Beckett, *All Strange Away* (London: Calder, 1979).

    28. Samuel Beckett, *Bing* (Paris: Minuit, 1966).

In all these cases, we can observe that Beckett starts unfolding his design practice from the act of reshaping already existing spaces, and then he gradually shifts to the invention of architectural spaces where the scale of the world and the scale of the human body converge. Something similar is considered to have been done by Jorge Luis Borges and similar design experiments can also be found in contemporary art. I could mention the practice of Miroslav Balka as an example or that of Bruce Nauman. This level of design idiom in the construction of architectural spaces is also achieved through another convergence, that between the architectural dimension of space within the literary or dramatic text and the architectural dimension of the theatrical stage, in the extension of which we can find spatial transformations that are at the core of contemporary art and very close to the concept of the stage developed by Rancière.

A final remark about the design spectrum of Beckett's performative come-into-being of his spatial settings: in Beckett's cosmologies, there is a contiguity, a queer continuity but also a perceptual dissensus between the organic and the inorganic. I mentioned above the intertextual relation between *Waiting for Godot* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Lucky's famous monologue in that play can be considered to be a metaphor of the creation of the world in a circular way, where the end meets the beginning and vice versa. The increasing presence of non-organic objects in Beckett's works culminates in *How It Is*, where Beckett, in his attempt to construct a cosmology that resembles the mechanistic universe of rationalism in the 17th century, designs distinct zones of objects.[29] It is about a topography of the natural world which draws mainly on the Flemish philosopher Arnold Geulincx. Beyond the intention to design a cosmology, we could say that Beck-

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29. Samuel Beckett, *How It Is* (London: Faber, 2009).

ett creates an inverted world of ruins and destruction, in an attempt to reframe the negative and to work on the idea of its metamorphosis.

By way of conclusion, all these allow us to talk about a distinct design idiom: Beckett creates spaces-worlds from scratch, posits the void and gradually provides spatial, architectural and, by extension, aesthetic qualities by giving instructions that are part of an unpresented performative design through writing. The resulting sense is usually that of a space beyond life, an extension of death, and/or a reflection on the advent of the decay that precedes death, and on coping with it. But since the scale of reference is both the body and the world, a sense of meta-revelation and meta-human formation emerges. In this context, we could argue that space, its performative design through writing, is simultaneously the constitutive site of a spatially determined subjectivity, where the emphasis is less on the subject and more on the design of a space that could be regarded as a distinct process of subjectification.

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Performativity in Ritual Space

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ABSTRACT

We can call "spatial performativity" the capacity of space to influence the behaviour and mental states of its users. The detection of the mechanisms through which spatial performativity functions is of particular importance for architectural and performative arts practice and for social science studies, yet there is little research on it. Spatial performativity is particularly intense in ritual space, as it corresponds to one of the main functions of ritual: to shape the bodies, behaviours and thoughts of individuals in a society. Ritual space, therefore, is an extraordinary case study for understanding how spatial performativity works, although it is necessary to establish study guidelines, given the enormous variety of configurations of ritual spaces. The characteristics of ritual that Catherine Bell proposes, applied to the study of performativity in ritual space, are very useful as research guidelines, for they allow us to detect common strategies in the use of architectural elements as generators of performativity, regardless of the ritual and culture in question. The categories of ritual pro-

posed by Bell are formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism and performance. To these characteristics we can add another one proposed by Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw, which basically consists of a modification of the usual intentionality of human action and has been called by Evangelos Kyriakidis a specific "frame of mind". That characteristic seems to be spatially linked to the spatial qualities produced through light, sound, smell or texture, which gives us a guideline to complete the study from the point of view of sensory perception.

Keywords: spatial performativity, ritualisation, ritual space, sensory space, performative space

Introduction

Ritual spaces are the cultural core of the built environment, important landmarks of the territory and the most representative architectural spaces of a culture. An ordinary space can be transformed into a ritual space by the frequent repetition of a ritual in it, and is then distinguished from everyday space. These spaces stand out from the rest of the fabric of the built environment because of their great capacity to confer behavioural patterns on their users. This capacity of space to modify human behaviour can be called "spatial performativity". Spatial performativity is not only present in ritual space, but in the entire natural and built environment, determining our behaviour, our mental states and even our thoughts. The study of this spatial quality is of utmost importance to understand the relation between performance and space in the development of our societies and the construction of our environment. Throughout history, spatial performa-

tivity has been used intuitively by all agents that construct the environment. However, it has not received much attention, or has even been reduced to a kind of "aura" present in the environment.[1] Since the mid-twentieth century, the phenomenological perspective of space alone has given greater importance to the influence that space exerts on its inhabitants, from a theoretical rather than a practical point of view,[2] although there have been some interesting methodological contributions to its study in specific spaces and its design applications.[3] In recent decades,

1. Among other authors, Vincent Scully, in *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1979), makes an interesting review on the interaction of the human being and their environment in ancient Greece, based on the perception of divinity in the landscape.

2. In the same phenomenological tradition regarding perception and embodied knowledge as that of Maurice Merleau-Ponty's *Phenomenology of Perception* (New York: Routledge, 2012), Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994) and Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1963), we find the following works: Steen Eiler Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1962); Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Existence, Space and Architecture* (London: Praeger Publishers, 1971); Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1979); Kenneth Frampton, "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance", in Hal Foster (ed.), *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle: Bay Press, 1983), 16-30; Juhani Pallasmaa, "An Architecture of the Seven Senses", in *a+u, Architecture and Urbanism*, special issue on "Questions of Perception: Phenomenology of Architecture", ed. Steven Holl, Juhani Pallasmaa and Alberto Pérez-Gómez, (1994): 27-38; Juhani Pallasmaa, *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses* (West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons Ltd, 2005); Juhani Pallasmaa, *Encounters: Architectural Essays* (Helsinki: Rakennustieto Oy, 2005).

3. See the attempts by architects Kevin Lynch, *La imagen de la ciudad* (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2008) and Botond Bognar, "A Phenomenological Approach to Architecture and its Teaching in the De-sign Studio", in David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, *Dwelling, Place and Environment* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1985), 183-200 to introduce a methodology that takes into account the cognitive processes of perception in the analysis of the environment within the

cognitive sciences have also begun to take an interest in it, particularly in questions related to spatial cognition and navigation in the territory.[4] Ritual space represents an exceptional opportunity as a case study in the search for the mechanisms through which spatial performativity operates, given the intensity it shows in this kind of space. This essay tries to clarify what spatial performativity consists of and the importance of its study to understand our environment, and proposes a basic methodology to study how it functions in ritual space.

Spatial Performativity and Ritual Space

Performance, performative, performativity, rite, ritual, ritualisation: we all have an approximate intuition of what these concepts mean, but not even scholars have reached a consensus on a clear definition of them, not to mention the historical problem of the definition of what space is. And yet, we all live in space, we are space, and we continuously carry out performances and rituals. Before proposing a form of study of the performativity in ritual space, it is necessary to clarify as much as possible what we understand by these terms.

The term "performativity"[5] began to gain popularity with the

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design process.

4. Robert M. Kitchin, in "Increasing the Integrity of Cognitive Mapping Research: Appraising Conceptual Schemata of Environment-Behaviour Interaction", in *Progress in Human Geography* 20 (1996): 56-84, doi: 10.1177/030913259 602000104, develops a conceptual model of interaction between environment and behaviour.

5. Hans R. Velten, in "Performativity and Performance", in Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning (eds), *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2012), 249-265, gives an excellent description of the route of the terms "performance" and "performativity".

work of John L. Austin, who refers to sentences in language that are in fact actions, such as phrases spoken in certain rituals or legal acts that change the *status quo* of someone or something: for example, the phase at a wedding "I take this man as my law-fully wedded husband".[6] Actually, Austin did not use the word "performativity", as "language performativity", but the phrase "performative utterances". Over time, the term "performativity" was fixed to refer to that type of language. Later, within gender studies, Judith Butler gave the term "performativity" a different meaning, maintaining that "performativity" is the influence that culture exerts on human beings, that it leads us unconsciously to act or even to perceive ourselves in a certain way. According to her, "performativity is not a singular act, but a repetition and a ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalisation in the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration". It would be about an action with "social, psy-chic, corporeal, and temporal dimensions".[7]

The meaning of "performativity" introduced by Butler fits bet-ter with the definition given by Ervin Goffman for the term "per-formance" as "an action carried out by a participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way in any of the other participants".[8] In this sense, we can say that "spatial performativ-ity" is the "performance" of space, the capacity of space to influ-ence those who inhabit it. The influence of space on human be-ings affects, often unconsciously, our actions, emotions and thoughts.

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6. John L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 6.

7. Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1999), xv and xxiv.

8. Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (University of Edin-burgh Social Sciences Research Centre. Monograph, no. 2, 1956), 8-9.

Of course, spatial performativity can be used to produce re-pressive spaces. As Dorita Hannah points out, "architecture mutely incorporates power systems into the built environment—defining, regulating, and limiting our daily practices".[9] But this represents only a small aspect of spatial performativity. Spatial performativity is always present in the interaction of living be-ings with space. To carry out any activity, human beings choose the spaces that best suit them, or we transform or create spaces to adapt them to our activities. In the choice, transformation or creation of space, not only purely functional aspects come into play, but also aspects that have to do with how the space makes us feel. From domestic space to monumental spaces, spatial per-formativity is present in our interaction with space, determining how we built it, or how we inhabit it.

In order to understand the interaction with the environment of a given culture, it is essential to know the mechanisms through which spatial performativity functions. It is also of utmost impor-tance to know these mechanisms in order to understand the evo-lution of the built environment and also to be able to understand its representations through art. But, above all, the study of spatial performativity allows us to construct the most appropriate envi-ronment for a society. It is necessary to introduce this new per-spective on space studies into anthropology, archaeology, sociol-ogy, or architectural and urban planning theory and practice, in order to broaden our knowledge of the relationship between human beings and the environment and to be able to improve it.

Of all the built environment, ritual spaces stand out due to their fundamental role in the organisation of the territory and

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9. Dorita Hannah, "Event-Space: Performance Space and Spatial Performa-tivity", in Jonathan Pitches and Sita Popat (eds), *Performance Perspectives: A Crit-ical Introduction* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 54-62.

their cultural relevance, but the most important thing, for us, is that spatial performativity manifests itself most clearly through them, thanks to their nature. The repetition of a ritual at a given site is often what transforms it into a ritual space, but, of course, throughout history, ritual spaces have also been planned, designed and constructed to accommodate ritual activity. Modelled through or designed for action, ritual spaces represent a paradigm in the close relation between performance and space, to the point that space can become another agent within ritual action.[10] So to define what a ritual space is, it is first necessary to understand what a ritual consists of.

Determining what constitutes a ritual has been the subject of debate for decades, given the enormous spectrum of expressions and forms that the phenomena assume. Consequently, few social science terms have been used in a more confusing way.[11] Catherine Bell, probably the most influential author in ritual studies in recent decades, argues, in her work "Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice" (1992), that it is impossible to define the phenomenon of ritual.[12] Bell considers that almost all human activities have been a ritual at some point or have been part of one.[13] However, scholars have never considered that all activity is ritual, since it is intrinsic to ritual that it is an action different from others. She suggests that we could approach the study of ritual by understand-

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10. Jonathan Z. Smith, in *To Take Place. Toward Theory in Ritual* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1987), puts forward a spatial theory with reference to theories of performance, considering that the ritual "place" is not a mere empty or passive receptacle but a force that shapes actions and actors.

11. Evan M. Zeusse, "Ritual", in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* 12 (1987): 405-422.

12. Catherine Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).

13. Catherine Bell, *Ritual. Perspective and Dimensions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 91.

ing that there are more obvious rituals –those that form part of a tradition or canon of rites, whether religious or secular– and those human activities that could be considered to be rituals or *rituals-like*, since they share many of their characteristics with those that are normally considered to be rituals. Instead of giving a definition of ritual, Bell lists "six neither exclusive nor definitive categories to assess the degree of ritualisation of an activity: formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism and performance". Bell argues that these ritualisation categories or characteristics of the ritual are also categories of ritualised space or characteristic of ritual space.[14]

Following Bell's proposal, we could define ritual space as space in which a ritual activity has been performed and which is characterised by formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, which contains sacral symbolism and is a highly performative space. On the other hand, the archaeologist Evangelos Kyriakidis, in his work on Minoan peak sanctuaries,[15] uses the characteristics enunciated by Bell to determine whether a prehistoric space has been a ritual space, but adds a new characteristic, which he formulates on the basis of the "theory of ritual action" elaborated by Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw, what he calls a specific "frame of mind". This specific "frame of mind" consists of three elements: first, of "a particular modification of the normal intentionality of human action, in which the relation between intention and action is subtly transformed"; second, "the celebrant has agent's awareness of his or her action but this is preceded and accompanied by a conception of the action as a

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14. Bell, *Ritual. Perspective and Dimensions*, 138-164.

15. Evangelos Kyriakidis, "Ritual and its Establishment. The Case of Some Minoan Open-Air Rituals", PhD thesis, St. John's College, University of Cambridge, 2002.

thing, encountered and perceived from outside", what Humphrey and Laidlaw call the "ritual commitment"[16]; and third, ritualisation provides "a dynamic means for the emergence of disjunct meanings and emotions which is one reason why it exists at all".[17] We also follow Kyriakidis by adding the specific "frame of mind" as a further characteristic to define ritual space, since it is one of the most important features for studying spatial performativity, as will be explained.

Performativity and Ritualisation

Many authors,[18] from different perspectives, have argued that performing rituals shape body and space, and that ritual space, in turn, shapes body and mind. Bell explains:

> Hence, through a series of physical movements ritual practices spatially and temporally construct an environment organised according to schemes of privileged opposition. The construction of this environment and the activities within it simultaneously work to impress these schemes upon the bodies of participants. This is a circular process that tends to be misrecognised, if it is perceived at all, as values and experiences impressed

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16. Caroline Humphrey and James Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 5.

17. Humphrey and Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual*, 228.

18. See, for instance, Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), David Parkin, "Ritual as Spatial Direction and Bodily Division", in David Coppet (ed.), *Understanding Ritual* (London: Routledge, 1992), 11-25, Humphrey and Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual*, and Ronald L. Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

upon the person and community from sources of power and
order beyond it.

[...] The importance of the ritual environment has, of course,
been elaborated before. [...] Yet a focus on the acts themselves
illuminates a critical circularity to the body's interaction with
this environment: generating it, it is molded by it in turn. By vir-
tue of this circularity, space and time are redefined through the
physical movements of bodies projecting organising schemes
on the space-time environment on the one hand while reab-
sorbing these schemes as the nature of reality on the other. In
this process such schemes become socially instinctive automa-
tisms of the body and implicit strategies for shifting the power
relationships among symbols.[19]

We can say that the ritualised environment would be analogous
to the built environment, and the process of ritualisation by
means of which the ritualised environment influences bodies
and minds would be analogous to what we have called "spatial
performativity". Nevertheless, the fact is that space exerts an ob-
vious influence on all living beings, not only on the highly ritual-
ised ones that human beings are, so we should specify that a
large part of spatial performativity in the built environment
would come from the processes of ritualisation; however, an im-
portant part of spatial performativity would be prior to the ritu-
alisation-construction of the environment, but that would be the
subject of further research. Here, we will focus on the performa-
tivity of the ritualised environment and, more specifically, on
that of ritual space.

Assuming that ritualised space plays a decisive role in the rit-
ualisation of the individual, it is necessary to ask how this hap-

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19. Bell, *Ritual Theory, Ritual Practice*, 98-99.

pens, what the spatial qualities or architectural mechanisms by which space exerts such an influence on the human being are. Obviously, a specific study from the field of the cognitive sciences is required in order to deepen the knowledge of this process, but from the architectural perspective we can make some observations about how certain spatial qualities or certain architectural mechanisms act as generators of spatial performativity. Nevertheless, the enormous variety of forms and expressions of the activity called "ritual" makes the detection of the architectural mechanisms of ritualisation unmanageable. Each type of ritual, in each culture, generates a specific ritual space but, in order to start studying the generators of spatial performativity in ritual space, the aforementioned ritual characteristics –or the categories of the degree of ritualisation– can help us to detect and classify them.

By studying how formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance are expressed in ritual space, we can detect certain architectural mechanisms of ritualisation. With regard to the specific "frame of mind", we will see that the architectural mechanisms associated with the other characteristics of ritual space can generate the "emergent moods" described by Humphrey and Laidlaw,[20] but there are also certain spatial qualities not exclusive to the architectural environment that are commonly associated with certain types of ritual spaces and that could be, to a large extent, the cause of these "emergent moods". Below we refer to some examples of how the characteristics of ritual space can help us to study spatial performativity produced through architectural mechanisms of ritualisation or specific spatial qualities.

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20. Humphrey and Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual*, 227.

Spatial Performativity as Architectural Mechanism of Ritualisation

Formalism confers an aesthetic dimension on the spatial framework where rituals are performed. Spatial performativity through formalism induces acceptance and complicity in the participants, and confers authority on the ritual leaders.[21] For example, the spatial performativity of a courthouse helps to confer legitimacy on the acts that take place in it, or, in a Gothic cathedral, it emphasises the divine character of the liturgy. In the first case, the architectural mechanisms of ritualisation usually consist of the use of a dais that rises above the rest of the participants, where the judge is situated, and of the directionality of the space towards the court. In the second case, the architectural mechanisms of ritualisation are the strict directionality of the space towards the altar, accompanied by the high ceilings supported by structural elements of great plasticity bathed in coloured light coming through the stained-glass windows.

Traditionalism in ritual space is expressed by using an architectural language referring to "a past", even if it is invented, or by maintaining ancient elements. The spatial performativity of these ritualisation mechanisms reinforces the sense of identity and belonging to a community. Since the establishment of ritual activity on the Athenian Acropolis, and throughout antiquity, traditionalism was used as an expression of the community. For example, the most sacred rituals related to the origin of the city were held at the same spot on the hill for centuries, namely, the

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21. We follow the nomenclature proposed by Grimes, *The Craft of Ritual Studies*, 251, for the ritual roles: "Ritual leader: primary ritual actor, front-stage ritual participant. Ritual follower: secondary ritual actor, backstage ritual participant".

site where the Erechtheion was eventually built. Another example is the Mycenaean walls, which remained intact until the 5th century BC, the parts of the wall that survived the destruction by the Persians were preserved and exhibited as relics until the end of antiquity.

Immutability is provided in the ritual space by the rigid distribution and proportions of its elements or by the orientation towards a cardinal point or a landmark in the territory. Here, performativity confers ritual discipline, precise repetition and physical control on the actions performed, suppressing "the significance of the personal and particular moment in favour of the timeless authority of the group, its doctrines or its practices".[22] For example, in most ancient Greek theatres the orchestra was circular, about 24 metres in diameter, probably shaped by the dances originally held there and the number of participants who took part in them. An example of the specific orientation of ritual spaces, in ancient Greece, are the altars and the entrance of temples, which were usually oriented towards the east.

Rule-governance imposes order on ritual space as opposed to the chaos of mundane space, leading to a perception of space different from the formless and wild fabric of the rest of the territory, a perception whereby behaviours must be communally approved of or dictated by a higher power. The architectural mechanisms used are often the succession of ever more hidden and restricted event-spaces[23] or spatial arrangements that oblige participants to position themselves and circulate in an established manner during the ritual action. Examples of this can be

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22. Bell, *Ritual. Perspective and Dimensions*, 150.

23. "Event-space" is a term attributed to Bernard Tschumi by K. Michael Hays, in *Architecture Theory since 1968* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1998), 216, which refers to architecture as a generator of events.

found in the restricted access to the *sancta sanctorum* of the temples, or in the spatial sectoring according to gender or age, as in some synagogues.

Sacred symbolism in ritual space allows it to be recognised as a place that transcends everyday space, a place where the collective is placed above the self, where the presence of a higher reality is perceived. The most common architectural mechanisms are the marking of the place by symbols, and the architecture itself can form such symbols, such as the cross plan of Christian churches, or through the monumentalisation of architecture in buildings that represent "power", as in temples or government buildings.

Ritual space is essentially a performative space, a space that "opens up special possibilities for the relationship between actors and spectators and for movement and perception".[24] The performativity of ritual space elevates the presence of leaders and ritual agents, while conferring complicity on the rest of the congregation. The most commonly used architectural mechanisms of ritualisation are the elevation of a part of the floor where the ritual leaders and agents stand, and the use of slopes or the construction of steps to accommodate the ritual followers to direct their attention towards the point where the ritual action takes place. Focal lighting is used for the same purpose, or the construction of an aural architecture that amplifies the sound of the human voice. All the previously mentioned ritual spaces are highly performative; the Christian temples or the synagogues, the Greek temenos, the open squares in public space, the ceremonial pathways and, of course, the ancient Greek or contemporary theatres.

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24. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance. A New Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2008), 107.

Spatial Performativity Co-generates "Emergent Moods" in Ritual Action

When Humphrey and Laidlaw describe how ritual space seems to contain acts ready to be performed by those who enter it, they are in fact pointing to the strong spatial performativity of ritual space.[25] These acts would have no intrinsic meaning, but would be "apprehensible"; it would be the celebrants who would give them symbolic meaning by the way they perform them. However, they observe that in certain acts the apprehensibility would reside in the psychological states and emotions that they would awaken in the celebrants when they perform them, what they call "emergent moods". They point out that it seems that there is no connection between the action itself and the emotions it arouses. But this observation that Humphrey and Laidlaw make for specific acts is extended by other authors to any ritual action.[26] Either way, it would be a part of the specific "frame of mind" that they describe as the characteristic that transforms any action into a ritual one.

As we have seen, the architectural mechanisms of ritualisation associated with the characteristics of ritual proposed by Bell act on the body and mind, awakening emotional states such as respect, complicity, identity or a sense of community. However, following Humphrey and Laidlaw's observations, we can focus on the specific study of the "emergent moods" generated by spatial

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25. Humphrey and Laidlaw, *The Archetypal Actions of Ritual*, 227.

26. See especially authors with a cognitive perspective, such as Pascal Boyer, *The Naturalness of Religious Ideas: A Cognitive Theory of Religion* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), Harvey Whitehouse, *Inside the Cult: Religious Innovation and Transmission in Papua New Guinea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), and E. Thomas Lawson and Robert McCauley, *Bringing Ritual to Mind. Psychological Foundations of Cultural Forms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

performativity that do not arise directly from the characteristics of ritual enunciated by Bell but from the spatial qualities of place. These qualities can be found in the natural environment and can be recreated by architecture. We refer here to spatial qualities that would be high sensory stimuli capable of helping to induce the "emergent moods" associated with ritual action. Although the generation of emotions occurs through culturally pre-established associations with stimuli, we can present some fairly broadly recognisable examples.

Light. It is difficult to imagine a mystical ritual taking place in broad daylight. The half-light always accompanies such rituals, as was the case with the mysteries of Eleusis, Samothrace or, nowadays, the night of resurrection before Easter. Darkness can provoke mystery, alertness, fear. However, the light of controlled fire comforts us, gives us security, creates solidarity, reassures us. Concentrated zenithal lights generate awe, revelation, connect us with the superhuman, as in the Roman Pantheon. Coloured lights transport us to a divine space, out of this world, to a sacred space, an example of which is the light produced by the stained-glass windows in Gothic cathedrals.

Sound. As we have all experienced, sound can provoke devotion, concentration, fervour, nostalgia, joy, sadness, fear, restlessness, calm. Sound plays an important role in rituals; music, percussion, singing, shouting and, of course, words in the form of prayers, supplications, sermons, are frequent in most rituals. The acoustic character of the place, what Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter have called "aural architecture",[27] also plays a decisive role. The aural architecture of a deep cavern can create

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27. Barry Blesser and Linda-Ruth Salter, *Spaces Speak, Are You Listening? Experiencing Aural Architecture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2007).

mystery, secrecy[28]; that of a gothic cathedral generates and conveys a relationship with the immeasurable, the eternal. An open space occupied by a crowd can generate festive excitement.

Textures. Just as sound generates auditory architectures, textures generate a tactile architecture. Sight, hearing and touch are synesthetically connected to each other in the perception of the environment. The sight of surfaces covered with soft and fluffy materials connects us to the tactile, just as the aural architecture containing these elements leads to a sense of comfort. But usually touch relies on other senses to create a mood. Paved floors in natural environments indicate a special space, different from the rest. The same goes the other way around: an unpaved area within a paved space can mean that it is a sacred or special place. Metallic materials, luxurious fabrics transport us to sacred spaces, while bare stone or wood tend to connect with communal rituals. There are also other tactile stimuli such as cold, heat or dampness, which can generate different frames of mind.

Smell. Smells are also an important part of the ritual space. The use of perfumes is common in all kinds of rituals and cultures. But the smell of the place is equally important in generating the specific mood. It is thanks to the mixture of the smell of candles, wet stone and incense accumulated over centuries in ancient churches that a mood of respect and reverence can emerge. In open spaces, the smell of plants often used in pilgrimages in different cultures, such as rosemary, myrtle, or the smell of roasting meat in western culture, the smell of a river or a spring can evoke joy and celebration.

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28. Aural architecture is the acoustic "personality" of a space and is created by the composition of numerous surfaces, objects and geometries in a complicated environment.

Conclusion

We have tried to show the high degree of spatial performativity in ritual space and how it acts through different architectural mechanisms of ritualisation or certain spatial qualities. We have also proposed to use the characteristics of ritual as a means to detect the mechanisms and qualities through which spatial performativity acts. However, much remains to be explored.

We humans need spatial performativity in our environment in order to be able to orient ourselves in space, to know how to act according to the culture and norms of the place. Spatial performativity is prior to the construction-ritualisation of the environment. It is present in the natural environment and must have been decisive at the beginning of the configuration of the human habitat. Delving into the performativity of ritual space can allow us to understand the evolution of the built environment, from its origins to contemporary space. It would be very useful for archaeology, anthropology, or sociology, to understand the relationship of ancient and contemporary societies with space. But it is also fundamental because it may help us to design spaces in a more conscious way.

The method of study proposed here is largely based on observation; however, there is another significant part that can only be experienced. Kyriakidis considers that it is possible to find traces of formalism, traditionalism, invariability, rule-governance, sacred symbolism and performance in archaeological remains, but the specific frame of mind can only be deduced or experienced. Archaeology, anthropology and sociology employ the perspective of the observer (etic's), but we can use the perspective of the performer (emic's), as Richard Schechner proposes in his work on performance studies.[29] To understand how spatial performativity

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29. Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies. An Introduction* (New York: Rou-

guides us, imprints patterns on our bodies, shapes our behaviour and creates frames of mind, as Schechner contends, we can enter certain spaces, we can perform certain performative routines or even participate in a ritual, and observe what happens in our bodies, our emotions and our minds.

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Emerging Performativity: Repetition and Singularity

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ABSTRACT

The present study considers performance as an outcome of the interaction between bodies and spatial structures. In this context, the concept of desire assumes a central role, functioning as a driving force that stimulates and motivates the emergence of actions when individuals encounter the environment. Furthermore, this interaction is reciprocal in nature, as the environment itself can stimulate and shape desires, thereby influencing the ways in which individuals desire to act. In that sense, emerging performativity is seeking to study the conditions that enable performance to be a generative process of acting, unlocking new potentialities of the interaction between bodies and space. What kind of structures offer the conditions for individuation and thus for deviation from predetermined protocols of use? What kind of processes take place during the performance? The relation between performance and individuation is approached by analysing the concepts of desire, interiority, potentiality and diagrammatic space. The relevance of these notions is studied through

the work of theorists such as Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari and Manuel DeLanda as well as the work of architects and artists who reflect on diagrammatic space and the capacity of the built environment to enable generative performance, such as Shusaku Arakawa and Madeline Gins, Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, RAAAF, Aristide Antonas, Dimitris Papaioannou and Ulrich Rasche. Such an understanding of performativity is informed by the study of neural processes that are related to action-perception by neuroscientist Michael Arbib. This approach to performance as a generative process proposes that structures and desires find themselves in a constant exchange of information, forming new actions in a rhizomatic way. In this respect, research and design of space attempt to problematise the environment, its affordance and perception with respect to its capacities.

Introduction

As far as the context of the present work is concerned, performance is conceptualised as an active process of self-creation, wherein an individual's identity is shaped through their interactions with the social and natural environment. This interaction is influenced by the performativity of space, which refers to the way in which structures are able to affect the actions that take place within them. The concept of "emerging performativity" pertains to the conditions that allow for the expression of unrealised aspects of the self and for the re-examination of how we interact with the world around us, thereby challenging and disrupting traditional ideas about how bodies perform within space. Individ-

uation is understood in this context not as the result of a single act but, rather, as a process whereby repetition sequentially actualises the process of self-making through performance. Iterability — the regularised and constrained repetition of norms — is what enables the creation of a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject, as Judith Butler notes in *Bodies That Matter*. According to her, "'performance' is not a singular 'act' or event, but a ritualised production that is reiterated under and through constraint, force, prohibition, and taboo".[1] Repetition, thus, instead of concretising an identity of the body, facilitates the creation of a temporal condition for the body. In this act of presenting oneself to the world, performance constitutes a social practice, involving an act that takes place in front of an audience. As Erving Goffman notes, this act is a "modus vivendi", a process where "together the participants contribute to a single overall definition of the situation which involves not so much a real agreement as to what exists but rather a real agreement as to whose claims concerning what issues will be temporarily honoured".[2] Therefore, performance as social practice is a complex and dynamic process, shaped by multiple forces and subjectivities.

The concept of individuation in this context highlights the relevance of the exploration and expression of identity. Through performance, individuals actualise virtual aspects of themselves and seek a sense of self. This constant process of identity-seeking allows individuals to discover ways of being by deviating from predetermined and dominant manners of behaviour and self-expression. In this way, the relevance of singularity can be understood as

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1. Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledges, 1993), 95.

2. Ervin Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Scotland: University of Edinburgh Social Sciences Research Centre, 1956), 4.

a way of asserting agency in the construction of the self. The investigation of the performativity of space involves analysing the concepts of desire, interiority, potentiality and diagrammatic space, as well as examining the work of designers and artists who consider the ability of the built environment to facilitate generative performance. According to Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "desire" is an energetic force that drives actions in response to the environment, actions which result in the formation of complexes of energetic and spatial forces.[3] Manuel DeLanda argues that the development of "relations of exteriority" enables the exchange of information between the body and its surroundings, and the deviation from predetermined patterns of performance is influenced both by external factors in the spatial structures that exist in our environment and by the agency of individuals and groups within it.[4] Structures defined by functional incompleteness have the potential for yet-unrealised actions, provide opportunities for individuation, and encourage the emergence of virtual aspects of the self. This leads to engagement with the environment in new and unexpected ways and allows for the exploration of new possibilities for self-expression and self-actualisation.

Desire for Performance

Performing is the actualisation of the self as an acting body. Through performance, we become our actions. This understanding involves recognising the existence of a potential, virtual self.

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3. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), 1.

4. Manuel DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2006), 11.

The act of performance occurs when a body and spatial structures interact with each other. In this context, the performativity of space refers to the conditions that encourage the development of specific actions within space. Emerging performativity signifies the extent to which these spatial conditions allow for deviation from predetermined protocols of acting, resulting in impromptu actualisations of the self that were previously dormant and awaiting. There is currently a strong desire for spatial and bodily practices which facilitate the development of actualisations that comply neither with a binary understanding of concepts such us private/public (in the case of spatial practices) or female/male (in the case of bodily practices), nor with any predetermined understanding of what someone can do or become within a certain space or environment. The emerging performativity of these spatial and bodily practices refers to the conditions that allow for the exploration and expression of previously unrevealed aspects of the self and for the redefinition of the ways in which we engage with the world around us. This can involve challenging and disrupting traditional notions of how spaces and bodies can perform and be performed.

In *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Deleuze and Guattari propose the concept of "assemblages" as a productive system of examining relations between components and entities. These complexes of forces are characterised by connectivity in contrast to closed systems or organic totalities. The concept of "desire", as an energetic force driving actions in response to the tangible environment, can be seen as a way of understanding how individuals interact with and shape their surroundings. Deleuze and Guattari characterised these forces as energy source machines that act as a driving force.[5] According to them, these

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5. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 1.

interactions involve the formation of complexes of energetic and spatial forces that shape the protocols of performance. These complexes are not predetermined but, rather, emerge at the moment of interaction between the body and the environment. In such an individuation process, the emergence of desire and function is not a one-way relation but a co-creation involving both the body and spatial structures. In his review of Gilberts Simondon's *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, Deleuze expounds the concept of "individuation" as a transductive process in which topological conditions, through the exchange of energy between matter and form, culminate in a state of equilibrium. According to his proposition, the pre-individual entity exists in a metastable state.[6]

In that sense, the performer and space, at the moment of the performance, together give rise to an enclosure that is temporarily characterised by stability. As Simondon writes, this individuation process is "a phase of becoming that will lead to new operations",[7] and, as Deleuze explains in his review, metastability is the paramount precondition in this process since "the metastable, defined as pre-individual being, is perfectly provisioned with singularities that correspond to the existence and distribution of potentials".[8] The body brings its own virtual desires and potentialities to the interaction, while the spatial structures offer their own morphogenetic capabilities. Together, these elements shape

6. Gilles Deleuze, "Review of Gilbert Simondon's *L'individu et sa genese physicobiologique* (1966)", in *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, no. 12 (2001): 44. See also Gilbert Simondon, *L'individu et sa genèse physico-biologique* (Grenoble: Editions Jérôme Millon, 1998).

7. Simondon cited in Deleuze, "Review of Gilbert Simondon's *L'individu et sa genese physicobiologique* (1966)", 47.

8. Deleuze, "Review of Gilbert Simondon's *L'individu et sa genese physicobiologique* (1966)", 44.

the emerging performativity, which actualises both the desires of the body and the potentialities of the structures. This understanding of the relation between desire, the body and the environment offers a way of conceptualising how individuals and communities shape and are shaped by their surroundings. It highlights the importance of considering the dynamic and co-creative nature of these interactions, rather than considering them as desires that pre-exist or structures with certain functions and capabilities.

The encounters between desires and structures in the environment can be thought of as attractor points that come together to create a performance cycle. When actions are repeatedly performed in a loop, the material and energetic forces involved generate feedback loops that result in a closed system, which hinders the appearance of new actions within the same space. These closed loops, referred to as "limit cycles" by philosopher Manuel DeLanda, exhibit "isomorphic behaviour, an endogenously generated tendency to oscillate in a stable way".[9] Performance is an ongoing process, in which the boundary between the body and the surrounding space is continually re-evaluated over time and in relation to the milieu, which results in a process of a constant becoming of the self. A deviation from this cycle can be instantiated by the exchange of information between unrevealed desires and undiscovered functions of space. This deviation may lead to a re-evaluation of the boundaries between the body and the surrounding space, potentially leading to the emergence of new actions and desires.

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9. Manuel DeLanda, "Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Genesis of Form", in *ANY: Architecture New York*, no. 23 (1998): 30-34, 30.

Relations of Exteriority and the Production of Singularity

In his work "A New Philosophy of Society", DeLanda explores how certain processes can deviate from predetermined paths or cycles of performance. When studying the formation of territories, he looks at the difference between "relations of interiority" and "relations of exteriority".[10] A system is considered to be characterised by interiority when it does not allow for the exchange of information with its surroundings, nor for deviation from its predetermined path of actualisation. However, when the built environment enables the development of relations of exteriority, it can result in spatial practices that are not just reproductions, but that have the ability to generate novel manners of acting and, thus, new ways of being. These relations of exteriority can be developed by the constantly transitional social and material context in which we find ourselves. The relation between bodies and structures is dynamic and reciprocal in the sense that external factors in the environment may shape the ways in which individuals and groups interact with their surroundings and these interactions can in turn shape and alter perception of the environment. This feedback loop can lead to the emergence of novel forms of social and cultural activity, as well as to the development of new ways of being and acting within a given context. One key aspect of DeLanda's theory of exteriority is his focus on the relationship between agency and structure.[11] The built environment and social structures developed in it can both shape and be shaped by the actions and behaviours of individuals and groups. This suggests that the development of relations of exteriority is influenced not

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10. DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 11.
11. DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society*, 10.

only by external factors in the spatial structures that exist in the environment, but also by the agency of individuals and groups within it.

The extent to which relations of exteriority affect the generative nature of the relation between agency and structure is reflected in neural activity and configuration. Michael Arbib, in his "Towards a Neuroscience of the Design Process", studies how the function of the brain and the formation of the neural network is related to the action-perception process within the physical and social environments where we perform.[12] He first explains the anatomy of the neuron: "Below the neuron we have synapses — the connection points between neurons", which he calls "loci of change".[13] Neurons communicate with each other with the development of synapses between them, forming neural circuits and then schemas, which are able to perform functions when activated. As he maintains, "what we do depends on what we have perceived, but what we have perceived depends on what we do — and our actions include exploration in search of knowledge of the world relevant to our unfolding goals and plans".[14] Arbib also tried to understand how "neural plasticity" mediates the creation of new neural schemas in the process during which a body invents novel ways of performing existing tasks. According to him, reacting to certain stimuli in the environment, the hippocampus may work together with the cerebral cortex to bring up past episodes, skills, memories, and desires during a generative process of performing new actions that would otherwise be considered irrelevant.[15] These stimuli, which are often unexpected elements

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12. Michael Arbib, "Toward a Neuroscience of the Design Process", in *Mind in Architecture* (2017): 77.

13. Arbib, "Toward a Neuroscience of the Design Process", 76.

14. Arbib, "Toward a Neuroscience of the Design Process", 77.

15. Arbib, "Toward a Neuroscience of the Design Process", 82-87.

in the environment, can bring up fragments of memories, experiences and skills outside of predetermined norms, resulting in changes in action-perception and the creation of new performances, in new ways of being.

In his lifelong project, Ernst Neufert created a guide for designing space based on ergonomic principles called "Architects' Data".[16] According to Neufert, there are only two types of bodies: male and female, each with specific sizes and limited in certain movements. A potential approach against Neufert's views would then refer to structures that intentionally deviate from the principles of ergonomics and may generate, as a result, new possibilities for use. It might challenge, for example, how the desire to rest would be impacted by a bed whose dimensions are four by four metres instead of the typical two by two metres. Ultimately, the ways in which a person would interact with such an object would depend on their individual preferences, needs, and abilities, as well as on the specific context in which the bed is used. Aside from deviating from predetermined norms of ergonomics, an environment may facilitate emerging performativity by hazing the divide between private and public. In his 2011 work "Inside",[17] director and choreographer Dimitris Papaioannou transformed a theatre space in Athens into an apartment, inviting people to come and go as they would in their own homes. Over the course of twenty days, he documented the return home from work of various individuals in six-hour-long improvisation performances. This experiment aimed to explore repetition and individuation, as well as the social and cultural impact on how different bodies interact with the same space, while also examining

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16. "Architects' Data" by Ernst Neufert was first published in Germany in 1936 by Bauwelt-Verlag.

17. Premiered on April 13, 2011 at the Pallas Theatre in Athens, Greece.

the meditative nature of everyday habits and routines and how these shape our interaction with space.

Potentiality and the Unfinished

The capacity of material structures to afford the generation of new spatial practices upon encounter with a body is influenced by the individual's perception of them. In that respect, conditioning often leads to the unconscious repetition of established protocols of performance in regard to certain objects or environments. When a material structure is characterised by "functional unfinishedness", which means that the potentiality of its function is not predetermined by our perception of it, it may be perceived as an object of unidentified function. However, it has the affordance to participate in as-yet-unrealised actions, providing opportunities for individuation during the performance cycle. The presence of functional unfinishedness allows for the possibility of deviating from predetermined protocols of acting, and encourages the emergence of previously dormant possibilities of the self. This promotes engagement with the environment in new and unexpected ways, rather than following established patterns of behaviour. Thus, it allows for the exploration of new possibilities for self-expression, fostering a sense of agency as individuals are able to shape their environment and the actions they take within it. Functional unfinishedness can also involve the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, as well as the development of new ways of thinking and being. It can lead to the formation of new social groups and communities built around shared interests and actions, and encourage individuals to encounter others who are exploring the same environment. This process can result in the emergence of new spa-

tial practices and the creation of previously unconsidered aspects of the self.

Taking as an example the dwellings we inhabit and the way we go about our daily lives within them, it is evident that the material structures within our homes, including furniture and other domestic objects, are influenced by the protocols of performance that these structures suggest. For example, the size and shape of a bed can give us clues as to how it should be used, based not only on its physical characteristics and how it relates to our bodies, but also on the other material structures present in a bedroom and the socially inherited ways in which a bed is typically used. Therefore, dwelling in this case can be viewed as a process that involves both material structures and energetic forces (desires) which influence one another and result in protocols of performance within the domestic space. The environment that has the ability to participate in the exchange of information between functionality and desire, and that enables relations of exteriority between bodies and structures, brings about virtual desires and unrevealed trajectories of the functionality of the spatial milieu, a process that differs fundamentally from the ability of the environment to adapt to changing desires.

In designing the interior of the "Amphitheatre House" on the island of Hydra,[18] the architect Aristide Antonas sought to create a domestic space that was not predetermined in its function, allowing the inhabitants continually to invent and redefine its use and their performance within the space. To achieve this, he left large areas of the interior empty, and furnished it with minimal, movable pieces such as lightweight chairs, tables, and mattress-

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18. "The Amphitheatre House", Hydra (Greece), Aristide Antonas, 2007, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.aristideantonas.com/tag/excavations/project/the-amphitheater-house.

es, which could be rearranged as needed. The central element of the staircase was intended to be utilised and its affordance could be explored by the users in a variety of ways, potentially serving as a cinema, seating area, resting spot, meeting place, or simply as a means of accessing the upper floor. This approach to interior design highlights the importance of openness within the domestic space, allowing for the possibility of mutating performances over time. It also emphasises the agency of the inhabitant in taking part in the definition of the function of their living environment. The function of different spaces in this dwelling, which could be seen as an open laboratory or ongoing workshop, was meant to be explored by individuals as well as groups of people that were hosted to live, work, and engage in collective activities.

A State of Imbalance

The constant exchange of information between interior and exterior, and, by extension, the constant redefinition of the limit between the body and space can be understood as a fundamental characteristic of performance and the emergence of new spatial practices. The Deleuzian concept of the "diagram" is perceived by DeLanda as a complex of material and energetic forces that exchange flows of information and produce affects.[19] Under circumstances that facilitate emerging performativity, the relation between spatial structures and desires is constantly re-singularised. Performance, in this sense, functions as an abstract diagram that allows the exchange of information between material structures and desires, enabling the generation of new protocols of acting. In this generative space, the relation between desires and

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19. DeLanda, "Deleuze, Diagrams, and the Genesis of Form", 33-41.

the function of spatial structures is in a state of imbalance, as it is constantly being re-evaluated and reshaped through the exchange of information and the production of affects between body and environment. This ongoing process of emergence and re-singularisation allows for the possibility of deviation from predetermined protocols of performance, leading to the exploration of undiscovered potentialities and the coming into being of new and unrealised aspects of the self.

The concept of "procedural architecture", as developed by architects Arakawa and Madeline Gins, involves the creation of structures whose functions are determined through the exchange of information with the human senses.[20] This approach is focused on creating environments that are interactive and dynamic rather than fixed or predetermined. In their project the "Bioscleave House (Lifespan Extending Villa)", Arakawa and Gins sought to create an "interactive laboratory of everyday life", a dwelling that would stimulate the senses and encourage the inhabitant continually to adapt and engage with their environment. The house was designed with uneven rocky floor surfaces and furniture in seemingly random shapes and sizes in order to challenge the dweller's perception and reinvention of their function. Unexpected openings and varying floor heights were also incorporated in order to create unforeseen views of the outside world. The goal of this experimental approach was to create an environment that would encourage the inhabitant to experience their surroundings in new and unexpected ways, rather than simply following predetermined patterns of behaviour. By constantly challenging the dweller's perception and expectations, the

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20. "Bioscleave House (Lifespan Extending Villa)", New York, Arakawa and Madeline Gins, 2008, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.reversibledestiny. org/bioscleave-house-lifespan-extending-villa/.

Bioscleave House sought to promote a relation between the individual and their environment that is in a constant state of imbalance, exploring new possibilities for spatial practices and ways of being.

Architect Claude Parent, in collaboration with Paul Virilio, has conducted extensive research on the concept of the "Function of the Oblique" through theoretical writing, drawing, and design experiments.[21] They explored how structures such as floors and walls could be designed in such a way as to be in a state of instability, stimulating the body to be in a constant state of exchange of information with them, in an attempt to find balance. Studio RAAAF, in collaboration with artist Barbara Visser, created in 2014 the installation "The End of Sitting", which studied the affordance of a sitting object. This installation, which was displayed in a gallery in Amsterdam,[22] challenged the conventional idea of sitting by proposing a structure that took over the interior of the gallery space and was designed to stimulate the user of the space to invent its function, although it was not initially perceived as a sitting object. This project was probably influenced by Parent's 1971 series of sketches for an apartment space,[23] in which he aimed to develop structures that would challenge the perception of domestic space and the experience of different actions such as resting and encountering. This idea of the oblique was also evident in the work of director Ulrich Rasche, who, in the production of *Woyzeck*, presented the characters as being in a constant unsta-

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21. Pamela Johnston, *The Function of the Oblique: The Architecture of Claude Parent and Paul Virilio, 1963-1969* (London: AA Publications, 1996).

22. "The End of Sitting", RAAAF, 2014, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.raaaf.nl/en/projects/927_the_end_of_sitting.

23. "Sketch for Apartment in Paris", Claude Parent, 1971, accessed January 9, 2023, http://www.grahamfoundation.org/grantees/5429-oblique-time-with-claude-parent.

ble state of becoming.[24] The actors performed on a slowly rotating, tilted platform in the form of a disc, creating an environment in which they were in constant motion throughout the duration of the performance. This highlights the themes of instability and transformation in the play, and the oblique angle of the stage serves to heighten the ongoing search for the self.

Conclusion: Towards the Co-emergence of Desire and Function Through Performance

The design of environments that is based on a limited understanding of the relation between bodies and space can inhibit the potential for emergence and the expression of previously unknown aspects of the self. Conversely, environments that allow for the exploration of new possibilities for self-expression and self-actualisation can foster a sense of agency as individuals are able to shape their environment and the actions they take within it. Desire drives the interaction between the body and the environment, resulting in their co-creation of performance protocols. Relations of exteriority enable the exchange of information with virtual desires and undiscovered functions of the built environment, as well as the introduction of unexpected elements into the environment. Functional unfinishedness allows deviating from predetermined ways of performing in space and encourages the emergence of previously dormant aspects of the self. This can lead to the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, the development of new ways of thinking and being, the formation of new social groups and communities, and the emergence of new spatial practices. Performance functions as an abstract diagram

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24. Premiered on January 31, 2020 at the Residenz-Theater in Berlin.

that allows for the exchange of information between material structures and desires, enabling the generation of new protocols of acting. These approaches to design aim to promote a relation between the individual and their environment that is constantly imbalanced, leading to the exploration of new possibilities for spatial practices and ways of being. Space and the performer become one, jointly inventing protocols of acting. In such a process, actions are not predetermined but are generated at the present moment. This does not refer to an open-ended, flexible space that can adjust to the performer's desires, but to a relation in which structures and desires feed on each other with information, and form new actions in a rhizomatic way. This approach to the research and design of space is not focused on finding optimal solutions to problems but, rather, on problematising the environment and its affordance. Such an understanding of performance could not only redefine the design process but also shift the perception of the capabilities of our environment and our agency towards it.

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Performance as Political Action:
The Creation of Public Sphere and
the Recreation of the Self

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ABSTRACT

This essay refines and explores the connection between contemporary performance practices and the political through a close reading of Hannah Arendt's theory of action, with particular attention to its aesthetic dimension and implications for artistic practices. Following Arendt, the political will be examined as the creation of a space of appearances, which can emerge anywhere and anytime, if there is a *plethos*. Plurality will be emphasised as the central condition of the public sphere founded upon the communication-relationships it generates, something which suggests a model of inter-subjectivity between performers and spectators. The public sphere will be equated with the performing space, where performers can exercise freedom with others, become recognised and redefined, while contesting the given and creating the radically new. Given the dimension of pluralism, openness and relationality of the political, according to Arendt,

the contemporary performance paradigm that will be examined is Anne Imhof's strongly collaborative practice.

Keywords: Hannah Arendt, performance, political action, public sphere, recreation

"Art is only possible together"
Anne Imhof

This essay will be grounded in Hannah Arendt's political theory with the intention of addressing the political and theoretical dynamics of contemporary performance practices. My objective is to approach performance as an active sphere of collective engagement: a democratic encounter, where there is not a dominant "I", but a plurality of subjects interacting and contributing to the emergence of the political. This is to respond to the current post-political order, the reproduction of dichotomies, relations of domination, individualism, what Arendt calls "world-alienation", which results in the elimination of spontaneity and the separation from others. Therefore, I want to stress the significance of expressing individual uniqueness through exercising freedom with others by focusing on a conceptualisation of the political centred on plurality and action. Engaging with Arendt's theory, I wish to argue that the political is not something that already exists, but something that can be created through artistic practices. The central argument is that performance can contribute to the emergence of the political, which will be connected to the creation of public sphere and to the recreation of the self. The artistic paradigm that I have chosen to examine together with the development of the argument, is Anne Imhof's strongly collaborative practice, always joined by a community of friends-artists. Wish-

ing to demonstrate the inseparability of the political, the public sphere, freedom and action, I will first focus on the concept of the "space of appearances" and link it to the performing space.

Arendt's political ontology equates being with appearing to others: "Everything that exists, exists in order to appear to others".[1] For Arendt, the public sphere is a "space of appearances", a form of being-with-others (*Miteinandersein*), whereby the individual is connected to other individuals and through this interlinking the political emerges. To act is to "worldly appear for many" and refers to the ability to become identified, differentiated, and to belong to the world. The revelatory quality of action is grounded in the ancient Greek understanding of appearing as "*phainesthai*", the brightness of appearing, showing oneself, connected to "*phos*", the light, and the "sheer beauty of appearances" in public spaces.[2] To appear presupposes the "reality of human relations", also described as the "web of human relations". The use of this specific term ("web") is due to the invisible and immaterial quality of the public sphere. Despite its invisibility, Arendt recognises it as real by affirming its relation to the objective world of things. It is upon this "web" that the self "falls" and appears for recognition.[3] Thus, the subjects of action (performers) disclose their collective individuality and create a new relational reality.[4]

The most characteristic example to understand the concept

1. Christopher Holman, *Politics as Radical Creation; Herbert Marcuse and Hannah Arendt on Political Performativity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 9 and 88.

2. Sophie Loidolt, *Phenomenology of Plurality: Hannah Arendt on Political Intersubjectivity* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 53-54.

3. Emma Ingala, "Hannah Arendt to Judith Butler: The Conditions of the Political", in Emma Ingala and Gavin Rae (eds), *Subjectivity and the Political* (New York: Routledge, 2018), 35-39.

4. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 178-180.

of the public sphere in the Arendtian theory as an intermediate space is the table, which unites and at the same time separates the subjects. To act politically is to be revealed and recognised and, thus, it is necessary to be connected with and distinguished from others: "We are unable to recognise something without distinguishing it from something else".[5] The political in Arendt introduces a model of intersubjectivity: "Plurality is the condition of human action, because we are all the same, and that means human, in a way that no one is alike to anyone else who has lived, lives, or will live". [6] Therefore, singularity in the sense of uniqueness can be claimed within a regime of pluralism that approaches sameness as a condition of equality and a possibility for differentiation. The creation of public sphere lies in the communication-relationship it produces and thus can emerge anywhere and anytime, if there is a plurality (constitutive of equality), a multitude perceived as *plethos* (πλήθος) and a public space free of labour and work.[7] It is the *plethos* that transforms space into a public sphere.

The contemporary visual and performance artist Anne Imhof, with the multifaceted performative work "Faust" (German Pavilion, 57th International Art Exhibition, La Biennale di Venezia, 2017), created two levels of performing space by constructing an invisible surface made of glass. Performers and spectators were connected and separated at the same time, all participating in the constitution of a shared space. The glass itself would reflect and produce new images-perspectives, while creating an intermediary space. The role of the spectators was active as they

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5. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 175-176.

6. Christopher Holman, *Politics as Radical Creation*, 89.

7. Michal Aharony, *Hannah Arendt and the Limits of Total Domination: The Holocaust, Plurality, and Resistance* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 220-221.

Eliza Douglas in Anne Imhof, Faust, 2017, German Pavilion, 57th International Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia
© Photography: Nadine Fraczkowski; Courtesy: the artist, German Pavilion 2017

moved around following the action while documenting the performance, creating their images-perspectives. According to Arendt, the public sphere centred on action, emerges the moment a multiplicity of perspectives concerning the same thing arises.[8] In contrast to the "pseudo-public realm" of society, where people come together for concerns that deal with production and consumption, in the public sphere performers and spectators are "gathered around a common world" that permits them to be plural individuals.[9]

The spectators are an active part of the action, which is not fully predetermined as it depends on the actions of others (spec-

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8. Loidolt, *Phenomenology of Plurality*, 55.

9. Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 117.

Eliza Douglas in Anne Imhof, Faust, 2017, German Pavilion, 57th Interna-
tional Art Exhibition – La Biennale di Venezia
© Photography: Nadine Fraczkowski; Courtesy: the artist, German Pavilion 2017

tators and performers). The action is performative because it is
not predictable with respect to the content it produces, and it
enables the participation of all, while forming a space of shared
meanings and significations.[10] Everything that takes a sensory
form and appears is received differently by each spectator and
performer, a condition of equality that produces different
thoughts and meanings.[11] According to Arendt, what appears to
others is not perceived by the ones performing. For that reason,
the performing self can appear and be perceived by the
plethos-audience and the variations of their approaches, and
spectatorship becomes an active form of engagement.

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10. Martin Plot, *The Aesthetico-Political: The Question of Democracy in Mer-
leau-Ponty, Arendt, and Rancière* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 61.
11. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind* (California: Harcourt, 1971), 49.

In the public sphere, subjects self-present themselves and thus can engage not only as subjects but also as objects to be viewed. Arendt emphasises that, precisely by objectively appearing, subjects can be perceived as real.[12] This argument can be understood through Imhof's "Faust" performance, where performers are perceived by the audience as subjects of action, but at the same time as objects of art. Arendt writes: "Artists need an audience to present their art just as political subjects of action need the presence of others to present themselves. They both need a publicly organised space, while both depend on others to perform their action".[13] Imhof's live actions can be characterised as performative installations, confirming the role of the subject as a living object, but also the role of the work of art as a living part of the public sphere. The public sphere does not always exist; it is created by the human capacity to act/perform together. By the moment this condition ceases to exist, it dissolves. The end of live action means the disappearance of public space. Arendt considers the eternal stay of the individual in the public space to be impossible. The ephemeral quality of performance manifests its relation to freedom as a resistance to the logic of the product that one can buy and possess.

Performance as a work of art is not just an object, a form, an externality: it is a living part of the multitude characterised by levels of social performativity, through which a value beyond money is produced: "it is the very image of value" produced by society for society and not by the economy for the economy.[14] Thus, the performance that enables this critical function can be

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12. Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, 19.

13. Hannah Arendt, "What is Freedom?", in *Between Past and Future: Eight Exercises in Political Thought* (New York: Viking Press, 1961), 154.

14. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 63.

perceived as the opposite of the product and as a critique of the product and the societies of entertainment, thereby creating a space for recreation, which reshapes the perception of reality by reconsidering the already given and by visualising the invisible. Arendt connects this element of invisibility to thought. Through art-making (performance design and practice), thought can become visualised and the work of art can be considered to be a thought-thing. Artworks as thought-things transcend their material dimension by acquiring a communal value in contrast to the commercialised and fetishistic side of objects produced for consumption. Arendt considers the capacity of human thought to be the basic principle of the work of art. She distinguishes thought from cognition by associating the latter with specific purposes and results. Cognition is associated with science, whereas the concept of thought is associated with philosophy and art. Cognition has a beginning and an end, in contrast to thought which is not a means to an end.[15] The concept of the political here questions this logic of determination and *telos*, and is grounded in the essence of birthing and the new beginning: the capacity to start something new. Thinking is a crucial aspect of action and is considered to be a collective practice, "a practice carried out between men rather than the performance of one individual in solitude".[16] Imhof affirms the role of thought as an active agent but also the undefined openness of action: "It's basically the thoughts of the people that are performing in it that, in the end, shape it".[17]

The emergence of the political and the work of art derive from

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15. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 170.

16. Loidolt, *Phenomenology of Plurality*, 40.

17. Harriet Lloyd-Smith, "Anne Imhof: Body Language as Tool, Canvas and Concept", in *Wallpaper's October 2021*, 25th Anniversary Issue (2021), https://www.wallpaper.com/art/anne-imhof-palais-de-tokyo-2021.

a deeper need to co-exist and communicate with others. According to Arendt, "beyond the satisfaction of their needs and desires, people have a need for a deeper communication". This argument is demonstrated through the concept of the new beginning, "the initiative of starting something new".[18] The new beginning characterised by an undefined openness indicates a possibility of freedom. Throughout performance, it is possible that what is not possible to happen may happen: "The subject is able to perform what is not possible to be performed".[19] This argument opens up the space for claiming levels of freedom and action beyond the dominant constructions-choices imposed by social reality.

Arendt presents two forms of action by distinguishing the action-drive for presentation ("self-exposure") from political action, considered to be a conscious decision ("self-presentation"). "Self-exposure" is a capacity of every living organism, as it declares the qualities beyond conscious decision-making processes, whereas "self-presentation" is the possibility of subjects who can consciously choose the image they present through their actions. There is an interesting comment on the paradox between the conscious initiation of action as a choice and the action itself as something radically new: "Human action almost never realises its purpose. Whoever starts an action must know that they have started something they cannot predict how it ends".[20] The indeterminate dimension of political action advocates a celebration of spontaneity and the unexpected, linked to freedom and radical creation, a world-opening which "no one knows how or when [it] is going to end".[21]

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18. Holman, *Politics as Radical Creation*, 89.
19. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 178.
20. Holman, *Politics as Radical Creation*, 89-101.
21. Plot, *The Aesthetico-Political*, 74.

Imhof's endurance performances seem to reflect the Arendtian notion of freedom and the political. Her live actions begin from a conscious and chosen image (many times in the form of paintings or sounds), but the images of the action are being remade anew: "We never rehearse a single piece in real time. But we come very prepared. The general scenes, movements, and images I think of and work out in advance. A lot of space for decision-making is left open. New things always occur during the course of a show and so the piece is always being rewritten by everyone as it unfolds".[22] To be free and to act are the same, for Arendt, which points out the importance of the action itself rather than the result.[23] People can be free during the action alone, neither before nor after the action. In order for the action to be considered a free action, it needs to be free from motives and purposes: "When people act, they don't know what they are doing, they cannot know the consequences of their action for themselves and others".[24] Performance as free and political action is not subjected to the will and is not fully guided by the subject, since it does not rely on the performer alone but on the performer in relation to others (performers/spectators). Arendt links freedom to the unknown. A key feature of action is courage towards the unknown: action is a form of self-exposure.[25]

The exposure of the self does not lead to the formation of an identity for the performer. The consolidation of identity would lead

22. Anne Imhof, "Performance in the Age of Social Networks", in *Purple Magazine*, 76 Index issue 29 (2018), https://purple.fr/magazine/purple-76-index-issue-29/imhof-anne/.

23. Julia Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt: Life Is a Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 16.

24. Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Why Arendt Matters* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 86-88.

25. Young-Bruehl, *Why Arendt Matters*, 91-92 and 98.

to a definition of the subject, to *what* one is. Arendt considers it philosophically impossible to articulate a definition for a subject. Through definition, subjects end up being perceived in terms of a composition of stereotypes and predetermined characteristics. Thereupon, she invites us not to focus on *what* someone is, as this results in specific standardisations that undermine the human capacity for uniqueness and self-determination, but to celebrate the *who*-ness. According to Arendt, *who* one is is being revealed every time through action. A continuous possibility of self-recreation arises, and identity can be formed and fixed only when the subject loses the possibility of action, which happens with death. The image of the political subject or the free self is, therefore, a non-representational moving image, affirming through its performativity the malleability of the world and the self.[26]

The concept of freedom characterised by constant movement prevents the formation of fixed positions, emphasises the possibility of recreation of the self and affirms the impossibility of consolidating an identity. This capacity of recreation is related to the realisation (of the human condition) of birth. Political action is considered to be a second birth and, therefore, appears as a miracle completely unexpected, which no one can predict, which interrupts the automated flow of things. In this way, the subject of action can contest socially dominated meanings and produce radically new meanings.[27] For Arendt, action can "escape the reduction of meaning that characterises modernity", and the role of appearance as a "self-contained" and "meaningful action" which constitutes a different reality is acknowledged.[28] The work

26. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 181.

27. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 205.

28. Dana Villa, *Arendt and Heidegger: The Fate of the Political* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 99 and 103.

of art distances itself from the functional context and is not in-
tended for use. For this reason, it can remain in the world as a
separate entity. An object is cultural insofar as it endures: endur-
ance is the very opposite of functionality, for to be functional is to
be used and eventually consumed or damaged. Culture is a term
deriving from the Latin word "*colere*", which means "to take care
of a world".[29] Works of art are things which maintain humanity
and worldliness by remaining in the world as thought-things.[30]
But what about performance?

    Action needs the contribution of narrative in order to estab-
lish itself and exist in time beyond the moment in which it occurs.
It needs to be transformed into thought (mental image) and to
become aestheticised through language (written/oral). Arendt
argues that the narration of a story can communicate the identi-
ty of the self that performed the action only if the end of the sto-
ry coincides with the end of the person's life. Accordingly, the
revelation of "who" can happen through the action of the narra-
tive, which she characterises as political, for it deals with the ac-
tion that took place within the public space promising a relative
immortality of mortals.[31] Arendt regards ancient drama as the
highest form of narrative.[32] Action results in the production of
new narratives, becomes historicised, endures time, and depicts
human existence.[33] Julia Kristeva concludes that the one who re-
mains in history is the one who acts in the political space and
whose actions are shaped into a memorable narrative. So, the
endurance of performance depends solely on the spectators. Will

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29. Trevor Tchir, *Hannah Arendt's Theory of Political Action: Daimonic Disclosure of the "Who"* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017), 144.

30. Arendt, "Society and Culture", 278-287.

31. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 192-195, 233-236 and 241.

32. Kristeva, *Hannah Arendt: Life Is a Narrative*, 19.

33. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, 8-9 and 97.

the action be transformed into a narrative? We can say that nowadays documentation and photography function as a form of narrative which represents, through a simple (visual) description, the action with no further explanation. The camera can render possible a partial, aesthetic eternity of the artist, the performers and the performance. In the case of Imhof's practice, it is also the music and the records released by the end of the live action as an aftermath that resist the ephemeral character of performance.

The political for Arendt is the space between, which unites subjects forming a new we. As a result, "a unique form of public happiness is created, which makes the action itself an enjoyable good".[34] Chantal Mouffe disagrees with the "optimistic" argument of the Arendtian public sphere and recognises the role of power and the importance of a "conflictual consensus". For Mouffe, the public sphere cannot be free of power relations. The realisation of a perfect unity rejects the role of power, which is a key element of social relations.[35] Art as a performing space of radical pluralism can preserve and strengthen democracy by recognising and presenting opposing tendencies, and by undermining anti-democratic expressions of passion in society. The political, for Mouffe, aims to create unity in a context of conflict and always seeks to constitute a "we" through defining a "they". In the context of the political, Mouffe seems to agree and disagree with Arendt at the same time, as Mouffe clearly states the significance of this conflictual relation through the "we-they" opposition. The existence of this other side is necessary for the constitution of democracy. According to Mouffe, the formation of a public sphere without antagonism would mean the end of democracy.[36]

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34. Holman, *Politics as Radical Creation*, 10 and 88.

35. Chantal Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox* (London: Verso, 2000), 104.

36. Mouffe, *The Democratic Paradox*, 11-16 and 132-135.

In this way, Mouffe includes the excluded in the public sphere by introducing the concept of "radical pluralism". Imhof's radical performances address the presence of conflict and dissensus by creating feelings of discomfort and tension through frameless images that emphasise the potentiality for an agonistic practice, especially by forming "we-they" relations, between performers and spectators, or performers and performers. Spectators in her live actions function as an alterity, a sense of otherness that adds an additional level of action within the political space, an inter-action between "we-they", which informs the Arendtian sphere of "we". Notwithstanding, the Arendtian conceptualisation of the political is a form of democratic politics and a dynamic plural response to the anti-politics of totalitarianism and total domination, and this is a strong reason why antagonism is silenced. Imhof, responding to the question regarding the political dimension of her work, said: "I think Faust makes statements, but not in a literal way. What I hope has become clear by now – we are antifascists. We are many. We are strong. And ready to fight. We never rehearse. But we are prepared".[37] Mouffe's contribution is valuable as it supports further the openness that political action introduces and promises in Arendt's theory, and Imhof's engaging practice seems to reflect both theories by creating common worlds of conflictual unity.

Contemporary performances linked to the conceptualisation of the political critically respond to the sovereign fantasy of acting individually. The political dwells in the creation of a performing space based on pluralism, liberty and equal participation. The action grounded in openness and spontaneity can escape definitions and become something that has not existed before and that cannot be repeated. Likewise, performance approached as polit-

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37. Imhof, "Performance in the Age of Social Networks".

ical action cannot be fully directed or designed and cannot be defined, for its essence lies within the performance itself: the production of new images that do not necessarily follow a rational logic and sequence. The absence of rational logic, purpose and functionality, together with the unpredictability of action, creates a space of freedom for the development of the different, the radically new. Following Arendt, we can say that any performance that can animate a culture of collective thinking and acting, that challenges the logic of identity and permeates the exposure and recreation of the self, is political. In this case, performing space becomes a worldly reality of inclusions, where the space and the selves are being interconnected and recreated. Thus, the events of performances are not to be understood in terms of a predetermined vocabulary and are not to be explained. Their significance is associated with the sensorial interlinking between performers, audience and their self-revelation qualities.

Performativity seems to be a strong aspect of Arendt's theory itself, as it is not about defining the political, freedom, action, the public sphere; it is more about creating a network of interlinking, raising questions and enabling thought. The term "theory" means looking at something from a distance, and being able to examine its meaning. In this essay, I tried to activate Arendt's theory in order to understand the political dimension of performing space, to conclude that to perform freedom or the political is to form an in-between space with others, to actualise a plural existence, to question and recreate the self and the public space. The undefined openness of free or political action can give rise to difference and the new, and can confirm the transformative power of action. Free action cannot exist without the condition of unity, but this can be disrupted by the emergence of radical creation. Therefore, the free self, if we accept that it exists, may enter a state of precarity and may deal with the problem of abjection, a

problem that emerges as conflict and antagonism are silenced in Arendt's conceptualisation of the political. Imhof's radical and political practice creates new public spheres, which are painful and beautiful, moving and still, directed and free, echoing both Arendt's and Mouffe's theories and actualising a form of radical pluralism in praxis.

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PART II.

Performing Space: Applied

Scenarchitecture: A Methodology for Investigating the Role of *Genius Loci* in the Reading, Understanding and Interpretation of Architecture and Heritage

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ABSTRACT

The essay focuses upon the process of reading, understanding, and interpreting the inner character (*Genius Loci*) and performative attributes of architecture, through the modality of site-specific performance. It explores Scenarchitecture, the author's methodology, which utilises theatre form as a medium to blend historical research with the perceptual, emotional response to a given site, during the live experience of architectural places and their contexts in nature. Combining local history with a physical, dialectical relation with *Genius Loci*, the method can reveal the multiple strata of intangible cultural heritage to a broader audience through sited performances deeply rooted in the place. The final goal is to foster place awareness and community engagement, but also to help stakeholders and urban developers to create design interventions that are respectful of places. The meth-

odology has developed through repeated testing in different contexts: in Research-led teaching at University of Rome La Sapienza and Nottingham Trent University, in professional practice for performance and architectural design in association with Archabout, and in live events in marketing and communication with Smart Jokes. Through a series of case studies in Italy and UK, the essay illustrates Moneta's site-specific, trans-disciplinary methodology for investigating the relation between architecture, theatre and heritage. Feedback collected during case studies in the form of live events and performances, evidenced the engagement of the audience with the themes and methods of the research; furthermore, all sited activities enhanced visitors' experience and the understanding of sited tangible and intangible cultural heritage in Italy and UK.

Keywords: site-specific, intangible heritage, *Genius Loci*, scenarchitecture, scenography

Introduction: Place, Character, *Genius Loci*

The essay summarises fifteen years of research on the hybridisation of the disciplines of architecture and scenography in both educational and professional areas, which has been called "scenarchitecture". The research arises from a societal need to rediscover the anthropic values of places investigating the interaction which occurs between us and our environment. Scenarchitecture is a methodology which combines the analytical and compositional methodologies of architecture with the poetic sensibility and visionary nature of theatre practice. It allows both disciplines to go beyond their limits to generate meaningful, original performative interventions in the built environment while revealing

the intangible cultural heritage. It is aimed at expanding and integrating immersive and site-specific theatre practice with a deeper relation to the place through the *Genius Loci*, the Latin phrase for the guardian deity of a place, which in contemporary usage refers to a place's distinctive character. It is also aimed at fostering a deeper relationship with the people who have a connection with the place today, and the people that historically lived there. The interaction between place and people brings to life the essence of the architectural space, unfolding the stories that are embedded in it. When theatre goes out of the traditional theatrical space, it reaches out to the built environment to find its own performative space; here, scenography and architecture leave their old roles and become "scenarchitecture", an interdisciplinary innovative method with the final goal of reading and interpreting architecture and heritage. The methodology is supported by studies on phenomenology by the architectural theorist Christian Norberg-Schulz, who defined the *Genius Loci* and its fundamental role in architecture in his seminal book: "The spaces where life occurs are places. A place is a space which has a distinct character".[1] Highlighting the role of Scenarchitecture in the interaction between theatre, scenography and architecture, the methodology invests and utilises the social, urban, and environmental phenomena happening around us, to re-establish the socio-political role of both disciplines.

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1. Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1980), 5.

The (R)evolution of Two Sister Disciplines

In the past, architecture had the role of "Mother of the Arts", made explicit through a universal and stable language during history, able to embrace in its complexity all the arts. At the same time, scenography has represented a synthesis between theatrical text and actor through the construction of a performative space, the stage: a physical link that hosts the scenic action, containing it and supporting it in its flow. Yet, in 1913, the influential theatre practitioner Edward Gordon Craig was already witnessing a revolution occurring in the relation between scenography and architecture: "Once upon a time, stage scenery was architecture. A little later it became imitation architecture. Still later it became imitation artificial architecture. Then it lost its head, went quite mad, and has been in a lunatic asylum ever since".[2] Fifty years later, the passivity of audiences, the decadence of theatre's societal commitment in favour of a banalisation of its role, was depicted by French theorist Guy Debord in his powerful book *The Society of the Spectacle.*[3] The growth of "spectacle" within the entertainment industry changed scenography's communicative power within theatre, as the result of its weakened socio-political role and influence on society. The decadence of theatre practice into commercial, mainstream spectacle was stigmatised by Peter Brook in his seminal book *The Empty Space* in 1968.[4] Brook's definition of "Deadly Theatre" includes the theatre productions that fail to modernise, instruct, or even entertain, those that rely on old schemes instead of exploring deeper meanings, and the ones

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2. Edward Gordon Craig, *Towards a New Theatre* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1913), 29.

3. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (London: Rebel Press, 1967), 28.

4. Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 11-13.

that then as now continue to rage in the majority of theatres worldwide. The dominance of "Deadly Theatre" over alternative productions goes hand in hand with the difficulty that the latter has in reaching an audience and keeping it. The "Deadly Theatre" is increasingly less open to experimentation yet more interested in "audience satisfaction", which guarantees solid revenues. Nowadays, the search for funding pushes theatres to look for economically safe productions, which can attract the greatest number of spectators. In this scenario, scenography acts as the sacrificial victim: pimped, and boosted with technological attractions, or reduced to the bone, to cut on costs. Out of mainstream theatre, many independent theatre realities survive under the umbrella of "Applied Theatre": small productions, alternative festivals, cultural and educational initiatives which often realise their expressive power through a deep relation with place in urban and suburban areas, and in the landscape. A recent development is the so-called "Immersive Theatre" and related theatre companies like "Punchdrunk" and "WildWorks",[5] which are built upon the use of found spaces and landscape, to foster audiences' interaction and participation. Their success must be interpreted as a rediscovery of the founding communicative and relational value of theatre practice, which expresses the relationship between place, actor and spectator. For this complex and varied form of alternative theatre practice, which is often generically designated as "site-specific", it is, therefore, necessary to recognise and reveal the relations between traditional scenography, conventionally linked to the closed space of the theatre stage, and the modalities and experiences achievable in a sited performance. This essay is aimed to present "scenarchitecture" as a methodology to analyse, interpret and reveal the interconnections and in-

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5. To see their work: www.punchdrunk.com and www.wildwoks.biz.

teractions between place and people, filling a gap in the design
for performance literature.

Architecture or Scenography?

For centuries, architecture has been known as the art and science
of "forever", while scenography represented a sort of "temporary"
architecture. For some time now, architecture has no longer been
able to build an identity for itself, just as the transformations of
communication methods and the digital revolution are changing
the very essence of scenography.[6] Architecture and scenography
are already contaminated to such an extent that it is not easy to
distinguish between them. As passive spectators, we are witness-
ing a phenomenon that sees the two disciplines colliding togeth-
er, with unexpected and complex results. The author's research
aims to investigate this area; it identifies three aspects of the in-
teraction between architecture and scenography in relation to
time. Time, in fact, not only affects the final physical product of
this interaction but also defines the essence of its functions.

Architecture becomes "temporary". This situation happens when
scenography is immersing architecture in its drama: buildings
look mutant, kaleidoscopic, in the shape of large scale "machines"
or made of evanescent, impalpable materials with a limited ex-
istence in time; these big artefacts are outlining a new era of the
art-architecture relation under the push of the age of the image.
Outer and interior spaces of these sculptural buildings are bio-
morphic, transparent, unpredictable, thanks to the support of
CAD. Software now can allow any shape to be physically realised,
hence the possibility to convert architecture into art: no more

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6. Alessandro Mendini, "La sintesi delle arti", in *Costruire* 205 (2001): 142-143.

Figure 1. Diller Scofidio + Renfro – The Blur Building,
Exposition Pavilion, Swiss Expo, Yverdon-Les-Bains, Switzerland, 2002
(source: https://publicdelivery.org/blur-building/ Creative Commons)

physical limits and rules, each conceptual design can become a phantasmagorical building, a "performing architecture". The "Blur" building (Figure 1), created by Diller Scofidio + Renfro, is the perfect example of a design that makes explicit the interdependence between art and architecture, technology, and performance: an ever-changing, permanent scenography built in relation with the context of Lake Neuchâtel in Switzerland.

Scenography becomes "forever". This is another new approach to design building which has transformed the ideological concept of architectural language and typology in favour of a self-referential, iconic identity developed through visual contaminations. The result of this process is a sort of "crystallised scenography", which is temporally and physically immutable, and can be understood as the result of design actions aimed at framing an evolv-

ing shape in its three-dimensional representation (real or virtual) in the scale of a building. The controversial project in Seoul by MVRDV (Figure 2) is an example of this borderline expression of Scenarchitecture: a "photo-frame" of the Twin Towers collapsing during the attacks of 9/11, turned into a building that transforms destruction into construction, with the dust cloud of the explosions turned into "living" spaces. This is one extreme result of the globalisation of architecture and the Starchitecture:[7] iconic, self-referential buildings as giant scenographic interventions trumping the needs of citizens and destroying the identity of places around the world.

Scenography as hybridisation of architecture. For centuries, the protagonist of scenography has been the stage, the internal "sacred" space of the theatre which, paraphrasing the Italian architect Bruno Zevi, "could not be fully represented in any form, and not be learned and experienced except through a direct experience".[8] When theatre practice moves out the "virtual world" of the theatre building, it explores and meets the real world; here, a different form of spatial experience needs to be considered, being related to an architectural space which contains its *Genius Loci*, its history and its stories. When live performance invades architecture, it gives scenography, architecture, and audience a com-

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7. Deshpande Tejashri explains that "starchitecture is split as 'Star + Architecture' and this is the architecture of the Starchitects or the 'Star-Architects'. The term stands for iconic, out of the box designs that stand in the glory of their self, redefining the skyline of a city. Here, function definitely follows form. These designs are ambitious, which in turn make them popular, making them reach the list of 'must visits' for that particular city or country"; see Deshpande Tejashri, "Starchitecture: Is It a Worthwhile Concept?", accessed January 3, 2023, http://squareone.blog/starchitecture-is-it-a-worthwhile-concept/.

8. Bruno Zevi, *Saper vedere l'architettura* (Milan: Einaudi, 1948), 90.

Figure 2. Twin towers project in Seoul by Dutch architect company
MVRDV (source: MVRDV website/CBS News website available at: https://www.
cbsnews.com/news/9-11-similarity-puts-korean-tower-plan-in-doubt/)

pletely new role. Since the 1960s and 1970s, the revolutionary
work of Richard Schechner and his *Environmental Theatre*,[9] and
the work of Julian Beck and Judith Malina with *Living Theatre* in
USA and their motto "Theatre is Life",[10] theatre has been freed
from the chains of its theatre stages, pushed into non-traditional
venues to explore its relation with place. These artists had the
urge to bring societal matters into their live performances and to
make them happen in found spaces, streets, and squares, or any
place where people could gather. This third aspect of Scenarchi-
tecture, which is the focus of my research and practice, is activat-

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9. Richard Schechner, *Environmental Theatre* (New York: Hawthorn Books,
1973).

10. John Tytell, *The Living Theatre: Art, Exile and Outrage* (London: Bloomsbury
Publishing, 1997).

ed when live performance abandons the designated theatrical spaces to explore architectural and urban spaces. In this case, the place -considered to be a unicum of spatial and social relationships- cannot be regarded just as a simple container of performances, as usually happens with street theatre or some generically sited performances; nor can it be reduced to a passive subject of the scene, as happens, for example, with re-enactments in heritage sites. With this exception, the place can function as a fundamental, proper dramaturgical element, necessary to the performance because directly connected to it, animating, and characterising the substance of a pre-existing theatrical text and/or defining and devising an original narrative for and about the place.

Scenarchitecture: A Methodology

Scenarchitecture has been defined as "a complex of design actions aimed at transforming an architectural or urban space to communicate a content with which to establish a dialectical relationship".[11] This is a design methodology to engage with the character of a place using a multidisciplinary approach that blends architecture, theatre, and sociology. A peculiar aspect of it is that it can also be used as a propaedeutic step to inspire sustainable scenarios for future architectural design, urban design, and Placemaking interventions in a given site. Scenarchitecture is fostering Peter Brook's manifesto included in his seminal book *The Empty Space*, arguing that each play has its own space and needs its own special place because space and concentration are inseparable and specific to the performance event. This is not a

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11. Andrea Moneta, *Scenarchitettura* (Rome: Nuova Cultura, 2012), 35.

way to look back; rather, this is a way of acknowledging the fact that "era after era the most vital theatrical experiences occur outside the legitimate places constructed for the purpose".[12]

Scenarchitecture methodology can be applied to any space that possesses an architectural character, including streets, squares, heritage sites and even the landscape, considered as a form of natural architecture. To intervene in this context, we need to consider the strata of historical processes that defined the place. As Norberg-Schulz states, "the structure of a place is not a fixed, eternal state, but this does not mean that the distinct character of a place changes or gets lost because identity can be conserved".[13]

Scenarchitecture is grounded in the work of French phenomenologist Gaston Bachelard on Topoanalysis and the possibilities of conjuring memory from buildings.[14] It also draws upon Situationist Psychogeography's dialectical interaction between people and human environment. It includes the strategy and instrument of *Dérive* put forward by Guy Debord, which investigates the laws and effects of the geographical environment on the emotions and behaviour of individuals.[15] Scenarchitecture is also based on studies about the phenomenology of place and architecture, which demonstrates how the interior world of consciousness and our surrounding spaces are tightly linked together, investigating the emotional response to architectural places and their contexts in nature.[16] It also investigates the role of *Genius Loci* in Placemaking, a collaborative process by which inhabitants can shape their

12. Peter Brook, *The Empty Space* (New York: Penguin, 1968), 79.

13. Norberg-Schulz. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*, 18.

14. Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (London: Beacon Press, 1964).

15. Guy Debord, *Situationist International Anthology* (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1955), 8-12.

16. Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976).

public realm to enhance the "sense of place", its distinctive and unique qualities and attributes, found in studies by Lynch, Alexander, Brooks and Golan.[17] Finally, it includes more recent approaches to spatial practices, which describe the tactics and possibilities left to inhabitants to operate their own self-determination and autonomous action within the limitations imposed by commerce, politics and culture.[18] As an art-based project, Scenarchitecture utilises exploratory, speculative, questioning approaches, as well as experimental approaches, including the design and use of wearable artefacts, called CosProps, a type of "portable scenography" that can be moved and transformed in real-time by the performer, and that interacts with both the space and the audience during the performance. Scenarchitecture is creatively delivered through cross-disciplinary research and production, which includes research-led teaching (students as researchers) and socially engaged relational practices (performances) to communicate the research findings while improving participation and community engagement.

Figure 3 illustrates the Scenarchitecture Methodology, which is divided in two distinct yet interacting phases: Phase 1 (Analysis) and Phase 2 (Design). Phase 1 (Analysis) is aimed at researching the site history with a focus on the origins of the chosen building, heritage site or found space, including its original purpose, use and re-use, and how the site has evolved over time. Research

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17. See Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1960); Christopher Alexander et al., *A Pattern Language*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977); Isis Brooks, "Can Spirit of Place Be a Guide to Ethical Building?", in Warwick Fox (ed.), *Ethics and the Built Environment*, (London: Routledge, 2000), 139-149; and Gan Golan, "Space for New Stories", in Rick Bell et al. (eds), *Beyond Zuccotti Park* (New York: New Village Press, 2012).

18. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984).

Scenarchitecture: Structure

Phase 1: Analysis

Research: History, use & community

- Historical and socio-political research of the site
- Past/current use and community;

Research: Heritage Site as a text

- Interaction between research and devising process, people and Places;
- The role of Archives;

Research: Perception Mapping

- Physical & experiential exploration of site to engage with its history, inhabitants and Genius Loci;

Phase 2: Design

Community Engagement

- Inhabitants as storytellers;
- Participatory design through site-specific theatre practice;

Dramaturgy of the Place*

- Storytelling: script and scenography;
- Storyboarding;
- Initial design proposal for the given site;

Performance, Place-Making

- Participatory design;
- Creating content for a site-specific performance;
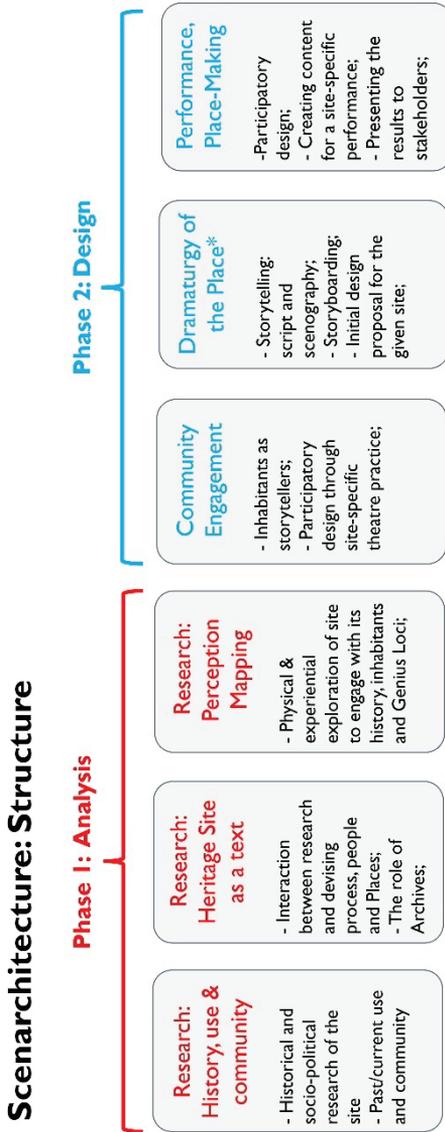- Presenting the results to stakeholders;

Figure 3. The two phases and activities of Scenarchitecture methodology

here includes a series of physical and perception explorations aimed at experiencing a given site and architectural space to connect with the *Genius Loci*. To do so, it is crucial to abandon any rational approach to the investigation and to explore architecture through our senses. As an old anonymous expression goes, "we see things not as they are, but as we are", because our perception is shaped by past experiences, according to our consciousness. Recent studies on neuroscience confirm that "reality" is in fact constructed by our brain and that the "stories" our brain tells us are influenced by life experience.[19] Phase 1 utilises a combination of tools and urban explorations derived from Psychogeography's *dérive*,[20] including location-based technologies.

A very important aspect of Phase 1 is communities: who lived there in the past, if the site belongs to a particular community and, if so, what relationship do they have or had with the site; if the site is important to one particular group of people in the surrounding community and, eventually, if regular events are/were held there. The connections with the current community which is still using the site or lives close to it, are essential not just to

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19. Brian Resnick, "Reality Is Constructed by Your Brain. Here's What That Means, and Why It Matters", accessed December 22, 2022, https://neuroscience.stanford.edu/news/reality-constructed-your-brain-here-s-what-means-and-why-it-matters.

20. As Debord explains, "one of the basic situationist practices is the dérive [literally: 'drifting'], a technique of rapid passage through varied ambiances. Dérives involve playful-constructive behaviour and awareness of psychogeographical effects and are thus quite different from the classic notions of journey or stroll. In a dérive one or more persons during a certain period drop their relations, their work and leisure activities, and all their other usual motives for movement and action, and let themselves be drawn by the attractions of the terrain and the encounters they find there"; see Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive", UbuWeb Papers, accessed March 28, 2023, http://arch243spring2021.luaad.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/derivedebord.pdf.

collect stories and information to devise a performance inspired by the site (to build its dramaturgical content), but also to detect if a live performance could engage those people as storytellers. There is a big difference between actors who are impersonating a character, and citizens that are not acting, but are just revealing their own life stories with their own voice. Their participation in the devising process and performance is a peculiar contribution of Scenarchitecture to deliver authenticity within interpretation, creating a powerful, unique experience for the audience which is immersed in both the real physical place and its real inhabitants. All people involved in the process, performers and audience, become "spect-actors": as defined by Brazilian playwright and activist Augusto Boal, they are spectators who take on the role of actors while engaged in the performance as active participants.[21]

Phase 2 of the methodology (Design) investigates the interaction between historical and contemporary fragments of stories, memories of the people that live or lived there; it is aimed at determining the direction of the devising process and the development of a script and a storyboard to describe all scenes of the final performance. These are the fundamental visual communication tools to design and illustrate the "dramaturgy of the place" for the given site. The "dramaturgy" of the place is aimed at highlighting meanings, contents and dynamics that were found while exploring the site, the people that live there and its history. Its focus is to unveil feelings and to tell stories, to reveal invisible links between places and people through a live performance, using all senses and sensibility. The design in Phase 2 is participatory: designers are co-creating the content for the site-specific performance with all people involved in the process (inhabitants,

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21. Augusto Boal, *Theatre of the Oppressed* (London: Pluto Press, 1979).

volunteers, students). The final performance, open to the public, is not only a way to reveal stories about places and people, but also an opportunity to socialise and share the intangible cultural heritage linked to the people who have direct or indirect connections with the site.

Performing Heritage Through Scenarchitecture

The case studies presented below are a selection of projects which applied Scenarchitecture methodology to heritage and the built environment in order to analyse, understand and interpret the inner character and performative attributes of places. I have refined my methodology in different contexts in Italy since 2007, and in the UK since 2014, using theatre practice as a medium to blend historical research with the perceptual, emotional response to architectural places. Combining local history with a physical, dialectical relation with the *Genius Loci*, the method revealed the multiple strata of intangible cultural heritage to a broader audience through sited performances deeply rooted in the place. The final goal was to foster place awareness and community engagement, but also to help stakeholders and urban developers, when engaging with the character of the place, to create designs that are respectful of places. My methodology was developed in different contexts: in research-led teaching at the University of Rome La Sapienza (Case study 1) and at Nottingham Trent University (Case studies 2 and 3), but also in professional practice for architectural design and live performance in collaboration with Archabout,[22] and for live events in marketing and communication with SmartJokes, an ethical communication

22. Archabout, accessed December 12, 2022. https://www.archabout.it/.

company based in Rome, Italy.[23]

Case study 1: Site-specific project Tramandala at Garbatella district, Rome, Italy (2008-2009)

The Project was funded by Festival Teatri di Vetro 3, Romaeuropa, and Rome XI Municipality; it was developed in collaboration with the MA in Digital Theatrical Urban Scenography at the University of Rome La Sapienza, and with Archabout Association. The research enquiry involved experimental research using location-based digital technologies (Geo-Blog) and perception mapping as a further methodological development of Scenarchitecture. It was based on recent work by Italian archaeologist Giuseppe Lugli and his son Pier Maria Lugli concerning the "Altera Forma Urbis" of Rome, which investigates the hidden, "secret" structural urban form of Rome in the shape of a star.[24] By analysing the nodes, axes and vertices of the star, it is possible to recognise that all main buildings (including the Coliseum, all the Baths and temples) and all the consular roads of ancient Rome were not randomly placed; instead, they are located in the aforementioned crucial points of the star (nodes, axes and vertices) which define its shape (Figure 4). The research was aimed at investigating if a similar correspondence of the main buildings and roads of modern Rome was also maintained in an extended version of the star reaching the seven-mile radius of the current city borders.[25] To do so, we selected as a case study the Garbatella district and XI Municipality in Rome, as the place in which there is a con-

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23. Smartjokes, accessed November 2, 2022. http://www.smartjokes.it/.

24. Pier Maria Lugli, *L'agro romano e l'"altera forma" di Roma antica* (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2007).

25. Mario L. R. Leante, "L'interazione analisi progetto. Area studio: Roma. Progetto di un centro servizi per la produzione cinematografica", accessed March 20, 2023, https://xoomer.virgilio.it/maleante/tesi.html.

centration of Rome's urban modifications, uncovering its old and recent history, with the aim of finding its connections with the seven-mile radius star. A phenomenological approach was used to interpret not just the physical position of Garbatella's landmarks, roads, and main buildings,[26] but also the experiences as they are lived during the interaction of the researchers with the district and its inhabitants. The research revealed both physical and intangible connections between the "Altera Forma Urbis" of Rome and its extended, contemporary urban structure within the area of study. Findings highlighted the fact that, if we extend the shape of the star from the original one-mile radius of ancient Rome to the seven-mile radius of the contemporary city limits, there is a correspondence between the area of study's main monuments and not only modern roads but also the social landmarks and gathering places created by inhabitants within their community.

Evidence of the originality of the findings was an exhibition (Segni Percorsi) commissioned and funded by Urban Centre-Municipio Roma XI, and a sited performance (Tramandala) commissioned and funded by Festival Teatri di Vetro 3 (a renowned Festival of the performing arts) and Fondazione Romaeuropa, one of the most prestigious cultural institutions in Europe. The Project delivered a promenade performance inspired by the project's research on the historical, social and morphological reading of the territory of Garbatella district, including the collaboration with its inhabitants during the devising process (Figure 5). Positive feedback collected during the exhibition and after the per-

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26. The phenomenological approach to research is here intended as the direct investigation and description of phenomena happening in urban context as consciously experienced by the researcher, in this specific case, the MA students involved in the research project.
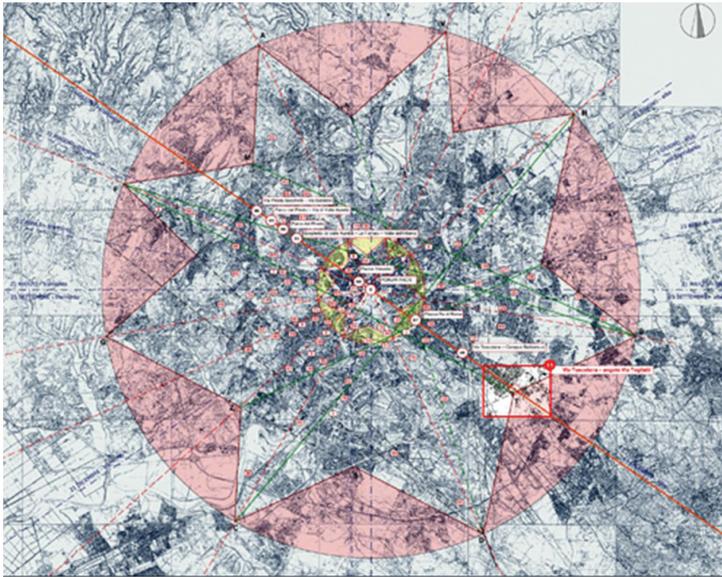
Figure 4. The "secret" structural urban form of Rome in the shape of a star
extended to the seven miles radius of the contemporary city limit.
Image: arch. Mario L. R. Leante

formance evidenced the engagement of the audience with the
themes, meanings and methods of the research. The dissemina-
tion of the work included the authored book *Scenarchitettura*.[27]

*Case study 2: Heritage design projects for National Trust at The Work-
house, Southwell, UK (2015-2019)*

The Workhouse is a National Trust place located in Southwell,
Nottinghamshire, the most complete workhouse in existence in
UK. The Heritage Project was a five-year long collaboration fund-
ed by National Trust and Nottingham Trent University, enabled
by National Trust's Research Strategy 2017-2021 that aimed at

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27. See Moneta, *Scenarchitettura*.

Figure 5. Different stages of the Project Tramandala
in Garbatella district, Rome, Italy

"fulfilling the role of heritage in the modern world, realising experiences that move, teach and inspire".[28] The project was focused on The Workhouse building and outdoor spaces in order to reveal its *Genius Loci*, to unearth forgotten, denied, and unexpressed stories of paupers segregated in the building, and to reveal them through architecture and performance so as to provoke the Workhouse's visitors to think differently about its history, identity and today's world. The projects were developed through research-led teaching. From 2015 to 2016, a number of Theatre Design students at Nottingham Trent University were involved as active researchers for content creation and performance design and delivery. They were paired with the Workhouse's volunteers to engage with the building and its archive material, and together they devised different paupers' stories inspired by the

28. National Trust, "Research Strategy 2017-2021", www.nationaltrust.org.uk, accessed 05 22, 2017, www.nationaltrust.org.uk.

Workhouse's archive. During the first two years of development, the project created installations. Since 2017, after gaining interest from The National Trust, stories have evolved from installations into collective, costumed promenade performances open to the public inside and outside the Workhouse, with the volunteers as storytellers. The project became a regular and popular feature of The Workhouse's Public Programme inspired by a different theme for each edition. Outputs of each year's project included photos and video, websites and blogs, newspaper articles, exhibitions; in 2019, a documentary captured the development of the project and final performance. Performances of the projects of different years were devised on the themes of welfare, mental health, the homeless, gender: in 2019, the performance "Poorhouse for Lunatics" used the theme of mental health to highlight contemporary issues of mental health in today's young generations. This gave a voice to the vulnerable housed young women of yesterday and today, working in collaboration with The Workhouse Volunteers. In 2018, the performance "Who Cares?" was inspired by The Workhouse's yearlong celebration of the centenary of "Women's Suffrage" in the UK. The research project picked the opportunity to highlight some contemporary issues in women's enfranchisement, working in collaboration with young homeless people from "Newark Emmaus Trust" and The Workhouse Volunteers. In 2017, the performance "Re-Imagining the Workhouse" followed a project enabled by The National Trust Creative Fellow Programme of Residencies, which was aimed at supporting the production of new creative work, in collaboration with researchers, responding to the site and engaging audiences in its history through creative means (Figure 6).

Case study 3: Ghosts! Heritage design project for Nottingham Castle Trust, UK (2021-2022)

Figure 6. Images from Heritage Projects performances at The Workhouse, Southwell, UK

The project secured a collaboration with Nottingham Castle, UK, for the realisation of public activities to improve the visitors' engagement while exploring the connections of Scenarchitecture with recent studies on Performing Heritage about identity, memory and belonging.[29] The work was funded in kind by Nottingham Castle Trust with supporting staff and the use of spaces and facilities. The enquiry was about researching and then revealing historical characters that had a role in the history of Nottingham Castle, with the aim of helping audiences engage with them on a perceptual level through storytelling, site-specific performance and CosProps (wearable artefacts) as the medium. The project involved six students of the BA (Hons) in Theatre Design of Nottingham Trent University as part of their Realised Design curriculum; they selected and designed a CosProp for each historical character chosen during the Scenarchitecture analysis. They then devised different performances in collaboration with six performers of The Television Workshop, a BAFTA award winning drama group and TV casting resource with a strong focus on diversity and inclusion based in Nottingham. Characters included: Empress Matilda, and the besieging of Nottingham Castle in 1140; Daniel Diggle, one of the Luddites in Nottingham, and his execution on April 2, 1817; the fictional character Amelia, a citizen of Nottingham witnessing The Great Cheese Riot in October 1766; Joanne of Navarre, Duchess of Brittany and Queen of England between 1403 and 1413; Duke Henry Pelham-Clinton, and the burn down of the Castle after Reform Bill Riots of 1831; the fictional character John, a servant of Isabella of France during the capture of her lover Roger Mortimer on October 19, 1330 (Figure 7).

The outcome was a series of scheduled promenade perfor-

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29. Anthony Jackson and Jenny Kydd (eds), *Performing Heritage* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011).

mances illustrating the six characters' stories in different places of the Nottingham Castle Grounds (Figure 8). The performances took place outdoor during the Covid-19 pandemic to adhere to

Designer	Character	Theme	Performer	Place	Duration	Photo	Order
Manon Bailey-Rosse;	Empress Matilda	Besieging of Nottingham Castle 1140, Battle of Lincoln in 1141	Ella Mitchinson	Path leading to Bandstand/ Trees			1
Emma Bullman	Daniel Diggle	Luddites in Nottingham, his execution on April 2nd, 1817	Dumo Mk	The Battlements/w all around the Castle			2
Lucy Carney	Amelia, a citizen of Nottingham	The Great Cheese Riot: October 1766	Paige Turton	Main entrance/ behind wall			3
Mea Fenwick	Joanne of Navarre	Duchess of Brittany and Queen of England 1403 1413	Justine Moore	Middle Bailey (Castle green)			4
Hardy Gruduls	Henry Pelham-Clinton	Burn down of the Castle after Reform Bill Riots of 1831	Nagaieh Dad	Entrance of Duke's Palace			5
Freya Willows	John, servant of Isabella	The capture of Mortimer on 19 October 1330	Thomas Unsworth	Mortimer hole			6

Figure 7. Performance Ghosts! at Nottingham Castle. Schedule and information about the characters, performers, and locations

Covid-19 regulations. The results confirmed the importance of adopting a multidisciplinary approach to enhance the use of perception and emotions in heritage sites. Heritage sites, in fact, with their peculiar identity and character (*Genius Loci*) which enhance the quality of place, provoke intense spatial experiences to those who engage with them. This combination of tangible and intangible heritage, of intrinsic and extrinsic qualities of place can help portraying human experiences and actions spatially, thus creating a powerful immersive journey for the audience. The characters' stories depicted not just historical facts but their connections with today's societal struggles on similar themes, a short-circuit in the temporal development of our lives. A questionnaire after the performance evidenced the success of the project, which brought characters from different eras to life, linking them with our contemporary world. Comments included: "I felt wrapped up in the Castle's history, and totally engaged in the individual stories"; "it enabled me to see the castle and grounds from a different perspective"; "this was an excellent way to learn about Nottingham's historic rebellious characters"; "the performance enhanced the experience of the Nottingham Castle grounds".[30] The project also produced a video teaser published on YouTube.[31]

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30. Andrea Moneta, "Ghost! Heritage Design Project and Performance at Nottingham Castle Grounds", accessed January 2, 2023, https://www.research-catalogue.net/view/1501963/1501964.

31. Andrea Moneta and Bill Newsinger, "Ghosts: a Site-specific Performance at Nottingham Castle", YouTube, accessed November 28, 2022, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g5dstG3gIjc.
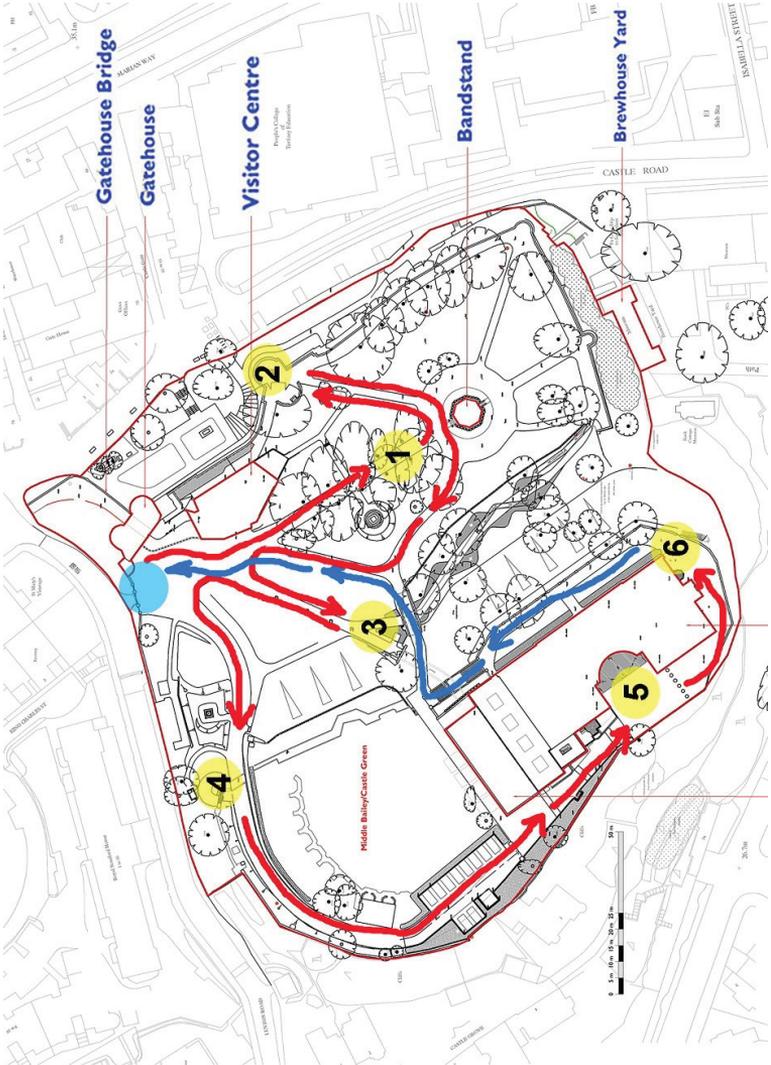
Figure 8. Map of Nottingham Castle Grounds showing the promenade
and the locations of the six characters and performances of Ghosts.

Conclusion

Scenarchitecture theory and practice has been developed into a bespoke methodology for sited performances and has demonstrated its ability to connect and bring to life history, people and places in a variety of different contexts in Italy and the UK. The new findings that this methodology brings to the fore are centred on the hybridisation of the disciplines of architecture and scenography as an original contribution to knowledge in immersive and site-specific theatre, which also advances theories in architecture, heritage and performance. Specifically, Scenarchitecture involves a combination of tools and methods not often used in site-specific theatre practice, which are selected from architecture, social sciences, participation, psychogeography, human geography, phenomenology, spatial practices and place-making. Its distinctiveness, as the result of the combination of different approaches, resides in its adaptability and response to the context through a deep connection with the *Genius Loci* of the given site. This essential element of the analysis of the site and its phenomenological approach interact with the design, enhancing it and producing unique meaningful performances that are life experiences. The final goal is to foster place awareness and community engagement, but also to help stakeholders, architects, and urban developers to create design interventions that are respectful of places. Furthermore, the original involvement of students, citizens and volunteers as active researchers and participants in both the creative devising process and the final performance acts as the necessary guarantee to balance authenticity with interpretation. Scenarchitecture, in fact, abhors re-enactments where historicism plagiarises authenticity; it also refuses the dictatorship of the text, where authenticity is unbalanced with respect to the director's interpretation. Scenarchitecture

performances – the revelatory and cathartic events in which all people and all elements of the methodology are put together and are shared – are not just the final testing of a methodology, but they also create a legacy for the place itself, opening a debate about its essence and role in current society.

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An Archaeological Museum as
a Performative Space for the Elderly

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ABSTRACT

Museums are places where visitors react, participate and shape their identity. It is generally accepted that museums offer a space that is primarily concerned with memories as a physical and symbolic interaction between elderly visitors and their interpretation of the exhibits. If this, however, can be unconditionally applied in the case of historical museums or, in the Greek context, of museums of Modern Greek History, what could be argued about archaeological museums, taking into account the mechanisms through which contemporary Greeks come into contact with antiquity? This essay refers to the encounter of the elderly with exhibits in an archaeological museum. It is argued that reminiscence is an occasion for the performance of human experience and memory in a new context of interpretation. In this context, elderly visitors become "community curators", beyond the prevailing cultural construction of antiquity. At this point, the archaeological museum becomes a performative space, where the

elderly interact with their memories to assert particular definitions of humanity.

Keywords: museum, performative space, the elderly, reminiscence

Museum as a Performative Field

According to Pierre Bourdieu, museum access and visiting largely depends on people's cultural capital.[1] As enjoyment of museum exhibits is typically reserved for a relatively small and privileged proportion of people who are able to understand and appreciate them, it is clear that the less privileged people face a certain cultural segregation. Although museums appear and claim to be open to all, in fact, they are visited only by a small segment of the population.

The distinction of this limited cultured public presupposes the musealisation of objects, which means their exclusion from the environment of their creation and use and their integration into the space of knowledge that the museum is.[2] Carol Duncan presented the museum as a ritual site and as a performance field that does not include actors and audience but, rather, is a controlling intermediary that induces a receptive mood in the spectators and then invites them as actors to "take the stage" and perform their best artistic selves.[3] Performance in this case is not

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1. Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel and Dominique Schnapper, *The Love of Art: European Art Museums and Their Public* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991).

2. Donald Horne, *The Great Museum: The Re-Presentation of History* (London: Pluto, 1984).

3. Carol Duncan, *Civilising Rituals. Inside Public Art Museums* (London: Routledge, 1995), 476-480.

an art but the interaction between the visitors and art, and be-
tween visitors and structure. Exhibits are part of this perfor-
mance, while visitors construct their "dramatis personae" by
adopting the social roles of the connoisseur, the artistically in-
formed, the one with cultural capital or the good citizen.

But what about all those people who exclude themselves or
who are effectively excluded from museums? What about, for
example, the elderly, specifically those who are deprived of the
art privilege because of their low educational and financial pro-
file or their low cultural capital? Given that Greece is one of the
most ageing countries in the world,[4] and that specialised re-
searchers have not yet dealt with the issue, the need for research
on this subject in this country is urgent.

The Elderly Nowadays

Nowadays older adults are people who continue to grow. They
still need happiness, joy and pleasure. In addition, they deserve
respect and appreciation and are committed to synthesising
their life-long experiences and shaping them into a legacy for
future generations.[5] This developmental dimension of old age
initiates a new creative action aimed at improving the lives of el-
derly people and, subsequently, at changing society's attitude
towards ageing.

Various interventions for the elderly have been proposed

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4. United Nations, "World Population Ageing 2019 Highlights" (New York:
U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, 1919),
https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/age-
ing/WorldPopulationAgeing2019-Highlights.pdf.

5. Jules C. Weiss, *Expressive Therapy with Elders and the Disabled* (London: Rou-
tledge, 1984).

throughout the world. These interventions often draw their themes from the past of the elderly and tend to establish the practice of "life review", according to Robert Butler,[6] who argued that the elderly person, in order to reach a satisfying level of enjoyment of life, must develop mechanisms to renegotiate the lived experience by remembering what they have lived. It is precisely this enjoyment of life, the "ego-integrity", as Erik Erikson had previously called it,[7] that is the prime aim of the third age movement, which deals with the basic need of the elderly to come to terms with what they have lived, their successes and failures, and to move forward with courage towards the inevitable end.[8]

The international interest in developing interventions for the elderly has paved the way for the development of "cultural gerontology", which explores the phenomenon of ageing in a wider social and cultural context, not as a problem but as a cultural value.[9] This essay proposes a possible framework for reinforcing the enjoyment of life, the "ego-integrity" of older people, in accordance with Erikson's and Butler's theories.[10] It refers to the encounter of the elderly with exhibits in an archaeological museum and it concerns the older people of a Greek local community, while exploring their performance of life in a local archaeological museum.

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6. Robert N. Bulter, "The Life Review: An Interpretation of Reminiscence in the Aged", in *Psychiatry* 26 (1963): 65-70.

7. Erik H. Erikson, *Childhood and Society* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1950).

8. Katerina Kosti, "Reminiscence Drama in an Ageing World", in *Critical Stages* 20 (2019), https://www.critical-stages.org/20/reminiscence-drama-in-an-ageing-world/.

9. Kosti, "Reminiscence Drama in an Ageing World".

10. See Erikson, *Childhood and Society*, and Bulter, "The Life Review: An Interpretation of Reminiscence in the Aged".

Reminiscence in Museums

It is true that museums offer a space that is primarily dedicated to memories as a physical and symbolic interaction between the visitors and their interpretation of the exhibits.[11] With her focus on the elderly, Gaynor Kavanagh spoke of museums as "dream spaces" that constitute a field of interaction between the objects and the visitor's subconscious. "Museums need memories as a primary source", she writes, to highlight their social role and their function as spaces where visitors react, participate and shape their identity by performing roles that belong to their past.[12] Dream spaces highlight emotions, senses and memories,[13] which promote positive feelings and enjoyment especially for the elderly. In this case, museums seem to be an expressive medium and the museum visit is a movement through imagination and memory. "The past that was, is no longer",[14] and reminiscing in museums can bring to mind one's past self, who can no longer be present, but can be performed.[15]

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11. Valerie Casey, "Staging Meaning Performance in the Modern Museum", in *TDR: The Drama Review* 49, no. 3 (2005): 78-95.

12. Gaynor Kavanagh, *Dream Spaces. Memory and the Museum* (London: Leicester University Press, 2000), 4.

13. Sheldon Annis, "The Museum as a Staging Ground for Symbolic Action," in *Museum* 151, no. 3 (1987): 168-171.

14. Mark Freeman, *Re-Writing the Self: History, Memory, Narrative* (London: Routledge, 1993).

15. Faith Gibson, *The Past in the Present: Using Reminiscence in Health and Social Care* (Baltimore: Health Professions Press, 2004), 9.

A Museum Visit

If, however, the performance of one's past self can surface while visiting historical museums,[16] then what could be argued about archaeological museums, taking into account the mechanisms through which contemporary Greeks come into contact with antiquity and the symbolic meaning attributed to it?[17] This is the main question that this essay endeavours to answer.

To answer this question, a visit to the archaeological museum of Megara is presented as a case study. Megara is a small provincial town nearby Athens and the visit to the museum aimed to investigate the relation between the antiquities and the experiences and interests of the local elderly community, as well as their understanding of the exhibits. The participants were fourteen members of the Elderly Day Care Centre of Megara, aged between 63 and 85, ten of whom were women and four men. All participants were functionally illiterate, having attended only a few years of primary school, and, as they had stated in a previous meeting, they had not visited any museum in the last five years. None of the participants, in fact, had ever visited the city's museum before, about which they were embarrassed, as they said.

A set of "reminiscence cards" with reference to specific exhibits was prepared for the visit. The cards included questions intended to connect antiquity with the recent past of the town, in order to stimulate the participants to reminisce. Some of these cards were used as museum educational material. The structure

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16. Susan A. Crane, *Museums and Memory* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).

17. Anastasia Chourmouziadi, Klea Daravigka, and Ioannis Stavridopoulos, "Critical Mapping Methodology as an Analytical Tool for the Understanding of Greek Archaeological Production," in *Open Science Journal* 6, no. 4 (2021), https://doi.org/10.23954/osj.v6i4.3010.

of the visit was modelled after the structure of the exhibition. The visit included references to the excavations in the town and to the history of the museum building, the statues and the sculptures, the ancient inscriptions, as well as many burial findings and objects of everyday life. The first contact of the elderly with the exhibits in the museum space created euphoria and inspired a willingness to learn, as the elderly visitors saw objects that they had seen before in their childhood in other contexts.

Paris and Mercer have noted that visitors understand museum objects through their prior knowledge, interests and social status.[18] This interactive model emphasises how the visitors' unique interpretations emerge from the interactions of their physical, personal, and social contexts.[19] This implies that meaning-making is not limited to the object or to the love of art and does not depend on *ad hoc* knowledge.[20] In the visit presented here, strange as it may seem, the elderly person's interpretation of the exhibition was linked to the interconnection between antiquity and their own life experience.[21]

One version of the participants' experience was recollections of popular notions about antiquities, such as an elderly woman's statement about two statues she used to see embedded in an old house in the town during her childhood: "I remember passing by and seeing and thinking they were saints. And I was wondering why they don't have heads. And I made the sign of the cross […]

18. Scott G. Paris and Melissa J. Mercer, "Finding Self in Objects: Identity Exploration in Museums", in Gaea Leinhardt et al. (eds), *Learning Conversations in Museums* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

19. Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, *Museum, Media, Message* (London: Routledge, 1998), 132.

20. George E. Hein, *Learning in the Museum* (London: Routledge, 1998).

21. John H. Falk and Lynn D. Dierking, *The Museum Experience* (Washington: Howells House, 1992).

Just like now – watch me". Memories from the recent history of the place were also revived, such as those concerning the archaeological museum building: "Here there used to be a doctor's office, where they gave us the vaccines. I didn't want to get one and I was running to get away from my grandfather who was bringing me here". Also, other memories of poor but happy childhood years, of religious life and daily activities were brought up, such as one regarding the basements of the ancient houses in ancient Megara:

> When we were kids, we used to put wheat, grain, barley on a towel. We would tie it up and leave it at the church at night and then pick it up the next day. It was a kind of blessing and a sort of prayer to God […] And now you' re talking about the ancient Megara […] They were used for temples of Demetre, weren't they? People offered grain, wheat and barley to their goddess. Just like us in our childhood.

The ease with which the elderly participants interpreted children's toys, such as anklets, known as "knuckles" or "kotsia", which have been one of the most popular children's toys from ancient times to recent years, was amazing: "We twisted it (the kotsia) like that, and as many times as it stood upright down on the floor, we won. Let me show you […]". As it turned out, the elderly in the archaeological museum functioned as "community curators" with shared concepts, experiences and perceptions,[22] their common starting point being their memories. Thus, many museum objects were interpreted as part of their past experience. An example of this is a museum case with loom tools and weights: "By

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22. Alison Moloney, "Cabinet Stories: Curators in the Community," in *Fashion Theory* 26, no. 6 (2022): 859-880, https://doi.org/10.1080/1362704X.2022.2081011.

using these tools we could spin and weave a variety of yarns and types of cloth, from fine to coarse. These items remind me my beloved friends, many of whom have died. And this affects me but makes me tearful as well".

Some of the exhibits were interpreted in a different way according to the context in which the elderly participants had first encountered them but then they had to be reinterpreted in the context of the museum:

> This [a statue] was in a neighbour's house. It was built in the wall of the house and we used to wash it with soap. And the owner of the house said: "the head is missing and the statue has no value". But I see it here now and it has another kind of value.

Other objects allowed the elderly to enrich already existing interpretations of them, such as the exhibits from burials they had themselves experienced during World War II:

> These items [small vessels] were in graves; my uncle used to dig shelters and he found a lot of them. There was a cemetery at the south end of the town; we kept finding graves and digging to get inside, to hide […] We were alive getting into the graves, trying to save ourselves.

David Lowenthal mentions that every relic exists simultaneously in the past and in the present, beyond the prevailing cultural construction of antiquity.[23] The memories of the elderly had the quality of familiarity and that is why they cannot be qualified as history. Antonis Liakos writes: "To the extent that the object is famil-

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23. David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 241.

iar to us, which means that it is within the field of our devotion, action and perception, it cannot become an object of history. The very cultural construction called history, in whatever form, presupposes that the subject of history has passed from immediacy to distance".[24] The transformation of memory to history was performed in the museum space, where another role emerged for the elderly, that of the expert who interprets museum objects in another context.

Moreover, the elderly participants shared some qualities of humanity, beyond the rational and the cognitive. It was what Gaynor Kavanagh called "dream spaces", as imaginary places "where our inner experiences find a mesh with the outer experience which museums provide".[25] Right there, at the point where the ancient ancestors and today's elderly meet, the innermost "dream space" of an elderly woman was presented. After reading a farewell inscription to the deceased Epinice, engraved on a grave monument ("Hail, Epinice, daughter of Mendaeus and Theotimi, you who left them childless, in bitter old age"), a seventy-seven-year-old woman burst into tears; she had lost her daughter several years ago.

Conclusion: Museum as Performative Space for the Elderly

Richard Schechner's revolutionary *Performance Theory* recognises that performance is not something that happens only on stage, but something that carries meaning and is realised on many lev-

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24. Antonis Liakos, "Statues Are no Longer Relics. Statues Are in the Museum", in *Tetradia Museiologias* 1 (2004): 15.

25. Kavanagh, *Dream Spaces. Memory and the Museum*, 175.

els of "everyday life, such as greetings, displays of emotion, family scenes, professional roles, and so on".[26] During the visit to the archaeological museum in Megara, every elderly participant became someone else from what they were in their current phase of life. They abolished time and became children again, playing roles within scenes of their childhood and youth, rediscovering parts of themselves directly connected to the exhibits. Words, movements, expressions and roles of a past life became a new way of interpreting museum objects. A new version of the past, their own past, which no longer exists, according to Hayden White,[27] emerged, "constructing" an identity that belongs to them. With the exhibits as a starting point, the elderly performed their reminiscence drama on a timeless stage, where the roles alternated; sometimes children, sometimes performers, sometimes mediators between past and present.

Reminiscence was revealed to be the cultural capital of the elderly participants, which now gave them a place and reason for being in the museum. Adults and particularly the elderly have a need to understand the museum through the world, their own world, the world of their experiences.[28] This perspective adds value to the lives of the elderly. For example, an old woman, who only knew how to spin and weave a variety of yarns and types of cloth, as she mentioned, appreciated her life as a continuum of a path through history that starts from antiquity and reaches the time of her youth, as she realised that her knowledge could be a museum exhibit that echoes history. At this point, the archaeological museum becomes a performative space, where people

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26. Richard Schechner, *Performance Theory* (London: Routledge, 1988), xvii.

27. See Hayden White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth-Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973).

28. See Paris and Mercer, "Finding Self in Objects: Identity Exploration in Museums".

interact with their memories to assert particular definitions of humanity.

The visit to the archaeological museum of Megara stimulated sometimes pleasant, sometimes traumatic memories of people whose educational profile may not have allowed them fully to understand scientific history, but their life experience showed them that humanity has always been the same, and that the ancient ancestors, now placed in the museum, were people who lived, rejoiced, grieved and felt the need to plead with God, as they themselves have done several times in their present day lives. If the museum seemed to be a foreign country to them before,[29] they had now taken on a new life role to perform in it, that of the community curator in the performative space of an archaeological museum, where they performed their life drama without a script. It should be noted that the visit to the archaeological museum of Megara was essentially a limited "experiment", as it concerned a small sample of elderly people in a small community. Therefore, the conclusions drawn from this cannot be generalised, but they could serve as a guide for further relevant research.

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29. See Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*.

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Architecture as Space of Consciousness

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ABSTRACT

This essay investigates the capacity of architecture to increase human consciousness and how performance can help us become aware of this process. "Performance" is understood as a set of actions, postures, movements, sounds, etc. carried out individually or by a group of participants in a given space. Connecting architecture, consciousness and performance is an ambitious task for an essay, so here we only intend to give some ideas that can contribute to the study of spatial cognition from a performative perspective. Albert Einstein is credited with the *saying* "Learning is experience, everything else is just information". In our ultra-technological world, we think we can understand architecture through images, but the only real way is to experience the architectural space with our presence, with our entire sensory system. To structure the study of the sensory perception of architectural space, we adopt what is proposed by Samkhya metaphysics. Samkhya metaphysics, included in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali, relates the elements to the senses: hearing is related to the element of akasha or ether, space; touch is related to the element of

air; sight is related to fire; taste is related to the element of water and smell is related to earth. For the analysis proposed here, we use performance focused on each of the senses to discover how the architectural environment affects us. However, it is the conscious multisensory experience that opens the way for a total understanding of architectural space.

Keywords: architecture, consciousness, performance, Samkhya, senses, elements, hearing, touch, sight, taste, smell, akasha, air, fire, water, earth.

Introduction

I would like to share my vision of architecture as a space of developing the human consciousness, and how performance can help us to understand it. By "performance", I mean an individual or group combination of positions, movements, sounds, etc., that help us increase our knowledge of architecture. For example, the performance in Figure 1, made out of a human line in the Epidaurus ancient theatre in 2013 with our students and my colleagues (Pablo Berzal, Eduardo Pérez, Ángel Alonso and María José Martínez), made us aware that through the precise construction of that line every person was able to see and hear perfectly from their seat. This experience confirmed to us that the construction of that masterpiece achieves a spatial, geometrical and functional unity that puts the whole audience in a position of equality when viewing the play presented.

Connecting performance, architecture and consciousness is an ambitious task for an essay, but I aspire to give some ideas, through which new performances can be created in the future for a better understanding of the relationship between architecture

Figure 1. Human line in the Epidaurus theatre. Course trip ETSAM 2013.
© María José Martínez

and consciousness. Firstly, it is interesting to note that, according to both Eastern and Western psychology, our mind is 10% consciousness and 90% unconscious. If we compare the mind to an iceberg, the part that rises above water is consciousness and the submerged part is unconscious. This means that 90% of what we say, think or know is unconscious, so we do not really know why we do it; they are all habits that our mind creates. The aim of our life is to make the unconscious conscious as much as possible, so that there is less of it and, therefore, less suffering.

If books enhance our consciousness through words and music through notes, architecture does so through space. But how can architecture help us tune into our consciousness, our sense of existence in the world? Albert Einstein is credited with the *saying* "Learning is experience, everything else is just information".[1] In

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1. As quoted in Carlo Giovannella, "Learning Is Experience. Everything Else Is Just Information", in *Proceedings of the 1st Workshop on Awareness and Reflection*

our ultra-technological world, we think we can understand architecture through images, but the only way is through experience, gaining knowledge of what is really important in an on-site visit. For example, if you enter the Pantheon in Rome, you have a total experience of space, and you could think you are inside the earth with the interior hollowed out and the sun shining inside. Its spherical-cylindrical geometry shows the sun's movement, which makes us aware of the rotational and translational motion of planet Earth.

But how can we experience space when we visit architecture? To answer this question, I would like to quote Jorge Luis Borges who, speaking of Henry James, wrote: "He was not unaware that he was a spectator not an actor, of life".[2] My belief is that, in order to experience space and understand how our sense of consciousness expands, one must act in a space and not limit oneself to being a passive spectator. We need to experience architecture through actions. Besides the classic way of analysing space by measuring and drawing plans and sections, I propose creating individual and group performances.

What kind of performance can we do? Essentially, anything is possible, but the action must reveal a vital aspect of the architecture we want to experience. Going back to Einstein, in his book *My View of the World*, he wrote: "All knowledge of things must come from an assimilation of the material provided by the senses".[3] All of this made me think of the Samkhya metaphysics,

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in Personal Learning Environments (2011).

2. [2] Jorge Luis Borges, *Prólogo: Henry James. La lección del Maestro, La vida privada, La figura de la alfombra.* (*Foreword: Henry James. The Master's Lesson, The Private Life, The Figure in the Carpet*), (Barcelona: Hyspamérica ediciones SA, 1987), 9. All English translations from works originally in Spanish are mine.

3. Albert Einstein, *Mi visión del mundo* (*My View of the World*), (Barcelona: Fábula Tusquets editores, 1995), 44.

ELEMENT	MANIFESTATION	SENSE	SENSING ORGAN	SUBTLE ELEMENT
AKASHA ETHER	SPACE SIZE	HEARING (TO HEAR)	EARS	EXPANSION / CONTRACTION FREEDOM / SLAVERY
VAYU AIR	MOVEMENT	TOUCH (TO TOUCH)	SKIN	CREATIVITY / DISPERSION
AGNI FIRE	SHAPE, BEAUTY AND COLOR	SIGHT (TO SEE)	EYES	INTELLIGENCE / STUPIDITY CLARITY / DARKNESS
APA WATER	FLUIDITY	TASTE (TO TASTE)	TONGUE	SWEETNESS / DRYNESS
PRITHIVI EARTH	SOLIDITY	SMELL	NOSE	TRUST / INSECURITY RELIABILITY / DECEPTION

Figure 2. Samkhya metaphysics table, where senses and elements are brought together

summed up in a table (Figure 2), which is collected in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali and brings together the senses and elements that I propose to explore.[4] The last part of the table refers to the subtle elements, which have to do with emotions, something much more difficult to deal with.

Hearing and the Akasha Element

The first sense of the diagram (Figure 2), hearing, is related to the element akasha. This element, which could be the same as Anaximander's "apeiron" or Aristotle's "ether", is the most essential element in architecture because we build a structure that shapes it so that the different activities of a human being can take place. An architect does not make forms and volumes, but creates a space that is vital to us and manifests the element akasha. According to Patanjali, akasha represents the expansion of consciousness, is the lightest element and can only be heard. To experience it in architecture, you have to close your eyes and focus your attention on hearing alone. For example, if you do this at the centre of the Hagia Sophia dome in Istanbul, you can hear all the tourists, who make sounds that stay horizontally moving towards infinity, while over your head there is only a deep silence of the 56-metre-high dome. This distribution of sound and silence helps us to understand the idea of God in Christianity, which idea is based on ascension and verticality.

As Juhani Pallasmaa wrote in his book *The Eyes of the Skin*, "the

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4. This table collected in the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali comes from the notes of the "Cultural Association for the Study of Yoga in Madrid", which follows the teachings of Swami Rama, founder of the Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy of the USA in Honesdale, Pennsylvania.

silence of architecture is a silence that responds, that remembers. A powerful architectural experience silences all external noise; it focuses our attention on our own existence".[5] If we represent a prehistoric cave as a human body (Figure 3), the place of daily life in contact with the outside world would be located in the head where our five senses are located. In the deep silence inside the cave, they painted. If you listen to that silence, it connects with your inner silence and you immediately know that they used to paint to develop their consciousness.

Hearing sound in space is an essential experience to understand architecture and cultivate your consciousness through it. For example, in the cave of Sibyl in Cuma, during a trip with our students in 2017, one student stood at the place of the oracle and sang. All of us had the amazing experience of the deep sound coming from the Oracle as if it were rising from inside the earth, and we understood the transcendence of that important Greek ritual.

According to the table of the Samkhya tradition, the subtle element corresponding to akasha is the expansion/contraction of space and freedom/slavery. One can experience the first one through listening to sounds, how they expand in space, both outside and inside our body. Regarding the latter, the Samkhya tradition tells us that, if we want to increase our inner freedom, we have to be aware of the akasha element by connecting with the sense of hearing.

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5. Juhani Pallasmaa, *Los ojos de la piel. La arquitectura y los sentidos* (*The Eyes of the Skin. Architecture and the Senses*), (Barcelona: Gustavo Gili, 2014), 52.
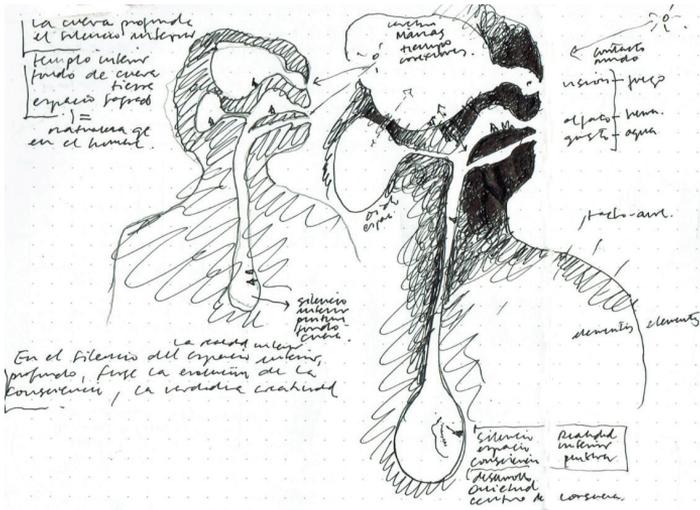
Figure 3. The human body drawn as a cave with prehistoric paintings.
© Author's drawing

Touch and the Air Element

According to the table of the Samkhya tradition, the second sense, touch, is related to the element of air, which is akasha or ether in motion. Its sensory organ is the skin, and the organ of action is the hand. In the African sculpture of Figure 4, carved from a single piece of ebony, the naked body is surrounded by a piece which can be seen as architecture. One is soft and fragile, the other hard and rough for protection. It is as if the architecture is an extension of the body itself, enveloping the skin through the air. The sense of touch is very extensive, since you can perceive both the perception of gravity or the air when you breathe.

Valie Export, the Austrian artist, makes performances by inserting her body in architecture (Figure 5). In this picture, her body is adapted to the stairs of the Thesustemple in Vienna, in
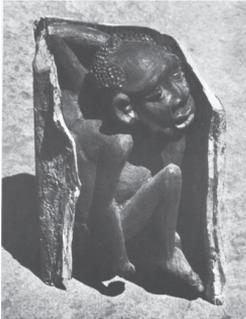
Figure 4.
African sculpture

Figure 5. Performance in the Thesustemple.
© Valie Export

such a way that her skin perceives the three-dimensional shape of materials, their texture, density, temperature, etc. This makes me think of what Pallasmaa says: "Primitive man used his own body as a system for dimensioning and proportioning his constructions. The essential survival skills of traditional cultures are based on the wisdom of the body stored in tactile memory. We could consider touch as the unconscious of vision, because vision reveals what touch already knows".[6]

In the temple of Apollo at Didyma, we created a performance with our students in 2015 (Figure 6) in order to understand the importance of the staircase that connects the inner courtyard of the oracle, called *adyton*, with the *chresmographeion*, the stage where the priest delivers the oracle to the consultee located in the pronaos. Through the touch of the body and the geometry we made, we all became aware of the staircase's size and height, which connected us to that ritual of Greek culture. If we refer to the air element in the philosophy of the Samkhya tradition, creativity is enhanced through this element and the sense of touch.

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6. Pallasmaa, *Los ojos de la piel*, 42.

Figure 6. Performance at the temple of Apollo at Didyma.
Course trip ETSAM in 2015

On the other hand, an excess of this element can lead to dispersion of what is really needed.

Seeing and the Fire Element

The third sense is sight, which is related to fire. Besides the obvious association – the eye absorbs the light of the fire – it is interesting to recognise that sight is linked to shape and beauty but not to space, the essential element of architecture, which can be truly understood through hearing alone. Geometrically, fire refers to the centre of a circle, which represents, in its African origin, a space for the community dances, festivals, etc. In this circle everyone is an actor and a spectator, while the centre is something sacred that unites them (the fire, the tree, etc.). What unites us is called "Universal Consciousness" in India, "Humanity"

Figure 7. African children's performance

in the West and "Ubuntu" in Africa, which means "I am because we are".

In the picture of Figure 7, African children make a fun performance with the soles of their feet, which symbolises the union of individuals that generate the circle of the community. They remind us that to be able to evolve one must collaborate and not only compete. In the West, the organisation is different: the actor and the spectator are separated through the formation of lines. These are not connected with the action of the teacher, priest, musician, etc., and the sacred centre, which unites us, has lost its place. Nowadays, vision is regarded as the most important sense and its role is strengthened by the incessant production of images. This image of the children is very powerful, but it is nothing like the experience of being there, creating the circle with them.

We created a different circle with the students in Epidaurus in 2014 (Figure 8). That geometry allows visual and acoustic equality of each spectator with respect to the centre. Although the actors are located in the centre, they are not the protagonists but, rather, the protagonist is the play being performed. The phi-

Figure 8. Performance in Epidaurus. 2014. © María José Martínez

losopher Peter Sloterdijk says about the dominance of vision: "The enigma of the eyes is that not only can they see, but they are also able to see themselves by seeing. This gives them a prominent place among the cognitive organs of the body. The art of the eye has certainly produced imposing and suggestive structures, but it has not facilitated human rootedness in the world".[7]

Regarding the subtle element proposed by the Samkhya philosophy, the fire element related to vision is linked not only to the physical clarity/darkness of an environment, but also to the clarity/darkness of the mind and emotions. Therefore, this element and this sense are related to the intelligence/stupidity which there is in the human being.

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7. Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1988) as quoted in Martin Jay, *Downcast Eyes. The Denigration of Vision in Twentieth Century French Thought* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994), 27.

Taste and the Water Element

The fourth sense in the table is taste and is related to the element of water. This sense is the most difficult to connect directly with architecture, for you are not able to taste the walls, but the connection with the element of water can help us understand this sense. As the writer Deepak Choppra says: "A long time ago, we lived in that primordial ocean, one day we came out of it and brought it with us. Seventy per cent of our body is made up of that ocean, it has the same components and is subject to the same cycles, like the rhythms of the tides".[8] If we remember the mythical Malaparte House, it rises and spreads horizontally over the ocean towards the end of the earth, where sea and sky, water and air meet.

Both in the Malaparte House and in the Alhambra, it is difficult to obtain permission to produce a performance. When we stage a performance, to understand the essence of these masterpieces, we will have to see how to connect the water in our body with the water outside. The sense of taste can help, because, when there is a deficiency of water in the body, there is a loss of this sense; in fact, without water there is no taste. In the Alhambra, with the understanding of gravity alone, without mechanisms, water is brought from the Sierra Nevada, 40 km away, to a fountain, whose height remains always the same. Everything in the Alhambra exists through the presence, vitality and fluidity of water, and the mental separation of human life and nature disappears.

But how to experience water without drinking it, touching it or being covered by it? We made a performance with the students at the Dun Aengus fort in the Aran Islands in 2016 (Figure 9), trying to experience the boundary that separates land and water. We glued our bodies together and our heads hang out in the emptiness of a 100-metre-high cliff. Apart from feeling verti-

Figure 9. Performance with students at Dun Aengus fort.
Course trip in 2016. © Ángel Alonso Ortiz

go, the perception of this magical place, where the earth seems to end facing the Atlantic Ocean, moved us and we connected with those who lived there for hundreds of years, enclosed in a small space, thanking life for surviving each day. The connection with the element of water would facilitate the close co-existence of the inhabitants over decades, since it enhances the sweetness of the human being, as seen in the subtle element section of the Samkhya philosophy table.

Smell and the Earth Element

The last sense is smell, which is related to the element of earth. It is interesting to note that the subtle element corresponding to them is trust and reliability, which may be the reason why our nose orifices point towards the earth and why animals smell the earth to secure their safety. In contrast with taste, our nose is important to understand space as it can smell the materials and all

Figure 10. Performance with students at Paestum.
Course trip to Napoli in 2017. © Ángel Alonso Ortiz

the activities that have happened and are happening at the moment. There is architecture that has the smell of earth, such as the dolmen, a sacred burial space hollowed underground in a continuity of hills. The dolmen can be seen as a cave built with large stones charged with the earth that compresses them for a long time.

The connection with the element of earth in the Parthenon in Athens is very exciting. The column of stone, which in reality is made of many drums on top of each other, gives the impression that it is one single piece due to the minimal joint where not even a fingernail can fit. If it had been possible to carve the entire temple out of one single piece of rock, they would have done it. Because of this continuity, the Parthenon makes us aware of gravity and connects us to the mother rock through our roots. As Pallasmaa clearly states, "the sense of gravity is the essence of all architectural structures and great architecture makes us aware of gravity and earth".[8]

8. Pallasmaa, *Los ojos de la piel*, 67.

Accordingly, in 2017, we staged a performance at the temple of Jupiter in Paestum (Figure10) to experience not only the relation between a human being and a column, sharing the connection with earth and gravity, but also how the sequence of columns may be comparable to human beings in the community. The Danish architect Ramussen writes, in his book *Experiencing Architecture*: "In classical architecture, for example, we speak of supporting and supported members. Many people, it is true, do not associate anything particular with this. But others get the impression of a heavy load weighing on the column, just like a human being".[9]

Conclusion

As we have seen throughout this essay, action through performance in architecture can lead to the development of consciousness through the experience of space, which in this study has been understood through the relation of the five senses and the five elements, according to the teaching of the Samkhya philosophy. It seems quite likely that the consciousness of the human being emerges from the body and how it relates to the surrounding space. In this sense, the Spanish architect Asis Cabrero writes: "It is through the representation of the outline of his hand that the human being learned to draw animals through the line that

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9. Steen Elier Rasmussen, *Experiencing Architecture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1959), 37.

11 Francisco de Asís Cabrero, *Los cuatro libros de la Arquitectura, I* (*The Four Books of Architecture*), (Madrid: COAM, 1992), 92.

12 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "The Film and the New Psychology", in *Sense and Non-Sense*, ed. Christopher Kul-Want (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), 103.
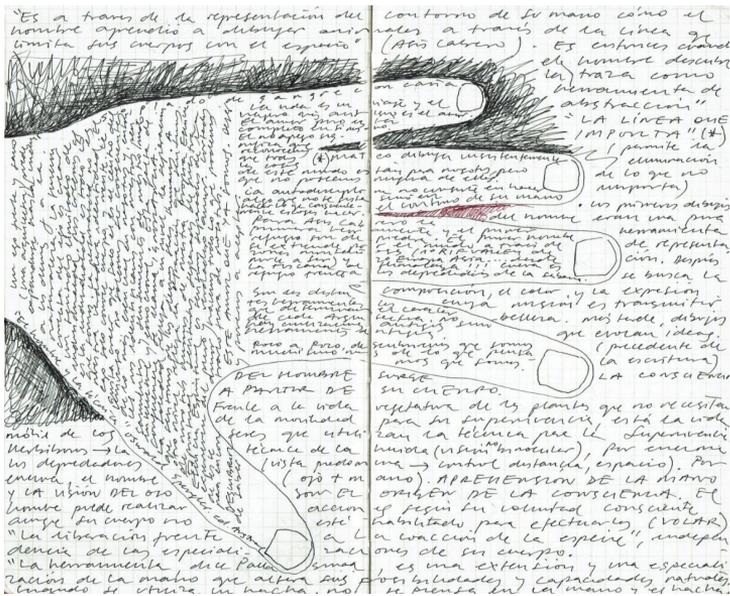
Figure 11. Representation of the prehistoric hands
with texts by Asís Cabrero. © Author's drawing

limits their bodies with space".[11] That reminds us of those prehis-
toric hands, which were made by placing them on the wall and
blowing animal blood through a cane (Figure 11).

Although we have analysed the senses separately, we know
that they are all connected in a whole. As Maurice Merleau-Ponty
writes, "my perception is [therefore] not a sum of visual, tactile
and audible givens: I perceive in a total way with my whole being:
I grasp a unique structure of the thing, a unique way of being,
which speaks to all my senses at once".[12] The connection of all
senses opens the way for another understanding of architecture.
For example, if you stand as if you were the Pharaoh, in front of
the rising façade of the Pyramid of Cheops, and see the sunrise

over the golden pyramid that crowned it and the energy that comes to the sense of touch through the density of the 2.5 million blocks of stone, you experience that this is a daily source of energy for the Pharaoh, not his burial place, even if the official line has taken the latter story for granted.

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When Jan Despo Met Jazz: The Athens Conservatory and the Athens Festival

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ABSTRACT

The Athens Festival, established in 1955, used for decades the spaces of the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens and the Ancient theatre of Epidaurus as its performance venues. This selection of venues was long tied with the presentation of specific music genres and the exclusion of others, especially jazz. Since 2016 important changes to the performance spaces of the Athens Festival have taken place. Eventually, in 2018, the Aqua Jazz Festival took place at the Athens Conservatory, a building designed by the architect Ioannis Despotopoulos. It was the first time that the "festival in a festival" model was realised during the Athens Festival and Despotopoulos' building was used for a jazz festival. Drawing from ethnographic work at the Aqua Jazz Festival and jazz performances in various spaces in the city of Athens throughout the year, I will describe the course of the space regeneration of the Athens Festival along with the establishment of the Athens Conservatory as a cultural centre and community in the way in which its creator, Despotopoulos, visualised it. Next, I will discuss the

process of the encounter of the Athens Conservatory spaces with a cultural performance, the Athens Festival. This discussion will establish the idea that a music festival performance is not ephemeral but is evolving and growing throughout the year(s) based also on the uses of space. Eventually, I will deconstruct the "festival in a festival" phenomenon, the incorporation of a cultural performance in another one, as an exquisite and composite structure of performances deriving from the life of a specific music community.

Keywords: space, music, cultural performance, Athens Conservatory, Athens Festival

Introduction

Ioannis Despotopoulos, the architect known as Jan Despo, left Chios and Athens to move to Weimar, then Dessau and Berlin, subsequently travelling between Greece, Germany and Sweden.[1] He was a composite personality who, strongly connected with the Bauhaus movement, contemplated and acted more like a cosmopolitan with the need to envision and create. Apart from the ties with the movement and the hegemonic figure of its first leader, Walter Gropius, who sometimes overshadowed other members, Despotopoulos never exhibited the urge to act as a Bauhaus representative but mostly as an ideologist influenced by the move-

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ment's social orientations after World War I. Despotopoulos' ideas and work evolved just like the movement, with an urge to reshape the world.[2] In contemporary Greece, Despotopoulos is widely known as the architect of the Athens Conservatory though his work includes hospitals, churches, schools, houses, agoras, sanatoria and other types of buildings in Greece, especially in his homeland, the island of Chios, and abroad. In the last decade, the Athens Conservatory formed a powerful identity as a cultural centre and not only a conservatory for studying music. One of the highlights of this formation process was the incorporation of its performance spaces into the Athens Festival.

The Athens Cultural Centre

In 1959, Despotopoulos won the competition for designing the Athens Cultural Centre. As a result, he returned to Greece from Sweden and regained, from 1961 to 1968, his previous academic position at the School of Architecture at the National Technical University of Athens. It was the period that Despotopoulos published his seminal work *The Ideological Structure of Cities*, emerging from and following his previous work "The Settlement. The Productive City-Community".[3] Designed in 1959 and built almost

2. William Smock, *The Bauhaus Ideal Then and Now: An Illustrated Guide to Modern Design* (Chicago: Academy Chicago Publisher, 2004), vii.

3. See Ioannis Despotopoulos, *Η ιδεολογική δομή των πόλεων* (*The Ideological Structure of Cities*), trans. K. Serraos, ed. K. Theologou (Athens: National Technical University of Athens, 1997), and "Ο οικισμός. Η παραγωγική Πόλη-Κοινότητα" ("The Settlement. The Productive City-Community"), (Athens: National Technical University of Athens, 1944), unpublished typed text in the Archives of Modern Greek Architecture at the Benaki Museum - I. Despotopoulos Archive (ANA_50). The information about this text is based on the thesis of Vasiliki Dima, "Οργανική πόλη και καθολικό πνεύμα: Διδασκαλία και έργο του Ιωάννη

a decade later (1970-1973), Despotopoulos' Cultural Centre aimed to launch a breakthrough public space in Athens, a centre containing a school of music (today's Conservatory), a hall for conferences, music and ballet performances, an open-air theatre, a national gallery, a national theatre, a Byzantine Museum, a museum complex, a national scientific foundation, a cultural foundation, a library, a square and an exhibition hall. But the only part eventually constructed and partially left unfinished was the Athens Conservatory. Its position, in parallel with one of the main streets of Athens, Vassileos Konstantinou Street, established it as one of his well-known works. The architectural archives at the Benaki Museum reveal about 2.500 sketches and models for the Athens Cultural Centre, featuring the ritual of shaping every unit of it. Despotopoulos worked on them again and again, assembling on paper his vision, a process that lasted twenty years.

Despotopoulos maintains, in his 1962 text for the Cultural Centre of Athens, that contemporary urban planning recomposes the city centres as symbols of the social life's intensity. He writes about his intention to create an internal environment for the Cultural Centre of Athens, an internal world, not only an external one.[4] Helen Fessas-Emmanouil emphasises that Despotopoulos was very much looking forward to the life that would enliven his work, not only its relation to the city.[5] The Athens Conservatory was the only building that came to life but was left unfinished, using only half

Δεσποτόπουλου" ("Organic City and Universal Spirit: Teaching and the Work of Ioannis Despotopoulos"), PhD thesis, School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens, 2015.

4. Ioannis Despotopoulos, "Το πνευματικό κέντρο της Αθήνας" ("The Athens Cultural Center"), in *Nees Morfes* January-February (1962): 6-10.

5. Eleni Fessa-Emmanouil, "Ουτοπία και πραγματικότητα. Το χρονικό του πνευματικού κέντρου της Αθήνας" ("Utopia and Reality. The Chronicle of the Athens Cultural Centre"), in *Themata Chorou kai Technon* 12 (1981) 17-44.

of its spaces.[6] Its parallel placement to one of the central streets of Athens stresses its elongated parallelogram shell. Zaroulas mentions that, when an observer looks at the building for the first time, she faces this parallel layered shell with its volume based on rows of braces. The whole shell of the 80.000m³ building is covered with Greek white marble.[7] It was designated a modern monument only in 2017, something which stressed its architectural identity as one of the buildings of modernism in Greece. For years after the Athens Conservatory's construction, Despotopoulos was silent, avoiding delivering texts as before, possibly due to his disappointment for the uncompleted Athens Cultural Centre, the realisation of which faced strong political opposition:

> Producing ideas, shapes and forms in Bauhaus was a productive process, a full and quite constructive one. The right perception of multiple realities and the dialectical adjustability of every given possibility were available in every country due to the "new way of thinking". As a result, the formed works had a social and political identity in a transnational context.[8]

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6. At the end of 2022, a large part of the building of the Conservatory was finally completed decades after its initial construction, adding and introducing a set of new spaces to the building: a) a new stage as a part of a new underground experimental multipurpose space, b) an arts foyer, c) cafe/restaurant, d) a K3 technology centre, and e) the "Ioannis Despotopoulos" Amphitheatre of 600 seats. This extensive renovation made possible through donations and funding from the prefecture followed a more limited renovation of the "Aris Garoufalis" concert space in 2017, where I attended numerous concerts on various music genres. This space was used for concerts of the Athens Festival but not of the Aqua Jazz Festival that I will discuss next.

7. Sotirios Zaroulas, "Η ιδεο-λογική δομή των πόλεων" ("The Ideological Construction of Cities") (2019), https://attikipedia.sadas-pea.gr/η-ιδεο-λογικη-δομη-των-πολεων-και-τησ-αρ/.

8. Ioannis Despotopoulos, "Σύντομη εισήγηση για ορισμένα σημαντικά

This excerpt from the text of Despotopoulos on Bauhaus condenses the way he thought and sketched, highlighting the possibility that the Athens Conservatory could function as a building able to create the aforementioned external and internal world and accentuating its simplicity and usability. In the last decade, the thoughts of Despotopoulos for the Conservatory were realised through the abundant contribution of the initially finished spaces of the building (almost half of the construction) to the cultural life of the city with a variety of music performances closely fabricated into the educational work of the Athens Conservatory, which was founded there in 1974. This current of cultural life hosted at the building, came together with the belated realisation by the state and municipality of its importance and with the urge to finish after decades the other half of spaces. The terrace and external spaces are the last ones left but have already been assigned for reclamation.

The Athens Conservatory made a wider opening to audiences in the last decade by using its spaces for concerts open to the public, especially after 2017, when the Garoufalis concert space was renovated. The old basement space hosted art exhibitions, such as Documenta 14, and became a part of the videos that the Greek National Opera produced during the Covid quarantine, using the music of Iannis Xenakis to highlight its parallel shell and architectural importance. The Athens Conservatory had a major shift with respect to the use of most of its spaces specifically for music performances during the second Aqua Jazz Festival in 2018.

'επακόλουθα' από το έργο του Bauhaus" ("A Short Presentation of Certain Important 'Consequences' of the Bauhaus Project"), in *Deltio Syllogou Architektonon* 5 (1992).

The Athens Festival and its Space Regeneration

A major shift to the articulation and content of the Athens Festival had also taken place in 2006 due to its opening to other performance spaces beyond the Odeon of Herodes Atticus in Athens and the Ancient Theatre of Epidaurus.[9] Already in 2005, the well-known actor and director Lefteris Voyatzis proposed to the festival's director, George Loukos, a new area for performances: the spaces of an old furniture factory at Pireos Street 260. The cultural monument of the industrial architecture of the Greek 1970s began to be adapted to a new complex of stages for the Athens festival, a seminal turn for its nature and character. Gradually, three spaces, the Delta (Δέλτα), the Ita (Ήτα) and the Epsilon (Έψιλον), with 700, 500 and 100 seats respectively, along with open spaces, like the garden behind the Delta and eventually three other spaces, the buildings Alpha (Άλφα), Vita (Βήτα), Zita (Ζέτα) and Gamma (Γάμμα), shaped a new identity for the Athens Festival. The complex of spaces acted as an evolving platform for contemporary art, reflecting the latest trends and experimentation in music, theatre and dance by Greek and international creative teams, and attracting and invigorating new audiences to new performance spaces and especially music genres.

This space regeneration timidly introduced the jazz music genre to the Athens Festival in the first years when the Pireos Street factory spaces were used. It was not until 2010 that the first jazz performances by Greek artists took place, along with an invited performance by the Joel LaRue Smith trio. Three nights of

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9. The Athens and Epidaurus Festival, known as the Athens Festival and as one of the oldest summer festivals in Greece, began in 1955. Spanning 67 years, the Festival has hosted numerous performances of music, dance and theatre with artists from Greece and abroad.

jazz and then, in 2014, a concert with Charles Loyd back at the Odeon of Herodus Atticus. The "No wall music" performance was given by the oud and piano player Dimitris Mikelis at the Pireos Street factory garden in 2016 while presenting the Najem project. Mikelis, who lived, studied and performed in the USA and Palestine, was returning to Greece, introducing a performance that was bridging jazz and the Arab world music. Next year, in 2017, "Jazz in the city" sessions took place. It was a two-day jazz marathon with the well-known Greek jazz radio producer Dimitris Trikas, who broadcast live on radio air the performances of six jazz groups from the Pireos Street garden: the Next Step Quintet, George Kontrafouris Trio, Harris Lambrakis Quartet, Ziad Rajab Trio, Adedeji Adetayo and the Haig Yazdjian Quartet. Harris Lambrakis with his ney, Adedeji Adetayo with Africanism and the Armenian Haig Yazdjian also established a dialogue between jazz and music from the Mediterranean area.

Last year, the opening of the Athens Festival took place at Pireos Street communicating in this way both the establishment of the specific space as a permanent performance venue of the Athens Festival along with the announcement of the Festival's headquarters moving to this ex-industrial area. As the Festival was adding new performance spaces to its venues, the Athens Conservatory became one such venue in 2018. It hosted the "Young Greek Classics" focusing on cello performances, and then the "Aqua Jazz Festival" as part of the "opening to the city" inception which was initiated in 2017.

Incorporating the Athens Conservatory into the Athens Festival: The Aqua Jazz Festival

The Athens Conservatory, taking over from the industrial spaces of Pireos Street, introduced the use of its own spaces for music performances, seminars and panel discussions during the second Aqua Jazz Festival in 2018.[10] As a cultural performance, the Aqua Jazz was incorporated into another cultural performance, the Athens Festival. A breakthrough in the use of spaces by the Athens Festival was the incorporation of one festival into another. This was a double faceted innovation, since never before had a four-day festival been incorporated into such a historical festival as the Athens Festival, and never before had the spaces of the Conservatory been used for the Athens Festival; eventually the jazz music genre was robustly presented – a genre that is less popular than electroacoustic and classical music in Greece. The Aqua Jazz Festival used the multipurpose basement spaces of the Conservatory. The Omega 2 (Ωμέγα 2) level – the atrium, the main stage and the experimental scene – hosted all the night music performances. The part of the basement which was inspired by ecclesiastical architecture –Despotopoulos had long experience in designing churches– was used for discussions and lectures. A small concert hall on the first floor was used for the students' performances and another one for the seminars.

The first Aqua Jazz Festival had already taken place on the island of Corfu in autumn 2015. The director of both Aqua festivals, Dimos Dimitriadis – who is the head of the Jazz Studies programme at the Department of Music Studies in Corfu – orches-

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10. The Athens Conservatory, the Jazz Studies Programme of the Music Department of Corfu and the Berklee Global Jazz Institute realised a jazz festival during the Athens and Epidaurus Festival; see https://aquajazz.gr/.

trated a week of seminars and performances, mixing high-skilled professional performers with the Department's undergraduate and graduate students in order to blend the genres of traditional Mediterranean music with jazz. Performances took place at the island's Ionian Academy and the art space Polytechnon, a space that holds a strong tradition for promoting the performing arts in Corfu. This was a small theatre in the beginning and eventually was renovated to a small club. It is one of the spaces in constant dialogue with the Jazz Studies programme of the Department of Music Studies, hosting performances by its graduates and undergraduates. In a way, the festival was moving from Corfu to Athens. The spatial planning of the Athens Conservatory building concentrates several spaces specifically designed for teaching, and other facilities for wider, audience-centred artistic and cultural uses. As a result of bringing together all these functions in a single, unique architectural unit and in a cultural performance, the Athens Festival, the use of the building was expanded gradually attracting artists, groups and other music festivals like Young Greek Classics, Tectonics and Panemos II on Xenakis.

The Athens Conservatory established a Jazz Studies programme in 2013. A part of the academic faculty and graduates of the Music Department from Corfu were incorporated into the Conservatory's teaching staff. The jazz music community grew substantially during the last decade due to the quite belated introduction of music studies in higher education. In the years 1985, 1991, 1992 and 1999, four music departments welcomed their first students. Jazz was the last or most recent addition to these music university programmes. Concurrently, the number of conservatories offering jazz studies increased, while many students chose to study abroad in well-known jazz music schools. The growth of the jazz community in Greece produced a more abundant and mature Greek jazz scene, a part of which was present at the Aqua Festival.

Greek Jazz Communities in Cultural Performance

The Greek jazz community is an art world, the internal world of Despotopoulos and a complex of artist networks.[11] These networks are displayed at the festival but most importantly they build the festival. A set of music performances structures the wider cultural performance. The space of the cultural performance enhances, changes or abolishes the identities, meanings and images of music genres. The creative space for dialogue that jazz and traditional genres of music offered was ideal for the combination and exchange of music ideas through performance and improvisation during the days of the second Aqua Jazz Festival. Loukas Bartatilas, in a documentary on the exhibition which he curated in 2019 "From the Building to the Community" on Bauhaus, Ioannis Despotopoulos and the Athens Conservatory, and which took place in the latter's spaces, explains:

> The tittle of the exhibition, "From the Building to the Community", originates from a text of Despotopoulos where he states that while planning this building, his intention was not only to design classrooms for the students of the Athens Conservatory where everyone could find her space to learn music, but to create a space functioning as a community of all these people who share their interest in music and arts. This is a "closed internal system" of a small community where its members share a coherent ideological orientation and act according to it.[12]

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11. Howard Becker, *Art Worlds* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), and Ruth Finnegan, *The Hidden Musicians: Music Making in an English Town* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

12. Loukas Bartatilas, "Το Bauhaus του Ιωάννη Δεσποτόπουλου: Άμεσες εντυπώσεις" ("Bauhaus of Ioannis Despotopoulos: Direct Impressions", presentation at the conference "Bauhaus and Greece: The New Idea of Synthesis in

During the Aqua Festival, the closed internal system, the small community, was structured by jazz music. The core of this community was specific people of the Conservatory, teachers and administration. This main network had, in the past or present, a dual presence, teaching both at the Conservatory and at the Music Department in Corfu. The community was expanded through the educational and performing networks of this core. Dimitris Kalantzis, a jazz pianist and head of the jazz studies programme at the Athens Conservatory, was a piano teacher at the Music Department in Corfu. During the festival days, he curated the concerts of his students performing on the first floor of the Conservatory, almost in parallel with dialogues and the beginning of evening concerts. Curating music performances and then performing with his ensemble at the Omega2 central stage, he was successively moving from one performance space to another in an effort to connect young musicians with the older ones, and he attended performers from abroad like Marco Pignataro from Berklee School of Music and Roni Eytan. Harris Lambrakis, a ney performer, was involved in the first Aqua Festival and the jazz marathon.[13] Present at the second Aqua too, Lambrakis gave a short seminar and performed with his group. Through dialogue and short performance examples at the seminar, international musicians from different backgrounds exchanged music ideas.

The community consisted of musicians with different but for-

Art and Architecture", Athens, 30th May - 1st June, 2019, accessed April 12, 2023, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5CN85zT8HI&t=5014s&ab_channel=BauhausConferenceAthens2019.

13. Ney is one of the oldest end-blown flutes. Harris Lambrakis is one of the musicians who in fact introduced ney in Greece. Lambrakis is a professional musician with numerous performances in the world and music collaborations as well as a teacher and instructor of the instrument; see http://www.harrislambrakis.com/.

mal jazz education experiences. Small samples of individual schools of jazz education gathered in an educational space, shaping their own community as practitioners of jazz, and this was a meeting of major significance. This community did not have clear boundaries and negotiated its identity. The music networks and worlds were visible during the festival, revealing how the community was shaped. I would also add that we should not confuse the spatial and temporary bond of a festival with an exclusive and hermetically restricted world, especially when these new ways of communication continue to re-draw the boundaries of the persons and the communities involved. In fact, this "porous texture" of these frames of space and time are the ones that shape such cultural performances, whether festivals, exhibitions or other events, to such attractive research subjects.

Discussing Research on Space and Music Performance

Besides multi-sited research methodology,[14] another methodological approach I used in order to understand the network of

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14. Multi-sited ethnography on urban festivals is mandatory, where the structure of the whole you are trying to capture is the result of the coincidence of actions happening at the same time in connected and interacting contexts; see George Marcus, *Ethnography Through Thick and Thin* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 50. George Marcus and Michael J. Fischer, in *Anthropology as a Cultural Critique* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), introduced the term "multilocale", which Marcus established later as "multi-sited". On using multi-sited ethnography and theory for studying music and space in festivals, see my "Όψεις μιας αστικής γεωγραφίας: Χώρος, μουσική και φεστιβάλ στην πόλη της Ξάνθης" ("Aspects of Urban Geography: Space, Music and Festivals in the City of Xanthi"), in Aspasia Theodosiou and Eleni Kallimopoulou (eds), *Μουσικές κοινότητες στην Ελλάδα του 21ου αιώνα* (*Music Communities in Greece of the 21st century*) (Athens: Pedio Publishing, 2020), 169-200.

musicians, spaces and performances inside the festival, its growth and hermeneutics, is the biography of a musician or what we call life history, with a special focus on music performance history. I decided to focus on the jazz viola player of the festival, Michalis Katachanas, who featured, due to his performing expressivity, as a cover photo in Francesco Martinelli's review for the Aqua Jazz Festival at the "allaboutjazz" website.[15] Following him meant following a series of his concerts in spaces other than the conservatory in Athens. In this way, I had the opportunity to understand an important part of the contemporary history of jazz, since the jazz viola performer was one of the first graduates of the Jazz programme in Corfu who continued his studies in the USA and returned to perform in Greece. The choice of following the performances was intended to stress the succession of performance spaces before reaching their final destination, the Aqua Festival. The spatial turnover unravels a much longer course of music performances, repetitions or changes of repertories and members of bands before the event of the festival, since it highlights the subdivision of the jazz world into numerous smaller communities scattered in clubs, concert halls, bars, experimental spaces, festivals and events. Another important element of these communities is that stage performers have as their audience other fellow musicians.

While festivals evolve, not only because they are fashionable but because they work as mechanisms of achieving targets for the cities, we understand that space emerges as a protagonist. Space seems to get transformed through celebratory events, imbued with the meaning and power of the occasion. Previous space func-

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15. See Fransesco Martinelli, "Athens Aqua Jazz Festival 2018", accessed May 12, 2023, https://www.allaboutjazz.com/athens-aqua-jazz-festival-2018-by-francesco-martinelli.

tion withdraws and gets forgotten and a temporary reshaping happens; a space reversal and its uses become a part of what Turner called "middle stage".[16] This celebratory space, whether a stage or another festival space, constitutes the ideal occasion for old and new, insiders and outsiders, to create a collective experience, to revive memories and feelings of belonging. In these cases, the performance of jazz music works as a kind of urban regeneration with a collective feeling. It is live not only at the frontstage and backstage, but it also creates a special dialogical frame.

The Aqua Festival and the Conservatory "owe" their existence to a set of performance spaces, whose succession was mentioned above. It is no longer unusual for venues featuring professional jazz performers to overlap and intersect with educational programmes and institutions. Following music at the festival field leads you to follow consecutively people and spaces. I explored their routes before, during and after their music performances at the Conservatory. I explored their everyday life, their rehearsals, organising events and choices where to perform. I attended lessons and exams of jazz music students at the Conservatory. I attended performances of other music genres at the Conservatory and explored all the performing spaces. I visited art exhibitions, presentations and lectures in the same spaces, which hosted events not related to music. I call this process "hanging out". Sometimes you need deep hanging out, sometimes surface hanging out. This methodological approach and way of thinking about cultural performances is in a way connected to Despotopoulos' philosophy on buildings and communities.

Foucault understands heterotopia as "capable of juxtaposing

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16. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-structure* (Chicago: Aldine, 1969).

in a single real place several places".[17] The Festival is "Scenes from an exhibition for an exhibition", just to paraphrase the title of Mussorgsky's music work.[18] The Festival is the ideal juxtaposition machine of these scenes but immediately acts as an incubator. Music spaces are not empty containers but the collection of practices of visible and invisible musicians. They contain the route from an experimental scene or exam concert to the festival stage. Clusters of performance venues are integrated in the spaces of festival performance. Despotopoulos stated that we should notice two concurrent directions in social phenomena and the city's organisation: from partiality to generality, from the "self" to "us", and vice versa. There is no clear demarcation in any function or performance, since one cannot happen without the other. They all constitute a network, an overall phenomenon.[19]

The Festival incarnates a picture, a frame, an idea that incorporates many others. Even if the Festival is traced to a specific number of events, during a specific time frame, and if these are realised during specific performances, they are born in the life of the community during the year. Past and present are mixed. Hans-Georg Gadamer, in *Truth and Method*, gave emphasis on this enigmatic temporary nature of festivals, ascribing it to its repetitive nature, even if every festival is neither the copy of a previous one, nor the memory of it. Consequently, its deep sense is that it is always something different.[20] Cultural performances are more

17.   Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces", in *Diacritics: A Review of Contemporary Criticism* 16, no. 1 (1986): 25.

18. "Pictures at an Exhibition" is a piano suite written by Modest Musorgsky. It is the musical reflection of a tour of an exhibition with works of the architect Victor Hartmann.

19. See Despotopoulos, "Ο οικισμός. Η παραγωγική Πόλη-Κοινότητα".

20. Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (New York: Continuum, 1975), 212.

dialogical and polyphonic than "texts" to read. They will always be as Bakhtin characterised them: dynamic means to grasp reality, not the naturalistic, fleeting and scattered side of reality, but the process of becoming, its meaning and direction.[21] Cultural performances are always microcosms. They take identity and steal it, scattering the keys of reading it so that all doors will be open, exposable, ready to get discovered. They reveal and reconstitute identity in order to reconstruct it.[22]

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21. Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and his World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 211.

22. Robert Cantwell, *Ethnomimesis: Folklife and the Representation of Culture* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 242.

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The Delphic *Prometheus Bound* (1927, 1930): Jesus Christ's Golgotha Transforms into Neo-Romantic Aesthetics

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ABSTRACT

The Delphic Festivals are considered to be an exceptional moment of antiquity's revival in modern history. This was the first systematic and organised project in Greece, set in a specific archaeological site and including several events such as theatrical performances, athletics, ecclesiastic music concerts, and folk craftsmanship. The "Apollonian" couple Eva Palmer-Sikelianos and Angelos Sikelianos, in order to revive the ancient Greek spirit, visualised a "Wagnerian Bayreuth", trying to (re)cover all phases of Greek civilisation: ancient, Byzantine and modern. Two performances of the Aeschylean *Prometheus Bound* were staged as part of the festivals at the "timeless landscape" of Delphi in 1927 and 1930. A crucial factor in both performances was space: the Golgotha-like rock of the first performance transformed into a scenery with a timeless aesthetic expression in the second event; in fact, the setting was the only thing that changed between the

two stagings. It has been a matter of dispute, over the years, if the two performances of the Delphic *Prometheus* were more Neo-Romantic than ancient Greek. This essay tries to revise the prevailing view about Angelos Sikelianos and Eva Palmer-Sikelianos as two mere lovers of antiquity, and to explore the roots of their theatrical performances and their intention to choose Delphi as the metropolis of spiritual rebirth. In addition, the essay analyses the semiotics of scenic space and other artistic factors, and at the same time examines the portrayal of Prometheus as the crucified Son of man.

Keywords: Aeschylus, Angelos Sikelianos, Eva Palmer-Sikelianos, Delphic Festivals, *Prometheus Bound*

Introduction

The Delphic Festivals live in memory as an emblematic moment in the history of antiquity's resurrection. Not only were they a definitive milestone in the relatively short theatrical history of modern Greece, but also they are regarded as a great artistic achievement in the history of staging ancient drama in Europe. For many, the Delphic Festivals stand as the "magnum opus" of poet Angelos Sikelianos and his American wife Eva Palmer-Sikelianos. For others, they constitute a bourgeois expression of nostalgia for antiquity, but, in general, they mark the beginning of the revival of ancient tragedy in Greece. In this essay, I try to revise the prevailing view of the Delphic Festivals in 1927 and 1930 as a mere reproduction of antiquity's grandeur, and I attempt to reconnect the contradictory elements which produced the puzzle of the Delphic Festivals while focusing on performing space. My purpose is to reveal the ideological background that shaped those

cultural events, by bringing to the fore Prometheus' representation as a crucified Christ, in order to show that Sikelianos' experiment was Neo-Romantic rather than ancient Greek or Byzantine.[1] On May 9 and 10, 1927, a personal vision of Angelos Sikelianos and Eva Palmer-Sikelianos took place in Delphi. The whole project was an embodiment of the "Delphic Idea", Sikelianos' worldview whose main goal was a worldwide cultural renaissance centred in Delphi. The reason for that nostalgia for antiquity had to do with the 1922 Asia Minor Catastrophe and the failure of the "Great Idea" of Greece to expand to the East. As a reaction, Sikelianos built up his own great idea, stressing that the Delphic Festivals did not aim at the "nostalgic restoration of a great aesthetic capital" but offered a choice for the creation of a global spiritual "order of general enlightenment and action".[2]Alternatively, as poet Nikiforos Vrettakos remarked, for Sikelianos, Delphi "was not the place where we can resurrect what has died forever but the place where the beginning of a new life can spring".[3]

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1. This essay is an extended and more detailed version of a presentation delivered at the "Performing Space 2022" conference, organised by the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of Peloponnese in collaboration with the Technical University of Madrid (Nafplio, Greece, 27-28 August 2022). The essay had previously been presented to the Annual Joint Symposium on the Performance of Greek and Roman Drama, organised by the Universities of Oxford and of London at Ioannou Centre for Classical and Byzantine Studies on 24 June 2019. All English translations from works originally in Greek are mine.

2. Angelos Sikelianos, "Η προσπάθειά μου στους Δελφούς. Τα πραγματικά κίνητρα" ("My Attempt in Delphi. The Real Motives"), Eleftheron Vima, August 26, 1926.

3. Nikiforos Vrettakos, "Το βαθύτερο νόημα του Σικελιανού" ("The Deepest Sense of Sikelianos"), in *Epitheorisi technis* 6 (1955): 420.

"Opsis": Scenography and Costumes

The critic Eleni Ourani, one of the spectators of the 1927 *Prometheus*, notes:

> Scenery at the beginning was rather annoying; a tall rock with
> realistic claims, which seemed unceasingly fake, was placed at
> the bottom of the orchestra. Even its colour, very pink, did not
> conform to the dark colour of the surrounding mountains. […]
> The artificial rock, despite its height, became in a while what it
> should have been from the beginning, a stylised scenery that
> aims only to give the impression of the rock and to help the
> movement of the actors.[4]

In fact, the real protagonist of the Delphic performances was the
landscape. It overshadowed the realistic/expressionistic rock
which Ourani describes. Therefore, three years later, at the second Delphic Festival, when another performance of *Prometheus*
was staged, the scenery was altered into something entirely new.
The huge rock was substituted by a low platform of cement with
its two edges ending in a staircase and an erected rocky column
in the middle of the platform, which would serve as a symbolic
cross, on which Prometheus would be crucified. According to Tsiambaos, the scenery for the second Delphic Festival (created by
the architect Georgios Kontoleon) testified to the cultivation of a
strict, archaic aspect of modernism: "A simple and abstract architecture, which is modern just because it refers to the past",[5] a con-

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4. Alkis Thrylos (Eleni Ourani), *Το ελληνικό θέατρο. 1927-1933* (*Greek Theatre.
1927-1933*), (Athens: Eleni and Kostas Ouranis Foundation, 1977), 51-52. Eleni
Ourani was publishing using the name "Alkis Thrylos".

5. Kostas Tsiambaos, *Αμφίθυμη νεωτερικότητα* (*Unimaginable Modernity*),
(Thessaloniki: Politeia, 2017), 69.

struction which did not only serve the performance but also proposed a harmonious relation between modernity and antiquity. In other words, a performing space that referred to the idea of deploying the classical past, a space according to which the relation between past and present becomes aesthetic, while the concept of "continuity" is perceived metaphorically and artistically rather than materially and historically: "Since the past lives stylistically in the present, continuity is subcutaneous and therefore there is no risk of challenging the past and tradition".[6] In the end, what is at stake is a continuity that is suggested by being associated with the timeless archaic landscape.

In fact, Palmer-Sikelianos did not focus on the mythical scenery; the tall rock or the symbolic cross was a secondary issue. Her real concern was to tune in with the ancient Greek architects, who placed the ancient theatre inside the timeless landscape. A few years later, in a letter to a collaborator of hers, she writes: "The form of ancient Greek tragedy and the shape of the ancient Greek Theatre are timeless values", adding that there is something that releases natural magnetic power when the audience is seated around a circle, looking down at a point which becomes their own centre of perception, instead of looking straight ahead at a flat perspective that is separated from that centre.[7]

Modernity was reflected in clothing too. Regarding costumes, fabric was an important component of "opsis". Palmer-Sikelianos used silk and claimed that, even "if Aeschylus did not have silk, he would accept this material in this particular work".[8] Even if she

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6. Dimitris Tziovas, "Η ελληνικότητα και η γενιά του '30" ("Greekness and the Generation of 1930s"), in *Cogito* 6 (2007): 6.

7. Eva Palmer-Sikelianos, *Επιστολές της Εύας Πάλμερ-Σικελιανού για το αρχαίο δράμα* (*Letters of Eva Palmer-Sikelianos on Ancient Drama*), ed. John Peter Anton (Athens: Livanis, 1997), 68-69.

8. Eva Palmer-Sikelianos, *Ιερός Πανικός* (*Upward Panic*), (Athens: Exantas,

appeared to be interested in making the Oceanids' clothing with rich folds, in order to highlight the stylistic qualities of the chorus' body movement and to reconstruct "the positions that the body representations depict on the ancient vessels",[9] her interest in hand-woven textiles on a loom was strictly related to the nostalgia for the pre-industrial society, an interest closely linked to "the primitivistic tendencies of modernism".[10]

Music and Chorus

Palmer-Sikelianos suggested that in "rebuilding the chorus of ancient Greek drama, the essential element that one needs, is music", stating that the music composers by that time had failed because they had received a purely European education, which was not sufficient for the composition of a Greek chorus accompaniment.[11] Unlike her predecessors, she chose her Byzantine music teacher Konstantinos Psachos as the composer of the choral parts, in order to suggest that the achievements of Byzantine music attested to the continuation of the ancient Greek musical tradition. Interestingly, although Palmer-Sikelianos did not want any classical instruments during the performance, Psachos insisted on plac-

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1992), 125.

9. Antonis Glytzouris, "Resurrecting Ancient Bodies: The Tragic Chorus in *Prometheus Bound* and *Suppliant Women* at the Delphic Festivals in 1927 and 1930", in *International Journal of the History of Sport* 27, no.12 (2010): 2102. Glytzouris states that "the similarities between the views of Sikelianos on machine-made Western dress and those which were exhibited through the Arts and Crafts Movement are also interesting".

10. Stavros Tsitsiridis, "Ο George Cram Cook και οι Δελφικές Εορτές" ("George Cram Cook and the Delphic Festivals"), in *Logeion* 7 (2017): 292.

11. Eva Palmer-Sikelianos, "Η τραγωδία κατά Σικελιανών" ("Tragedy According to Sikelianos"), in *Theatro* 11 (1963): 67.

ing a small classical orchestra behind the paper rock scenery. That caused a number of problems, mainly because of the miscommunication between the hidden musicians and the chorus girls.[12] However, even if Palmer-Sikelianos failed to raise the question of continuity between the Byzantine and the ancient Greek tradition through music composition, she did manage to suggest it as an appropriate method for the interpretation of ancient drama, especially with regard to the choral parts. Leontis, trying to figure out the real reason for the usage of Byzantine music, suggests that it had to do primarily with Palmer-Sikelianos' need for "Greekness": Sikelianos' wife could see herself as the first woman in Greece to stage an ancient drama in an ancient theatre, as an American who

> would finally collaborate with Greeks to put Greece on the map with a total made-in-Greece revival: a tragedy performed by Greeks in demotic Greek [language], sung to melodies composed by Psachos in the tones of Byzantine music, and mobilised with the rhythms and steps of Greek folk dances.[13]

The system of the chorus' movements and gestures was probably the most interesting element of *Prometheus* at Delphi. Trying to identify what motivated Palmer-Sikelianos to present a chorus whose dancing imitated the movements and postures depicted on ancient Greek vases, one must acknowledge as the main source of her inspiration the famous American dancer Isadora Duncan.[14] Also, influenced by the theoretical views of Édouard

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12. The problems were solved during the repetition of the performance (when the rock turned into a platform made of cement) because the musicians were visible by members of the chorus.

13. Artemis Leontis, *Eva Palmer-Sikelianos. A Life in Ruins* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019), 136.

14. Glytzouris, "Resurrecting Ancient Bodies," 2094. The Avant-Garde artist

Schuré, who suggested that the chorus should acquire a more material substance and, thus, had provided detailed technical instructions for its staging, Palmer-Sikelianos tried to make the tragic chorus "a work of living art", placing it at the heart of the drama.[15] She turned to the golden age of ancient Greek pottery, where the head and legs of the figures depicted on the vases were in profile, while their bodies were represented frontally, a body movement that the American director designated as "Apollonian movement".[16] Tsatsoulis maintains that this view coincides with the contemporary perception of physical theatre, according

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belonged to a community of European Neo-Romantics who believed that the ancient and modern woman/man is a product of nature who uses the timeless "solar plexus" as the centre of her/his expression (referring to dance expression).

15. Eleni Κoνεου, "Βαγκνερισμός-Νιτσεϊσμός στις Δελφικές Εορτές των Σικελιανών υπό το κιαροσκούρο του Édouard Schuré" ("Wagnerism-Nietzscheism in the Delphic Festivals Under Chiaroscuro of ÉdouardSchuré"), in Areti Vasiliou et al. (eds), *Ιστορία και Ιστοριογραφία του Νεοελληνικού Θεάτρου: Πρακτικά συνεδρίου προς τιμήν του Θόδωρου Χατζηπανταζή* (*History and Historiography of the Modern Greek Theatre. Proceedings of Conference in Honour of Theodoros Hatzipantazis*) (Rethymno: Institute of Mediterranean Studies, 2020), 302-303. According to Tsitsiridis, the imitation of movements and postures from ancient Greek vases and sculpture had been prepared by the publication of the book by Maurice Emmanuel *La Danse grecque antique d' après les monuments figures* (Παρίσι: Hachette, 1896). As the researcher suggests, "the idea was apparently more widespread at that time, as in December 1899, the French newspaper *Le Théâtre* published an extensive article entitled 'Théâtre antique –Gestesmodernes. La Grèce', in which ancient vases and sculptures were contrasted in detail with modern theatre, opera and dance performances". See also Tsitsiridis, "O George Cram Cook και οι Δελφικές Εορτές", 292.

16. Glytzouris, "Resurrecting Ancient Bodies", 2097. The author suggests that "the presentation of the chorus, which the spectators of the Delphic performances experienced, was certainly an artistic innovation. However, the chorus episodes were almost autonomous musical dance events, independent from the remaining body of the performance. Moreover, the text of the tragedy itself was not perceptible, since the emphasis fell on the mime and the music and dance presentation".

to which the body loses its cultural identity; he states that Palmer-Sikelianos, with her anti-realistic approach to the body of the actor, "suggests the deconstruction of the body so that it can regain its physical condition and capabilities".[17]

The Christian Prometheus

The performances at Delphi raised an intriguingly complex issue, both artistic and ideological: the correlation between Prometheus and Christ, an obvious link between antiquity and the Byzantine era.[18] The poet Kostas Karyotakis, who was among the spectators, refers "to the myth of Prometheus and the Christian tradition in a unified symbol, forming a timeless image of the superior man who struggles and is crushed by his ideals".[19] The parallelism between the Divine Drama and Prometheus' suffocation is portrayed in the newspapers:

> And the stones were gone. The curtain of the temple of the soul swayed. [...] Prometheus suffered to the music of Christ. [...] And long before Christ, Prometheus avenged the poor people who later crucified Christ. And Aeschylus, the creator of unrelenting suffering, gave "The Almighty Man".[20]

17. Dimitris Tsatsoulis, *Δυτικό ηγεμονικό παράδειγμα και διαπολιτισμικό θέατρο* (*Western Hegemonic Paradigm and Intercultural Theatre*), (Athens: Papazisis, 2017), 102.

18. A newspaper article reports that the spectators "saw the rock of Prometheus as they saw the cross of Christ"; Anonymous a, "*Προμηθέας Δεσμώτης*" ("*Prometheus Bound*"), Esperini, May 12, 1927.

19. Kostas Karyotakis, "Δελφικές Εορτές" ("Delphic Festivals"), in *Alexandrini Techni* 9 (1927): 11.

20. N. Laidis, "Το δελφικόν θαύμα. Ένας πνευματικός θρίαμβος" ("The Delphic Miracle. A Spiritual Triumph"), Esperini, May 11, 1927. The same columnist

Papadaki suggests that the relation of Prometheus to Christ was the key element that urged the German spectators to interpret Sikelianos' performance as a *Passionspiel*.[21] The same reception pattern continued in the 1930 version: "Prometheus with his golden coat, long blonde hair and his generosity, without a mask, resembled the Nazarene. He was a Nazarene but a Greek Nazarene".[22]

Following Nikolai Berdyaev, Sikelianos supports the "Christian resurrection" which links the principle of a person with the principle of the community. Christ is seen as another prophet and his myth is placed among the great myths of religion; the Christ of the mysteries is a Dionysian Christ.[23] It is important to note that, according to the Delphic ideological background, there was no conflict between Hellenism and Christianity but a substantial union. Sikelianos does not seem to be interested in "Dogmatic Christianity" but in "Orphism", a set of religious beliefs and practices originating in the ancient Greek and Hellenistic worlds.[24] Finally, one could say that Sikelianos made the choice of staging *Prometheus Bound* mainly because it is a play that serves the ideal of ecumenical renaissance, in a similar way as Christianity does. The idea of a ritual continuity between antiquity and Byzantium/

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describes the performance as a "sacred opera", equating Prometheus' rock with Golgotha and the Oceanids with the "Maries of Christ".

21. Eleni Papadaki, *Πίσω από το πέπλο της ωραιότητας* (*Behind the Veil of Beauty*), (Athens: Benaki Museum, 2018), 187.

22. Anonymous b, "Εξαιρετική επιτυχία των Δελφικών Εορτών" ("Extraordinary Success of the Delphic Festivals"), Patris, May 30, 1930.

23. Papadaki, *Πίσω από το πέπλο της ωραιότητας*, 161.

24. Vasilis Kremmydas, "Ο ιδεολογικός κόσμος του Άγγελου Σικελιανού" ("The Ideological World of Angelos Sikelianos"), in *O Politis* 97 (2002): 16. Orphism is a mystical Greek religion that offers purification of the soul from inherent evil. It was named after Orpheus, a Thracian legendary poet and musician, who tried to retrieve his wife Eurydice from Hades, playing his music.

folklore offered a Christianised imagining of antiquity, which corresponded to the Helleno-Christian beliefs of artists, spectators, and critics.[25]

Ideological and Artistic Background

The Delphic Festivals were a project that attempted to globalise a Greek cultural event while also ideologising an archaeological site, in order to "objectify the subjective process of creation", in other words, in order to create a new objectivity that later would be called "Greekness".[26] Since 1905, Sikelianos had already told his wife that "Delphi is the chosen centre where a new temple must be built. Not a temple of marble columns, but one with education, economy, and justice as its pediments".[27] In this sentence, Sikelianos echoes some of the values of "community consciousness", an ideological proposition based on philosophers such as Friedrich Nietzsche and theoreticians such as Oswald Spengler, according to whom "community authority is proposed instead of parliamentarism, [and] Christianity [is seen] in the spirit of an archaic mystery".[28] One of the basic conceptual principles of this worldview is the phrase the poet repeatedly uses in his writings when he refers to the "Promethean state of man".

25. Evangelos Kaltsounas, Tonia Karaoglou, Natali Minioti, Eleni Papazoglou, "'Communal Hellenism' and Ancient Drama Performances in Greece (1975-1995): The Ritual Quest", in *Journal of Greek Media and Culture* 7, no.1 (2021): 77.

26. Andreas Ioannidis, "Ο αισθητικός λόγος στο Μεσοπόλεμο ή η αναζήτηση της χαμένης ολότητας" ("The Aesthetic Discourse in the Interwar Period or the Search for the Lost Totality"), in Yorgos Mavrokordatos (ed.), Βενιζελισμός και αστικός εκσυγχρονισμός (*Venizelism and Urban Modernisation*), (Heraklion: University of Crete Press, 1988), 383.

27. Palmer-Sikelianos, *Ιερός Πανικός,* 82-83.

28. Glytzouris, "Resurrecting Ancient Bodies", 2102.

According to Kremmydas, Sikelianos' idealism is "part of the European occult movement […] which he communicated with and which he was trying to influence in order to make it more Greek".[29] On the other hand, the Delphic Idea was also based on the "communalist" proposal, which expressed the ideals of the major Anti-Enlightenment ideological movement: "a synthesis of the communities of the Aryan race in that 'diamond of the Earth' (Greece) based around the metropolis of Delphi".[30] In a documented attempt to dissociate Sikelianos from reactionary ideologies, Svoronos suggests that in the case of Sikelianos, "starting with a grid of ideas that has been, fairly or not, the ideology of European fascism, […] did not lead the Greek thinkers to the same destination. […] They escaped the danger […] and joined the camp of freedom and justice and played an important role in the struggles of Greek people".[31]

By implementing Sikelianos' ideological project, Eva Palmer-Sikelianos inaugurated a new period in the staging of ancient tragedy in Greece, although she was not a professional theatre director. Being a lover of Richard Wagner, she conceived *Prometheus* as a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. With an ideological basis in the movement of Neo-Romanticism (Wagner, Nietzsche), and having adopted Neo-Romantic theatrical models (Isadora and Raymond Duncan, Parisian Symbolist theatre), Palmer-Sikelianos gathered all these influential elements and transformed them into a unified theatrical experience, setting up a directorial interpretation in which she instilled her personal intuition along with her artistic criterion, and thereby weaving into the canvas of the

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29. Kremmydas, "Ο ιδεολογικός κόσμος του Άγγελου Σικελιανού", 15-16.

30. Glytzouris, "Resurrecting Ancient Bodies", 2102.

31. Nikos Svoronos, "Προτάσεις για τη μελέτη της ιδεολογίας του Σικελιανού" ("Suggestions for the Study of Sikelianos 'Ideology"), in *Nea Estia* 1306 (1981): 1598.

Delphic Idea the iconic introduction of Greekness. Thus, "through the rethinking of Greekness in the area of myth and symbols, each historical period of Hellenism could now interpret equivalently any other one".[32] The community at Delphi was, therefore, a kind of ark that preserved antiquity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, a step-by-step analysis of all the theatrical and ideological factors of the Delphic Festivals shows that the archaic, Byzantine, and modern folk performances of Eva Palmer-Sikelianos and Angelos Sikelianos were really made up of Neo-Romantic materials and consisted of various divergent eras, styles, and elements. First, the performing space, which initially comprised a scenography created as an expressionist construction with realistic intentions, found its real destination, three years later, in a stage of archaic modernism, whose ultimate goal was to highlight the timeless landscape. Second, the costumes had, of course, an ancient look but were made on the loom and conformed to the trend which Palmer-Sikelianos had already adopted at the Symbolist Theatre in Paris; they were also influenced by the Arts and Crafts movement of that era. Third, the musical composition resembled Byzantine hymns but was created for a western-type orchestra hidden inside the fake rock, following the Western European model of the musical accompaniment of ancient tragedies. Four, the famous chorus movements, although

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32. Antonis Glytzouris, *Η σκηνοθετική τέχνη στην Ελλάδα. Η ανάδυση και η εδραίωση του σκηνοθέτη στο νεοελληνικό θέατρο* (*The Art of Directing in Greece. The Emergence and Establishment of the Director in Modern Greek Theatre*), (Heraklion: University of Crete Press, 2014), 425.

they reproduced representations found on ancient Greek vases, actually resulted from the influence that Édouard Schuré, contemporary dance tendencies, Isadora Duncan and the Avant-Garde had on Palmer-Sikelianos. Five, the Christian figure of Prometheus, although it was supposed to indicate the continuity between antiquity and Byzantium, was in fact an expression of contemporary mysticism pertaining to the occult movement. Even the ideological background of Angelos Sikelianos and Eva Palmer-Sikelianos was built with Neo-Romantic materials. It was made to represent all phases of Hellenism (ancient Greek, Byzantine, and modern folk culture) but in its background one can detect movements of the late nineteenth century (Symbolism, Decadence, Aestheticism) as well as a critique of the French Enlightenment and Parliamentarism.

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Bathing Waters as Urban Activators: Observing Ongoing Practices in Inland European Cities

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ABSTRACT

This essay aims to discuss an ongoing organised citizen mobilisation for urban bathing in public spaces. Even though there are several isolated studies on collective bathing practices carried out in urban public space, there is still limited research that has delved into the different examples by bringing them together, comparing them and understanding their underlying mechanisms. In response to this gap, this essay begins to collect and unravel citizen initiatives related to bathing waters, recognising bathing waters as urban activators due to their political, social and spatial impact. Therefore, in this essay, the urban bathing practices found to date are analysed and classified into three main groups: cases preserving existing public bathing spaces; practices reprograming existing open urban waters into bathing waters; and processes reinventing old public bathing scenarios. Furthermore, the underlying mechanisms identified so far have

been summarised into three key themes: (i) inland European cities are the most active in testing new bathing water models; (ii) the collaboration, policy framework and resources are essential in these processes; and (iii) design is the tool to enable experience and iteration.

Keywords: bathing waters, urban landscape, water culture, public space, communal practices

Introduction[1]

"Bathing water" is a term used by the European Union since the 1970s to refer to all natural surface waters suitable for human bathing in Europe.[2] The European Union recognises that open bathing is one of the most important leisure activities in the continent; it also contributes to personal well-being and social equality. Policies safeguarding bathing water quality and management, as well as the exchange of bathing water information, are laid down in the EU Bathing Water Directive (BWD) originally introduced in 1976 and updated in 2006. This BWD preserves,

protects and improves the environment and minimises human risks.

Although European directives exclude the waters in human-made architecture for bathing (for instance, spas, swimming pools, thermal complexes), I will use the term "bathing water" for all waters programmed for the practice of bathing which are public in character, without distinction between natural and artificial bathing spaces. This means that, in this study, bathing waters are open or enclosed, completely designed or simply improvised, warm or cold. Moreover, my research assumes that water necessarily has a spatial connotation associated with it and, therefore, water indicates space. For this reason, this study does not refer to water spaces but, rather, to bathing waters or bathing spaces.

The presence of bathing waters is capable of greatly transforming the space[3] and behaviour[4] of nearby human and other living beings. Some European citizens already had acknowledged rivers, fountains, ponds and other public waters as their urban

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3. Just as water transforms the natural landscape, its presence, use and management influence the construction of the built environment. Water determines the cities we inhabit and has the capacity to transform them. See Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World, 1750-1840*, trans. Jocelyn Phelps (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), and Carl S. Smith, *City Water, City Life: Water and the Infrastructure of Ideas in Urbanizing Philadelphia, Boston, and Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014).

4. "Collective bathing spaces may be called queer by definition in their insistence on reinvention and appropriation on bringing our bodies into public life"; see Christie Pearson, *The Architecture of Bathing: Body, Landscape, Art* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2020), 24. "The function of the baths is the creation and recycling of private and public fantasies, the transactions between them and the invention, testing and possible introduction of new forms of behaviour"; see Rem Koolhaas, Elia Zenghelis, Madelon Vreisendorp, and Zoe Zenghelis, "Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture", in *Casabella* No 378 (1973): 42-45.

bathing playground since the urban drift of the 1800s, defying municipal bans where they existed or freely bathing in less monitored waters. "Swimming/bathing guerrilla"[5] has continued ever since and has played an important role in raising awareness of the citizens' need for bathing waters. Nevertheless, I discuss something that has been developing from the 1970s to the present day and is going beyond mere acts of social disobedience: an ongoing organised citizen mobilisation for urban bathing in public space. After a period of time when free bathing spaces became dissociated from urban spaces and routines, such mobilisation is currently making a comeback in European cities, activating a renewed political, social and spatial dimension.

Even though there are several isolated studies on collective bathing practices carried out in urban public space, there is still limited research that has delved into the different examples by bringing them together, comparing them and understanding their underlying mechanisms. In response to this gap, this essay begins to collect and unravel citizen initiatives related to bathing waters, recognising bathing waters as urban activators due to their political, social and spatial impact. Based on the examples analysed, in order to understand the apparatus behind their performance, we formulate three research questions: (RQ1) "in which cities do we find public bathing waters activating the urban landscape (where)?"; (RQ2) "what causes these practices to emerge (why)?"; (RQ3) "in what way do these initiatives take shape in space (how)?"

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5. "Swimming/bathing guerrilla" is a term used by individual or communal initiatives claiming urban swimming/bathing to refer to actions of social disobedience (for example, bathing in waters where bathing is not allowed, placing ponds in the public space without permission, etc.).

Methodology

To answer our research questions, this essay first researched the ongoing urban bathing spaces that fulfilled three premises: being recent examples, being initiated by individuals or communities, being performed in public space. The sources used are the following: books and architectural magazines focused on the theme of bathing spaces, citizen practices and public space activation; the city itself through the observation of bathing waters and bathing spaces; digital platforms, where the initiatives report on their activity, such as websites, blogs and Instagram, Facebook or Twitter accounts; the actors behind the initiatives by conducting interviews with them.

Therefore, the urban bathing practices found to date have been analysed and classified into three main groups: cases that are preserving existing public bathing spaces, either by safeguarding water quality or protecting architectural structures; practices that are reprogramming existing open urban waters into bathing waters (for example, making them accessible, usable, clean and safe);[6] and processes that are reinventing old public bathing scenarios, now extinct, in communal settings adapted to the present context. Having investigated the practices, insights

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6. Water, if you do not know how to behave in it, is a very dangerous medium in which you can easily drown. This danger factor has made the waters of seas, rivers and lakes very feared and swimming has become essential knowledge in the last two centuries; in fact, learning to swim is part of the school curriculum in many Western countries. To ensure safety in the water, in the first instance, this knowledge must be transferred. In addition to learning to swim, there are other ways to improve water safety: the presence of lifeguards, the design of swimming aids, the implementation of basic rules or the development and communication of information material.

have been extracted that can shed light on the discussion of the three research questions.

Findings: Ongoing Practices

Preserving existing public bathing spaces. Switzerland is one of the countries where existing public bathing areas have been best preserved. Proof of such preservation is found in the city of Zurich, where original baths from the middle of the nineteenth century are still in use and people freely bathe in the river Limmat (Figure 1), and in Basel, where bathing in public fountains is an enduring tradition highly supported by the city council and the company that manages the water, the Industrielle Werke Basel (IWB). This is due to three reasons: firstly, it is a privileged situation where the water comes directly from the Alps to the cities, not being polluted along its course; secondly, there is a long tradition of using water for bathing in both cold and warm forms; and finally, there are clear policies about water quality and the safety of bathers established for a long period of time. In this context, an evocative example of the continuity of a public bathing space based on safeguarding the protection of an existing architectural structure is the process related to the reconstruction of the Bains des Pâquis (Baths of Pâquis) in Geneva. Since its opening in 1872, this bathing space has been very popular among the citizens of Geneva. The Bains des Pâquis are located on the Lake Geneva and became public property in 1890. Forty years later, the original wood structure was demolished and rebuilt using concrete according to the project of Louis Archinard and Henry Roche. In 1980, the town of Geneva wanted again to demolish and rebuild the existing baths, which triggered a huge mobilisation of neighbourhood protests that led to the foundation of the As-

Figure.1. Unterer Letten, Zurich. Christian Senti. 2022

sociation d'usagers des Bains des Pâquis (AUBP). The AUBP sought to convince the city council that the citizens did not want the new structure and that it was not technically necessary. There were many meetings between architects and officials, but the citizens failed to stop the reconstruction project, which was approved of in 1987. The AUBP then decided to call a referendum so that the citizens could decide whether they wanted the new structure or the renovation of the existing baths. The results were against the demolition, and the city of Geneva entrusted the restoration and management of the Bains des Pâquis to the AUBP. The project was carried out by a team comprised of architects Marcellin Barthassat, Claude Butty, Gabriele Curonici and Jacques Menoud, as well as the engineer Jean-Pierre Cêtre, and the AUBP became the administrator of the space.

Reprograming existing urban waters into public bathing waters. Most European inland capitals are built around rivers, a landscape where, until the 1900s, people washed their clothes, bathed, sailed or fished. After industrialisation, many of them were re-

signed to a purely infrastructural programme (for example, transportation, industrial discharge, energy production). However, "the gradual migration of heavy industry from urban centres in the 1980s and 1990s has led to urban waterways becoming, once again, a contested space in many cities".[7] In the German capital Berlin, already in 1997, two recently graduated architects at the time, Jan Edler and Tim Edler, envisioned the possibility of reprogramming an urban canal in the city for bathing and designed a large natural pool.[8] They enthusiastically submitted their project, called Fluss Bad Berlin (River Bath Berlin), to the city council, which found the idea to be very good but unrealistic. The project remained forgotten until the Edlers presented it to the Lafarge Holcim Award 2011/2012, one of the world's most important awards for architecture and sustainable urban development. In this case, their proposal was one of the winners. This laid the groundwork for the founding in 2012 of a non-profit citizens' organisation, which was joined by thirteen other bathing enthusiasts who are working together with the city of Berlin on implementing the project in the city. Other initiatives with similar objectives have emerged in European cities such as Paris, where the Laboratoire des baignades urbaines expérimentales (Urban Experimental Bathing Laboratory) have been recovering the canals and fountains of the capital through weekly bathing events held since 2012, or Vienna, where Schwimmverein Donaukanal (Danube Canal Swimming Club) was founded in 2020 to bring back the tradition of bathing in the Danube.

Other existing urban waters to be reprogrammed as bathing

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7. Andreas Ruby, Yuma Shinohara, and SAM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum (eds), *Swim City* (Basel: Christoph Merian Verlag, 2019), 11.

8. A "natural pool" is a chlorine-free water surface with a water monitoring system that is as close as possible to what a natural body of water would be.

spaces are public fountains, which are spaces that, before water reached the households, were vital social meeting points in the urban landscape. That communal role was gradually lost and public fountains remained in most cases as decorative spaces deprived of their initial use. Nevertheless, it is very common in Western cities to see more and more waves of people cooling off in public fountains during heat waves, whether bathing is prohibited or not. These are clean open urban waters, more inviting and safer than the waters of rivers, ponds or lakes. It could be imagined that existing urban fountains could easily become urban bathing waters, but there are limited examples of practices that are going further than the swimming/bathing guerrilla.

With the aim of giving back to these spaces their social importance, and of linking the latter with the tradition of bathing, the collective Hotel Regina has been converting existing fountains in Switzerland into warm bathing waters since 2016. For this purpose, they train Chauffeurs/Chauffeurrsses des fontaines (water heating experts) and look for water spaces with potential. Although the collective had started this process as a swimming/bathing guerrilla, at that time their perseverance joined together the interests of a range of agents, making an institutionalised conversion feasible. The idea was inspired by the city of Basel, where citizens are allowed to bathe in any of the city's fountains, including the historical ones, during the summer. As bathing in fountains was already possible in the warm months, Hotel Regina wanted to invite the citizens of Basel to be able to bathe in the cool months as well, following a historical Swiss culture of warm water bathing. However, the water in the springs of Basel is cold, so Hotel Regina devised some strategies to heat it, including the invention of a mobile wood stove. In addition, the collective designed a specific ritual to perform the bathing practice.

The events in which a fountain is heated (Figure 2) are called

Figure 2. Brunnen Gehn in Fountain Stachelschützen, Basel.
Dominik Dober / Hotel Regina, 2021

Brunnen gehn (Fountain Goes). First, the so-called Chauffeurs/
Chauffeursses des fontaines heat the water in the existing foun-
tain to a comfortable temperature, circa 39°C. The bathers are
then welcomed so that they can begin the bathing ritual. A life-
guard ensures compliance with bathing rules and general
well-being. As these events had a great reception and growth in
the beginning, Hotel Regina created a specific platform for all the
issues related to fountain heating called Pro Fontaines Chaudes
(Pro Hot Fountains).

Reinventing bathing scenarios. Baden, which means "bathing" in
German and whose mineral waters naturally spring up at 47°C,
has seen over time how these public waters have been gradually
privatised in favour of tourist use. Bagni Popolari (Popular Baths)
started its activity in 2012, when the last public bathing space was
closed for demolition and was rebuilt as part of a major new pri-
vate project mainly for travellers. It was this fact that led Bagni
Popolari to start questioning the ownership and management of
water, or the future bathing possibilities in the city. From then on,
they combined knowledge and strategies to "give the [bathing]

water back to the city".[9] The first project of Bagni Popolari was the Verenabäder (Verena Baths), a temporary water pool built using formwork beam, which was constructed in 2015. The structure was filled with fresh thermal water and was freely accessible to all. In 2017, during the demolition of the last public bathing space, Bagni Popolari ran up a second project, the Thermal Wasser Spiele (Thermal Water Games), a small temporary bathing architecture right next to the demolition site. Due to the successful results of the two ephemeral experiments, subsequent projects had a more permanent character. Thus, in 2018, Bagni Popolari began the renovation of an existing bathing space dating back to 1299, the Bad zum Raben (Bath for the Raven). The project, which takes the name of the original structure, had two main objectives: on the one hand, to study the feasibility of gradually restoring the existing bathing space, and, on the other hand, to use the space as a hub for exhibitions on bathing-related topics. Their latest project, operating since 2021, is called Heissen Brunnen (Hot Fountains). It consists of several mineral bathing waters at 37°C and 43°C on the banks of the river Limmat with open access. Such bathing waters provide a great free alternative for local people as opposed to the new, large, privately developed bathing structure. In addition to the water ponds, there are fountains for drinking and foot bathing, as well as showers, benches and other elements that facilitate pre- and post-bathing rituals.

Another initiative is Pool is Cool, which fights for reintroducing open-air public bathing waters in Brussels. This initiative was started because the European capital, unlike other European cit-

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9. Simon Axel, "Wir wollten der Stadt das Wasser wiedergeben" ("We wanted to give the water back to the city)", Hochparterre, accessed February 22, 2022, https://www.hochparterre.ch/nachrichten/architektur/wir-wollten-der-stadt-das-wasser-wiedergeben (my translation).

ies, did not have any public outdoor swimming pool. Its objectives are, firstly, to call on the municipal authorities to take urgent measures to overcome the lack of bathing spaces, and, secondly, to provide urban waters for the enjoyment and well-being of citizens. To this end, they uphold different strategies based on action, research and design. The association began to take root in 2015 when they joined the Big Jump Brussels,[10] which encouraged them to practise swimming/bathing guerrilla. Their events took place not only in rivers but also in public fountains, ponds and other water bodies found in the city. However, in 2018, they changed their strategy by inventing Expedition Swim, a mixture of collective events and investigations that explored and tested possible outdoor bathing scenarios in the existing waters of Brussels. In their first architectural project in 2016, the year the association was officially established, they built a small temporary bathing artifact using scaffolding and wood, located in a poor area of the city (Figure 3). That prototype was called Badeau, and for three summertime weeks it became an urban activator and regenerator, showing "to what extent water is an element of urban scenography but also a powerful catalyst for the playfulness of public space".[11] After the success of their first project, in the summer of 2017, Pool is Cool ran the biggest public open-air pool in Brussels, an ephemeral bathing space on a terrace outside the Centre for Fine Art (BOZAR). In 2018, instead, for one day they

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10. Big Jump is an open-source event founded by the European Rivers Network in 2002, which aims to raise awareness of how valuable freshwater resources are and how important it is to preserve them. Each year, a common date is set for the event across Europe, and different groups sign up to join it. The event consists of plunging, swimming and bathing collectively in threatened or privatised waters.

11. Gilles Debrun, "Badeau. 2016. Architecture: Pool is cool", Architecture.urban.brussels., https://architecture.urban.brussels/nl/interviews/gilles-debrun.

Figure 3. Badeau, Brussels. Paul Steinbrück / Pool is Cool, 2016

transformed a huge existing roundabout in the North District of Brussels into a bathing water. The project was called The North Beach. A fourth ephemeral bathing space was about to be built in 2020 but could not be carried out due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The precedent pop-up projects served the association in spreading the debate about urban bathing waters in a very effective way, gathering different agents through the bathing experience itself. Therefore, in 2021, Pool is Cool built a more durable bathing space that has been an important step for the association.[12] The space is called FLOW, an outdoor public water that operates in summer. This last project has been widely acknowledged and was one of the five finalists of the European Prize for Urban Public Space 2022.

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12. Amelie Poirel, "FLOW, un projet continu" ("FLOW, an ongoing project"), in *A+*, accessed September 8, 2022, https://www.a-plus.be/fr/projet/flow-un-projet-continu/.

Underlying Mechanism: Inland European Cities as the Laboratory for Testing Free Communal Bathing

Claiming waters far from the sea. The urban bathing practices found to date, which fulfilled the three premises set out in the methodology, have emerged in European cities that do not have immediate access to coastal waters. It has been precisely in these inland environments, in the absence of any urban or natural structure that guarantees open bathing, where communities and citizens have reacted before the public administration, being the initiators in the production of bathing spaces. Thus, cities such as Brussels, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, or Zurich, among others, have become the laboratories in which new, unconventional ways of reintroducing free communal bathing in the city have been tested. The present urban landscape offers a vast stage for experimentation because of its variety of potential bathing waters and its diversity in the agents involved: existing local initiatives, enthusiastic bathers, experts from different disciplines, private entities and public administration. The potential bathing waters include rivers, lakes and hot springs, but also ponds, fountains and misused spaces.

Open alliances, soft policies and communal funding. The examples analysed and classified reveal that alliances are crucial for the initiation of similar processes. All the collectives involved in the production of bathing spaces strive to work together with a broad spectrum of agents in the beginning: bathers, artists, architects, engineers, biologists, lawyers, local universities, city museums, already existing initiatives and other interested groups. In the cases studied, it has been observed that over time these alliances accepted other agents to take part, such as the public administration, private entities or new members. This openness has helped initiatives to adapt to the needs and give continuity over time to the use of bathing waters.

On the other hand, in the interviews with the initiatives, the agents confessed that, in order to stabilise the freedom and stimulation we observe in the analysed practices, both a robust institutionalised political order and the existence of a consolidated "public realm" [13] are necessary for its initiation, durability and enlargement. For this reason, these projects are born in cities that already have mature and soft policies to monitor water quality,[14] protect ecology, guarantee the safety of bathers, establish responsibilities, give citizens tools for self-government, or manage the guardianship of public spaces.

Finally, to carry out these projects, it has been necessary to find funding for their implementation. Some of the processes analysed have found support in public or private organisations which support projects in the field of urban planning and urban development, not at the initial moment but once the transformation potential of public bathing water spaces has been demonstrated. For that initial moment, however, other collaborative economies have boosted communities and citizens to initiate these processes, through crowdfunding, donations or memberships.

Materialisation in space enables experience and iteration.[15] In the cases presented in this study, the materialisation of the attitudes in space has been realised through the design of prototypes, events, rituals, maps or gadgets.[16] Thus, design has concretised

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13. Hannah Arendt, *La condición humana* (*The Human Condition*), trans. Ramón Gil Novales (Barcelona: Paidós, 1993).

14. David Sim, *Soft City: Building Density for Everyday Life* (Washington, WA: Island Press, 2019).

15. Harry Francis Mallgrave, *From Object to Experience: The New Culture of Architectural Design* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018).

16. In contemporary European cities, certain attitudes and ideas of citizens manage to have an impact on physical space: they materialise, take shape and

real testing to explore the potential of free bathing in the city. Indeed, urban bathing "requires architecture"[17] to allow the embodiment in water to be realised.[18] The ways in which design achieves the transformation of urban public waters into public bathing waters are varied: by building concrete facilities such as changing rooms, access to the water, pools, enclosures, dams, or areas to relax after bathing; by organising collective events to reclaim urban waters; by reinventing rituals of bathing in public space; by producing and providing maps to the citizens; or by inventing and implementing devices to heat, move and filter the water.

Therefore, design works as a mediator for the performance of water and, ultimately, of space. Performing water in public space affects and effects agents,[19] stimulates spatial agency,[20] influenc-

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are put into practice in the built environment; see Sofie De Caigny et al., *Flanders Architectural Review*, No 14, "When Attitudes Take Form" (Antwerpen: Vlaams Architectuurinstituut, 2020). "The role that bathing plays within a culture reveals the culture's attitude toward human relaxation. It is a measure of how far individual well-being is regarded as an indispensable part of community life"; see Sigfried Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 628.

17. Pearson, *The Architecture of Bathing: Body, Landscape, Art*.

18. "Architecture [...] unfolds its specific reality only in use"; see Sophie Wolfrum and Alban Janson, *The City as Architecture* (Basel: Birkhauser Verlag GmbH, 2019), 35.

19. The practices performed by an actor in the presence of other agents influence the behaviour of observers. Actions have an effect on them by triggering a reaction, and/or affect them by influencing their subsequent actions; see Christopher Dell, *The Improvisation of Space* (Berlin: Jovis, 2019).

20. "Spatial agency" is a concept that is detailed through architectural examples in the book *Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture* by Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider and Jeremy Till (London: Routledge, 2011), 50-55. The authors choose to bring these two concepts together, on the one hand, because "spatial does not so much replace architectural as a term, but radically expands it", and, on the other hand, because "agency is described as the ability of the

es future actions[21] and ensures its permanence.[22] Moreover, design is essential to promote further bathing spaces. By performing the bathing spaces, agents involved in their production and users testing them envision, from real experiments, what these spaces can offer in similar or different situations. In the reproduction of spaces, a long iteration project is initiated over time, adding new layers of design to the already tested structures. It should be noted that the initiators of bathing spaces are generally in charge of their management, laying the foundations of an open design, which facilitates the inclusion of changes or improvements.

Conclusion

Recognising public bathing waters as urban activators, we learned: first, that the principal cities, where processes of activation are being tested, are far away from the coast (see RQ1); sec-

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individual to act independently of the constraining structures of society; structure is seen as the way that society is organised". The two terms together define an architecture that serves as a platform to provide individuals with agency, so that they can take creative, ecological, political or social action and be an active part of changing our built environment. The same theme is discussed in a later book that also brings together examples of "spatial practices" that embrace politics, activism, performance, care, architecture and urbanism in the public realm: Melanie Dodd (ed.), *Spatial Practices: Modes of Action and Engagement with the City* (London: Routledge, 2019).

21. The baths constitute a collective facility of great social importance in the urban context. They are a "social condenser" built around water with the capacity of bringing "hidden motivations, desires and impulses to the surface, to refine them for recognition, provocation and development"; see Koolhaas, Zenghelis, Vreisendorp and Zenghelis, "Exodus, or the Voluntary Prisoners of Architecture", 42-45.

22. See Arendt, *La condición humana*.

ond, that, behind the practices re-emerging for bringing back open bathing to the cities, we find strong alliances, soft policies, and public and collaborative funding (see RQ3); third, that the role of design is crucial in the materialisation of the ideas in space for its use and impact.

Urban bathing waters, understood as a public realm in our cities, are once again, as they were in the past, a desired social space for citizens in the European context and other Western societies.[23] In the case of bathing practices, they are also acknowledged as "important pleasures [to be] experienced within a social framework",[24] reclaiming the right to social enjoyment. To re-enjoy urban waters, citizens join together and seek the support of institutions using design-based spatial transformation tools.[25] On the other hand, institutions are opening to negotiation to speed up public space making. This fact gives rise to very interesting, negotiated processes in public spaces from which we can learn alternative ways of producing the city.

The processes observed in this study succeed in satisfying various needs of the contemporary city: (i) to offer a free space for citizens' performances, a space in which consumption is not the main driver and which has been given new value after the pandemic; (ii) to provide the opportunity to cool off in the summer months in the context of global warming in a space free of cost, especially important for populations with fewer resources; (iii) to react to immediate needs in a resilient way, benefitting from the knowledge and motivation of interested agents; (iv) to increase

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23. See Ruby, Shinohara and SAM Schweizerisches Architekturmuseum, *Swim City*.

24. Henri Lefrebvre, Łukasz Stanek, and Robert Bononno, *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 136.

25. David Harvey, *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2012).

the participation of citizens in the production of space, which contributes to better management of the complex urban landscape; and finally, (v) to develop sustainable systems for cleaning and water management, or technologies to reduce water consumption and improve the urban climate.

In addition to broadening the collection of ongoing processes related to public bathing waters in the European urban context, important aspects that support the growing demand for existing free bathing spaces could be further investigated in parallel. Such aspects include the importance of water quality and ecology, the benefits of bathing for the well-being of citizens, and the advantages of bathing waters for mitigating urban overheating. Other interesting future work includes trying to understand what the situation is like in other contexts where bathing has different connotations from those it has in Europe: spirituality, mysticism or superstition.

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Performance, Space, City: "Delivery Theatre" Experiences During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Considering an unprecedented historical event such as the Covid-19 pandemic, this essay aims to explore the case of "Delivery Theatre" in Italy during the closure of theatres. This is an artistic modality inspired by the experience of the actor Ippolito Chiarello ("Barbonaggio Teatrale"), who performs his plays not only in the theatre but also on the street or in non-theatrical venues, on small stages, selling them in pieces. Since December 2020, this format has been performed in Messina by the Carullo-Minasi Company, as an opportunity to "meet" the city. The two artists presented their programme with a view to transforming the pandemic restrictions into an opportunity for widespread artistic action, reaching above all the city suburbs, where theatre is too often denied.

Combining a theoretical and an artistic perspective, this specific case study is analysed in relation to similar experiences in

several Italian cities. In particular, we present, in the first part of this essay, the social and political meanings of the "Delivery Theatre", and, in the second part, its dramaturgical modalities, scenic characteristics and results. Some of the issues that emerge are: the central role of the "theatrical relationship", achieving an active participation of the spectator and expanding the theatrical event beyond its traditional, material and institutional boundaries; theatre as a "tool" having an effective impact on society, especially in a historical period of separation, isolation and fear; the possibility of imagining and animating new and different audiences; the actors as "nomads" who, in a collective emergency, rediscover their original identity.

Keywords: delivery theatre, city, performance, community, relationship

Theatre, the Covid-19 Pandemic and Public Space

The Covid-19 pandemic represented a dramatic event for the performing arts industry, which had already been affected by precariousness and economic difficulties.[1] In February 24, 2020, all theatre activities in Italy were suspended to prevent the spread of the virus. During the first, severe lockdown, for more than three months takings were reduced to zero. The restart, from June 2020 until the second lockdown during the autumn, was only partial and full of challenges, also due to the imposition of rules

1. This work is the result of a dialogue started some time ago between Katia Trifirò, researcher in the Performing Arts at the University of Messina, and Cristiana Minasi, actress, author, stage pedagogue and currently a doctoral researcher at the same University. The first three sections have been written by Katia Trifirò, and the final two sections have been written by Cristiana Minasi.

regulating social distancing, safety protocols for performers and spectators, and the modalities of fruition of both theatrical places and events.

In this context, the pandemic emphasised the overall fragilities of the system, with reference to the problems of finding resources, production organisation, the legislative framework and institutional and cultural policies. The loss was minor for those who recovered a part of their profits from government support measures, but the most serious consequences affected the more commercial subjects (private theatres and companies) and, above all, independent artists and small theatres.[2] It became clear, in particular, the inadequacy of work and welfare regulations, which did not take into account the specificities of the performing arts professions, and of culture in general. At the same time, this stalemate accelerated institutional intervention to make the long-awaited law on the performing arts ("Codice dello Spettacolo") a reality.[3]

For all these reasons, the pandemic has imposed a profound rethinking about the performing arts system, both internal and external. This process has mainly concerned institutional settings, economic issues, and cultural policies. Above all, artists, critics and operators discussed the role of theatre in contemporary culture and society, taking their starting point from the pandemic closure in order to focus on the meaning and value of the-

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2. Oliviero Ponte Di Pino, *Un teatro per il XXI secolo. Lo spettacolo dal vivo ai tempi del digitale* (*Theatre for the 21st century. Live Performance in the Digital Age*), (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2021), 169-188. All English translations from works originally in Italian are mine.

3. On these topics, see Livia Cavaglieri, *Il sistema teatrale. storia dell'organizzazione, dell'economia e delle politiche del teatro in Italia* (*The Theatre System. History of the Organisation, Economy and Policies of the Theatre in Italy*), (Roma: Dino Audino, 2021).

atre as a common good, especially at a time of collective crisis, fear and isolation.

The attempt was made to imagine shared solutions to allow theatres to reopen after the closure, but also in order to avoid losing contact with the public during the months of the imposed suspension of live theatrical activities. The proposals, therefore, addressed not only the future of theatre, focusing on themes and issues hitherto reserved for academic circles, such as the use of digital media and its consequences or the role of criticism,[4] but also the current time of the pandemic, in terms of the possibility for theatre communities to keep the dialogue between actor and spectator open, in order to continue theatrical activities even during the pandemic.

Despite the closure of theatre buildings, performers tried to imagine different spaces they could reach their public, showing in this research a deep need to work on the theatrical relationship, beyond and outside the production, distribution and organisational system. Fundamental was the role of digital media, which offered a virtual space of sharing and fruition to theatre companies. This is evident from the many streaming activities started by single artists and several theatre institutions, until the controversial proposal of a "Netflix of culture" announced by Culture Minister Dario Franceschini on the 18th of April 2020.

From this point of view, the opportunities opened up by the web have encouraged a variety of artistic experiences seeking to explore new forms of communication and expression, in connection with the dramaturgical possibilities of the new technologies.

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4. Andrea Zardi, "Drammaturgie del distanziamento: danza e spazio pubblico nell'era del post-covid" ("Dramaturgies of Distancing: Dance and Public Space in the Post-Covid Era"), in Ilaria Riccioni (ed.), *Teatri e sfera pubblica nella società globalizzata e digitalizzata* (*Theatres and the Public Sphere in a Globalised and Digitalised Society*), (Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2022), 266.

On the other hand, the principle of a profound incompatibility of the live performance with the mediation of a screen has led artists to explore different ways of meeting the spectator, while respecting the rules imposed by the emergency state.

This second perspective involves the artists' use of urban space as a rediscovered place for a new relational dimension, a place which is not limited to outdoor theatrical activities but, rather, turns into an opportunity to practise new public rituals of participation, sharing and aggregation, thus giving expression to a social need denied by the danger of contagion. During the pandemic, while the domestic space became an obligatory place of daily time, in a process, also mediatised, of redefining the boundaries between inside and outside, public and private,[5] the empty city turned into a stage for performative actions of objectivisation, enacting and problematising the condition of isolation and the experience of the lockdown.

However, the forms of contact created by actors and dancers in the desertification of streets and squares above all activate artistic and political processes of self-reflection on the status of the artist and the public, restoring the relational nature of performance, apart from the simply spectacular dimension. Re-appropriating public space, with a performative action of a strong symbolic value, means creatively imagining a possibility of dialogue between theatre and the city that goes beyond the confines of the stage, taking on a range of practices that break down traditional production, organisation and distribution patterns.[6]

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5. See Chiara Borroni, "*Prove di libertà*. La ritrattistica d'attore ai tempi del lockdown nel lavoro di Riccardo Ghilardi" ("*Trials of Freedom*. Actor Portraiture at the Time of the Lockdown in the Work of Riccardo Ghilardi"), in *Cinergie – Il cinema e le altre arti* 21 (2022): 123-135, doi: https://doi.org/10.6092/issn.2280-9481/14310.

6. With reference to dance and choreography in shared public space, Zardi

In the new and unexpected pandemic situation, the theatre has used the urban environment to escape from the limits of the buildings designated for performance and to involve the outside space. In this process it is important to consider the legacy of theatrical research, during the 20th century, with regard to the redefinition of theatre space:

> In the 20th century, theatre people mistrusted the prearranged, "neutral" but preventive space; they do not believe in the neutrality of a space with respect to artistic creation and, operationally, they want to create their own space in the knowledge that the space of the performance and the inseparable space of the theatre are a sense of theatre. The theatre culture of the 20th century has, in the multiplicity of poetics and events, a strong unity and coherence in the research and experimentation of a theatre that is possible, and that makes sense.[7]

The emphasis is on the system of relations of which space is an active part, focusing on modes of fruition, both inside and outside theatres. Nowadays, those experiences continue to germinate and, in times of collective emergency, seem to live again in the challenge of generating theatrical communities in places of everyday life, such as streets and squares temporarily subtracted from their usual function and providing a space for new imaginative possibilities.

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speaks of "decolonising the art paradigm in relation to the current system of production and distribution" and of "creation of new terms and languages"; see Zardi, "Drammaturgie del distanziamento", 269.

7. Fabrizio Cruciani, *Lo spazio del teatro* (*The Space of Theatre*), (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1992), 143.

"Delivery Theatre" Experiences

The experiences of "Delivery Theatre" occurred between these two poles, theatre and the city, in the context of the pandemic and the suspension of theatrical activities, and were originally inspired by a performative research in the urban space realised by the actor Ippolito Chiarello. Since the autumn of 2020 the format of "Delivery Theatre" has spread to several Italian cities, as short performances delivered to the spectator for a symbolic price.

Developing the idea of "Barbonaggio Teatrale" ("Theatrical Bargaining"), Chiarello defines himself as an actor - but also as a cultural agitator and social provocateur - who trains himself to "create a sentimental relationship with the audience". Chiarello's project was born in 2009, well before the pandemic, from his discomfort with the Italian theatre system and his desire to take a new direction. For these reasons, since then Chiarello has been staging his plays not only in theatres but also on the street or in non-theatre places, selling them in pieces. Starting with his debut at the Castel dei Mondi festival in Andria (Puglia, Italy), co-producer of the play "Fanculopensiero Stanza 510", Chiarello sets a price for each piece of the play and, using a price list, distributes it to the passing public. The spectator chooses the piece and pays for it; the actor performs it, also trying to explain the meaning of the experience. Usually, the play is performed in the theatre in the evening, but it often becomes an autonomous artistic proposal.[8]

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8. Since 2009, "Barbonaggio Teatrale" has stopped in more than 300 cities/places in Italy, and has travelled in Europe, reaching Barcelona, Madrid, Paris and Nantes, London, Berlin, and Vancouver in Canada. Since 2010, "Barbonaggio", from an individual experience, has become a movement followed by many artists. Since 2010, an event called "Artisti barboni per un giorno" ("Barbon artists for a day") has been organised in Lecce (Puglia, Italy) every year, with the

Spreading theatre culture and restoring dignity to the actor's profession are two of the premises of this artistic proposal, which during the pandemic closure of theatres spread all over Italy not only in protest but, above all, to reaffirm the importance of the theatre at a time of crisis, enhancing it as a common good and restoring a direct relationship with the public. The political value of "Delivery Theatre" became even stronger during the state of emergency, highlighting the artist's function in society not as an entertainer but as the guarantor of a fundamental, necessary task like that of doctors or teachers.

This gave rise to the idea of artistic "USCA" ("Special Units of Artistic Continuity"), taking up the idea of health units, which, according to Chiarello, in a utopian state, should comprise a doctor, a nurse and an artist. Chiarello writes:

> I simply proposed to my colleagues, in Italy and abroad, to join a thought and not a bureaucratic network. I proposed to already existing and similar experiences and to the artists or companies that wanted to repeat my modality to use a single voice, because I am sure that in this way we can forcefully show that we are moving and that we are ready to reinvent ourselves, first of all to react to an emergency and, secondly, because we believe in a systematic action towards the public, which should then continue in the future, out of emergency and in the forms that each one will then choose.[9]

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participation of many artists from various parts of Italy and abroad. On this occasion, each of the participants has the opportunity not only to present their own artistic proposal, but also to reflect on and discuss together about art as a common good and the profession of the actor. See Ippolito Chiarello, "Barbonaggio Teatrale" ("Theatrical Bargaining"), https://www.ippolitochiarello.it/barbonaggio-teatrale/, accessed January 9, 2023.

9. See https://www.ippolitochiarello.it/barbonaggio-teatrale/. The "Usca"

Explicitly echoing the imagery associated with motorcycle riders, the only ones allowed to circulate in deserted cities during the pandemic to deliver basic necessities, the artists continued to perform by taking their plays to public spaces, such as streets and squares, and to courtyards or under the balconies of houses, reaching new audiences, continued to "rebuild a new sense of community", to "affirm through an artistic act a political thought", to emphasise "that artists and performers are workers".[10] For all these reasons, in Italy and abroad, the different ways of "delivery" have taken on the meaning of "small acts of resistance", or attempts "to build relationships, in the desert of public space"[11] and to reaffirm the radical nature of the theatrical experience, all the more essential in a historical phase of separation and fear.

A similar experience is that of the project "Consegne. Una performance da coprifuoco" ("Deliveries. A curfew performance"), realised in Bologna during the second lockdown by the Kepler-452 Company and inspired also by the figure of the rider. The actor, Nicola Borghesi, literally wearing the shoes of the rider, moves around the city trying to give meaning to the relationship with the person receiving the delivery, who, with the help of technology, becomes the protagonist of the performance. For the duration of the moped ride, rider and customer are connected, offering an otherwise impossible perspective on the urban void. The Company writes:

At a time when reflection rages on which activities are essential and which are not, we wanted to ask ourselves what is essential for us and what might be essential for the audience, through

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network by Chiarello involved 50 companies, 170 artists, 13 regions, 50 cities, 3 countries, 2 continents.

10. See https://www.ippolitochiarello.it/barbonaggio-teatrale/.

11. Ponte di Pino, *Un teatro per il XXI secolo*, 178.

a very concrete question: what would you like to receive in your home right now? And then, again, other questions, to ask each other in the deserted night of the curfew: what does it feel like to hear the doorbell ring? What do you expect? A wonder, a nuisance, an unexpected visit, a gift, the Gestapo, pizza? Were you less lonely before? Why did people go out in the evening? Why is this second lockdown so much more terrible and desperate than the first? What happened to the banners saying "everything will be OK"? What is left for us to do now? "Consegne" is a privateer, absurd, economically unsustainable art action. "Consegne" is an improbable meeting at an unthinkable moment between an actor dressed up as a rider and a spectator dressed up as a receiver who stubbornly try to understand each other in a deserted, dark city.[12]

In the same context, there is the experience of "Favole al citofono" ("Fables on the Intercom") by Teatro dei Venti, in Modena, as part of Ippolito Chiarello's "Usca" network. Each booking includes a minimum of five tales of the same Fable and a payment, to be shared with neighbours, with Gianni Rodari's stories at home. The Fables are told exclusively over the intercom, not only for the children but for anyone who has the desire to have this experience, which also delivers theatre in front of school windows or shop windows. The project extends to "Favole al telefono" ("Fables on the Phone") or on Zoom for people in homes for the elderly and other residential facilities.[13]

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12. See the "Consegne. Una performance da coprifuoco" website, accessed January 9, 2023, https://kepler452.it/CONSEGNE-UNA-PERFORMANCE-DA-CO-PRIFUOCO.

13. See the "Favole al citofono" website, accessed January 9, 2023, https://www.teatrodeiventi.it/blog/2021/03/17/favole-al-citofono-nuovi-appuntamenti/.

The Carullo-Minasi Company's Theatrical Research in Messina's Urban Space

Sharing the artistic and political premises of the "Delivery Thea-tre" started by Chiarello, a project has been launched in Messina by the Compagnia Carullo-Minasi since 11 December 2020,[14] not only as a practice, with the aim of concretely bringing theatre outside institutional buildings, in direct contact with the city and its inhabitants, but more radically as an opportunity to build, through theatrical action, "places of meeting and knowledge - places of love". That is, according to a suggestion by Giuliano Sca-bia, "a theatre open on all sides - a theatre of participation"[15]: spaces rediscovered by the community and for the community, in which one experiences the value of relationship, in its authenti-cally human dimension.

For Giuseppe Carullo and Cristiana Minasi, bringing "theatre outside the theatre" is the desire to create relationships in "places of experience", those which, according to Cruciani, reveal how "the diversity of which theatre consists" needs "a space that pre-sents its normality not with respect to the idea of theatre but

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14. The modalities and rules of these "deliveries" are indicated on the Com-pany's website, on the page dedicated to the "Delivery Theatre" (accessed Jan-uary 9, 2023, https://carullominasi.wordpress.com/delivery-theatre-carullomi-nasi/). The experience, in the emergency context of the pandemic, continued until the first six months of 2021. Subsequently, it was turned into a festival di-mension, through the organisation no longer of single, short performances but of entire spectacles in outdoor places, as Cristiana Minasi reports in the final section of the essay.

15. Giuliano Scabia, "Cos'altro c'è da fare se non costruire il Paradiso Terres-tre?" ("What Else Is There to Do but Build the Earthly Paradise?"), in Renzia D'In-cà (ed.), *La città del teatro e dell'immaginario contemporaneo. Teatro d'arte* in/*civile* (*The City of Theatre and Contemporary Imagery. Un/civil Art Theatre*), (Corazzano: Titivillus, 2009), 16.

Figure 1. Scene from the Delivery Theatre in Messina by the Carullo-Minasi Company. Photo, courtesy of Gianmarco Vetrano, photographer

with respect to everyday social life",[16] especially at a historical moment when public space is negated in its community, aggregating and socialising function.

Another important aspect for understanding the "Delivery Theatre" experience concerns the reaffirmation of the theatre as a common good, belonging to the community in all its expressions, "to be cared for also in the interest of future generations".[17] That is a principle asserted by Giuseppe Carullo and Cristiana Minasi, who work in a specific urban space such as Messina, where the current, extraordinary artistic flowering recognised by academic and militant critics is paradoxically matched by the precariousness of the places of art and culture, always at risk de-

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16. Cruciani, *Lo spazio del teatro*, 179.

17. Ugo Mattei, *Beni comuni. Un manifesto* (*Common Goods. A Manifesto*), (Roma-Bari: Laterza, 2011), 27.

spite the courageous efforts of companies and single artists who attempt to establish themselves in the territory.

Asked a few years ago about these issues, during a project on theatre and education, the Company admitted the urgency of a collective path that puts artists and the city on the same side, since theatre is first of all a human experience and a reason for research and proposals: "When we are denied meeting places and spaces, we have to claim them, recover them", says Minasi, "considering theatre an instrument of thought and democracy. If theatre is content and silent, it can become an instrument of regime and propaganda. Instead, the scene can be the democracy of being together crossed by education as a question in progress".[18]

A dimension emerges that is both utopian and playful, that is based on the nomadic and popular tradition of the actor's art, which still revitalises in the present time an ancient history and can suggest an alternative and different way of thinking about theatre, opposing relationship, participation, community to separation, passivity, isolation. As Guarino writes, "the exit from theatre restores action to elemental conditions, and to the fundamental meanings of presence. The organised disorder and provocative recognised charisma in the interventions of actors' communities are the legacy, cyclically denied and rediscovered, of the frequencies and knowledge of nomadism".[19]

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18. Cristiana Minasi, "Interview with Cristiana Minasi", in Lorenzo Donati and Rossella Mazzaglia (eds), *Crescere nell'Assurdo. Uno sguardo dallo Stretto* (*Growing up in the Absurd. A View from the Strait*), (Torino: Mimesis Journal Books, Academia University Press, 2018), 108.

19. Raimondo Guarino, "Luoghi e azioni. Introduzione a un'inchiesta" ("Places and Actions. Introduction to an Enquiry"), in Raimondo Guarino (ed.), *Teatri luoghi città* (*Theatres Places Cities*), (Roma: Officina Edizioni, 2008), 23.

Figure 2. Scene from the Delivery Theatre in Messina by the Carullo-Minasi Company. Photo, courtesy of Gianmarco Vetrano, photographer

New Audiences and Nomad Performers

The forced closure of theatres concerned the whole industry, forcing or perhaps allowing us to experience a new journey and find a new "audience". Spectators were no longer invited to our home, the theatre building, but joined at home. The performer, in general, repeats in an enclosed space dynamics that are always the same, in the dimension of a comfortable repetition of a place that is always different from city to city, but always the same. During the pandemic it was different: it was about going out to conquer new people and new territories, in a theatrical dynamic renewed because it was spatially and temporally diffused. A un/stable theatre, which is in movement and action, even during the breaks between performances, in a rewriting of the urban space given by the various passages that formed a network of gazes which reconstructed a "further theatre", was coupled with "con-

scious everydayness". A city re-enabled and re-inhabited, whereby attention is paid to something that does not belong to the everyday but that restores value to it, in which everyone became an integral and active part of an "open-air theatre", in the immense "empty space" of the existing. As sociologist Gemini argues,

> society resorts to theatre whenever it feels it must affirm its existence. Said otherwise, individuals and social groups need to represent and give themselves in performance to themselves in order to continue to exist, transforming themselves, which is why the rate of collective theatricality increases in times of crisis and change.[20]

Our response to the pandemic, through the "Delivery Theatre" experience, despite being felt as something extremely innovative, actually only proposed the principles that have always animated theatre since its origins: nomadism and creativity. "In essence, street theatre is the actor occupying a space of experience and attracting attention [...] that is, it is the actor on a stage placed everywhere (in this 'everywhere' is the meaning of street theatre) or the space of wonder with the effect of the transformed city".[21]

And so, in effect all theatrical performers, a few excluded, have reinvented themselves by finding their identity in being guarantors - in opposition to what was required by health regulations - of "presence as relational awareness".[22]

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20. Laura Gemini, *L'incertezza creativa. I percorsi teatrali e comunicativi delle performance artistiche* (*Creative Uncertainty. The Theatrical and Communicative Paths of Artistic Performances*), (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2003), 161.

21. Cruciani, *Lo spazio del teatro*, 92.

22. Gabriele Vacis, "Presenza come consapevolezza relazionale" ("Presence

Crisafulli, who has dedicated all his theoretical and practical work to the "theatre of places", maintains:

> The place is not a work. It is reality. It is not the fruit of the work of a single author and does not possess the coherence of a written text. It derives from and lives in relation to complex processes to which nature and man contribute. It is infinitely articulated, experienced and alive, charged with memory. During the work, the place requires the members of the group to be inhabited, experienced, perceived with all the senses, for a certain period. It requires an immersion and a relationship of sensitive exchange.[23]

This is a plural relationship that unleashes energies of present, past and future memory, a stratified relationship with one's own performance that already has a life but needs to vary and shape itself according to the site, in relation to the living, complex, interrelated fabric of presences, stories, functions, relationships given by the hic et nunc of the performance. Again Crisafulli: "Giving form from the place therefore means bringing heterogeneous entities together on a coherent level, and reworking them to make them act poetically, and in a concatenated manner, in the performance".[24] Everything is generated by the performance as it unfolds, in a resonance of invention and action that end up coinciding, in a process that does not allow any separation between

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as Relational Awareness"), in *Acting Archivies Review* 20 (2020): 105, https://www.actingarchives.it/review/archivio-numeri/32-anno-x-numero-20-novembre-2020/232-presenza-come-consapevolezza-relazionale.html.

    23. Fabrizio Crisafulli, *Il teatro dei luoghi. Lo spettacolo generato dalla realtà* (*The Theatre of Places. The Spectacle Generated by Reality*), (Dublin: ArtDigiland, 2015), 62-63.

    24. Crisafulli, *Il teatro dei luoghi*, 62-63.

inside and outside, in a return of influences, evocations, suggestions that the place proposes to the artist who becomes the demiurge of past memories, present presences and future constructions, in a temporal rebound that makes circularity the essence of its form and content at the same time.

Outcomes of this Experience: From Creating Performances to Organising Festivals

"The 'generating' gesture of theatre is seen in this occupation of space to find the centre of things and of itself so that the community represents itself".[25] Theatre is the art of observation but also the art of communication, which, restored to its etymological dimension, is "cum/munis", the art of bringing together mutual gifts. The pandemic has certainly returned to the theatre the risk of losing itself and, therefore, perhaps also of finding itself again by starting from its "zero state". A theatre that returns to being a public space because it has highlighted, as never before, the need to be there for one another: the spectator for the actor and the actor and the spectator in a reciprocal condition that has rewritten the dramaturgy of places, returning them to their original and circular "design". Thus, from the space of the theatre as a relationship, to the space of the city as a utopian reconquest of the value of citizenship. The latter is not

> a given acquired once and for all, but rather a process that never ends and that is nourished by many contributions, both theoretical and practical, of different matrixes [...]. To create is to resist. To resist is to create, as Stephane Hessel, French partisan survi-

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25. Cruciani, *Lo spazio del teatro*, 93.

vor of the extermination camps, said. But today even this is no longer enough, we need to re-learn not only how to resist but also how to coexist, because the quality of the existence of each individual within the single human community is linked to the quality of the existence of all the others, we need to regain that utopia, in the sense of a beautiful place (eu-topos) and not just a non-place (ou-topos), which alone can help collectively counter the drift of society towards an ever larger and more heterogeneous assemblage of efficient consumers.[26]

In fact, in the context of the Carullo-Minasi Company, we have already organised and directed three diffuse theatre festivals since the "Delivery Theatre" realised in the pandemic phase: "Tramonti" (July-August 2021), in the San Rizzo Hills of Messina; "Fondo Teatro" (June 2022), at the Forte Petrazza amphitheatre overlooking the Strait of Messina; and "La Scuola del Teatro" (December 2022), which, for three days and with no less than nine performances, inhabited the spaces of the Passamonte School, the Botanical Garden and the Gardens of the Faculty of Legal Sciences in Messina.

In short, this is a contingency that, step by step, has been transformed into a far-reaching visionary project, the consequences of which can be seen in something that is still in progress and in the making, yet to be historicised and that perhaps translates and will translate into recurring organisational and programming practices. A renewal of an all-embracing vision

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26. Laura Gobbi and Federica Zanetti, "Teatro ed educazione alla cittadinanza. Tra re-esistenze e sconfina-menti: le possibilità di un teatro necessario" ("Theatre and Education for Citizenship. Between Re-existences and Trespassing: The Possibilities of a Necessary Theatre"), in Laura Gobbi and Federica Zanetti (eds), *Teatri re-esistenti. Confronti su Teatro e cittadinanze* (*Re-existing Theatres. Discussions on Theatre and Citizenship*), (Corazzano: Titivillus, 2011), 15-16.

that invests in actors, authors and audiences, but above all organisers and institutions that shift their gaze to recompose a lost community. A "cultural welfare" that promotes the principles of a new grammar of "civic imagination",[27] capable of spreading across multiple spaces. An ecological approach and methodology that rediscovers the need for people to represent themselves within their own world, to find themselves and situate themselves.

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27. See Roberta Paltrineri and Giulia Allegrini, *Partecipazione, processi di immaginazione civica e sfera pubblica. I Laboratori di Quartiere e il Bilancio Partecipativo a Bologna Bologna* (*Participation, Civic Imagination Processes and the Public Sphere. Neighbourhood Workshops and the Participative Balance Sheet in Bologna*) (Milano: Franco Angeli, 2020).

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About the Contributors

Alba Balmaseda Dominguez was born in La Coruña, Spain, in 1985, and graduated as an architect from the Polytechnic University of Madrid in 2010. She was awarded a grant with the Erasmus programme in La Sapienza University of Rome in 2007. Her Diploma Thesis was rated as outstanding and won of a National Prize in 2011. She completed a Master's Degree in Advanced Architectutal Projects at the Polytechnic University of Madrid in September 2011. She developed academic research and teaching at the Vastu Shilpa Foundation (Amhedabad, India), the University of Nairobi (Nairobi, Kenya), the Tokyo Wonder Site (Tokyo, Japan), Istituto Universitario di Architettura di Venezia (Venice, Italy), the Royal Danish Academy (Copenhagen, Denmark), Technische Universität Berlin (Berlin, Germany) and Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Leuven, Belgium). Balmaseda Dominguez actively collaborated with I+P Arquitectura (Vigo, Spain), a studio focused on sustainable architecture; the Vivero de Iniciativas Ciudadanas-VIC (Madrid, Spain), an open platform that brings together social innovation and public space; and Anupama Kundoo Architects (Berlin, Germany; Pondicherry, India), a research-oriented practice dedicated to building technologies, architectural design and urban planning. In 2014, together with Ariadna Barrio, she founded the BarrioBalmaseda studio, which for six years developed different public and private projects. Since 2020, she has worked independently and has combined architectural practice with teaching and research, as an assistant professor at the University of Stuttgart, Germany, and a doctoral candidate at the University of Roma Tre, Italy.

Pablo Berzal Cruz is an architect with a PhD from the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid and an expert in landscape design and management from the Universidad Complutense de Madrid. He specialised in ritual space with his doctoral thesis. Since the beginning of his career, he has been interested in all artistic expressions, especially in the performing arts, collaborating in immersive theatre projects such as "El hilo de Ariadna" by Enrique Vargas (Madrid, 1994) or in the performances of the artistic group Tumulto (Granada, Madrid, Paris, Venice, Cartagena, between 2007 and 2009). He has combined architecture and art, most notably in his work in the architectural direction of the Madrid Contemporary Art Fair "ARCO" (2003 and 2006) and the creation of the architectural experimentation project "Arch Lab" for the Directorate General of Architecture of the Spanish Ministry of Public Works (2003-2007). He has designed and curated numerous exhibitions (Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Madeira, Athens) and has participated as an artist in solo and group exhibitions (Madrid, Seville, Athens). He has been teaching on the Master's degree in Ephemeral Architecture at the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid since 2011. He is currently carrying out postdoctoral research on the performativity of ritual space at the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of the Peloponnese, Greece, within the Margaritas Salas programme of the Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, and he is teaching at the Department of Architectural Projects of the same university.

Triantafyllos Bostantzis has a PhD, an MA and an Integrated Master in Theatre Studies (School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki), an Integrated Master in Film Studies (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki) and a BA in Applied Informatics (University of Macedonia). He has participated in conferences and symposia in Greece and abroad and has presented papers on the reception of ancient drama on the modern Greek stage. He has published articles in conference proceedings and theatrical journals. Bostantzis is also the founder of the theatrical group

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Evangelia Danadaki is a performance and video artist. Her practice is situated at the interface of visual art and theory, exploring the political by re-staging realities of artificial, urban and natural spaces. Through the design of live actions based on democratic structures, she questions and plays with musicians, dancers, performers (trained/not trained) to exercise freedom collectively and create new polyphonic shared spaces. She studied contemporary art practice and philosophy at Central Saint Martins, University of the Arts London, and political theory at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece.

Katerina Kosti works as a Teaching and Laboratory Staff Member at the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of the Peloponnese, Greece. She graduated from the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Athens and obtained a postgraduate degree (MA) from the Postgraduate Programme Museum Studies, University of Athens. She obtained her PhD from the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of the Peloponnese. Her doctoral thesis focused on the use of drama in history teaching. Her post-doctoral research at the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of the Peloponnese is about reminiscence drama and is entitled "Drama in the Third Age as a Means of Developing 'Ego Integrity'". Her research interests lie in the field of reminiscence drama and drama in education for learning and social inclusion in formal, informal and non-formal learning environments.

Maria Mikedaki is an archaeologist and Assistant Professor of Ancient Theatre at the Department of Theatre Studies of the University of the Peloponnese, Greece. She holds a BA from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, and an MA and a PhD in Classical Archaeology from the University of Vienna, Austria. Her research focuses on ancient theatre (architecture, scenic space, scenography, masks and costumes), ancient Greek clothing, coroplastic (terracotta figurines) and ancient Greek topography (Attica, Boeotia, Aegean islands). Her publications include: *The Painted Backdrops of the Hellenistic Theatre* (2nd revised edition, Kardamitsa, 2023, in Greek), *Tabula Imperii Romani, J 34 – Athens, Boeotia* (Academy of Athens, 2019), and *Tabula Imperii Romani, J 35 – Smyrna, I: Aegean Islands* (co-authored with P. Karvonis) (Academy of Athens, 2012). She is currently writing a book entitled *The Costumes of Ancient Greek Theatre*. She is a member of the Archaeological Society at Athens.

Cristiana Minasi is a PhD candidate in Cognitive Science, curriculum "Social, Territorial, Media and Performing Arts Theories and Technologies", at the University of Messina, Italy. She has studied at the "International School of High Pedagogy of the Scene", directed by Anatolij Vasiliev. In 2011, she founded the "Compagnia Carullo-Minasi", working as director, actress, playwright and stage pedagogue. Her plays have won numerous awards.

Andrea Moneta, working both as an architect and a scenographer, is a trans-disciplinary practitioner and academic. His activities are all strongly informed by expertise in architecture, scenography and urban design. He has a particular interest in socially engaged spatial practice in heritage contexts, at the intersection between art, architecture and performance, and he is actively involved in these areas through the concept of Scenarchitecture, promoting a change in thinking and practice around theatre and the performing arts. His creative work is centred on

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Alberto Morell Sixto (Madrid, 1967) is an architect (1992) and a Professor of Architectural Design (2000) at the School of Architecture of the Polytechnic University of Madrid, Spain. He directs the 14km/Morell Teaching Unit (2010) of the Department of Architectural Projects (dpaetsam.com), which follows a line of research into the origins of architecture (ud14km.es) (instagram.com/ud14km). This Collaborative Unit of the University comprises both the Project Teaching Workshops and the Architecture and Research Studio, which is currently working on a Senior Cohousing project in Santander and a Ritual House in Mallorca (ud14km.es/alberto-morell).

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Lydia Polykandrioti is an architect and researcher who was born and raised in Athens, Greece. She received her Master's degree in Architecture from Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands (*cum laude*). Her dissertation, "Folding: From the Desire of the City to the City of Desire", researched the dynamic interaction between the city and the production of urban actions in relation to the concept of desire, focusing on a neighbourhood in Athens. She has worked as an architect in the Netherlands and Greece for various renowned offices. Currently, she lives in Athens and works on independent projects and research. Her work "Interiors of Potentiality: Generative Dwelling" received the Critical Essay Award at the 10th Biennale of Young Greek Architects in 2021.

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Thomas Symeonidis is an associate tutor in aesthetics and philosophy at the Athens School of Fine Arts, Greece. He is also an adjunct lecturer

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Nikolaos-Ion Terzoglou obtained a Diploma in Architecture and Engineering (2000), a Master of Science (2001, Postgraduate Diploma in Architecture: Design-Space-Culture), and a PhD in the Theory and Philosophy of Architecture (2005) from the National Technical University of Athens, Greece, where he teaches concepts and theories for the organisation and design of architectural space as a tenured Assistant Professor. He previously taught at the University of Patras, Greece (2007-2010). He also holds a BA in Painting from the Athens School of Fine Arts (2009). His doctoral thesis was awarded the Second International ICAR-CORA Prize in 2007. He has published a book in Greek titled *Ideas of Space in the Twentieth Century* (2009), which was his post-doctoral research project (2007-2008), and has co-edited a book in English titled *Intersections of Space and Ethos* (Routledge, 2015, 2017). Additionally, he has produced 75 scientific articles published in numer-

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The essays collected in *Performing Space* are intent on moving forward the discussion about the relevance and significance of the interrelation between performance and space. Besides, in virtue of the fact that the contributors to the volume have different disciplinary or artistic backgrounds, this collection is aimed to initiate an interdisciplinary examination of performance and space, and to foster a mutually enlightening dialogue among areas as diverse as philosophy, architecture, performance theory and practice, theatre studies, anthropology, literary theory and pedagogy. *Performing Space* establishes an international forum, where the provenance, the conceptuality and the contemporary potentialities of performance are discussed and brought to bear on the built environment, both past and present. The essays in the first section of *Performing Space*, "Performance, Theory, Space", endeavour to reflect on theoretical and epistemological issues that concern the status and conditions of artistic performance, space or both, by having recourse to writings by Friedrich Nietzsche, Jacques Derrida, Gilles Deleuze, Hannah Arendt and Jacques Rancière, among others. The second section, "Performing Space: Applied", comprises essays focusing on case studies of actual performances and evaluating the outcome of specific performative events. The essays in question acknowledge and analyse the significance of particular spaces and their evident impact on the corresponding performances.