



#4

Espaços do
Drama
Spaces of
Drama



ÍNDICE

INDEX

Editorial

Artigos / Articles

Um Teatro Ambulante
Alexandra Trevisan

Presenting the performance “Pre-Bard // Post-Shard” and its theoretical ground on the performativity of the urban space: The urban space is dramatised.
Alikí Kylika

Spaces for Creative Production: Experimental Theatre, Adaptive Re-use, and Institutional Identity
Cathy Braasch

Drama and Project: The Little Scientific Theatre of Aldo Rossi
Daniela Sá

2 D, 3D and Other Ds
José Capela

Theatre and Architecture: A Place Between
Juliet Rufford

O Espaço Cénico como Laboratório do Espaço Arquitetónico Contemporâneo
Michele Cannatà

The contemporary scenography as an introspective architecture
Sara Franqueira

Entrevista / Interview

Louis Janssen
por/by Jorge Palinhos

Recensões / Reviews

Teatro Site-Specific: Três Estudos de Caso
Cláudia Marisa Oliveira

Dramatic Architectures: Places for Drama – Drama for Places – Livro de Atas
Juliana Gonçalves

Notícia / News

A Mobilização da Intertextualidade da Dialética Cinematográfica
Nelson Araújo

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EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL

Espaços do Drama

Já não existem profecias, e o tempo tornou-se um campo aberto a todas as possibilidades e todas as escolhas do ser humano. Com o fim do tempo fechado, foi também o próprio espaço que se abriu às possibilidades da ação humana, tornando-se crucial para a sociedade, como lugar onde o futuro pode ser disputado e construído, mas também ferramenta de pensamento para pensar todas as práticas humanas que acontecem nesse mesmo espaço.

É o caso do drama, para o qual o espaço sempre teve um papel crucial, chegando a afetar a natureza e funcionamento do próprio teatro, que variava consoante era feito em anfiteatros abertos, carroças, igrejas, estrados de madeira, palcos à italiana, etc.

E é também o caso da arquitetura, que é a arte do espaço, mas que não existe dissociada do teatro enquanto laboratório de corpos e rituais sociais.

O presente número da *Persona* vem no seguimento da conferência internacional Arquiteturas Dramáticas, que decorreu na Escola Superior Artística do Porto em 2014, mas também de numerosas investigações, comunicações e publicações por parte do projeto Arquiteturas Dramáticas do Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo, que tem procurado estabelecer pontes e miradouros entre aquelas duas áreas que, apesar de casadas na prática, muitas vezes na teoria procuram ocultar a intimidade.

Neste número vamos por isso encontrar um conjunto diverso de perspetivas sobre o teatro, a arquitetura, a performance e o espaço, que abrangem temas que vão da arquitetura móvel à cenografia, do urbanismo a peças arquitetónicas de sentido singular, mas sem dúvida muito teatral.

Spaces of Drama

There are no more prophecies and time became the open range where every possibility and choice of the human being is possible. And with the end of the closed time, condemned to confirm its fate, space itself opened up to the potential of human action, becoming crucial to society, as the place where the future can be disputed and built, but can also be a tool of thought to think every human practice that happens in space.

Such is the case of drama, for which place was always of the essence, even influencing the nature and functioning of theatre itself, that was shaped by the fact it was happening in open theatres, wagons, churches, wooden planks, Italian stages, etc.

And that is also the case of architecture, the art of space in itself, which needs theatre as a laboratory of bodies and social rites.

This number of *Persona* is the result of the international conference Dramatic Architectures, that happened at the Escola Superior Artística do Porto in 2014, but also the result of the research and work done by the project Dramatic Architectures of the Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo, which has been trying to build bridges and viewing points between these two areas, which, even if they are married in practice, many times, in theory, try to hide their intimacy.

Therefore, here one can find a diverse number of perspectives about theatre and architecture, performance and space, encompassing subjects such as mobile architecture, scenography, urbanism or even mysterious and unique architectural, and theatrical, pieces.

Assim, Alexandra Trevisan aborda um conjunto de tentativas arquitetônicas de criar um teatro ambulante que ocorreram durante a década de 60 sob a regência de Carlos Ramos na famosa Escola do Porto.

Aliki Kylika aborda um projeto teatral em Londres que tenta dar conta, através da performance, da experiência de urbanidade da cidade.

Por sua vez, Cathy Braasch aborda a relação entre algumas companhias de teatro de vanguarda e os lugares teatrais que ocupam, quase sempre espaços arquitetônicos adaptados, e não construídos de raiz, que contribuem para a dramaturgia apresentada.

Daniela Sá aborda uma bela e enigmática obra de Aldo Rossi, o Teatrino Scientifico, explorando pistas que talvez desvendem o segredo deste teatro da arquitetura e a forma como traduz pensamento tanto arquitetônico como teatral.

José Capela reflete sobre a múltiplas dimensões da cenografia, interpretando as ideias de Manfredo Tafuri sobre a arquitetura renascentista à luz de práticas cenográficas ilusionistas, que questionam a ilusão ou geram o distanciamento.

Juliet Rufford discute as complexas relações teatro e arquitetura, nomeadamente ao seu nível político.

Michel Cannatà aborda a construção de espaços cênicos e/ou espaços de representação de mitos e ritos e como estes proporcionam oportunidades de investigação para testar metodologias e poéticas da arquitetura no âmbito de um debate disciplinar

Por fim, Sara Franqueira propõe a Cenografia contemporânea como um modo de arquitetura introspectiva, na medida em que uma parte considerável do teatro contemporâneo procura convocar associações emocionais íntimas que promovam a construção do significado e promovam uma mudança de atitude.

Após este tema, fizemos uma pequena entrevista a Louis Janssen, o anterior presidente da OISTAT, Organização Internacional de Cenógrafos, Técnicos e Arquitectos de Teatro, para discutir o papel desta organização nas práticas arquitetônicas e teatrais, e o próprio trabalho de Janssen nesse sentido.

Remata-se o presente volume com recensões a duas publicações do CEAA sobre a temática, realizadas por Cláudia Marisa Oliveira e Juliana Gonçalves, e uma notícia sobre um projeto de

Alexandra Trevisan tells us about a number of attempts to create a moving theatre that happened during the 60s in Porto, under the direction of Carlos Ramos, of the famous Porto Architecture School.

Aliki Kylika describes a theatrical project that happened in London, which, through performance, tried to research and display the urban experience of the city.

Cathy Braasch discusses the connection between some avantgarde theatre troupes and their theatrical spaces, almost always found, adapted spaces, that have an important role in their performance.

Daniela Sá investigates the beautiful and enigmatic work by Aldo Rossi, the Teatrino Scientifico, exploring clues that may reveal the secret of this theatre of architecture and how it expresses architectural and dramatic thinking.

José Capela reflects about the multiple dimensions of scenography, interpreting the ideas of Manfredo Tafuri about Renaissance architecture in relation with illusionist scenographies and scenographies that question illusion or generate detachment.

Juliet Ruffords approaches the complex relationships of theatre and architecture, namely its politics, implications and requirements.

Michel Cannatà discusses the building of scenic spaces and or spaces of presentations of myths and rites, and afford opportunities of research to test methodologies and poetics of architecture.

At last, Sara Franqueira proposes contemporary scenography as being defined by an introspective architecture, in the sense that most contemporary theatre aims at provoking intimate emotional connections that promote meaning and changes of attitude.

We also include a short interview with Louis Janssen, the previous president of OISTAT, the International Organization of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians, to discuss the role of this organization in theatre and architectural practices, and Janssen's own work on these domains.

This publication is closed by two reviews of two editions of CEAA about this subject, by Cláudia Marisa Oliveira and Juliana Gonçalves, and a short notice about a Cinema research project directed by Nelson Araújo, on a debate concerning the intertextuality in this field.

investigação em cinema, coordenado por Nelson Araújo, sobre um debate em torno da questão da intertextualidade no Cinema.

É, por isso, um conjunto de perspectivas que se dão neste número da *Persona* que, espera-se, poderá contribuir para desbravar novos lugares das práticas e teorias cênicas e arquitetônicas.

Jorge Palinhos

This is, therefore, a wide range of perspectives that, we hope, can contribute to opening up new places of theatrical and architectural practice and research.

Jorge Palinhos

ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

Um Teatro Ambulante

Alexandra Trevisan*

Abstract

The VII UIA (Union Internationale des Architectes) Conference took place in the summer of 1961 in London. It was organized by Riba (Royal Institute of British Architects) and under the general name "Architecture and Technology", where the debates focused on new architecture materials and techniques. An international student contest under the theme "A Travelling Theatre" was set up at this conference. In the academic year of 1960/61 the Fine Arts Schools of Porto and Lisbon embraced the UIA proposal by giving some of their 4th year students the chance to develop a project for the mentioned contest. In this period, the Fine Arts School of Oporto headmaster's, the architect Carlos Ramos, was also vice-president of the UIA, since 1959 - he had been elected at the General Assembly that took place in Lisbon, that year. The first prize of the contest was awarded to Spanish student Emilio Perez Piñero. Yet we believe the projects by the architecture students from Porto, the ones we know from the photographs by Teófilo Rego, present solutions we think deserve a broader approach, so that, the cross-relations among the Carlos Ramos' school, the proposed program for the contest by the UIA, and the relation with the Portuguese social and cultural context, particularly in the Theatre's sphere.

Keywords: Modern architecture, theatre, Escola do Porto, photography.

Em finais de 1960, a Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA) lançou um concurso internacional destinado aos estudantes de arquitectura, tendo por tema "Um Teatro Ambulante".

Os resultados destinavam-se a ser apresentados no VI Congresso da UIA, que decorreu no Verão de 1961 em Londres e que foi organizado pelos membros do Riba (Royal Institute of British Architects) sob a denominação geral *Architecture and Technology* (New Techniques and New Materials). Os debates centraram-se nos efeitos dos novos materiais e técnicas no design de arquitectura (A. Nicolas, 2007, p. 45).

A Union Internationale des Architectes (UIA) tinha sido fundada em 1948 em Lausanne como

uma organização não-governamental, com o objectivo de reunir os arquitetos do mundo inteiro, independentemente da sua raça, ideologia ou doutrina.¹ O secretariado-geral, sediado em Paris, era à data do VI Congresso assumido pelo arquitecto francês Pierre Vago, que ocupou o cargo entre 1946 e 1969.

Criada por um pequeno número de arquitectos conhecedores da arquitectura moderna – Auguste Perret, Sir Patrick Abercrombie, Jean Tschumi, Helena Syrkus – e, de acordo com Aymone Nicolas (2007, p.14), inscrevia-se na tradição das sociedades de arquitectos nacionais ou internacionais (como o comité permanente internacional de arquitectos CPIA) ou dos encontros mais informais organizados pela revista francesa *L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui*, a partir de 1932. Mas ainda, segundo o mesmo autor, os ideais universalistas e os objectivos profissionais definidos pelos membros fundadores aproximam a UIA do espírito unionista que presidiu à fundação da ONU e da UNESCO em 1945.

Os estudantes de arquitectura tiveram a possibilidade de começar a confrontar os seus projectos na UIA a partir do congresso de 1957. A participação dos jovens ficou a dever-se ao incentivo de Buckminster Fuller que "encorajou a UIA a tornar-se numa plataforma de experimentação dos recursos planetários para a qual podiam contribuir todos os estudantes de arquitectura dos países representados na UIA" (A. Nicolas, 2007, p.45). Foi André Gutton que concretizou a ideia seguindo o modelo dos "concours d'émulation da École Supérieur des Beaux Arts".

A proposta da UIA para os estudantes, de apresentarem um projecto para um teatro ambulante, parece ser um programa que já se encontrava em discussão quer no contexto da arquitectura, quer do teatro, dois campos com objectivos e acções partilhados.²

Coincidentemente, em Junho de 1961, realizou-se em Londres o Congresso Internacional dos Técnicos de Teatro, promovido pela Association Internationale des Techniciens de Théâtre (A.I.T.T.), na sequência das actividades desenvolvidas, primeiro, pelo Teatro das Nações, onde estiveram presentes representantes de 28 países, que, por sua vez, originou o congresso que teve lugar em

Paris, em 1959, no qual nasceu a A.I.T.T. (J.Mourier, 1988, p.167).

O tema escolhido para o Congresso foi o teatro de usos múltiplos, que de acordo com as palavras de Jean Mourier, presidente da A.I.T.T., (1988, p. 168) tinha como objectivo principal dotar os países desenvolvidos, mas também os subdesenvolvidos, de algo que correspondesse às suas necessidades imediatas, fornecendo-lhes os instrumentos necessários para poderem levar o teatro a um maior número de pessoas.

O debate na A.I.T.T. estava relacionado com questões antes de mais técnicas, mas também com aspectos que articulavam o Teatro e a Arquitectura, de modo a criar soluções que possibilitassem um envolvimento alargado das populações nos diferentes países.

Foi neste contexto que o arquitecto e cenógrafo francês, Jacques Bosson, apresentou no colóquio *Le Lieu Théâtral dans la Société Moderne*, realizado no centro cultural de Royaumont (Asnières-sur-Oise), em 1961, uma conferência intitulada “Nécessités actuelles du théâtre ambulante” [Necessidades actuais do teatro ambulante] na qual explica que foi “a partir da dupla necessidade prática de implantação”, nas cidades antigas, “e da liberdade a reconquistar pelo teatro que nasceu nele a ideia de criar um teatro ambulante”, ou seja, “um teatro que podia, enquanto se definiam as estruturas da Cidade nova, implantar-se nos lugares existentes sem destinação fixa e encontrar a sua saúde na mobilidade.” (J. Bosson, 1988, p.149).

O projecto que Jacques Bosson apresentou em 1961 foi aquele que, dez anos antes, tinha sido aconselhado a retirar, quando o propôs para obtenção do seu diploma na École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, por não ser considerado um assunto da arquitectura.³ Refere também que, apesar de tudo, a sua causa acabou por vencer visto que a UIA tinha aberto um concurso para as escolas de arquitectura do mundo inteiro sobre este mesmo tema e que, contemporaneamente, os materiais e a capacidade construtiva possibilitavam a progressão desta ideia.

Entre as escolas que responderam a este concurso, contavam-se as Escolas Superiores de Belas Artes de Lisboa e do Porto.

No contexto português é necessário destacar o contributo fundamental do arquitecto Carlos Ramos (1897-1969) nas relações desenvolvidas entre Portugal e a UIA, particularmente na criação da SPUIA (Secção Portuguesa da UIA) ao lado de Pardal Monteiro.

Em 1950 Carlos Ramos foi eleito presidente da secção portuguesa da UIA, momento a partir do qual passou a relacionar-se com uma grande diversidade de arquitectos de diferentes nacionalidades.⁴ O estabelecimento destas relações foi profícua e certamente contribuiu para o reconhecimento pelos seus pares do seu trabalho e empenho, já que foi responsável pela organização do Congresso que decorreu em 1953 em Lisboa, com o tema *Architecture at the Crossroads* [A Arquitectura no Cruzamento de Caminhos]. Ainda nesse ano foi eleito para Vogal da Comissão Executiva da UIA.

Carlos Ramos esteve presente nos congressos que se seguiram e, em 1959, foi eleito Vice-Presidente da UIA na Assembleia Geral que decorreu em Lisboa, vindo a cessar essa função em 1963. (B. Coutinho, 2001, p.201-02)

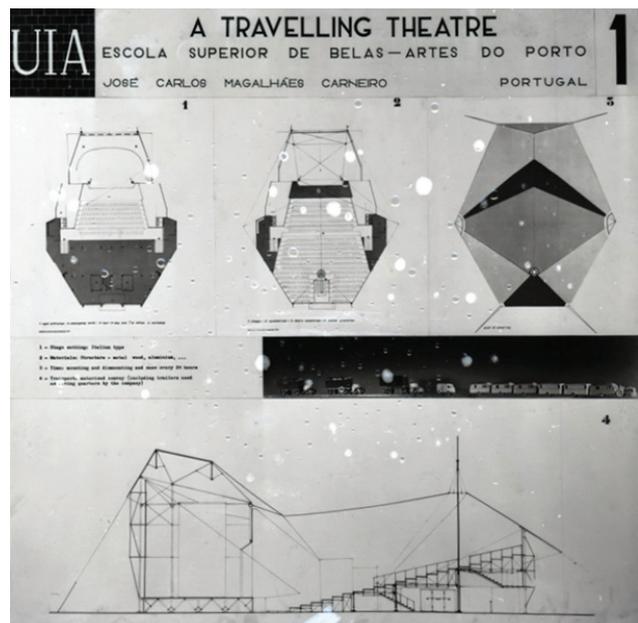


Figura 1 “A Travelling Theatre”. José Carlos Magalhães Carneiro, 1961. Fotografia de Teófilo Rego (Arquivo Teófilo Rego, Casa da Imagem, Fundação Manuel Leão).

A participação nos Congressos estendeu-se a jovens arquitectos formados na Escola Superior de Belas Artes do Porto (ESBAP), de que era director, como são exemplo, em 51, Fernandes de Sá, Januário Godinho e Fernando Távora. (C. Moniz, 2011, II, p.255).

É importante perceber que existia uma clara vontade de participação dos estudantes e dos arquitectos formados na ESBAP, incentivados pela própria Escola, em encontros internacionais que proporcionavam um debate alargado e uma oportunidade de actualização. Assim, também em 1951, Fernando Távora, Viana de Lima e João José Tinoco participaram no CIAM 8, em Hoddesdon. Outras participações terão lugar quer nos CIAM (até 1959) quer nos congressos da UIA.

O período em que se fortalecem as relações e a acção de Carlos Ramos na UIA coincidiu com a sua actividade na Escola Superior de Belas Artes do Porto, primeiro como docente do Curso de Arquitectura e, a partir de 1952, como director, cargo que assumiu até 1967.⁵

É perfeitamente reconhecido o seu protagonismo na transformação pedagógica do Curso de Arquitectura desta Escola, bem como o seu interesse pelas diferentes áreas artísticas que promoveu dentro da Escola, através de colóquios, debates, ciclos de cinema e exposições de alunos e de professores, onde assumem particular relevância as Magnas que, a partir de 1953, reuniram os “trabalhos dos alunos mais classificados durante o ano lectivo anterior, a par dos dos professores a quem competia o ensino daquelas especialidades”, cujo objectivo era dar a conhecer publicamente “as actividades profissionais e escolares de mestres e alunos.” (Arte Portuguesa, 1953, p.5)

Assim, quando surgiu a oportunidade de participação dos estudantes de arquitectura no Congresso da UIA em 1961 Carlos Ramos era, simultaneamente, director da ESBAP e Vice-Presidente da UIA, estando criadas todas as condições para a apresentação de propostas.

Os anos 50 no Porto foram um período rico na criação de grupos que promoveram actividades ligadas à arquitectura, à cultura e às artes. Destacamos a ODAM (Organização dos Arquitectos Modernos – 1947-1953), que pugnou pela defesa da arquitectura moderna, o Cine-Clube do Porto (1945)

que abriu a possibilidade à cidade de assistir no Cinema Batalha à projecção de filmes de carácter mais experimental ou que não passavam no circuito comercial, e o TEP (Teatro Experimental do Porto - 1953) cujo primeiro director foi António Pedro, que “deu a conhecer os grandes nomes da dramaturgia moderna (de Synge e Betti a Miller e a Ionesco) e restituiu os clássicos à sua perene juventude (Shakespeare e Ben Jonson, Kleist e o nosso ‘Judeu’). (L.F. Rebelo, 1988, p.137)

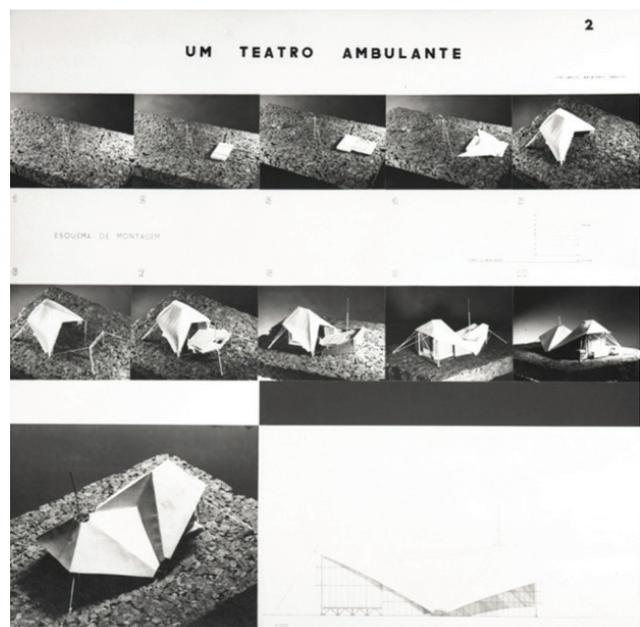


Figura 2. “A Travelling Theatre”. José Carlos Magalhães Carneiro, 1961. Fotografia de Teófilo Rego (Arquivo Teófilo Rego, Casa da Imagem, Fundação Manuel Leão).

Entre a Escola de Belas Artes e estes dois últimos grupos existiam ligações não só através da sua participação como espectadores, mas também de uma colaboração activa ao nível da organização e gestão.

Havia assim um clima propício à compreensão das necessidades que se prendiam com áreas como a do Cinema e a do Teatro. Em parte este contexto poderá explicar a resposta adequada e criativa ao desafio para projectar um teatro ambulante, que não era um programa habitual.

É certo que se conhece a existência anterior a 1961 de teatros ambulantes em Portugal, Duarte Ivo Cruz

(1983, p. 222-23) refere que, em 1936, António Ferro concebera a iniciativa do seu 'Teatro do Povo' dirigido por Francisco Ribeiro, e que "um grupo de actores e atrizes se lançara na aventura apaixonante de percorrer o país numa mensagem de arte e cultura" e ainda, que noutra plano, se destaca, "pela obra de divulgação popular, a 'Companhia Itinerante' de Rafael Oliveira"⁶, que possuía um teatro desmontável, e que foi o principal protagonista desta modalidade teatral em Portugal, mantendo-se activo até 1963.⁷

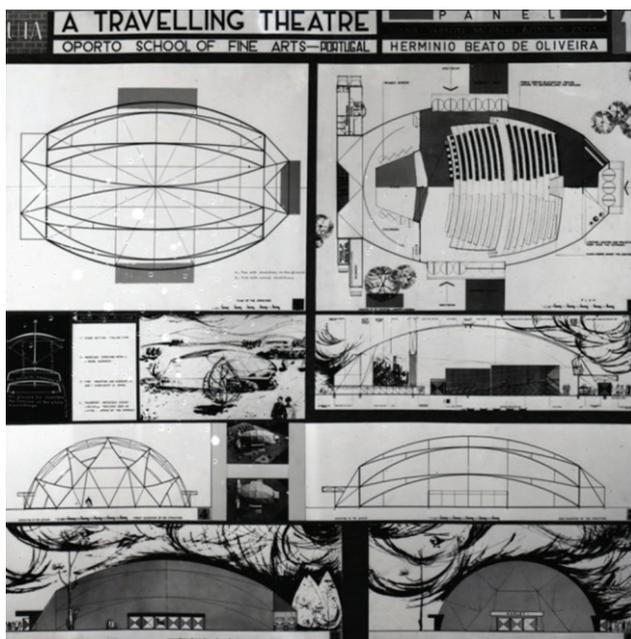


Figure 3. "A Travelling Theatre". Hermínio Beato de Oliveira, 1961 Fotografia de Teófilo Rego (Arquivo Teófilo Rego, Casa da Imagem, Fundação Manuel Leão).

Mas desconhece-se a existência de preocupações arquitectónicas no que se refere a esses teatros.

Para o concurso criado pela UIA, em 1961, provenientes da Escola Superior de Belas Artes de Lisboa, foram apresentados, ao que julgamos saber, três projectos, desenvolvidos como trabalhos escolares, no ano lectivo de 1960-61, na disciplina de Composição de Arquitectura, de que era professor Luís Cristino da Silva.⁸

Por seu lado, na ESBAP, foram apresentados pelo menos dois projectos dos quais tivemos conhecimento através dos negativos guardados no arquivo comercial do fotógrafo Teófilo

Rego.⁹ Os dois projectos a que nos referimos são de José Carlos Magalhães Carneiro¹⁰ e de Hermínio Beato de Oliveira.¹¹

José Carlos Magalhães Carneiro optou por criar dois espaços distintos que articulam o palco – de tipologia italiana - com pé direito mais alto, com o auditório, criando uma leitura exterior mais dinâmica e complexa. Esta opção difere claramente daquelas apresentadas, por exemplo, por Jacques Bosson, Perez Piñero, que virá a ser o vencedor do concurso, ou Hermínio Beato de Oliveira, que criaram um espaço único no qual se organiza o palco e o auditório em articulação com os equipamentos técnicos.

Na legenda do desenho de um dos placards da proposta de Magalhães Carneiro, pode ler-se que os materiais da estrutura são o metal, a madeira e o alumínio e que esta pode ser montada em 24 horas pela própria companhia.

Relativamente à cobertura das estruturas, os projectos mencionados optaram pela lona, existindo uma óbvia afinidade com as tendas usadas pelos circos.

Por sua vez, Hermínio Beato de Oliveira recorreu ao desenho detalhado de todos os elementos, mas é a maquete que coloca em evidência a resolução estrutural e a sua capacidade para que apenas com a ajuda de poucos meios – as viaturas usadas para o transporte da própria companhia – rapidamente o teatro ficasse montado em 24 horas e pronto a receber o público. Também neste projecto existe uma clara distinção entre a zona do palco, também de tipologia italiana, e o auditório, mas a estrutura elíptica abriga as duas funções, criando um único volume. Os materiais são também o metal, a madeira e o alumínio.

Os dois estudantes de arquitectura apresentaram propostas perfeitamente adequadas ao tema geral do Congresso da UIA – as novas técnicas e os novos materiais.

O projecto vencedor, de entre 88 apresentados, foi, como referido, o de Emilio Perez Piñero (1935-1972), aluno do 4.º ano da Escuela Superior Técnica de Arquitectura de Madrid, que veio a tornar-se, apesar da sua morte prematura, num arquitecto destacado na concepção de estruturas e cuja carreira se iniciou precisamente com o sucesso que obteve na exposição de Londres em 1961.



Figura 4. “A Travelling Theatre”. Hermínio Beato de Oliveira, 1961. Fotografia de Teófilo Rego (Arquivo Teófilo Rego, Casa da Imagem, Fundação Manuel Leão).



Figura 5. “A Travelling Theatre. Hermínio Beato de Oliveira, 1961. Fotografia de Teófilo Rego (Arquivo Teófilo Rego, Casa da Imagem, Fundação Manuel Leão).

Para além das questões inerentes à construção de um teatro, estes alunos tiveram ainda que articular dois factores fundamentais: o ser itinerante e, nesse sentido, recorrer a materiais de construção que o tornassem facilmente montável e desmontável, e ser leve e pouco volumoso. Nesta linha de ideias o teatro de Perez Piñero, cuja estrutura era montada a partir do próprio camião que a transportava, cumpria exemplarmente todos os requisitos. Os arquitectos Félix Candela, Buckminster Fuller e o engenheiro Ove Arup, que constituíram parte dos elementos

do júri que avaliou os projectos, consideraram que a estrutura desmontável desenvolvida por Perez Piñero era um grande contributo técnico.

Depois do reconhecimento da UIA, o projecto de Perez Piñero, ainda em 1961, foi galardoado com a medalha de ouro pela sua contribuição para a divulgação do teatro popular na VI Bienal de Artes e Arquitectura e na II Bienal Internacional de Teatro, celebrada em São Paulo no Brasil.¹²

Estes prémios confirmam o cruzamento, promovido internacionalmente, entre arquitectura e teatro, bem como as preocupações sociais expressas nestes dois campos, associadas à vontade de reverter a tecnologia e a cultura em prol das populações.

O teatro ambulante enquanto programa arquitectónico não teve sucesso em Portugal e, apesar do empenho e entusiasmo colocado nos projectos desenvolvidos pelos jovens estudantes da ESBAP, não houve oportunidade para a sua concretização.

Notas finais

¹ A UIA no seu site oficial define-se como uma Organização pluralista e não discriminatória: “L’Union Internationale des Architectes, l’UIA, est une organisation non gouvernementale, la fédération mondiale d’organisations nationales d’architectes. Ces organisations sont les membres de l’UIA. L’UIA a pour vocation d’unir les architectes de tous les pays du monde, sans aucune forme de discrimination. Composée de délégués de 27 états, lors de sa création à Lausanne, en Suisse, en 1948, elle rassemble aujourd’hui les organisations professionnelles de 124 pays et territoires et regroupe, à travers-elles, plus d’un million trois cent mille architectes dans le monde.” (<http://www.uia-architectes.org/fr/qui-sommes-nous#.U6g5ApRdWSo>)

² Devemos referir que neste período existia no seio da UIA uma proximidade maior com diferentes áreas artísticas, como explica Aymone Nicolas: “L’architecture fut considérée en 1945 par les gouvernements membres des Nations Unies sous son angle économique avec la création d’une commission Habitat auprès du Conseil économique pour l’Europe de l’ONU. Comme les architectes protégeaient de leur côté jalousement leur indépendance, ils furent classés au plan international à côté des associations d’artistes, d’écrivains ou de dramaturges. Pour l’UNESCO, l’UIA était placée au même rang que l’Association internationale des arts plastiques, l’Institut International du théâtre, le Pen club, etc. Autrement dit, les valeurs culturelles et sociales, privilégiées par les architectes eux-mêmes, ne furent pas reconnues par les instances gouvernementales internationales qui cataloguaient plutôt la discipline dans le champ artistique. Ce n’est qu’en 1969, que l’architecture trouva place à l’UNESCO dans la Section des établissements humains aux côtés des services du patrimoine mondial.» (A. Nicolas, 2007, p. 47-48).

³ Este projecto foi publicado na *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui* (1954, Fev.) n.º 52.

⁴ Na nota 17 do quadro cronológico do catálogo da exposição retrospectiva que a Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian lhe dedicou em 1986, são enumerados 29 arquitetos com os quais manteve “relações intensas”, dos quais, a título de exemplo, destacamos Patrick Abercrombie, Pierre Vago, Jean Tschumi e Helena Syrkus. (P.V.Almeida, O.L. Filgueiras, R. M. Gonçalves, C.M. Ramos,1986, s.p.)

⁵ Em 1940, Carlos Ramos assumiu as funções de professor da 4.ª cadeira de arquitectura na EBAP, actividade que suspendeu nos anos de 1946 a 1948, período em que leccionou na Escola de Belas Artes de Lisboa e, a partir de 1952, quando se tornou director da ESBAP.

⁶ Em 1918, Silva Vale transferiu a liderança da sua modesta companhia de província, a cuja reestruturação Rafael de Oliveira se dedicou, acabando por dar origem, em 1933, à Companhia Rafael de Oliveira, Artistas Associados, e, posteriormente, aquando da construção do seu próprio teatro ambulante, também conhecida por Companhia do Desmontável. Foi ator-empresário, director, cenógrafo, autor e dirigente associativo, sócio n.º 502, de 17.09.1943, do Sindicato Nacional Artistas Teatrais, com carteira profissional n.º 42, de 11.08.1947.” in <http://cvc.institutocamoes.pt/pessoas/rafael-de-oliveira.html#U9P8n-NdWSo>

⁷ Podem ser encontradas fotografias de espetáculos da Companhia de Rafael Oliveira em <http://opsis.flu.ul.pt/>

⁸ Um dos projectos foi uma colaboração entre os alunos Mário Varandas Monteiro e Maria da Silva Abreu e os outros da autoria de João Paiva Raposo Almeida, e Joel Trindade Santana, com o título “Um teatro ambulante para 500 espectadores” (G.C. Moniz, 2011, II, p. 186-88).

⁹ Estes negativos foram detectados no decurso do trabalho de inventariação realizado no âmbito do projecto intitulado Fotografia, *Arquitectura Moderna e a “Escola do Porto”*: *Interpretações em torno do Arquivo Teófilo Rego* (PTDC/ATP-AQI-4805/2012).

¹⁰ José Carlos de Almeida Magalhães Carneiro formou-se em arquitectura na ESBAP entre 1949 e 1973, ano em que apresentou o CODA. No processo acessível através do Repositório Temático da Universidade do Porto, na informação sobre este arquitecto consta um CV onde é referida a sua colaboração durante dois anos no atelier do arquitecto João Andresen e a participação na equipa que constituiu o Gabinete de Arquitectura da Sociedade de Construções William Graham S.A.R.L., e ainda que com o arquitecto João Seródio organizou um atelier independente.

¹¹ Hermínio Beato de Oliveira, natural de Arouca, formou-se em Arquitectura na ESBAP entre 1946 e 1972. Viveu em Faro onde foi professor de desenho. Foi escritor e poeta.

¹² Estes dados foram retirados de Fundação Emilio Perez Piñero, <http://www.perezpinero.org/>

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ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

**Presenting the
performance “Pre-Bard
// Post-Shard” and its
theoretical ground on
the performativity of
the urban space:**

The urban space is
dramatised.

Aliki Kylika

Abstract

This text presents the theory behind the performance “pre-Bard // post-Shard” that took place in several venues in London between 2013 and 2014. The performance promoted an awareness of history as the means to inspire social and urban awareness. It had the form of live-installations where the urban map was built live on stage by the participatory activity of performers and audience alike. The theory behind it was based on the performativity of the urban space, which is understood as the interaction of humans and the built environment within the familiar scale of everyday life. In turn, this affects the shape of the city through the longer cycle of historical time. To experience this performativity, one needs to participate in the performance of its becoming. To form this theory the research engaged with the subjects of site-specific-theatre and immersive theatre, Deconstructivism, urban space, urban flows, the event, collective consciousness and history.

[link: <http://www.alikilylika.com/Performance-1/Performance-Cities-1>]



[Image 1: 'pre-Bard//post-Shard' (2013-14) Flyer]

The city is ever changing. It's ever flowing. It is the nexus of social life and the built environment. It is an ancient form of settlement, while also, still, the modern condition of life. The study of the city and its development exposes in its very core, in the form of its everyday life and of its urban space, the political and the social state of affairs in each era: to study the evolution of the city involves in fact a study of the history of the nations, as well as a study of culture and sociology. It therefore offers an understanding and an awareness of our environment such that affords to the individual the formation of a citizen identity.

In an attempt to promote such social and urban awareness, and in fact to gain this understanding for oneself, contemporary theatre offers an essential medium: theatre is essentially storytelling that has the power to present complex concepts in a grasping, entertaining and interactive manner. The idea of telling the story of the evolution of different cities in a theatrical format and showcase the everyday life of the urban dwellers in the history of each city produced in 2012 the performance 'pre-Bard//post-Shard' about the history of London. Towards the creation of this project a wider research on space and theatre, the dramatisation of architecture and its analogy with the dramatisation of the urban space, was undertaken.

Contemporary theatre has adopted a new vocabulary in order to identify and classify specific forms that fall outside the norm of classic theatre, such as site-specific-theatre, immersive theatre, devised and physical theatre and so on. These forms differ from each other, but share the common characteristic of being unconventional in all or some of their elements; their use of space, text, bodily expression, relationship with the audience and the application of multiple media. In all of these forms influences from performance theory are found, connecting them with anthropological rituals, social processes and patterns, psychoanalysis, embodiment, personalization, direct action and interaction, everyday life, play practices and others.

Site-specific and **immersive theatres** in particular are stretching the borders between theatre and architecture towards new interdisciplinary territories. In site-specific theatre the text, the narrative, the action and the theme of the play are directly inspired by the architectural elements of the space, its atmosphere and history. In this theatrical form and its derivatives (site-responsive, site-inspired) the catalytic energy of the site informs the final outcome of the work.

A phenomenological-existential understanding of space is therefore expressed, where space is the *vessel* (the medium) for human life, and is experienced as the necessary condition for humans to exist. Space, responsively, is a medium that is filled with meanings once human life occupies it. Philosopher Gaston Bachelard (1994) writes about

the spatiality of human existence, the space of our dreams, our subconscious and childhood memories, which is rooted deep into the very core of our being in the world, thus connecting us with the entire universe. Space bears the memories and traces of everyday life in it, and reveals it to the investigative eyes and senses of the artists who occupy it in site-specific work.

Immersive theatre on the other hand *constructs* the environment that will most eloquently express the content of the text and allow the narrative to unfold in multiple dimensions and storylines. **Architectural space** is transformed into a spatial script, a **narrative environment** with traces implanted in it to reveal elements of the characters of the play, or the background setting of the plot. In entering this environment the audience takes on an active role that sets an individual path and produces a unique storyline of the theatrical content. The narrative created is influenced by the constructed ambience and elements of the space, the carefully planned acts and most importantly the subjective choices and interpretations of each participant in the audience. The space of immersive theatre is as real as the characters in it, and as poetic as the story it describes. The relationship of this space with the audience is so intimate, that no falsity is allowed for the theatrical effect to apply successfully. In immersive theatre as much as in everyday life, the spatial stories of people are expressed through narrative environments, which, in the words of design lecturer Allan Parsons, they are '*fictional realities and real fictions*' (2009: 6).

The journey in these environments connects the elements of the plot together (facts, clues, traces, symbols, words, images and actions) and allows the visitors to move forward in the story, as a translation of their physical movement in space. This double action works emphatically on the dramatic effect of the space, considering the original meaning of the word drama. The verb δράω- δράω means in ancient Greek to act, to move or to do, and it marks the beginning of tragic theatre, when action accompanied the poetic text for the first time. In English as well as Greek, the word implies a strong emotional state, suggesting that the journey within a narrative environment is an active experience through one's emotions, a psychological examination of oneself.

The environment becomes the drama, as it assumes control of the actions and feelings of the visitors.

Architecture is dramatised.

Narrative environments exceed the theatrical space, and spread across any site where the drama is situated.

In the Jewish Museum in Berlin, created by the architect Daniel Libeskind, the space is the principal exhibit. The building suggests a strong narrative for any visitor that enters it, a narrative spoken through the language of architecture. All senses are activated in experiencing the narrative environment of the museum; mentally, we are informed on the history of the Jewish community in Berlin; psychologically, we empathize with them, while are emotionally triggered by the dramatic spaces of the building; and physically, we are compelled to walk around.

The floor in the holocaust vault is filled with metal plates carved with faces. As one walks on them, the shrill sound produced, echoes around the smooth, elongated, narrowing walls towards the sky light at the top.

This eloquent script of the museum's narrative is composed using the architectural language of **Deconstructivism**. The designs of the museum are a series of conceptual diagrams of the Star of David that organise the structure and form of the building. The walls, planes and columns appear skewed, warped and dislocated following the new syntax that Deconstructivism composed. Influenced by Russian Constructivism in architecture and the linguistic analysis of theorist Jacques Derrida, Deconstructivism was an intervention in Modernist theory and practice, one which placed the building object as the method of critical theory. In diagrams, assemblages, models, digital representations and built structures, the architectural object itself participates in the critical discourse of architecture.

Deconstructivism was an interrogation of the classical rules of composition; balance, symmetry, harmony, unity, purity and hierarchy of form were reexamined to their very roots, were interrogated and contaminated. Through this process Deconstructivism allowed the emergence of a new philosophy for architecture, a new syntax, one which maintains the archetypal of dwelling, while introducing the event, the *folly, narrativity,*

dramaturgy and choreography. Architect Bernard Tschumi marked the space of the 'Parc de la Villette' with red dots - structures of folly, notations of an architectural index, announcing the new quest for architecture, to produce spaces where human desire is expressed. Engaged with its process, its language and theory, **architecture engaged with performance, it became performative**. It created spaces in order to speak.

By using the ambiguous word *performative* I refer to the influential work of British analytic philosopher J. L. Austin (1955) who first presented a performative utterance as a simultaneously enunciative and physical act; according to his analysis, the performative is a repetitive act, when to say something is also to do something. The term has evolved following the work of Jacques Derrida (1976) and Judith Butler (1993, 1997 and 2006) amongst other theorists (Latour, 2005; Law, 2007; Pickering 1995; Thrift 2007) and has become a wider practical and theoretical concept that covers the behaviour and performance of humans as well as objects and their interaction.

The theory and practice of performance have informed the cultural fields of fine arts, cultural studies, anthropology and theatre with matters of body mediation and activity, live presence, interaction, immediacy, temporariness, and engagement. Following these developments, the term performativity focuses predominately in the process rather than the results of an action. The duration and context of the action in the present time become important and are emphasized rather than its completion and future outcome. Bodily participation and interactivity are fundamental aspects within this process, whereas the ability to produce results becomes irrelevant.

Performance practices (in the form of rituals or other events and social customs) have been instrumental in the birth and evolution of architecture, suggesting that the discipline is in fact performative. The performative in architecture manifests not what the architectural object *is*, but what it *does*, placing focus in the flexibility and the interactivity of architecture.

The performative focus in architecture is highly relevant today in responding to the contemporary

spatial needs of a globalised social, cultural, financial and political reality. Globalisation has seen the intensified mobility of human, financial and cultural capital through a multiplicity of interrelated networks including transportation, telecommunication, social media and institutional networks. This mobility operates in a constant flow of people, commodities and information and is better conceived as a global society of flows, also characterised as a network society or, in the term of urbanist Francois Ascher (2001), hypertext society.

Hypertext stands for the way words are linked in different texts simultaneously in the Internet, allowing the user to surf between different platforms. Similarly, *hypertext society* is characterised by loose social relations that shift between layers and create multiple links, operating in a loose, flexible and unpredictable way.

The space into which the society of flows operates is, according to sociologist Manuel Castells, clearly defined:

[It] is made of the articulation between three elements: the places where activities (and people enacting them) are located; the material communication networks linking these activities; and the content and geometry of the flows of information that perform the activities in terms of function and meaning. This is the space of flows. (Castells, 2009, pp.34)

The structure of such space according to Castells consists of nodes and networks. In architectural representation this translates into spatial diagrams.

In the local scale of the city the relational web of Castell's space of flows defines its position in a global context. While it affects the everyday operations of the city, it does not express **the spatial interactions of everyday life in the urban space**. In "the Practice of Everyday Life" sociologist Michel De Certeau (1988) recognises in the footsteps of the urban walker a spatial activity that translates into flows. The walker, completely free in the urban space, just like a 19th century *flâneur*, chooses a path from an infinite number of possibilities. In hesitating, crossing, drifting away, the walker performs a spatial improvisation that enunciates trajectories and unfolds stories in space. This walking activity transforms or abandons spatial

elements in a performative inscription of its urban poem. The myriad footsteps of all citizens create together common places in the city.

As people walk around the streets towards their activities, they subscribe a linear path on the urban map. This line is the geographical representation of these walking flows of citizens. De Certeau notes that as soon as these flows are traced as a substitute for the memory of the original action, the latter ceases to exist; they inscribe the past by erasing it. The individual's particular way of being and moving about in the city falls into oblivion. This flow survey is an act of power over the active body of the walker, a means of control, as it transfers action to legibility by suppressing the practice. Geographical space is for De Certeau a *panoptikon* space, where the entire city can be viewed from afar and above, as a space syntax of the activity of everyone who dwells in it. Just like looking at the city from the top of a skyscraper, the city plan distances the planner from the spirit of the city, which only dwells at the street level of the urban space.

Everyday life practices, claims De Certeau, are a resistance to this suppression. The city plans may control the flows of the crowd, but they cannot dominate the subtle and radical appropriation of spatial elements that are exercised by the urban walker. **Desire lines** are a form of such resistance. They are the paths permanently traced on soft ground by the repetition of the footsteps of different individuals that deviate from pre-designed pathways.

They suggest a persistent flow followed freely by a series of unconnected walkers that spontaneously and actively respond to the design of place. Each step is an internal alteration of the order of space, practiced and immediately forgotten as it moves towards the next step. Walking is subsequently a temporary position, a non-place taking, therefore reducing time to a miniscule.

Time in the space of flows is compressed:

As in split-second global financial transactions or the generalized practice of multitasking, squeezing more activity into a given time; [...] the space of flows dissolves time by disordering the sequence of events and making them simultaneous in the communication networks, thus installing society

in structural ephemerality. [...] The multiple space of places, fragmented and disconnected, displays diverse temporalities, from the most traditional domination of biological rhythms, to the control of clock time.

(Castells, 2009, pp.33-36)

Everyday life is experienced in its temporariness, as a series of **events**. To have the memory of an event is to extend it in time, add duration and project it towards infinity.

Events that are remembered are a form of inscription in our memory that retains their experience active in our thought. Through the recollection of our memories we become aware of our being in the world and help shape our character. **Collective memory** is the memory of events that are experienced in the presence of others. These events and their memory keep us bonded as a group and allows for **collective consciousness** to be formed.

The incident of the 9-11 in New York for example, happened in a few minutes, but had such a severe impact in the lives of people across the globe that will never be forgotten. It has become part of our collective memory and our collective consciousness. Its importance and after effects (the wars that followed it) also make it part of history.

History is the act of organising collective memory; a classification of the importance of different events; a controlling of memory. It is subjective narrative that makes sense of the vast terrain of memories of the past, similar to the geographical map of flows in the urban space.

The study of history reveals patterns of evolution; it is an explicatory process of our current condition: geographical, social, political, cultural and financial. The time of history is for human civilisation what glacial time is for species. The history of cities is the story of the evolution of urban space, through events from everyday life that helped shape it. The history of cities, as a view from above, can only be narrated in the space of flows. As such, it erases the trajectories and events of everyday life that can only be experienced inside this space. To become immersed into this active landscape of memories and spatial practices, one needs to participate in the performance of its becoming. In this sense the urban space is performative.

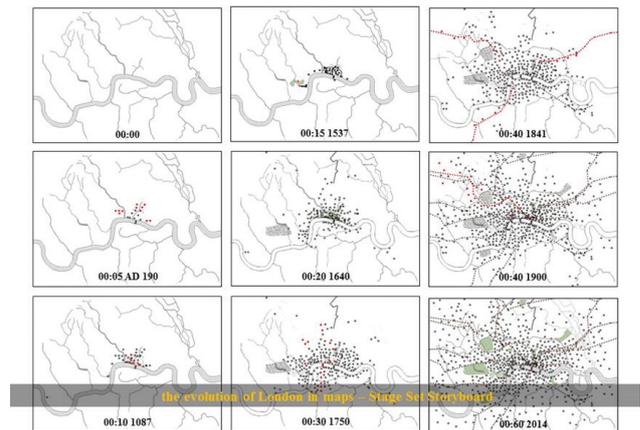
The performativity of the urban space is understood as the interaction of humans and the built environment within the familiar scale of everyday life. In turn, this affects the shape of the city through the longer cycle of historical time.

The metropolis of London is home to 8.5 million people. While there is a great engagement of the citizens with the city, only a few have knowledge of its history and even fewer grasp the effect they have as individuals in society, in the shaping of it. London has grown organically through the eras, from tribal huts and a Roman camp to a global metropolis. The process of its evolution goes in parallel with the development of parliamentary democracy and capitalism, and the development of the London dwellers into citizens.

“Pre-Bard // post-Shard” is a performance about the history of London.

It merges urbanism and theatre in order to give people the story and understanding of their environment, a perception of space and history. It takes the form of a live-installation performance-lecture, where 400 blocks are laid out on stage by the performers, following the timeline of the city’s development (see image 2). Condensed within two hours, 2000 years of the expansion of the built environment is laid out on stage to expose the processes of transformation of the city, the performativity of the urban space. **The built environment** is therefore presented on stage as **a result of the performers’ flows**.

The selected format for the show is one of a **performative lecture**. In it each fact is represented by an action and is enriched by images and sounds. Every date and fact of the timeline that the narrator reads is followed by the laying of blocks on a virtual map on stage. The map is visualised by the main rivers of the site initially and is gradually enhanced with the shapes of landscaped parks, new rivers or scaled architectural models of landmarks. When relevant, a historical fact is followed by a minor action focusing on important events or everyday customs. The lecturer is no more important than the actions performed. The content becomes vivid and memorable, penetrated by additional layers of meaning.



[Image 2: Performance Cities (2013-14) London storyboard]

Scale is very important here; The urban map and the historical timeline shift the proportions of time and the city by lifting the spectator’s view from the scale of everyday life, to a scale that allows historical time and the metropolitan area to be comprehended and controlled. The use of scaled blocks and building models reverses our relation to space. Instead of being a wanderer within the urban space, the audience is positioned as the distant supervisor of the city.

Each uniform block is a dot on the graph of architectural activity in the urban space that is inscribed within the terrain of history. Contrary to this, the action of the performers placing the blocks on stage is temporal, and although repeated in each performance, it is always different. This action therefore embodies the ephemeral and unpredictable in everyday life within the architectural and theatrical space of the map installation.

The performers are citizen volunteers who join rehearsals, members of the audience and auditioned actors, who all share a co-existence in the city.

On stage each participant does not express feelings or characteristics of an individual personality. They are symbols of **the everyday individual**: an inhabitant of the city, a builder and a random person in the street that participates in a small or large way in shaping the environment. The audience participates in the building of the

installation, further engaging with the spatial representation of their city. Different professions, of different ages, from different countries, all participants are part of the metropolis, and build it together. In this process, the foundations of the city are discovered, connecting spaces from everyday life with their historical past.



[Image 3: 'pre-Bard//post-Shard' (2013-14) Credits: Tim Parker, 'the fascinating everyday', Kakia Konstantinaki]

Archival projections of paintings and photographs introduce the urban imagery and further immerse the audience into the living past: architectural designs submitted for various developments, engravings of the various stages of the London Bridge across the eras, paintings of the Great Fire, the Pleasure Gardens in Vauxhall and the Great Exhibition in Hyde Park, photographs from the Great Smog et al.

An accompanying soundscape, created by the artist Daniele Imara, is also playing, referencing the urban sounds and music of the different eras: the constant sound of water, horse hoofs, sword fights, mob cries, churchbells and bagpipes is gradually replaced by the sound of car horns, airplanes, phones ringing and electronic music. While the sounds remain in the background, they serve as another element of immersion, one that we rarely ever notice in our everyday life, although it is constantly present – **the sound of the city**.

Disrupting the historical timeline, like a cut through history, everyday life intervenes with small fractions of theatrical performances of archival stories from diaries, journals and literate works.

These are introduced by the lively presence of a minstrel, **staging social customs** in the metropolis throughout the eras: the hanging spectacles in Tiburn tree, the brothels in Southwark, the aristocracy entertainment of dancing in Pleasure Gardens, the crowds on London Bridge during industrial era amongst others.

Minor actions, performed as part of the building, focus on **landmarks and incidents** whose symbolic character suggests another level of understanding the city's evolution: the banks, the palace, the reform prison, the policing, the riots and strikes, the law enforcements, the planning restrictions. The different forces that shape the city are here apparent: the intervention of festivals and celebrations in urban development, the role of the people, the role of the authorities and, in the 20th century, the role of the urban planner as the expert figure on the city.

Within the two hours of the performance, we stop the clocks of the historical process momentarily to cut through time and look at the perpetual change of London. From forest to town, from surrounding villages to a metropolitan city; the transformation of landscape to cityscape and urban life is revealed in front of us.

The urban space is dramatised.

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ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

SPACES FOR CREATIVE PRODUCTION:

Experimental
Theatre, Adaptive
Re-use, and
Institutional
Identity

Cathy Braasch

Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between spaces for experimental theatrical production and the adaptive reuse of architectural spaces. Modernism generally supported the notion of the theatre as a neutral and flexible machine, as in Walter Gropius's Total Theatre. However, theatres which have emulated these goals often lack dynamics that support the creation of innovative theatre. Experimental theatre companies gravitate to found spaces not just for their affordability but also for the spatial specificity and indeterminate identity. This research focuses on the case study of St. Ann's Warehouse in Brooklyn, New York, with discussion of key precedents such as the Public Theater, The Performing Garage, and the Schaubühne Theatre. St. Ann's Warehouse's new theatre is constructed within the shell of a warehouse building embedded within Brooklyn Bridge Park. The design evolved out of the theatre company's decades of experimentation altering other existing spaces. The theatre, as exemplified by St. Ann's, is not a neutral volume, but functions as an existing site that provides the needed resistance for innovative creative production and, for these avant-garde institutions, the architectural ambiguity to free themselves from over-definition and stagnation. Thus, these spaces are essential to the vitality and relevancy of contemporary theatre.

Keywords: Experimental Theatre, New York City, Adaptive Re-use, Institutional Identity

Introduction

The audience swelters under a couple of lazy fans, their plastic seats nested tightly between the massive columns. The actress is about to exit the darkened stage in the final scene of a long aching drama. Suddenly, the wall-sized metal loading dock door opens with surprising smoothness. Cool air rushes into the theatre and the audience's eyes come into focus. What initially appears to be a flat backdrop or the aperture of a Turrell installation reveals itself to be the space outside of the theatre, a glowing white dress framed by the large boutique

window across the street. The entire depth of Wooster Street and the facing building has been drawn into the world of the play. The actress climbs out the loading dock and disappears into the city.

This theatrical device is generated from the eccentricities of a converted industrial space and not the fabrication of massive disposable scenery. It economically achieves the primary goal of modernist and avant-garde theatre which is — to heighten the engagement of the audience. The inclusion of the exterior urban space, the shifting of the wall of the theatre, and the awakening to a different climate — all of the components of the experience — serve to shake a complacent audience member into a greater state of awareness. The audience is presented with the ambiguity between reality and the constructed world of the play.

The site for this production was the Ohio Theatre in New York City, operating from 1984 until 2010 and now relocated. That night was the only time I ever saw the loading dock opened during a performance, although opening the doors after a show was a favourite ritual, allowing the audience to spill out onto the sidewalk with their drinks. The Ohio had all of the essential qualities of a "found" theatre space: a vast volume, extreme stage proportions, obstructions, worn materials, and spatial idiosyncrasies. The form of the theatre allowed for innovative reconfigurations such that each play reconceived the space. The materials, obstacles, and quirks connected the creators and audiences with the history of the space, a bond that endured for the duration of inhabitation.

It is the aim of this paper to discuss how the design of adapted spaces, specifically their paradoxical combination of highly specific formal qualities and also tremendous flexibility, provokes experimentation in theatre. Together, those spatial characteristics generate innovation that is critical to theatre maintaining vitality and relevancy with a broad audience. Through the lens of the architect, I investigate the spatial conditions that prove fruitful for these theatres. First, this paper will explore the reinvigorating force of these spaces as evident in the earliest and most canonical examples of converted theatre venues in New York City, The Public Theater

and The Performing Garage. Next, I investigate the productive characteristics of other user-designed spaces such as Massachusetts Institute of Technology's Building 20 and Peter Brook's Le Bouffes du Nord, and then the architect-driven solutions of David Chipperfield's Neues Museum and Jürgen Sawade's Schaubühne Theatre. Finally, the example of St. Ann's Warehouse synthesizes these design strategies producing a deeply contextual, public, and innovative theatre in the post-industrial fabric of Brooklyn as well as a model for design collaboration.

Found Space and the NYC Avant-Garde

The Ohio Theatre, the site of the example at the beginning of this essay, was and will continue to be one of many spaces supporting the creation of experimental theatre in New York. Nearly all of these spaces are adaptive re-use of existing structures including warehouses, oil tanks, schools, residences, even an abandoned swimming pool. A number of factors drove these practitioners from conventional theatres. A primary reason was affordability and availability. The number of Broadway theatres shrunk dramatically post-World War II as audiences were drawn to the movies and production costs rose significantly with unionized labour (Kenrick, 2008).

These alternative venues have been enduring spaces for creative production because they offer a certain resistance in the staging of performances that pushes the process of invention. The quirks – the columns, the limited sight lines, or the unconventional proportions – all necessitate specific responses that lead to new spatial relationships on stage. In contrast, these spaces also have generic and unprecious qualities that make them highly adaptable and encourage experimentation. In these spaces, it is typically cheap and easy to reconfigure seating, add lighting positions, or drill a couple of holes into the wall.

In New York City, two of the most significant and enduring of these adaptive re-use theatres are the Public Theater (1967-present) and the Performing Garage (1975-present). They are the grandparents of many more venues and spatial transformations. They were innovators providing a new model of

theatre production outside of the commercial Broadway system and have maintained their vitality after decades of use. Each space has unique formal characteristics that relate to their mode of creative production and institutional identity.

The Public, true to its name, has a large civic presence and produces a broad range of performances that hope to engage as much of the community as possible. Joseph Papp, the founder of the Public, was first known in the 1950s for his mobile Shakespeare productions that turned street corners and parks into stages. This evolved into the free Shakespeare in the Park still thriving and emulated across the country. Papp's profoundly generous vision of making theatre accessible to all people resonates deeply with the home the theatre found in the dilapidated Astor Library (1854). The Astor family created the library as the first public library for the people of New York City. Its collection became the seed for the New York Public Library that occupied the building until 1911. Abandoned by a second occupant, Papp found the sprawling derelict structure on the brink of demolition in 1965 (Dolkart, 2004). He convinced the City to purchase it for use as a theatre.

The civic nature of the institution marries well with the building's history and is carved into the grand Romanesque façade. The welcoming presence is reinforced by three two-story tall, boldly colored banners announcing the theatre's identity as well as broad, gentle stairs and ramps that stretch out into the sidewalk. Three fully glazed arched doorways draw people into the generous brightly lit lobby which is accessible all day for ticketing and lounging. The Public's mission to be open and inviting to all people while still producing innovative theatre is clearly expressed in this reinterpretation of the historic library.

Interestingly, the unified façade ties together three phases of construction from the 1800s which is reflected in the diversity and complexity of the interiors. Housed inside the labyrinthian building are five theatres and a cabaret. The audience journeys from the open lobby into a thick *poché* of circulation space. Each space is completely unique – variations approximating a black box, a proscenium, and a thrust. The spaces generated

new inventions from day one. In 1967, the rock musical “Hair” premiered in the Anspacher Theatre, the former library reading room, which is a narrow double height space. Ming Cho Lee’s set design stacked a raw two-story scaffolding at the back of a shallow thrust stage creating vertical playing space and a sense of the actors being above the audience. (Smith, 2009) Almost 50 years later, the spaces of the theatre have been reorganized continually to meet new needs and the performances to reach a more diverse audience than any other theatre in New York.

The Performing Garage is a much simpler conceit – a single bare volume in which the Wooster Group develops and performs their work. It is critical for their method of creating new work that the production grows in the same space where it will be performed, creating seamlessness between creation and presentation. This process is exemplified by their 1984 production “L.S.D. (...Just the High Points).” The production timelines clearly show the iterative process that generated the work – a sequence of readings, site visits, recordings – all of which become montaged into the final production (The Wooster Group, 2014). The primary element of the set is a long elevated table that runs the width of the audience it directly faces. The actors sit behind the table with microphones as if participating in a symposium. Video monitors sit beneath and behind the table, at times representing the action on stage or interjecting new elements. Other groups of actors perform underneath or beside the table (The Wooster Group, 2014). The table forms a linear blockade in direct confrontation with the audience denying any traditional stage movement, and the actors sit buried behind microphones like a droning academic completely upending expectations of engagement with an audience.

This unconventionality is echoed by the mute façade of this former flatware factory. It is understated and unpretentious to the point of incognito. The flat red brick is interrupted only by a large steel roll-top door, a small black steel door for entry, and a postage-stamp-sized sign announcing the theatre’s name. The immediacy of the interior theatre volume is echoed at the entry where the audience passes directly from the street entrance into this intimate performance space. The Wooster

Group’s institutional identity prioritizes the kind of privacy of an artist’s studio. It is a workspace or a laboratory that invites the public to join in the process of creation.

As practitioners watched and participated in productions at the Public, the Performing Garage, and other early innovators, the opportunities of unconventional theatres became apparent. From industrial to domestic, these found spaces allowed the performers to describe new relationships between actors and audience and to redefine the boundaries of a stage. Essential to its survival and growth, as theatre was being redefined by the audience’s immersion in film and television, these innovations emphasized the immediacy, unpredictability, and intimacy of live performance. Since the 1970s, converted performance spaces have flourished throughout New York City. Initially motivated by frugality, these achievements have been revolutionary in the construction of new theatrical experiences, primarily motivated by both the resistance and flexibility of the found spaces they used. Among the many diverse contemporary typologies of performance, they share an emphasis on exposing process and developing innovative spatial relationship to engage the audience.

Low Buildings and Anti-Architectural Impulses

The two essential elements in the success of these adapted spaces are that the original buildings are undervalued (they can be altered) and yet there is richness found in the physical evidence of their past. Building 20 on the campus of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge is a key example of the productivity that an undervalued building can generate. Stewart Brand uses this building to define his concept of the ‘*low road*’ (1994, p.24) – the potential for malleable, generic spaces to stimulate creative production. Faculty member Morris Halle said, ‘*If you want to bore a hole in the floor to get a little extra space, you do it. You don’t ask. It’s the best experimental building ever built*’ (Brand, 1994, p. 28). Brand argues that the lack of value associated with the structure gave scientists the freedom that they needed to innovate. There were few amenities and poor climate control, but faculty and students chose

to stay in the space to be able to personalize their workspace whether that meant opening windows, running cables down the hall, or adding partitions. *'Smart people gave up good heating and cooling, carpeted hallways, big windows, nice views, state-of-the-art construction, and pleasant interior design for what? For sash windows, interesting neighbours, strong floors, and freedom'* (Brand, 1994, p. 28). It should also not be overlooked that the history of the building – the mythology of past successes – had a powerful influence, and traces of their presence were evident in the well-worn wood stairs and the generations of modifications.

Within theatre, Peter Brook has articulated similar aims for productive, vital spaces. He scouts specific sites around the world for each production. Except when required by local governments, he does not hire architects; but he and his team directly alter these spaces to support the performances. They preserve the texture and history of the theatre while unifying the stage and audience. When describing Brook's home theatre in Paris, Le Bouffes du Nord, Andrew Todd says *'it is perhaps an overstatement to speak of Brook as the author of this richly successful space; nonetheless it remains his space by virtue of the strategies of discovery and modification'* (1996, p.11). Brook and his collaborator, Micheline Rozan, discovered the derelict, forgotten theatre. The renovations were as minimal as possible – the stage was extended beyond the proscenium and the seating expanded around the stage to create intimacy between the audience and actors. Their aim was *'not to erase a single trace of the hundred years of life that had passed through it'* (Todd, 1996, p.11).

Brook's performance of specific alterations of old theatres and other found spaces around the world have led to some of these becoming permanent venues. Using similar restoration strategies to Le Bouffes du Nord, the BAM Harvey Theater in Brooklyn, NY was re-opened for "The Mahabharata." The alterations have been largely maintained, and it is an extremely active, intimate, and rich venue. In Copenhagen, Brook's team converted an abandoned gas reservoir. It operates as the Østre Gasværk Teater hosting a broad range of new work and touring productions. Todd asks:

What can we learn from the palpable success of these non-professionals [non-architects], whose spaces present a rich thematic of temporality, conviviality, and modifications. What principles motivate their cunning, modest, and conceptually honest schemes? What insights can be gleaned by looking at another discipline bound by space, time, and society? (1996, p.12)

One clear response to Todd's question is that as architects we all too often discard the element of time – imagining a singular end state for designs even when they are intended to house dynamic institutions. Whereas temporality is inextricable from creation for anyone engaged in the performing arts, architects place insufficient emphasis on considering the potential growth, reinvention, and reconfiguration of these theatres, museums, workspaces. If architects emphasize these considerations, there is the potential to have collaborative dialog with the client and the public that could lead to less deterministic spaces and more fluid re-inventions of buildings over time.

Architect Engaged

Two adaptive re-use projects offer a strong model for the role of an architect in collaborating with a dynamic institution and for the strategies deployed in St. Ann's Warehouse. Both projects are in Berlin, where the history of the buildings and the damage they have sustained gives the existing fabric a clear significance to the public.

Not unlike theatres, contemporary museums are institutions whose mission and audience are constantly evolving. David Chipperfield's renovation of the Neues Museum has a kinship with Brook's approach to maintaining traces of the building's history. The interior of the museum was devastated by World War II and further neglected while used as office space by the East German government. Chipperfield's approach clearly demarks new construction from the existing structure, often legible as an insertion within the massive brick shell that bears the marks of weathering and prior structures. There are locations where the damage opened up multi-story spaces; some of these have

been maintained with inserted new construction which is pulled away from the original walls. These demarcations between old and new construction and the lack of sanitization of the historic building provide an opportunity for the on-going development of the museum and create a powerful connection to the past.

In contrast, the Schaubühne Theatre offers a more severe partitioning between exterior and interior. The theatre was renovated and restored by Jürgen Sawade in 1981. The original cinema, designed by Erich Mendelsohn in 1928, was severely damaged in the war. The exterior is meticulously restored creating a record of the building's history. The interior is not treated with reverence, but is designed to be a dynamic space for the existing Schaubühne Company that was in need of a venue. The walls maintain traces of the former life of the space, but in general the former movie theatres and support spaces were gutted and unified in one large performance space. That singular volume can be divided into three distinct venues by an enormous soundproof metal door. The entire space is divided into 3m x 7m hydraulic lifts (Blake, 1984). This allows for a fantastic amount of variation in stage and audience configurations. The historic shell functions independently from the theatre spaces. It establishes the identity of the theatre company as an institution with an enduring presence in the community. The autonomy of the interior is unified by traces of its history, but is designed to heighten the productivity of the institution.

Both of these designs create a spatial language that links the past life of the building with the new institutions inhabiting them. Chipperfield intertwines the old and new systems allowing for future expansion or revision of the new. Sawade's design creates a division between interior and exterior, a loose fit that connects history with the possible future outcomes. The challenge as an architect is how to design for these properties that allow for multiple futures in renovations or new construction without caricaturing or fetishizing the textures and motifs of found spaces. Both designs avoid sentimentality through the strength and integrity of the new insertions which provide a spatial framework for innovative creative production.

St. Ann's Warehouse

The story of St. Ann's Warehouse begins in 2000 when the New York City Department of Parks cleared out trash, collapsing floors, and remnants of the roof from the structure now known as the Tobacco Warehouse on Water Street, in the Brooklyn neighbourhood DUMBO (Down Under the Manhattan Bridge Overpass). What remained was a trapezoidal brick building envelope, two stories high with arched openings and one interior partition. This preservation effort came at the beginning of rapid development in DUMBO. Within a few years, the waterfront Main Street Park opened and residential and commercial tenants were moving into the area. The Tobacco Warehouse stood on the edge of this growth, over the years drawing festivals, wedding photographers, graffiti artists, and food trucks. It became an unintentional sculptural installation, a venue for commentary on the rapid, alternately thrilling and alienating development of the neighbourhood.

The theatre now known as St. Ann's Warehouse evolved from a group called the Arts at St. Ann's Church (1980-2001). Sited in a church, their early productions featured rock narratives by Lou Reed, the puppeteering innovations of Mabou Mines, and many others (St. Ann's Warehouse, 2014). They then converted a spice factory located at 38 Water St. in DUMBO into a theatre. It was intended to be a temporary venue for a year or two, but it evolved into a 13 year tenure. That attenuated residency allowed for significant experimentation that greatly informed the design of their new home.

These two entities, St. Ann's and the Tobacco Warehouse, came together as a new theatre venue designed by Marvel Architects and Charcoalblue Theatre Consultants. At the time of this writing, the project is under construction so this analysis is based on architectural drawings, renderings, and visits to the construction site. No performances have occurred in the space. The design of St. Ann's translates the years of experimentation in the previous warehouse space into a variety of conditions for the new space as shown in the infrastructure and urban sitting of the project.

The primary performance volume is bracketed on one end by a dense cube containing ticketing, control

booth, grid access, fixed platforms for the uppermost rows of seating, and storage (Marvel Architects, 2014). The density of these services produces the openness and unity of the performance space. The permanent seating platforms allows for additional audience at a height that is impractical for the temporary risers used elsewhere without intruding on the volume and forcing a single stage configuration.

The lighting infrastructure displays a similar mix of economy and flexibility. The lighting positions are evenly distributed throughout the performance area and lobby that could double as a smaller venue. Denser concentrations of circuitry are located based on use patterns from the past years in the Warehouse (Marvel Architects, 2014). These systems build on the testing in St. Ann's Warehouse and find the balance between infrastructures that provide functionality without impeding flexibility. One potential limitation seems to be that although both seating and lighting hope to allow for multiple configurations that there is a dominant orientation, the suggestion of which could be sufficient to discourage some experimentation.

This renovation hybridizes the strategies seen in the Neues Museum and the Schaubühne Theatre. For St. Ann's, the empty shell is the given condition, and, like Schaubühne, its materials and geometries are respected. Like Neues Museum, the theatre and its support spaces are treated as an insertion. This is coded in the materials and reinforced by their physical separation. Plywood, steel, and glass brick indicate new construction and are discrete from the existing weathered brick. The steel columns of the new structure are inset from the existing building envelope signifying the autonomy of the two systems. The building systems are economical and not overly mechanized solutions intended to provide St. Ann's with the ability to continue to grow and adapt.

St. Ann's relocation to this site is a strong indication of their evolving and increasingly public institutional identity. The adjacency to the Brooklyn Bridge Park and the visibility of the Tobacco Warehouse communicate a similar message to The Public's linkage to the democratizing Astor Library. Brooklyn Bridge Park has reclaimed the post-industrial waterfront for the public. Locating

an art institution in a primary location celebrates and concretizes the new agency the public has over these spaces. St. Ann's community room and their public triangular forecourt reinforce this interconnectedness.

Several suggestive spatial elements point to opportunities for innovation and a dynamic relationship between the institution and the city. One such element is a view corridor through the building which visually connects Water Street to the park. When unobstructed, this axis will link the city street to the waterfront. Often, the corridor will display intersections of scenery and rehearsals, creating a day to day engagement between the public and the artists that can be explored and exploited by both.

Conclusions

Theatres in "found spaces" made an unambiguous break from conventional theatres by creating intimacy between the audience and actors, challenging normative spatial relationships, and forefronting the process of creative production. The interior volumes of these performance spaces have generic, malleable qualities that provide flexibility while their specific existing spatial forms also generate a productive resistance. Both forces increase the opportunities for invention in theatrical productions.

Urbanistically, these qualities also help to shape the institutional identity which may emphasize either the anonymous or the more civic characteristics of the forms. These buildings are for institutions resistant to a static identity, ones that actively seek architectural ambiguity to free themselves from overdefinition and stagnation.

The history of these buildings is represented in their materials, residual forms, and cultural memories. These qualities connect the performances with a broader duration than the immediate world of the play which ultimately makes the work more deeply engaged with the public.

Architects and theatrical institutions have the opportunity to develop more collaborative relationships combining the strengths of each. Architects can learn from the experiments and practical testing of these institutions, improve

the qualities that make these spaces dynamic and adaptable, and, in new construction, seek to generate this marriage of flexibility and resistance in spaces for creative production.

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ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

Drama and Project:

The Little
Scientific Theatre
of Aldo Rossi

Daniela Sá

Abstract

This paper will focus on a singular approach concerning the relation between Architecture and Theatre, regarding their methods, techniques and instruments. Through the presentation of a particular piece – the *Teatrino Scientifico* of the Italian architect Aldo Rossi – we consider a hypothetical analogy between these two disciplines in their own ways of thinking and performing. This way, we aim to contribute to the understanding of how the use of clearly conventional dramatic resources such as Character, Set, or Play can become ways of architectural practice. This piece of strong theatrical features, drawn and built by a famous architect, is still very enigmatic and quite unknown. Despite its strangeness, the *Teatrino Scientifico* seems to have an extraordinary relevance in this architect's work, which, according to Rafael Moneo, has the value of *oeuvres complètes*. This small painted wood construction of 1979 is not easy to classify. It is not a puppet theatre, nor a model of other project, nor a conventional set. Inside of it, little models of Aldo Rossi's own architectural buildings seem to be put in interaction with each other as in a silent play. The analysis of *Teatrino Scientifico* would be a place for enquiring how its theatrical condition may help to disclose some of the main characteristics of his work, such as reduced elements of composition, the use of repetition or a strong formal abstraction. It may also give some substantial ground on the understanding of some of his main theoretical assumptions as the notion of rationalism, disciplinary autonomy or typology. An architect's performance of his own architecture in a stage would be traced in other similar examples in architects for to consider the hypothesis of a specific ability of Theatre as an instrument of particular revelation facing architectural practice.

Keywords: Aldo Rossi; Little Scientific Theatre; Autobiography; Typology; Abstraction.

Inquiring into the correspondences and analogies between Theatre and Architecture, a unique hypothesis, even if quite enigmatic, is presented in this essay about a singular piece, designed and built by an architect. The connection between these two

disciplines is taken in consideration regarding their instruments, resources and conceptions; in other words, searching a hypothesis of correspondence between them in their own specific *ways of doing*.

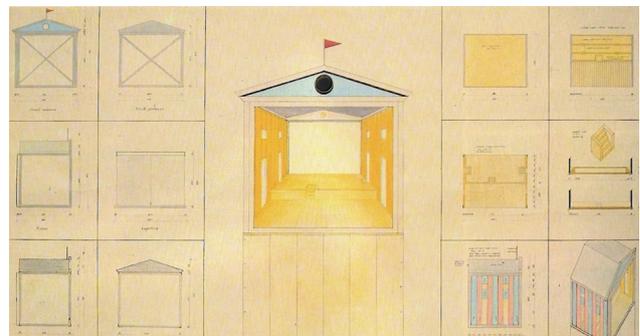


Figure 1. Aldo Rossi, *Teatrino Scientifico* [Technical Drawings], 1979

It is under this scope that here we investigate a particular theatrical device made by an architect that it is not a model of any known project, nor a puppet theatre; that is not that well-known or written about, but it is somehow taken as having the significance of a *oeuvre complète* (Rafael Moneo, 1979, p. 38); that is made by an architect, but has strong theatrical features; that we easily recognize as a theatrical set, but no action seems to be within its aim.



Figure 2. A. Rossi, *Untitled*, 1979

Figure 3. A. Rossi, *L'Architettura – Il Prólogo*, 1978.

Figure 4. A. Rossi, *Disegno con teatro Gallarate ed altri edifici*, 1978.

Probably, its enigma and ambiguity cannot be entirely dismissed. Moreover, this may be the very clue of the piece being close to the inner, somehow private, field of an architect's practice. That may explain the few writings and essays produced about this piece of such a well-known and published

architect. Beside the author's own descriptions about the piece, that we find in two articles (Rossi, 1979a and b) and short references across some of his texts, there are no significant publications about this piece, with the important exception of Rafael Moneo (Moneo, 1979)¹. Certainly, it is not easy to talk about this piece, or to definite it, and its very title can be cause of puzzlement – *The Little Scientific Theatre*.

We propose here that an insight through the practice and nature of Theatre may help to disclose some of its key points, helping not only to explore a connection between these two disciplines, from the point of view of their practices, but also a singular insight on the work of an architect and its idea of Project that had influenced so much the disciplinary field of Architecture in the second half of the twentieth century.

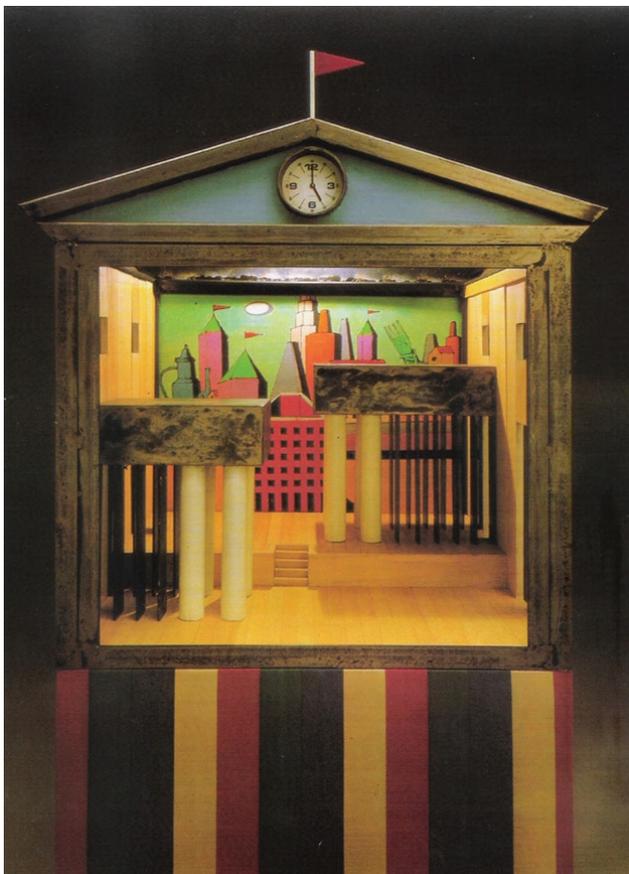


Figure 5. A. Rossi, *The Little Scientific Theatre*, 1978

The Little Scientific Theatre (*Il Teatrino Scientifico*) is made of painted wood and a steel structure of 50 x 60 x 70 cm and was designed by the architect Aldo Rossi around 1978, with collaboration of the architects Gianni Braghieri and Roberto Freno. In this piece, models of parts of his own architectural work are displayed in a scene, although not corresponding to any specific architectural project. They can be easily identified: the Cabines d'Elba, the volumetry of the Gallarate housing complex, and, painted on the scenery, Rossi's persistent and repetitive allusions to the San Carlo de Arona monument, the ossuary and chimney of the Modena Cemetery, coffee pots, palm trees and industrial towers, arranged in different compositions.



Figure 6. A. Rossi, *Modena Cemetery*, Modena, 1971-78.

Figure 7. A. Rossi, *Gallaratese Housing Complex*, Milan, 1968-1973

These pieces, alternating in between several photographs and drawings that the architect made of the Little Scientific Theatre, seem to be put in interaction with each other, as in a play. However, no action seems to be taking place. This strange arrangement of models in a clearly theatrical device doesn't have an evident meaning. Despite looking like a puppet theatre, there is no trace of figures to play in it or even a sense of action. Only models, alone, seem to have a role in it, as in a silent and still play.



Figure 8. A. Rossi, *Polaroids – Teatrino Scientifico*, 1979

The connection of A. Rossi with theatre and acting is a very peculiar one and in that we may find

some relevant assessments to question his little theatrical device. If he had projected and built a significant number of theatre buildings² and several settings for plays, ballets and operas³ throughout his career, his connection to theatre would furthermore be related to the very nature and characteristics of its practice. Being married to an Italian actress, Sonia Gessner, some personal assertions lead us to believe that he was close to actors, directors and writers both in theatre and cinema (Bonicalzi, 1994). His many references to *empty theatres* suggest his frequent attendance of rehearsals, where the action, fragmented and repetitive, reveals a singularity of theatrical fiction.

I particularly love empty theatres with few lights lit and, most of all, those partial rehearsals where the voices repeat the same bar, interrupt it, resume it, remaining in the potentiality of the action. Likewise in my projects, repetition, collage, the displacement of an element from one design to another, always places me before another potential project which I would like to do but which is also a memory of some other thing. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 20)

I realized as much while looking at empty theatres as if they were buildings abandoned forever, even though this abandonment in reality is often briefer than the length of a day. Still, this brief abandonment is so burdened with memory that it creates the theatre. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 30)

Around the time of creation of The Little Scientific Theatre, A. Rossi designed another theatre that may be crucial to understand his interest in a specific ability of Theatre of placing reality and fiction. That work is the Theatre of the World (*Il Teatro del Mondo*), built almost coincidentally, in 1979, for the Venice Biennale.

Unlike the Little Theatre, this building had a major notoriety among architects and critics, and was profusely described and written about. In this work we find one singular characteristic that can be revealing of A. Rossi's interest in working with the nature of Theatre and it can be seen in the transversal section of the building: spectators are not positioned facing a stage, as usually happens,

but facing each other. Two stair benches are placed face to face, with a narrow stage, at a lower level, in the centre.⁴ The conventional division of the audience as observer, and the actor as observed, is here suppressed. The audience is simultaneously watching and being watched. This particular space suggests it was designed as a device to see and to be seen. Therefore, the acting on stage, the drama that follows a playwright, loses its predominance as the main element of the theatrical phenomenon. A dramatic role is also due to those who observe, and it is, by nature, unpredictable and unforeseen.⁵

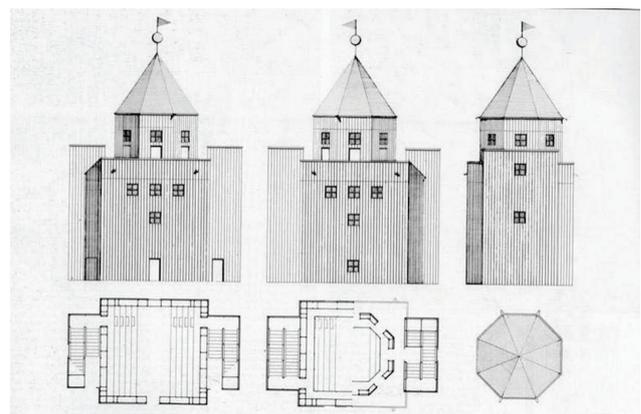


Figure 9. A. Rossi, *Theatre of the World*, 1979.



Figure 10. A. Martinelli, *The Theatre of the World*, 1978. (slide)

This dismissal of the playwright from the core of theatre ability to fiction, may find its most radical expression in the absence of action or narrative in the Little Scientific Theatre. Being one of its most

intriguing characteristics, it seems to be more than just a theatrical experiment; it may express a Rossi's specific idea of Architecture: its independence from a specific use or function as *raison d'être* (Rossi, 1966a, p. 82), dismissing the representative and functionalist understanding of architecture, as if playing a particular role. In the stillness of the Little Theatre, echoes a sense of action, past or future, as its vocation, but not as its identity.

For I have always preferred the bricklayers, engineers, and builders who created one form, who constructed that which rendered one definite action possible. Yet the theatre, and perhaps only the theatre, possesses the unique magical ability to transform every situation. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 33)

A theatre with a suspended play may be the place to observe its hypothesis of autonomy, its inner logic and rules, even if, as Rossi remembers, "Without an event there is no theatre and no architecture" (Livesey, 1994, p. 84).

Permanent sets and *scaenae frons*, like the roman Theatre of Orange or the onstage set of *Teatro Olimpico*, had always fascinated A. Rossi. Likewise, the *Palazzo Della Ragione* of Padua, the amphitheatre structure of Arles or Lucca, the mosque of Córdoba or the Diocletian Palace in Split, are taken in their exemplary formal permanence, and they are used as the central argument of his seminal book "The Architecture of the City" (Rossi, 1966a). Their permanence in the urban structure will state the hypothesis of a autonomy of form that underlies the variability of its use, of time and space, being somehow elementary, essential and intensely connected to memory.

I loved the fixed scene of the theatre in Orange; somehow that great stage wall could not but be fixed. And the great amphitheatres of Arles, Nimes, and Verona are also clearly delimited and permanent places, since they were the loci of my education. [...] the architecture of the theatre has yet to be discovered, although to me it is clear that the theatre must be stationary, stable, and irreversible – but this seems true for all architecture. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 80)

I have always claimed that places are stronger than people, the fixed scene stronger than the transitory succession of events. This is the theoretical basis not of my architecture, but of architecture itself. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 50)



Figure 11. A. Rossi visiting *Teatro Olimpico* – Fixed onstage scenery, Scamozzi, Vicenza, (1584-1585).

This hypothesis of a permanent set for different plays has close analogies with his conviction on a permanent formal structure that underlies the very nature of a city in the variability of its events. And, here, perhaps is the theory of architecture that gives some strong suggestions to the nature of the theatrical set. A. Rossi refers a play by Max Reinhardt (1934)⁶, staged in the very streets of Venice, that Le Corbusier elected as the most beautiful theatre he had ever attended – the city of Venice itself, with nothing more than a few chairs to sit upon.

The recognition of permanent features in form is the very base of A. Rossi's influential

typological studies. It demands an exercise as its basis – the difficult act of reading constancy within the different, a sense of correlation in the inevitable singularity of each work of architecture. That requires an exercise of transportation, of displacement that enable facts to be connected, besides their contingency. It is in this instrumental condition that A. Rossi places the Little Theatre – it enables, through theatre, a way of *displacement*.⁷



Figure 12. *Il Mercatore di Venezia*, director Max Reinhardt, International Theatre Festival of Venice, 1934.

Figure 13. *Unité de Marseille*, Le Corbusier, 1968.

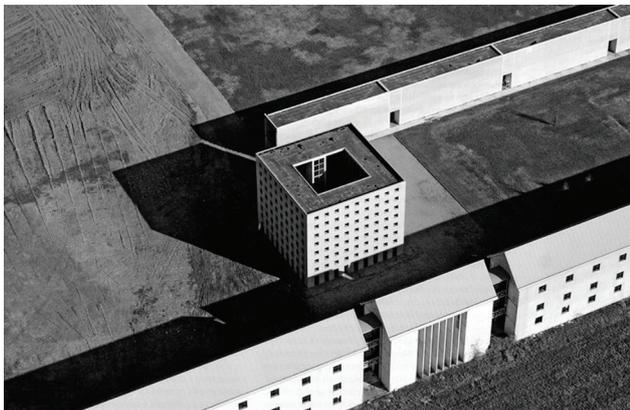


Figure 14. A. Rossi, San Cataldo Cemetery, Modena, 1971-1978

The architectural models that figure in the Little Theatre are few, alternating with each other, and strongly repetitive. These characteristics can also be attributed to A. Rossi's architecture. A quest for essentiality and permanence leads to a progressive abstraction, a strong schematism present in the use of pure geometric forms (cube, pyramid, prism) in a restricted and obsessive personal repertoire. The Little Scientific Theatre may be the clearest expression of his formal world. Discarded from a

specific demand, this repertoire gains its autonomy expressing a projectual system in its ideal status. Inside Little Theatre, fixed and repetitive "characters" are staged as elements of a personal projectual drama. Alternating their dispositions in set, photos and drawings, they perform a still play that the architect seems to observe.



Figure 15. A. Rossi, *Teatrino Scientifico* - Polaroid, 1979.

Figure 16. A. Rossi, *Gallaratese Housing Complex*, Milan, 1968-1973.

Repetition and obsessiveness is for A. Rossi "what is proper of artists, and architects in particular" (Rossi, 1966b, p. 202). Although it may produce a total silence – the repetition of objects as a tautology –, A. Rossi states that, in the best examples, it leads to a most particular improvement (Rossi, 1975, p. 10). As so, some unexpectedness can be found in the repetitive action of an actor in rehearsal, placing the uniqueness of an act one time and again.

For certainly the time of the theatre does not coincide with the time measured by clocks, nor the emotions bound to chronological time; they are repeated on stage every evening with impressive punctuality and exactitude. But the action is never extraneous to the ambience of the theatre or *Teatrino*, and all is summed up in the little wooden tables, a stage, the sudden and unexpected lights, people. Herein lies the spell cast by the theatre. [...] [The Little Scientific Theatre] became a laboratory where the result of the most precise experience was always unforeseen. Yet nothing can yield more unforeseen results than a repetitive mechanism. And no mechanisms seem more repetitive in their typological aspects than the house, public buildings, the theatre. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 30)

It is very significant that A. Rossi refers to Raymond Roussel (1877-1933) as the *other author* of this piece (Rossi, 1979b, p. 45). In his book "Locus Solus" (Roussel, 1914), Roussel describes a theatre – *Le Théâtre des Incomparables* – in which we can find some formal resemblances with the Little Scientific Theatre. One of the most intriguing sets - the one with a table and a chair in the middle - seems to be, after all, a representation of a Roussel's theatre scene.⁸ Although, apart from some formal analogies that Rossi himself unveils, it would be in Raymond Roussel's particular idea of Literature that we may find clues for a deeper comprehension of the use and meaning of the Little Theatre. This author, taken as one of the main precursors of Surrealism, described his literary method⁹ in a similar way to the automatism that surrealist artists would later develop. For his poetry, Roussel picked an ordinary sentence and mixed the order of words or replaced some of them for another with similar sound. The intention - he described - was to rescue the formal value of the word (in its graphic or phonetic dimension) from the predominance of meaning as its purpose. Despite the distance of both practices, it is not difficult to establish a relation into Rossi's interest on the autonomy of formal dimension of architecture. On that, the staging of architectural fragments as elements, combined as a *collage* and in a more or less automatic way can be seen as a place for observing their own laws in action. Displaced, through theatre, the work of an architect gains a peculiar autonomy and places the architect as an observer.

In its original sense, 'Theatre', from the Greek "theatron", derives from "theasthai", to behold, so it is literally a place for viewing (the "thea"). This nature and its specific condition of *speculation* seems to be of much interest to A. Rossi, in its simultaneous meaning of "speculum": both a mirror and a medical instrument to *see more*, to discover, to speculate - or in other words, to create *fiction*. His interest in the Little Scientific Theatre seems not to end in a theatrical experience, or in an exercise of representing architecture in general, but what is in display are his own projects and references in little models. And it should not be a coincidence that both this Little Theatre and his "Scientific

Autobiography" (1981) share the same adjective in their title. Although admittedly provocative (Rossi, 1981a), the Scientific Theatre expresses a particular value as a working instrument, a tool, even if it was discarded from the beginning as a hypothesis of evident outcomes.

The invention of the Little Scientific Theatre, like any theatrical project, is imitative; and like all good projects, its sole reason is to be a tool, an instrument, a useful space where definitive action can occur. The theatre, then, is inseparable from its sets, its models, the experience of their combinations; and the stage can thus be seen as reduced to an equivalent of an artisan's or scientist's worktable. It is experimental like science, but it casts its peculiar spell on each experiment. Inside it, nothing can be accidental, yet nothing can be permanently resolved either. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 43)

Following this argument, we note that around 1978 A. Rossi had worked in the project of a book plan to be called "Some of my Projects" (*Alcuni miei progetti*), never published, but later reshaped into the "Scientific Autobiography" in 1981, as some of his archival papers point out¹⁰. This book concerned a selection and description of his own work, with drawings and photographs, along with some personal notes. By this time, Rossi seemed to be particularly focused upon reflecting about his work, especially on the possibility of describing it.¹¹

In this way the Little Scientific Theatre, as an anatomical theatre, positions itself as a peculiar instrument to *see*, making the architect face himself: his own work, his memories and analogies. The theatrical ability for *revelation* seems to expose Rossi in this double position of working and at the same time observing his own laws in action. Significantly, the actor Tommaso Salvini states about the nature of acting, quoted by K. Stanislavsky: "*An actor lives, weeps and laughs on the stage, and all the time he is watching his own tears and smiles. It is this double function, this balance between life and acting that makes his art.*" (Stanislavsky, 1936, p. 12)

The connotations of the Cabins of Elba and the Little Scientific Theatre contain in themselves so much that is private and autobiographical that they permit me to pursue what would otherwise remain fixated within a self-consuming desire for the past. (Rossi, 1981a, p. 43)

It is not new the idea of architects staging their own work in a theatre. Similar practices can be found, even if with slight differences, with K. F. Schinkel

(1781-1841), in the stage set of both his National Theatre of Berlin and the Theatre of Hamburg drew their exterior perspectives viewed from across, within the city. Indeed, A. Rossi did quite the same thing in a technical drawing of Theatre Carlo Felice, placing in a set an exterior view of the building. Another example is the one of Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728-1799), who in the technical drawing for the Theatre placed a perspective of another project of his, the Metropolitan Church.

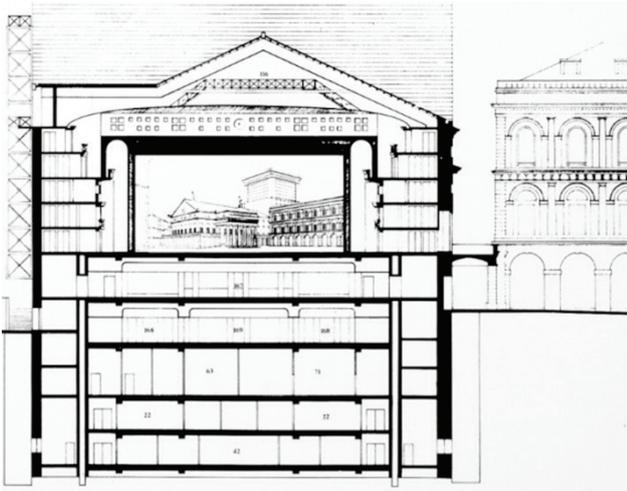


Figure 17. A. Rossi, *Teatro Carlo Felice*, Genoa, 1983-1989.



Figure 18. Étienne-Louis Boullée, *Opera Caroussel*, Paris, c. 1795.

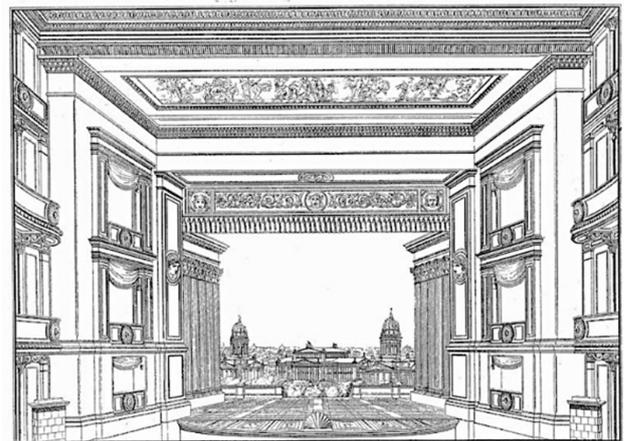


Figure 19. K. F. Schinkel, *National Theatre*, Berlin, 1818-1821.

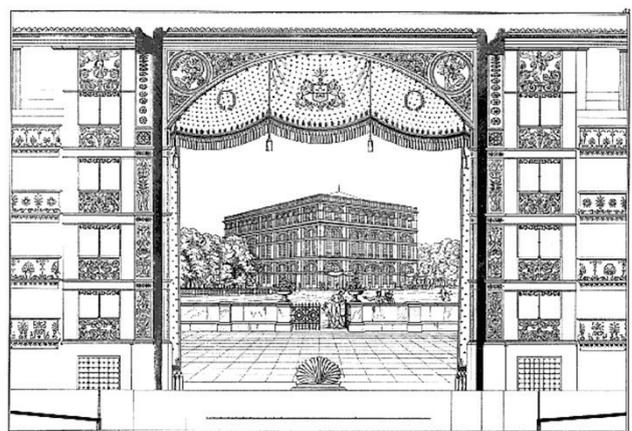


Figure 20. K. F. Schinkel, *Theatre*, Hamburg, 1825-1829.

Putting the personal development of the protagonist as the centre of a plot in literature (the *Bildungsroman*) is believed to have been inaugurated by J. W. Goethe, in 1795-95, with the publication of “Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship”, whose first title was to be, significantly, “Wilhelm Meister’s Theatrical Calling”¹². In this connection between Autobiography and Theatre, Memory and Fiction, it is interesting to note that in Goethe’s house, in Weimar, there is a small wooden puppet theatre from his childhood, vaguely mentioned by Rossi¹³, that has an extraordinary formal resemblance to the Little Scientific Theatre.



Figure 21. J. W. Goethe, *Puppentheater*, 1753.

What may distinguish Little Scientific Theatre from other disciplinary ways of reflection and self-analysis would be its clear use of objects and their direct assemblage. Two years before, A. Rossi had presented “The Analogous City” panel (1976) (fig.) in the Venice Biennale, later described as a way of accessing the imagination that lied in concrete things, in direct contact with objects.

The definition of “analogous city” had appeared in the reading of my book *The Architecture of the City*. In its introduction of the second edition, written some years later, it seemed to me that description and knowledge must give its place to an ulterior stage; the ability of imagination that lies in the concrete. In this way, I’ve underlined the painting of Canaletto [“Fantastic View with Rialto Bridge and the Basilica of Vicenza”] where, through an extraordinary collage, an imaginary Venice was built upon the real one. And the construction is made through projects and objects, invented or real, quoted and assembled together, proposing an alternative within the real. (Rossi, 1976, p. 5)

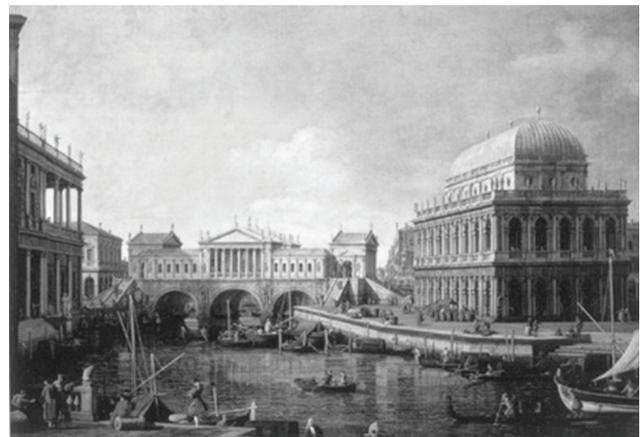


Figure 22. Canaletto, *Capriccio with Palladian buildings - Fantastic View with Palazzo Chiericati, Rialto Bridge and the Basilica of Vicenza*, 1756-1759.

The *capriccios*, that Rossi mentioned so frequently, performed this ulterior stage of description and knowledge – the *discourse of objects*, and for that, the Little Theatre stands as a singular example.¹⁴

This idea of a discourse that is produced through objects contains the notion of a specific nature of cognoscibility, a singular knowledge contained in concrete objects that is somehow indescribable, hermetic, unless due to a *performance* of themselves. This exaltation of an autonomous value of objects, apart from any representativeness, can also be found in a title of an A. Rossi’s exhibition – *Things which are only themselves* (1996).

The peculiar Little Scientific Theatre can be seen as an attempt to access that knowledge, that *ulterior*

stage of revelation in which contemplation assumes its dramatic condition of an *enigmatic play*.

Endnotes

¹ Other significant studies are Livesey, G. (1994). *Fictional Cities, Chora*, 1, 84-109 and García, C. (2006). *Il teatrino scientifico*: Aldo Rossi, *DC. Revista de crítica arquitectónica*, 15-16, 142-145.

² Project of *Teatro Paganini*, in Parma (1964); *Teatro del Mondo* in Venice (1979); *Teatro Carlo Felice*, in Genova (1983-1989); project of Teatro de Las Indias (1989); project of Frankfurt Theatre (1994), and the rebuilt of *Gran Teatro la Fenice*, in Venice (1997).

³ We have the examples of *Madam Butterfly*, Ravenna (1986); *Raimonda*, Zurich (1989); *Electra*, Taormina (1992).

⁴ In an upper level, a balcony all around overviews the set, like an anatomical theatre. Laterally, two stairs lead to an exterior round balcony from which the city can be seen from its top, which is very significant in a territory like Venice, extremely flat and with no major upper revealing sights to view and understand the city and landscape.

⁵ When asked what kind of theatre Le Corbusier preferred, he answered: "The circus, the circular theatre, because in the circus the actors play themselves, or, in other words, they are at the same time, actors and spectators. The bond of the roman theatre, the circus of the roman theatre that makes a kind of a magic link, which is also the human link that reproduces a psychophysical mode of that condition of actor-spectator that creates a possibility of reciprocal vision and listening. I define the amphitheatre as a plastic concentration. That plastic concentration is not only due to the architecture, it is also made by things and people." (Rossi, 1981b, p. 77)

⁶ Aldo Rossi, *El tiempo del teatro*, Publicacions aperiòdiques, nº 08. 04, Laboratori d'arquitectura teatral i espais de potencial escènic. (trad.) Maurici Pla, p 72.

⁷ The fact of transporting, deforming, and placing the project in diverse places and situations contains an impulse to experiment, a will to verify the work on different examples and imaginable points of view, till a kind of abstraction. In this sense I consider as a true and exemplary architectonic work, in designs and models, the Little Scientific Theatre of 1978." (Rossi, 1986, p. 9)

⁸ Aldo Rossi, *El tiempo del teatro*, p 74.

⁹ The book is called "Comment j'ai écrit certain des mes livres" (1935), and it is referred by A. Rossi in "Architecture of Museums" (Rossi, 1966b).

¹⁰ Unpublished personal notes and documents at MAXXI – A. Rossi archive in Rome states this intention. (MAXXI-AR SCRITTI, AR SCRITTI/012 NPR 0168.)

¹¹ Around late the 70s, A. Rossi had already built some of his most famous projects (Galaratese Complex, Modena Cemetery, Segrate's Monuments, Fagnano Olona and De Amicis's School) and had started to lecture in ETH Zurich, IUAV in Venice and in the most important universities of the United States. In his pedagogy, the pursue of a Theory of Project in A. Rossi was intensely linked to practice, not so much to establish a way of doing - an academicism, as Rossi put it -, but more likely as a hypothesis of the practice of Architecture being something transmissible, therefore collective and cognoscible. Therefore his notion of Rationalism never distinguished a before and a after, a practice of theory and the making of a project, but a difficult, and sometimes contradictory, coincidence. (Rossi, 1966b)

¹² Often seen as an autobiography, it describes the life of the protagonist in pursuit of a life in theatre; he writes, directs and performs for a theatre company, but later discovers that his own life, decisions and acts have been already written for him as if it

was a play, by a mysterious secret society.

¹³ "[...] the scientific use of memory of "little theatres" to which Goethe had dedicated his youthful years." (Rossi, 1979b, p. 45)

¹⁴ Its tridimensionality is a step forward in relation to Canaletto's collages and in closeness to the nature of architecture.

Acknowledgments

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ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

2D, 3D and other D's

José Capela

Abstract

This text is about detachment. A comparative analysis is carried out between the detachment performed (in theatre) by Bertolt Brecht and stage designer Caspar Neher and the type of detachment found (in architecture) by Manfredo Tafuri in buildings since the Renaissance.

In both cases, detachment is identified where there is a dissonance between an object and its context. Both Marxists and ideologically affiliated to “historical materialism”, Brecht and Tafuri advocate the practice of relativization of history through the confrontation of different historical periods (a particular way of decontextualization). Both of them believe also in the libertarian and politically destabilizing potential of detachment. However, the similarities end here. From this point onwards, the discussion evolves to identify the implications of the centrality Tafuri awards to the language of buildings, which constitutes a departure from the production issue at the basis of Brecht’s materialistic “aesthetics”. Finally, this difference leads to yet another divergence, related to the type of spatial device each of them works with: the difference between a stage and the opposite of a stage.

Keywords: Bertolt Brecht; Manfredo Tafuri; Caspar Neher; detachment

Renaissance 3D

I shall begin by talking about the Renaissance period, six centuries ago. A time when there was no photography or printing press. A time when Architecture, often associated to Sculpture or Painting, was one of the few ways of producing and spreading images. The time when a scientific system for depicting reality, called “perspective”, was invented. After that, space could be represented, not just with depth of field, but also with a continuous, progressive and commensurable evolution between the *near* and the *distant*.

Perspective made it possible to create images – two-dimensional representations – similar in appearance to what the human eye sees when observing things around it; or, at least, considerably

more so than previously existing images. Filippo Brunelleschi sought to demonstrate the effectiveness of perspective as a representation system by making this similarity obvious, and for this he used his famous *tavoletta*. In order to use the *tavoletta*, the observer would stand in front of the *Battisterio de San Giovanni*, holding a painting of that building from the back, the depiction of the building facing the building itself. The real baptistery could be seen through a hole in the centre of the painting. In addition to the painting, the observer would also hold a mirror. When placed in front of the hole, the mirror would partially block the view of part of the building, but this could still be seen. The hidden part was replaced by the reflection of the painting. There would be seamless continuity between the baptistery parts that were not blocked by the mirror and the part that was blocked but replaced by the reflection of its depiction in the painting. From the standpoint of the human eye, the two-dimensional representation had an appearance similar to the three-dimensional object it depicted (Panofsky, 1992).

In addition to this empirical demonstration, Brunelleschi also substantiated the legitimacy of perspective *scientifically*, through the graphical construction which made the image possible, but I would like to focus on the appearance of perspective – its verisimilitude. The possibility of an image being convincing enough for the human eye not only marked the onset of a new era of representational epistemology (the representation of space and representation in general), but it was also the first time there was scope for representations that could *deceive* – which the French would later designate quite literally as “deceive the eye” (*trompe-l’oeil*).

The representation of spaces that did not exist was not a novelty. The novelty resided in the illusionism: the relatively convincing impression of standing before a space that was actually nothing more than its representation. This illusionism was all the more eloquent the more the fictitious thing was conceived to be mistaken for real, i.e., the more the perspectival representation of space co-existed in apparent seamlessness with real spaces, or with people and objects. And so was born the modern concept of “stage design”: spaces which

were only perspectically represented on a surface (the traditional backdrops) and spaces which did exist but, due to the accelerated perspective, appeared to be something they were not, such as the superlative *Teatro Olimpico* (1575-1585) by the architect Andrea Palladio.

dissonance

I will not dwell on the history of stage design anymore. I would like to introduce a different subject and get back to stage design later. I will resume the topic of the Renaissance period but, this time, to consider some of Manfredo Tafuri's thoughts on this matter.

Referring to the Renaissance, Tafuri (1988: 36-38) stated:

From the moment that Brunelleschi institutionalizes a linguistic code and a symbolic system based on the supra-historical confrontation with the great example of Antiquity, at a time when Alberti is no longer satisfied by a mythical historicism and rationally explores the structure of that code in its syntactic as well as emblematic values, in that time span begins the first major attempt in modern history to refresh historical values as the translation of a mythical term to the present day, from archaic meanings to revolutionary messages, from old "words" to civil actions.

(...)

Brunelleschi's architectural objects, autonomous and absolute, were intended to intervene in the structures of the medieval city by subverting and changing their meanings. (...) One of the greatest lessons of Brunelleschi's Humanism resides in his view of the pre-existing city as an ephemeral and available structure, ready to change its global significance once the Romanesque-Gothic balance of "continuous narration" is changed with the introduction of compact architectural objects.

(...)

Therefore, Brunelleschi performs his urban revolution using architectural objects as a starting point. He seems aware that the level of rigour employed in their construction alone implies the introduction of a new code for interpretation, even

for the city as a structure. What was previously the norm – the historical overlay of events and the paratactic nature¹ of space – now becomes the exception, when interpreted in the light of the new humanist linguistic code. Conversely, the rational rigour of the organism, which used to be the exception, becomes the norm.

According to Tafuri, Brunelleschi's buildings inaugurated a new architecture. They did not obey or provide continuity to an urban and edificatory logic of the city, affirming their own, autonomous order instead. Tafuri draws several consequences from this observation, but I would like to focus on two particular aspects.

The invention of the entity called "project design" is historically credited to Alberti. It is based on the total separation between the design stage of the project – which is carried out by the architect and results in the production of a number of drawings that determine the form of buildings – and the subsequent stage when the building is constructed by a group of people which simply follow the instructions contained in the drawings. It was a decisive step towards what has been our concept of architecture for the past six centuries, and most of the time we still design projects according to Alberti's prescription.

However, this is not the invention Tafuri values the most when he looks retrospectively to the Renaissance "revolution". More than the procedural aspects intrinsic to the project of architecture, preceding the object, he is interested in the effect produced by objects, by their presence. He is particularly interested in the evocation of Classical Antiquity brought about by new buildings and in confronting that *evoked order* with the medieval urban context. The meaning of buildings – their language and their symbolizing capacity – is thus fulfilled in the confrontation with their respective context. In their *dissonance*. As Tafuri explains, this dissonance can even result in a reversal of roles: instead of looking to a Renaissance building as an exception in the medieval context, one may see it as a presentation (a sort of sample) of a new context in light of which the old medieval city is seen from a *detached* outlook.

In order to make these considerations, Tafuri sets out from a very particular acceptance of “context”. When discussing architectural projects, the term “context” usually means the geographic features or landscape of a particular location or region, the pre-existing “architecture”, the structure of land occupation... this acceptance may even be extended to include abstract aspects such as the habits and the culture of a specific population or specific rules which must be followed when intervening in a given land parcel. Tafuri refers to context as something that determines the interpretation of objects; as a set of conceptual assumptions in view of which it becomes possible to interpret what the works mean. As a cultural *a priori* that works tend to follow but in respect of which *certain* works (such as Renaissance buildings) may acquire a critical dimension. They may lead to *distancing* - the second aspect I would like to address.

distancing

For Tafuri, the Renaissance marked the onset of a new stage for Architecture as a discipline. It is common knowledge that this was the period when an architectural language of the past was for the first time recovered in a *systematic* manner, and that this recovery reflects a framework of cultural and ontological values. Tafuri discusses this fact focusing specifically on the concept of “history”. From his point of view, Renaissance architects reused building forms from the past as a tool to construct a discourse. This discourse was not about the past, but rather about the *relation* between the *present* and the *past*. In other words, forms from the past were used not just out of the desire to recover that past, but because these forms served as a reference to a discourse about the relation between the present day and history. For Tafuri, these buildings convey a discourse that is, to that extent, *historiographical*.

Tafuri recognises highly intellectualised intents in these projects (much like his own discourse, for that matter). Andrew Leach (2007: 97) refers to this way of understanding Renaissance architecture, stating that ‘(...) *in intellectual terms, Architecture emerges from this moment as a practice subject to its own theoretical programme: it is different from*

building for being what we would now call one of the arts’.

Therefore, the establishment of Architecture’s “own theoretical programme” was based on projects which cited other projects that preceded them. It was based on an architecture that represented itself –in a self-representation. It is insofar as the projects acquire the ability to “speak” for themselves that Architecture develops a theoretical *corpus*.

Tafuri always sees this possibility of self-representation as the adoption of a retrospective stance. He understands the evolution of Architecture from the Renaissance period up to the time of his writings (the 1960s) as the history of the tension between historicism and anti-historicism – in other words, as a permanent choice of stance regarding the relation between the present and the *past*.

This also explains the fact that Tafuri refers to self-representation as “metalanguage”. If, in order to interpret a particular building, it becomes necessary to accurately realise which point past it makes reference to, then the language of the new building must connect with the language of the past it makes reference to. The building “speaks about a manner of speaking”. That is metalanguage indeed.

I do not think that, in order for Architecture to represent itself, it must represent architecture produced specifically in the past. A building that is not tied to the architecture of the past does not necessarily constitute an anti-historicist manifesto, as Tafuri assumes. An abstract building may represent a “way of understanding buildings”: it may represent the universe of buildings, i.e., Architecture (in its most traditional acceptance). The *Schröder House*, for example, can be seen as a representation of architectural objects in general, understood as “sets of coloured plans arranged in space conforming spaces”. To this extent, it is actually a possible definition for “architecture” (“architecture” as in “architectural object”). You could label such a project as anti-historicist, or supra-historical, but you can also consider it merely abstract – an attempt to define the basic constituents of space configuration and architectural form.

However, Tafuri’s argument is paramount to our understanding of Architecture as a “theoretical programme”. The revolution Tafuri identifies in

Renaissance architecture is in fact the revolution he himself introduced in the theory of Architecture: despite being bound to history or historiography, Tafuri systematizes the concept of *self-reflexive* project.

A project may represent other projects in order to create a discourse about projects.

distancing through stage design

Let's get back to stage design. After having argued that projects which refer to other projects (or to project design) possess a self-reflexive nature, I would now like to address this issue in the context of stage design. I will only consider scenarios that represent some part of a supposed reality, regardless of their verisimilitude. I will be referring to mimetic scenarios, which happen to be the most common type, and out of these I will further exclude those representing "natural" things, such as forests, for example. So let's focus on scenarios representing constructions resulting from human design. Considering only this type of scenario, I would like to ask: If a scenario is a construction (that which is installed on stage) and it refers to other constructions (the part of the supposed reality evoked on stage), may one assume that all scenarios are self-reflexive?

I don't think so.

For several centuries, stage design has evolved to promote illusion, not consciousness. It evolved to become verisimilar. The invention of perspective in the Renaissance was a key step in this direction. The technical resources available to theatres also kept evolving until the golden age of mechanical devices and grandiose scenarios in the 19th Century, which preceded the invention of cinema. Things like volcanoes overflowing with lava and ashes falling over the actors or entire battles were something one could see staged in the great theatres, directed by top promoters to impress the wider audiences – to cause an impression as strong as the poignant situations endured by melodrama characters. Scenarios were meant to lend credibility to the narrative and magnify, atmospherically, its emotional effect. Their purpose was simply to be convincing, not to evoke reflection about them or anything else. Like a stimulant, they were aimed at emotions.

Already in the 20th Century, Bertolt Brecht would openly oppose this model of stage design. In his work, as well as set designer Caspar Neher's, with whom he worked, the reference to a "reality" outside the stage became critical in nature. Doubly critical, in fact:

1. The existence and operation of scenic devices were exposed. That which traditionally would be hidden was now left in plain sight. The recreated fragments of reality were now faced as fragments – limited in size in order to fit the stage. They no longer occupied the entire frame of the "window" through which the stage can be seen (breaking the illusion that there was a different place beyond the window) and, instead, they became scenic events that occupied only a part of the stage (which was accepted as a stage, i.e. the place for a representation). This way, more things could be placed on stage. It became possible to use elements of different natures which could be seen simultaneously, including, for example, projections and panels with texts. There was also room for some things that used to be hidden, such as light sources or the musicians. Scenery changes could now be seen. Ultimately, theatre itself was exposed as a device: the audience was not kept in the dark anymore, thus shattering the illusion that they were watching something which would happen even if the audience was not there and emphasizing the fact that they were experiencing a communication phenomenon. To this extent, Brecht and Neher made theatre critical of its own devices.
2. Through an inductive process, this theatre made apparent that everything mankind produces is a construction. Everything is the result of a particular choice in a given circumstance. Whether on or off the stage, facts are not pre-determined but rather guided by the will of individuals. That is what Brecht sought to prove his audience. He believed he could contribute to a process of social awareness – namely the promotion

of class consciousness. Common individuals should realise that their place in society was determined by the dominant classes, in other words, that they were dominated. For this to happen, the way of doing of artistic practice should evoke, or denounce, the way of doing of society in general: it should denounce that a production system was at the basis of social organisation and that the class deemed as “proletarian” had been created to feed that system. Speaking to those who make theatre, Brecht (1976: 321) advised: ‘Get [the audience], friends, to realise that this is not magic, but work’.

Therefore, the theatrical experience was understood as a cognitive exercise, much more reflexive than it used to be. *‘Instead of sharing an experience the spectator must come to grasp with things’*, said Brecht (1964: 23) about his formula of “epic theatre”. And to *grasp with things* means to reach the distancing necessary in order to be able to see them clearly.

historical distancing

In Brecht’s theatre, this distancing strategy includes an additional process known as “historicization”. In order to acquire a critical perspective regarding the “state of affairs” in the present, the present must be contrasted with the past – a contrast capable of allowing distancing in relation to things that may be too close in time to be seen with clarity. Analysing Brecht’s historicization, Meg Mumford (2009) identifies seven specific operative resources. She calls them “H-effects”: (1) distancing from current phenomena by moving them to the past; (2) viewing events as the result of circumstances and choices with an historical specificity; (3) showing the differences between the past and the present, highlighting the changes; (4) showing the similarities between the past and the present, promoting change; (5) denouncing the versions of history provided as the vision of the ruling class; (6) providing space for suppressed and interventionist stories; and (7) presenting all versions of history as serving vested interests.

At this point, it probably has become quite clear that I am trying to drive the argument towards a convergence between the distancing strategy proposed by Brecht (1898-1956) and the distancing strategy Tafuri (1935-1994) identified in Brunelleschi’s buildings. Brecht juxtaposed the past and the present within his dramatic narratives, so that both would become evident. Tafuri saw the Renaissance buildings as a juxtaposition of an object from a time to a city from another time, also with the purpose of making those times become evident.

Both Tafuri and Brecht believed that the confrontation of two different historical times could lead to *historical consciousness*, that is, the awareness that the present is the result of what was ideologically determined in the past and, above all, that what is happening in the present will determine the future. This basic realisation makes us agents of history just for living in the present. This is what allows us to modify history – to choose it, even. Or at least to be aware that we could do so.

Tafuri himself – by adopting a *transdisciplinary* perspective – took Brecht as a reference for his argument. Tafuri (1988: 113) advocates this promotion of consciousness as a possibility for all the different arts, stating that *‘Architecture, city and epic theatre, they all seek an extreme transparency of the processes that led to their making so that they can be revealed to those following their stories with distancing’*.

In his analysis of *Teorie e storia dell’architettura* (1968), Panayotis Tournikiotis (1999: 214-219) designates the possibility formulated by Tafuri – of opening Architecture to the questioning of its ideological bases – as *‘Brechtian poetics of Architecture’*.

After pointing out this convergence between the distancing *proposed* by Brecht and the one Tafuri *identified*, I would now like to consider a few issues related to the precise acceptance of said distancing according to the individual perspective of each of these thinkers, and then draw some conclusions about their differences.

distancing from the means of production

What is Tafuri’s acceptance of “processes” when he is referring to the phenomena that originate the architecture or the city? I have already

mentioned the ideological function Tafuri assigns to the *language of buildings*. That language may be historicist, anti-historicist or – a role of paramount importance – the agent of historicization and, to that extent, destabiliser of history (Tafuri, 1988)². This destabilisation leads to critical distancing, but what is it critical of?

Both Tafuri and Brecht were Marxists. Their political worldview is consistent with “historic materialism”: the belief that socialisation processes are organised, first and foremost, in terms of how people combine around a given *mode of production*. Brecht exposed the scenic mechanisms (productive) as a means to simultaneously expose historical mechanisms (the political narrative whose essence is production). How about Tafuri? How does language, a core element in Tafuri’s thought, relate to the production issues at the core of historical materialism?

From this point of view, it is difficult to relate Tafuri’s theory and the immediatism with which Brecht addressed the practical aspects of production – the *ways of doing*.

In *Teorie e storia dell’architettura* (1968), Brecht’s name often comes associated to Walter Benjamin, who also took Brecht a reference (Benjamin, 1992). For Benjamin, the epic theatre is a paradigmatic example of art that allows for distancing, precisely from the means of production. As seen in Dadaistic *collages*, the use of a given technique in epic theatre exposes the existence of that particular technique. The *way of doing* a particular work is not limited to a simple means of execution, nor is it a matter of virtuosity; it is primarily a part of the work’s *theme*. The work consists, at least in part, in demonstrating how it was made. It draws attention to the way it was produced like a finger pointing at it.

Tafuri does not take aspects of a productive nature into consideration. It is meaningful, for example, that Tafuri (1988) refers to Alberti as the precursor of the rational exploration of a linguistic code rooted in Antiquity and does not mention the fact that he also invented the labour concepts of “architect” and “project design” as we know them.

And now I can finally return to the starting point: perspective. If we momentarily refrain from situating facts in their historical context, it is interesting to note that Tafuri has elected Brunelleschi as

the founder of historicization in Architecture – a *distancing* process – when Brunelleschi is also the “inventor” of perspective – a feature of *illusionism*. Already in the 20th Century, Brecht (2000) would look upon the use of perspectival illusion with disdain, to the point of stating that it had no use other than providing a comic effect.

device

To conclude, I propose returning to the theme of *dissonance* – that which occurs between the object and the context where it is inserted, and which is capable of triggering critical distancing. This strategy of “anomalous insertion” is historically associated to Marcel Duchamp’s readymade. In theatre, it is associated to Brecht. Tafuri proposed identifying it in Brunelleschi. In as far as regards the latter two (both at the core of my argument), an analogy could be established between:

- the dissonance between Brunelleschi’s Renaissance objects and the medieval city in which they were inserted;
- the dissonance between the stage design elements used by Brecht and Neher and the stage they were inserted in.

This explains why traditional scenarios – which occupy the whole stage so as to make it appear something it is not – do not have a self-reflexive scope.

However, there is a fundamental difference between Brunelleschi’s objects mentioned by Tafuri and the stage design elements used by Brecht and Neher.

Scenarios are meant to be observed from the outside. Their recipients (the audience) are external to them, even though Brecht liked to keep audiences illuminated so that they did not forget the situation they were in – that they were only watching theatre. One could say that in theatres the audience’s eye *converges* towards the stage.

This is not the case with Brunelleschi’s objects. They act as the counterpoint to other objects, their pre-existing “equals” which, together, make up the city. In other words, they are localised

interpretation keys that permit the understanding of a wider context – so wide as to encompass the day-to-day experience of the population which is their recipient. In a way, the interpretation is made *from* them. The reading is performed starting from a centre (the object, in its finitude) to its periphery (with its unstable boundaries).

In this sense, the way how Pier Vittorio Aureli interprets some of Mies van der Rohe's buildings seems to carry on – and radicalize – Tafuri's understanding of Brunelleschi's buildings. Regarding the plinths Mies created to place its buildings on, Aureli (2011: 37) wrote:

This is evident in projects such as Riehl Haus (1907), the Barcelona Pavilion (1929), the Seagram Building (1954-1958), and the Neue Nationalgalerie (1962-1968). By emphasizing the place of the building, the plinth inevitably makes that place a limit on what it contains. (...) The way the plinth organises the relation between the building and its place, affects not only the experience one has of what is on the plinth, but also – and especially – the experience one has of the city, that is outside of the plinth. One of the most remarkable things one feels when climbing onto a Mies plinth, whether in New York or Berlin, is the experience of facing away from the building and looking at the city. Suddenly, and for a brief moment, one feels detachment from the flows and organizational patterns which animate the city, even though confronting them.

A device that is formally similar to a stage, but works precisely in the opposite way.

Endnotes

¹ "Paratactic" is an adjective derived from the noun "parataxis," which designates the juxtaposition of phrases without the use of a conjunction between them. In the urban context, Tafuri refers to a logical sequence of spaces by simple juxtaposition. Cf. Tafuri (1988: 36-38).

² Tafuri states that "the new functions of art, design, architecture, negate the historicity of artistic processes, revolutionising its meanings, compromising its values, involving them in a dynamic of continuous construction of the world. This is what connects the architectural avant-garde to the thinking of [Alexander] Dörner, Benjamin, and Brecht: history does not shape performance, but rather, it's the latter that will transform the functions of the former". Cf. Tafuri (1988:76-77).

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ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

THEATRE AND ARCHITECTURE: A PLACE BETWEEN

Juliet Rufford

Introduction

This article examines the relationships that exist between theatre, performance and architecture within an 'expanded field' of architectural practice. Viewing contemporary architectural practice in general, and interdisciplinary experiments between architecture and performance in particular, within the current context of neoliberal capitalism, I claim that the crass application of drama to architecture aids the transformation of built space into mere commodity. However, I see in some recent examples of non-standard architectures new ways in which architecture might make artistically and socially affirmative use of drama, theatre and/or performance in order to rediscover its role supporting social and cultural life. Adopting the interdisciplinary methodology advocated by architectural designer and historian Jane Rendell (in her *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*, 2006), I consider the performance architecture projects of Alex Schweder and Ward Shelley (2007-ongoing) and the redevelopment by Haworth Tompkins Architects of London's Battersea Arts Centre (2006-ongoing) as examples of 'critical spatial practice' (Rendell, 2006, p. 1). Thus, at a time when spatial theorists are raising concerns about an architectural culture of shallow spectacle and glib performativity, I argue for a new politics of performance in architecture.

Keywords: Critical Spatial Practice, Interdisciplinarity, Performance Architecture, Politics of Space, Theatre Architecture.

The theatre—architecture problematic

How often throughout history have theatre and architecture been intertwined? Whether in the production, articulation and programming of space, the structuring of events, or the performance of civic identities, the two are founded upon experiences of everyday life in the city. While theatre is world-building: enabling us to imagine, organise and construct social life, architecture plays a performative role in our lives: affecting our senses, directing our movements, containing and sheltering us. Indeed, they have sometimes seemed so closely

related that it makes little sense to separate them. This closeness is especially evident in examples of theatre architecture from the ancient world. For instance, when the sage Bharata, writing in verse in the *Natya Sastra* (c. 200BCE–200CE), describes the ritual construction of the Indian playhouse, it is clear that the event of building fused acts of architectural dramaturgy and social performance together with architecture. And, in another coupling of architecture and performance, the Roman architect Vitruvius, in his *De Architectura* (c. 25BCE), provides insights into the inter-connection of choreography, *chora* ('space'), *choros* ('chorus' and also 'dancing floor') and cosmos in the Classical worldview. Thus, both theatre and architecture can be seen as powerful embodiments of human affairs and as complementary artforms designed to articulate the place of people within a social and spiritual totality.

Theatre and architecture have enjoyed an artistically and socially productive relationship during later historical periods as well. The earliest theatre sets were representations of city streets and buildings that rooted dramatic events in well-ordered representations of everyday environments (see Serlio, 1996). As Christine Boyer argues, such 'scenographic theatrical arrangements [were] mirrors held up to society [...] civic portraits intended to be remembered' (Boyer, 1996, p. 74). Meanwhile, as Marvin Carlson points out, the theatre building has been one of the most persistent of all architectural typologies — a fact that suggests the centrality of both theatre and architecture to collective memory and urban identity (Carlson, 1989, p. 6). Throughout the twentieth century, as theatre and architecture expanded beyond their traditional disciplinary parameters, performance-makers and architects from Filippo Tommaso Marinetti to El Lissitzky and from Bernard Tschumi to Trisha Brown viewed as sacrosanct the tightly braided nature of these two endeavours. And, while the artistic and ideological agendas informing different meetings of theatre and architecture from the Renaissance through to twentieth-century avant-gardist and neo-avant-garde experiments have often been at variance with one another, the sense that these two areas of practice act as important foils for one another has been a constant theme throughout their histories.

What is problematic, for those of us who are committed to socially engaged theatre and the continuing relevance of critical architecture, is that theatre and architecture are increasingly being caught up within a matrix of capitalism, cultural desire and cultural production. The burgeoning trends for starchitect-designed museums, pop-up venues, and 'alternative' spaces that cry out for 'spontaneous' acts of performance and spectatorship are cases in point. In such instances, cities become performatively enhanced 'brandsapes' that place the interests of big business, consumerism and urban governance over those of communities and the cultural life of a city (Klingmann, 2007). The question of what happens to our cultural buildings and rituals when urban districts and landmarks are prized more as real estate than as neighbourhoods, and theatre is seen neither as art nor social practice but as a creative industry is one that is troubling scholars of architecture, geography, and theatre and performance studies (see, for example, Harvey, 2001; Harvie, 2009 and 2014; McKinnie, 2012 and 2013; Read, 2000; and, Roberts, 2018). Similarly, the question of what defines architecture and of whether, in the final analysis, 'all of architecture is a manifestation of capital,' is receiving renewed attention as historians, practitioners and theorists respond to contemporary economic and cultural realities (Deamer, 2014, p. 2). Before I advance my own case for the rediscovery of a genuinely critical interdisciplinarity, and for the construction of alternative architectural performativities, the trajectory that has brought the mainstream of architecture and urban design to its current performance-enhanced state of hyper-commoditisation deserves a brief exposition.

From architectural ethics to brand aesthetics

As Dalibor Vesely reminds the reader of his *Architecture in the Age of Divided Representation*, European architecture from antiquity to the Renaissance was practised according to the ethical principles of decorum (2004: 366). But, the architectural values that emerged under the new system of capitalism were dictated, to a large extent, by power and money. From the staging of privilege and authority in the seventeenth-century court

masques and urban masterplans by Inigo Jones to the theatrical expression of social status in the design of the eighteenth-century *hôtel particulier* by Nicolas Le Camus de Mézières, and from the phantasmagoric scenes of Siegfried Kracauer's 1920s Berlin to the stagy representations of American postmodernism, there is an unmistakable emphasis on princely or corporate appearances, spectacle and spatial effects. In these various examples, aspects of drama and theatricality, including perspectival staging, character, theatre design and dramatic illusionism, are merged with space and form in ways that deepen and extend the prevailing social and politico-economic orders of their day.

The thought that the dramatic architectures of a contemporary, globalised design culture are more than usually complicit with neoliberal agendas is one that is being hotly debated by scholars. Whereas critical commentary on architecture and the city has tended to follow Guy Debord in focusing its attention on 'spectacular' images in and of the city, current discussions about lucrative architectural design are beginning to place greater emphasis on atmosphere, embodiment and architecture's role in contemporary processes of subject formation (Debord, 1994). In architect and brand consultant Anna Klingmann's study of architecture in the contemporary experience economy, the brandsapes of the twenty-first century continue to rely on the power of images but their special characteristic (one which marks them as qualitatively different from the cityscapes of previous eras) is their ability to transform subjects, managing their experiences of space through highly affective, theatrically inflected tropes and techniques such as participation and immersivity (Klingmann, 2007; see also Krupar & Al, 2012). This new approach to the design of space, as handbooks in the field make plain, draws heavily on the creation of character, dramatic narratives of space, and scenes that will affect all the senses (see, for example, Lukas, 2013). In attributing the seductions of the urban brandscape to acts of performing, staging and participating, such architectural publications show how theatre's influence on contemporary architecture embeds it evermore securely in economic concerns around urban regeneration and the quest to

improve the 'performance' of previously unprofitable urban districts.

Although theatre buildings form just one small part of urban regeneration programmes, the fact that theatre and arts complexes have been used to boost tourism and investment across cultural districts is a sore point for many theatre practitioners and scholars, who view the theatre as inherently transgressive and as a platform for highlighting social issues. Susan Bennett's observation that, in millennial New York City, the 'enthusiasm of then-mayor Rudolph Giuliani for the Walt Disney Company's restoration of the 1903 New Amsterdam Theatre — an enthusiasm he expressed by way of tax incentives and low-interest loans — was driven by the desire to clean up what the city saw as a problem area' reveals a disjunction emerging in the 1980s between theatre's sense of its social worth and emerging neoliberal views of theatre as an effective gentrification tool (Bennett, 2005, p. 413; see also Bennett, 2008; and Carlson, 1989, p. 94-5). It is bitterly ironic, although typical of the way in which capitalism co-opts difference and neutralises dissent that, more recently still, performance-makers and architects, who have turned their backs on the landmark theatre building, have, in many instances, reinforced the dynamic between theatre, architecture, cultural desire and capitalism. Pop-up venues are a good example of this. In London, the craze for these temporary venues (usually vacant premises leased out whilst they are awaiting development) has been incorporated so successfully within a mainstream logic of transience — temporary jobs, temporary housing, buy-it-now-it-may-be-gone-tomorrow experiences and other (not so) cheap thrills — as to rob these ephemeral architectures of any critical or political potency they might once have had. To summarise: whether we look at the uses of theatre in contemporary architecture and urban design or consider theatre architecture in the context of contemporary urban regeneration schemes, we will notice how both appear as 'symptoms of and agents within a contemporary, globalising urban economy' (McKinnie, 2013, p. 67). For me, the challenge is one of how best to re-frame theatre, architecture and the city, finding in the breach between civic imperatives and the places in which we live or go to the theatre

ways to (re-)politicise our cultural practices and urban landscapes.

A brief methodological interlude

In exploring this question, I have benefited from Jane Rendell's approach to analysing inter-disciplinary arts projects. In her *Art and Architecture: A Place Between*, Rendell discusses a number of projects that she terms 'critical spatial practices' (2006, p. 1). The projects, which include interventions by Cornford & Cross, FAT, muf art/architecture, Rachel Whiteread and Krzysztof Wodiczko, were made at a moment of grave doubt about the social worth of public art. But, for Rendell, each of these projects seems to grapple with much the same social and political problems as were first theorised by members of the Frankfurt School and, more recently, by some post-structuralist and feminist thinkers. Rendell argues that each of the works of art/architecture which she considers calls into question the ideological apparatus that structures the terms and methods of specific disciplinary practices. Instead, these works suggest new ways in which the disciplines of art and architecture can exert a critical and transformative pressure on one another (2006, pp. 10-12). Each work is as concerned with examining its own conditions of possibility — with the social, institutional and politico-economic determinants that shape cultural productions of all kinds — as it is with questioning disciplinary norms. Moreover, in Rendell's view, the projects work through issues that pertain to art and/or architecture to raise bigger questions about the world beyond. This latter point is crucial because it is largely through a work's engagement with questions that have traction in the wider world that Rendell is able to reconceive architecture as art, and art as the material equivalent of critical theory (2006, p. 191).

For me as well as for Rendell, critical theory offers valuable ways of distinguishing spatial practices *that are socially and/or politically engaged* from the plethora of cross-disciplinary and hybrid forms that, while artistically innovative, do not seek to alter institutional norms or social relations in any meaningful way. In situating my discussion of recent works of performance architecture and performance-

led theatre architecture, I am not attempting to show how these practices exemplify a theoretical position. Similarly, I do not claim that these projects provide solutions to disciplinary, institutional, social or political problems (or, at least, not in any direct way). Rather, I am interested in how, in glancing between the performative, the theatrical and the architectural, these works seem to make manifest some of critical theory's most urgent questions, and to operate materially to reassert architecture's basis in ethics and in what theorist of postdramatic theatre Hans-Thies Lehmann terms 'social response-ability' or, the aesthetic means by which to encourage us as audiences and as users of architecture to reflect upon the social, politico-economic orders in which we are implicated (Lehmann, 2006, p. 185).

Performance architecture and social response-ability

Theories of sociality continually rub up against theories of space since social life, as spatial theorist Henri Lefebvre argues, is both socially and spatially produced. From curator and art critic Nicolas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics to the theories of social interdependence driving business and management studies and economic geography, the ways in which human beings encounter one another inform *and are informed by* questions of space. Domestic space remains one of the most widely theorised yet contentious of such socially produced spaces. For, if there has been a need for a comforting narrative about house and home, this narrative has just as frequently been countered by conflicts and dramas over where, how and with whom we live. As Theodor Adorno argues of Martin Heidegger's treatment of the question of dwelling, attempts to unveil the 'original essence' of dwelling and to reconnect with the 'primacy of being' succeed only by disregarding the issue of actual housing needs caused by social conditions (Adorno, 1973, p. 59). And, for all the cosy appeal of Gaston Bachelard's study of the secret, seductive spaces of the family home or, Christian Norberg-Schulz's emphasis on belonging and rootedness, phenomenological approaches to domestic space have been called into question for their essentialising and nostalgic

tendencies. Indeed, as Marxist and feminist theorists point out, the space of the home has signified differently at key moments throughout history, and domestic space is liable to mean different things to people of different genders, ages, ethnicities, mental and physical abilities, economic classes and more besides (see Bammer, 1992; Colomina, Grosz and Penner in Borden et al. eds., 1999; Leach, 1998; and Miéville, 1998).

One of the ways in which these socio-spatial issues are manifesting is through performance architecture – so called to acknowledge its debt to performance art and distinguish it from technologically-orientated performative architectures. Performance architecture explores the possibilities for 'architect performed buildings' – where the architect becomes a kind of performance artist – in order to scrutinise the relationships between architecture and the social rituals of everyday life. Alex Schweder and Ward Shelley's 2007 *Flatland* provided an opportunity for six performer-inhabitants and their audiences to consider questions of sociality, spatiality, architecture and performance through embodied acts of research. *Flatland* took the form of a tall, very slim inhabitable sculpture. Constructed by its housemate artists – besides Schweder and Shelley: Pelle Brage, Eva La Cour, Douglas Paulson and Maria Petschnig – *Flatland* acted as a diagram of people's lives as they were lived over a three week period at New York's SculptureCenter. With its eight nodes (six individual living spaces and two communal areas) spread over the structure's four storeys, this 'performance of extreme living test[ed] the boundaries of not only its inhabitants but also its viewers, eliciting anything from horrified claustrophobia to a desire to enter the structure' (Cole, 2007, n.p.). Publicly sited and placing its occupants under considerable social and psychological pressure, the project questioned common assumptions about the home as a place of security and a retreat from the world.

By dint of peopling their (largely) transparent 2'-0" x 32'-0" x 24'-0" 'house' and inviting gallery visitors to witness a heightened performance of (often quite fraught) domestic negotiations, Schweder and Shelley highlighted a fundamental aspect of architecture: the reciprocal relationship between

subject and object, between people and buildings. *Flatland* could be said to have staged the key Lefebvrian problematic that 'space and the political organisation of space express social relationships but also reflect back upon them' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 8). Furthermore, it used an explicitly theatrical dynamic — i.e. of performance and spectatorship — to frame the inter-influence between social behaviours and spatial fields in this traditionally most private and, therefore, partly unknowable of arenas. Furthermore, in positioning this domestic space complete with all its messy programmatic complications inside the 'pristine' space for the exhibition of fine art, the artists juxtaposed the rhythms and concerns of two contrasting spheres of operation, opening both the repetitive, mundane world of domestica and the high-stakes world of the international art market to critique. For if these two spaces are markedly different in terms of building type, function, programme, scale, cultural values and connotations, they might equally be seen as spaces prone to normativity and tradition — spaces whose cultural meanings, affordances and limitations we fail to fully explore, and to harness in the service of positive change.

Following on from *Flatland*, a triptych of architect-performed buildings, which began with *Stability* (2009) and continued through *Counterweight Roommate* (2011) to *In Orbit* (2014), was conceived as 'social relationship architecture' (http://www.alexschweder.com/work/in_orbit.html). These three pieces, which Schweder and Shelley performed as a duo, separately and collectively tested the possibilities and problems of inhabitation, cohabitation, and social interdependency. *Stability* (Lawrimore Project, Seattle), which took the form of an inhabitable beam raised off the ground via a central pivot, caricatured cultural desires and conflicts that attach to sociality and space. Its sea-saw-like form allowed for two self-contained and individually furnished live/work areas to be located at either end of the beam but made the successful use of one occupant's space dependent on the position and weight of the other occupant. As Shelley and Schweder performed the routine tasks of their daily existence, their actions indexed a range of other actions, inter-actions and consequences that

can 'tip the balance' at a variety of different scales and in a multitude of places. In fact, one conscious aim of this project was to demonstrate how, 'from the intimacy of families to the geopolitics of nation states, our desires for closeness or separation are given form through walls and doors, borders and check points' and to examine how two artist-occupants might respond to that reality (<http://www.alexschweder.com/work/stability.html>). Negotiations of space are complex, continual, and often fraught with tension. *Stability* asked its occupants, and the 'audiences' who came to see the structure performed, to confront this situation and make positive choices about how we share our world with others.

Counterweight Roommate (Scope, Basel) put Schweder and Shelley's theme of social inter-dependence under additional stress by making each roommate's movement up and down its tall, thin building dependent on being able to use the body mass of his fellow occupant as a counterweight to his own laborious progress. Tethered to either end of a single rope, Schweder and Shelley's gruelling five-day experiment in vertical living took *Stability's* concerns with co-operation and the mutual negotiation of closeness and separation to a new, more urgent level: it suggested that our very survival may hinge on our being able to balance competing claims on available resources and territory. The third piece in the triptych, *In Orbit* (The Boiler, New York) resituated questions about the politics of space and the co-ordination of human needs for, and in, housing both inside *and outside* a twenty-five foot steel and timber wheel, which was suspended from the venue's ceiling. Over ten whole days and nights, while Schweder lived inside the wheel, Shelley occupied its exterior. As with *Counterweight Roommate*, each artist had to co-ordinate his movements with the other if either was to be able to achieve even the most basic of human functions — a condition of vulnerability that Shelley acknowledged when he told an interviewer: 'We've begun to see that trust is a big issue in this piece. I'm very dependent on Alex' (Scherer, 2014, n.p.).

Responses to these pieces were, by turns, comedic, disconcerting, and intriguing. But, for all the apparent playfulness of these collaborative

experiments, the works raise questions that are discipline-specific (e.g. how might architects re-think design, fabrication and construction in relation to the social dramaturgy of everyday life?), inter-disciplinary (e.g. what is gained through performing architecture or, for that matter, through architecting the real-life performance of social relations?), and trans-disciplinary (e.g. how might the conceptual and socio-spatial tools afforded us by performance architecture enable constructive approaches to socio-economic, geo-political and other complex realities that range from the housing crises affecting cities and states to territorial disputes of catastrophic international proportions?). In all, ideas about how we (per)form ourselves as subjects in and of architecture looped back into questions about how architecture gives shape to cultural, political and social contexts. Schweder and Shelley's experiments in designing, building, and living in spaces that were at once private and shared, enacted and witnessed undermined the conventional foundations of domesticity, prompting onlookers to wonder what new social, familial or communal dramaturgies may be written through the inter-action of bodies and objects in space and through time. The artists suggest that what might be at stake for architecture and its occupants in these acts of constructing, deconstructing, restructuring and performing habitation are the very concepts of identity, inter-action and dwelling. Certainly, their architect-performed buildings issue a call to us to rethink habitual patterns, conventional methodologies, and practices that unthinkingly reproduce the status quo.

Playing at the edge of architecture

If the performance architecture of Schweder and Shelley makes productive use of performance to explore the effects of architecture on subjectivity and social (and, by extension, geo-political) relations, my second case study — the redevelopment of an arts centre by theatre architects Haworth Tompkins — takes up performance methodologies in order to open architecture to collaborative, project-specific alternatives to standard industry practices and protocols. The reasons I want to focus on this

are three-fold. First, it is a successful model for approaches to theatre architecture at a time when the typology has been called into question (see Hannah, 2007). Second, it reveals how performance can help architecture trouble cherished industry orthodoxies, enabling us to rethink architectural processes, and professional and social relationships across a wide range of building types and contexts. Third, it is subtly subversive of what Adorno, throughout his philosophy, termed 'identity thinking' or, the tendency towards a blind acceptance of the world 'as it is' that prevents people from recognising heterogeneity and exploring the 'as it might be' (see, in particular, Adorno, 1973). In Adorno's thought, the tendency towards identification — the 'obligation to become identical, to become total' — is closely linked to the exchange principle and the commodity structure that dominates our social system since both reduce things (whether human labour or, ways of building or producing theatre) to abstract universals (1973, p. 146). Thus, opposition to the identity or unity principle as it conditions a discrete area of cultural life: theatre architecture, in this case, implies criticism of the exchange principle — even though that may not have been a conscious aim on Haworth Tompkins's part.

Battersea Arts Centre (usually known as BAC) in south London occupies Battersea's former town hall, an 1893 building designed for civic function and ceremony by the architect E. W. Mountford. It was re-tooled as a community arts venue hosting three studio theatres in 1980. From its inauguration until the early years of this century, the centre programmed its black box studios, leaving most of the rest of its seventy-four-room building poorly used. By 2006, BAC's Grade 2* listed building was badly in need of technical upgrades and repair. For financial reasons, the arts centre would have to remain open throughout the redevelopment and this was what provided the immediate impetus for a series of phased architectural interventions. In formulating an appropriate working method for the phased programme of works, Haworth Tompkins looked to BAC's scratch performance techniques, where performance pieces are shown at various stages of their development to an outside audience whose feedback guides the further development of

the work. Translated into an architectural process, scratch performance results in theatre architecture that is both provisional and collaboratively authored. In place of the mainstream architectural scenario, in which a team of very expensive experts rolls out a solution, often to the bewilderment of the client, Haworth Tompkins's work at BAC started involving the theatre makers themselves in an interdisciplinary and iterative approach to redeveloping their building — one in which each testing-of-an-idea-through-doing-it has provided opportunities to modify previous iterations. Changes are made in response to performers' needs by mixed groups of architects and theatre-practitioners, who arrive at decisions through a process the architects associate with fuzzy logic — that is, with ways of seeing and doing that recognise more than simple 'true' and 'false' or, 'right' and 'wrong' values (Haworth Tompkins, 2007). Nothing is treated as fixed or final. While each phase of works has resulted in a new articulation of the space — one that actively shapes the performance work being done in, on and through it — successive seasons of theatre have been allowed to inscribe themselves onto the long-term character of the space.

During the initial stages of the project, which coincided with work by the performance collective Punchdrunk on its immersive, promenade show: *The Masque of the Red Death* (2007–8), Haworth Tompkins adopted ideas that director Felix Barrett had discussed about creating 'sneak routes' around the building. The architects revealed hidden doors and broke through partition walls, leaving these changes in place at the request of other artists and theatre companies. Other temporary alterations made specifically for Punchdrunk, including lowered ceilings and partition walls, have also been retained and, over time, may become indistinguishable from the permanent architecture of BAC. Architect Steve Tompkins explains the improvisatory, cumulative nature of the work:

We make small interventions, feeding into specific performances and these will leave a trace, an accretion, which will gradually accumulate. And, eventually, like a coral reef perhaps, the building will transform into a different space, a different environment [...] but over evolutionary periods of

time. So, even though each intervention might be a day, or a week, or six months, the time period of the project is [...] twenty years, say? [...] Or more? (Tompkins, 2011, interviewed by Brocklehurst and Rufford, n.p.).

Thus, the ad hoc, unpredictable nature of these phased interventions has encouraged theatre and architecture to engage each other in an on-going process of creative re-definition, where theatre is treated as a way of 'doing' architecture, and architecture is treated as a fluid and temporal art — neither as the science of rational space-planning nor as an exercise in arrogant form-making. In contrast to the hi-tech performative architectures of recent decades, Haworth Tompkins's interventions are enabling an alternative architectural performativity — one less interested in the creation of smart surfaces, and the eye-catching metropolitan landmarks beloved of civic authorities than it is in performatively de-essentialising or 'troubling' standardising practices and hierarchies.

As Haworth Tompkins started helping artists make adjustments and additions to enhance the space, it also started returning the arts centre to a more explicitly 'found' state. Whereas the 1980 conversion of the building had tried to expunge all trace of Victorian town hall, Haworth Tompkins's work was aimed at rediscovering the complexity and ambiguity that occurred when the arts organisation first moved in and started using a building not designed for theatre. Through a series of subtractive moves, the team dis-identified spaces that had previously been designated as 'theatres.' And, once the legitimacy of these converted studio spaces had been problematised, it became easier for those involved to see where else in the building 'dramatic architectures' might be unveiled. For instance, at first-floor level, Haworth Tompkins unveiled a sequence of inter-connected domestic-scale rooms, which Barrett used as intimate performance environments before gathering the entire audience for a participatory finale inside the 800-seat Grand Hall. Thus, the theatre architects and performers freed architecture and theatre from the confines of the stage, tearing down the boundaries that separate acting space from

audience space, and front- from back-of-house. More recently, by installing a building-wide system of temporary technical hardware, the architects have enabled theatre practitioners to find, or create, exactly the right spatial context for their work and, as a result, to foster performer-spectator relationships that would be unthinkable inside a conventional auditorium.

What I want to emphasise about this approach is that it arises from the concrete and particular character of the arts organisation, its building, and its circumstances. In fact, if we agree with Adorno that 'other' perspectives are only available once we take account of the specific and contradictory character of concrete phenomena, we will appreciate that attempts to escape the hegemony of the identity or unity principle in order to assert 'nonidentical' ways of being, making and thinking cannot be abstracted and generalised. Were one to posit BAC Playgrounds as a 'readymade' architectural methodology — one that could be straightforwardly applied to any number of redevelopment projects — one would not only suppress the particularity of Haworth Tompkins's interventions at BAC but also risk subsuming it within the very professional (and, by implication, cultural and politico-economic) system it sought to critique. The important point to be taken from this project is that other ways of doing architecture are available to those who are prepared to embrace ambiguity, contingency and risk, and to gear an anti-systematic working method, such as is afforded by rigorous interdisciplinarity, towards the concrete particularities of a project.

Architecture's manipulation at BAC is being undertaken with full consciousness of what Haworth Tompkins is rejecting or transforming in architectural terms: stylistic trademarking certainly but also the idea that the theatre is a fixed typology. While offering longevity and security for artists, BAC Playgrounds absorbs the lessons of found-space experimentation into its workings and is, thus, able to offer a venue that is provisional, versatile, and open to later modification. The project has other consequences that extend beyond the boundaries of theatre architecture. In acknowledging the rigidity with which commercial architecture has operated in

our recent history, and exploring the performative potential of these minimal, on-going moves, Haworth Tompkins is challenging industry norms more broadly. The studio's use of performance techniques to 'devise' architectural solutions and, thus, to de-essentialise accepted ways of doing things might help architecture reinvent itself, not as a giant commodity, but as a critically and socially-turned practice — one that re-thinks what architecture is by concentrating on what it does, who it serves, what it might enable.

Conclusion

Although, I have been at pains to point out some of the dangers of the relationship between theatre and architecture under neoliberal capitalism, I have also suggested how performance techniques and methodologies might change how we understand and practise architecture. Conversely, I have shown how architecture might occasion institutional and political critique by providing alternative spaces, forms and structures within which to rethink social and cultural productions of all kinds. It is because of the possibilities that these two fields hold out to one another that I offer these preliminary thoughts about dramatic architectures.

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Juliet Rufford

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ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

**O ESPAÇO CÊNICO
COMO LABORATÓRIO DO
ESPAÇO ARQUITETÔNICO
CONTEMPORÂNEO**

Michele Cannatà

Abstract

By observing some contemporary architecture it is possible to identify the main characteristics that define the contemporary image of the theatres' architecture and places of entertainment and representation of collective myths and rituals.

This study aims to recognize those experiences that, starting from the representation of human affairs and through a relationship of continuity with the materials of architecture and urban history, have introduced new possible interpretations of the contemporary architectural space. In particular, we analyze works from the contemporary architects A. Rossi (1931-1997), G. Grassi (1935) and A. Siza (1933), that discovered in the construction of scenic spaces and/or spaces of representation of myths and rituals an occasion to research about experimental verification of methodologies and poetic architecture, even if always within a disciplinary open debate.

The presented works demonstrate how any project represents an important opportunity to verify the methodological processes for the architecture's construction. Analyzed architectures apparently seem different in the programmatic content and functional architectures, but they actually have the same aim, with a common denominator in every project which is the architectural disciplinary reference. The spectacle as an opportunity to participate in a collective event is the thread that binds these three works.

In any project, different temporal vicissitudes and functional reasons built different spaces, with different construction techniques and formal expressions: this simply is the result of a complex process and the expression form of a discipline that sees architecture as an artistic practice. Architecture is a possible synthesis of urban historical facts and the different historical urban functions.

Keywords: Architecture, theatre, history, typology, construction.

Introdução

O espaço do espectáculo, desde o anfiteatro inserido num ambiente natural como o grande teatro

de Epidauro (IV século aC), aos grandes edifícios urbanos (O Coliseu em Roma I dC), constituiu uma referência tipológica, monumental e colectiva, dos fatos arquitectónicos.

Ao teatro, Vitruvius, no Livro V do tratado de arquitectura mais conhecido, dedica uma parte específica, demonstrando a importância desta tipologia na arquitectura e na construção das cidades gregas e romanas. Desde o tempo de Vitruvius à contemporaneidade, as formas de representação dos acontecimentos humanos não mudaram muito. Ainda hoje, e muitas vezes nos mesmos lugares, continuam a ser representados, espectáculos, tragédias e comédias escritas ao longo de mais dois mil anos.

A partir da permanência da relação entre a cena, enquanto representação do espaço arquitectónico e dimensão temporal, o projecto de arquitectura encontra um momento de verificação das múltiplas formas de habitar de um determinado espaço. O espaço cenográfico configura-se, muitas vezes, como um campo de experimentação e de teste do mesmo modo que os modelos de aproximação aos projectos reais e ideais. O Teatro enquanto tipologia histórica, como todas as tipologias pertencentes ao âmbito disciplinar da arquitectura, torna-se objecto de interpretação contemporânea. Este, o Teatro enquanto tipologia, oferece portanto, a um contexto temporal diferente, a possibilidade de reutilização de um processo de construção de um espaço historicamente identificável, através dos novos meios disponíveis (materiais, técnicas de construção, sistemas de luz, som e comunicação à distância).

Através da observação de algumas arquitecturas contemporâneas, parece possível identificar os principais caracteres que definem a imagem da arquitectura do teatro contemporâneo, dos locais de entretenimento ou também da representação dos rituais e mitos colectivos. O estudo que se apresenta é orientado no reconhecimento dessas experiências que, a partir da representação dos acontecimentos humanos, através de uma relação de continuidade com os materiais e arquitectura da história urbana introduziram novas interpretações possíveis para o espaço arquitectónico. Em particular, analisamos algumas obras de arquitectos contemporâneos: A. Rossi (1931-1997), G. Grassi (1935) e A. Siza (1933), que na construção de áreas cénicas e/ou espaços

de representação de mitos e ritos encontram algumas oportunidades de investigação para verificar experimentalmente as formas possíveis, metodologias e poéticas arquitectónicas.

A. Rossi inicia um brilhante percurso e afirma-se com *L'Architettura della Città*, um dos textos que marcam a teoria da arquitectura nos anos 60. Na introdução expõe um processo para investigar a cidade através de uma análise complexiva dos acontecimentos dos quais deriva a sua própria construção (Rossi, 1978, p. 11). A cidade é entendida como arquitectura, como uma representação da vida de uma comunidade que se manifesta nas formas construídas ao longo do tempo.

A estrutura da investigação de A. Rossi reporta a uma ideia de cidade, na específica dimensão de um determinado lugar, mas, ao mesmo tempo evoca, através dos exemplos da história universal, as formas de todos os tempos e de todos os lugares.

O teatro, na suas diferentes declinações de formas, de escalas e de materiais é configurado como uma possível ferramenta científica para verificar a arquitectura, como disciplina e momento de construção da cidade e do espaço, para o desenvolvimento da vida colectiva.

O debate provocado pelo caso legal decorrente da reconstrução de G. Grassi do teatro romano de Sagunto - uma intervenção exemplar que não permite interpretações ambíguas ou paralelas (Cannatà e Fernandes, 1999, p.8) - transporta-nos para o problema da continuidade da arquitectura aquando da intervenção em preexistências com valor patrimonial.

O projecto interpreta o carácter tipológico e a história da pré-existência para que esta possa continuar a sua função no tempo. A nova arquitectura realiza-se com o material preexistente e como memória. Uma questão que Grassi já tinha abordado em 1971, no projeto de reabilitação do castelo de Abbiategrasso, que não chegará a construir. *A combinação do novo com o velho. Onde o antigo é deixado intacto para testemunhar a sua história e aquela da cidade. Onde o novo não renúncia a ser antes de tudo o próprio, isto é a arquitectura* (Grassi, 1980, p.81).

Vinte anos mais tarde, com o início dos trabalhos de reconstrução do Teatro Romano de Sagunto,

Giorgio Grassi põe em prática os princípios disciplinares enunciados em Abbiategrasso.

Do teatro clássico ao Teatro do Mundo

No teatro antigo, a cena fixa representava o local ideal onde todas as tragédias, bem como todas as comédias podiam desenrolar-se. Um lugar da mente, fora do espaço e do tempo, mas capaz de ser identificada com os lugares e os tempos de todas as acções dramáticas.

I teatri romani che si sono conservati e le ricostruzioni del Rinascimento palladiano ci hanno reso familiare quest'immagine della classicità come disponibilità impassibile allo scatenarsi delle passioni umane: la facciata marmorea d'un solenne palazzo con la porta reale al centro e le due porte più piccole simmetriche ai lati, che poteva essere ogni reggia, ogni piazza di città. Bastava che dalla soglia d'una di quelle porte s'affacciasse un re, o un indovino, o un messaggero, ed ecco che tra le tante azioni potenziali una diventava attuale, senza che la continuità con il resto dell'esistente e dell'immaginabile fosse spezzata (Calvino, 1993, p.139).

Italo Calvino, embora não sendo arquitecto, historiador ou crítico de arquitectura, é provavelmente um dos autores mais citados pelos arquitectos contemporâneos. A dimensão cósmica e científica dos seus textos, assim como a interpretação fantástica dos acontecimentos humanos aí descritos, permitem-nos encontrar momentos comuns para o entendimento da multiplicidade com que tudo - artifício e vida - se relaciona.

O teatro é uma fachada, por trás da qual tudo é possível. Uma fachada, que se refere a uma ideia da cidade, a uma imagem da sociedade cuja complexidade se relaciona com a interpretação histórica dos eventos representados.

A arquitectura, mais do que qualquer outra disciplina, através da imagem pública que cada projecto propõe, constrói os fragmentos dessa obra colectiva a que chamamos cidade. A imagem pública concebida para ser vista, mas também para ver. Uma imagem que associa às três dimensões da construção

volumétrica, a dimensão do tempo, materializando deste modo os processos vitais da cidade.

No Teatro, basta alterar a cena para alterar o tempo, mantendo o espaço original. Na cidade, com um olhar, conseguimos perceber os diferentes tempos, variáveis que resultam da alteração das condições originais ou da mudança de funções, e ler a multiplicidade dos materiais e das acções responsáveis pela materialização de um presente em movimento.

O espaço público como espaço cénico em que todos participam e cada um representa a sua própria acção, é o espaço colectivo privilegiado da arquitectura. Ao contrário do espaço doméstico, em que a dimensão individual e íntima é reservada à família, amigos e outras pessoas com quem se partilha um quotidiano definido pela posição social e económica de cada um.

Para A.Rossi (...) *Anche il ponte di Rialto è un passaggio, un mercato, un teatro* (Rossi, 1979, p.154).



Figura 1. Composição com o Teatro do Mundo, as portas da bienal, a torre de Pesaro e outros edifícios.

Fonte: <http://www.artsblog.it/post/1030/frase-del-giorno-architettura-e-utopia>.

Ninguém melhor do que Aldo Rossi teve a capacidade de dar vida nova às formas históricas e clássicas da tipologia do teatro. *L'architettura della città*, marca a afirmação da *Tendenza* como

movimento arquitectónico que, constrói uma teoria para o projecto contemporâneo assente na leitura e interpretação das tipologias dos edifícios da cidade histórica.

O papel especial que a arquitectura tem reservado ao teatro, na contemporaneidade é, sem dúvida, devedor da excepcional investigação e interpretação de Aldo Rossi.

O Teatro do Mundo, concebido em 1979 e construído para a Bienal de Arquitectura em 1980, a convite de Paolo Portoghesi, é a síntese de uma forma de compreender e interpretar a arquitectura contemporânea na sua relação com a cidade da história.

O Teatro do Mundo tem como palco a água de um mar sem limites e como cenário primordial, a cidade de Veneza. Aquilo que devia ser um pequeno edifício para eventos efémeros é transformado numa imagem sem tempo e sem lugar e ao mesmo tempo numa imagem de todos os tempos e de todos os lugares. O Teatro do Mundo transporta-nos para uma ideia da arquitectura e da cidade como cena fixa dos complexos e mutáveis acontecimentos humanos. Como no teatro clássico basta mudar um cenário ou uma personagem para obter uma *cena* nova. Basta mover um objecto para alterar um contexto e obter novas prefigurações de diferentes realidades.

Antes de ser imagem, o Teatro do Mundo é para Aldo Rossi, construção. Sem construção, afirma, não há arquitectura. Veneza, cidade das cidades que Marco Polo no livro de Calvino, sem nunca nomear, descreve a Kublai Khan, é uma cidade construída sobre a água. A madeira é o material usado para as fundações dos edifícios e para a construção de barcos. A madeira é também o material de construção usado por Rossi para a realização do teatro. Um material antigo que lhe oferece solidez e mobilidade. A água do mar de Veneza reporta a uma relação com o mundo e com todos os cenários possíveis que a deslocação de pessoas e coisas pode evocar. A água é a meio que permite um movimento, e que, ao mesmo tempo estabelece um contexto sempre diverso. O Teatro do Mundo resume de forma exemplar a investigação sobre a cidade análoga que as sobreposições tipológicas e as arquitecturas originadas pela memória de todas as cidades e de todos os tempos podem produzir.



Figura 2. Veneza. O Teatro do Mundo, o Redentor e a ponta da Alfandega.

Fonte: <http://www.artsblog.it/post/1030/frase-del-giorno-architettura-e-utopia>.

O teatro poderá ser, portanto, uma máquina de um laboratório científico para experimentar em diferentes contextos. Um mecanismo necessário para ultrapassar as dificuldades das especificidades do lugar.

Acerca de um trabalho desenvolvido alguns anos antes daquele de Veneza, A. Rossi escreve:

(...) ho progettato il teatrino scientifico come luogo della pura rappresentazione: un palco, delle scene prospettiche, degli oggetti scenografici. Questo teatro era indifferente alla sala, non creava uno spazio teatrale, come i teatrini dell'infanzia che si ponevano in una sala qualsiasi e dove architettonicamente si trattava di una sezione di un possibile edificio. Così le case, i palazzi, le chiese rimaste dimezzate dai bombardamenti aerei del dopoguerra nelle città d'Europa mostravano la vita pubblica o privata come uno spettacolo (ROSSI, 1979, p.154).

Um texto que expressa definitivamente a necessidade de representação da vida pública e privada, como o momento central da construção do espaço arquitectónico.

O projeto do teatro romano de Sagunto, memória do passado e restauro das funções.

As ruínas dos teatros espalhados nos territórios de influência da civilização greco-romana

assinalam a presença de um passado em que estes edifícios condensavam a vida cultural das cidades. As intervenções, em geral, sobre os restos destes edifícios foram quase sempre orientadas para a camuflagem das ruínas sem questionar a possibilidade de um projecto capaz de estabelecer as distâncias temporais e ao mesmo tempo a introdução de espaços arquitectónicos contemporâneos.

Giorgio Grassi como já se referiu atrás, põe em prática uma metodologia de intervenção já amplamente teorizada no projecto de reabilitação do castelo de Abbiategrosso de 1971.

Una interpretazione di una volontà collettiva non solo per mostrare una scelta profondamente realistica di utilizzazione di un monumento, ma anche perchè, nell'identificare il monumento storico (...) con l'edificio pubblico per eccellenza, essa ripropone una continuità civile dell'architettura della città (Grassi, 1980, p.79).



Figura 3. Sagunto. O teatro romano reconstruído. Fonte:autor

O tema da continuidade da arquitectura como uma representação da vida e da memória colectiva está de volta num projecto que se revelará de extrema importância para um debate sobre a interpretação do passado e sobre a participação dos cidadãos na construção da cidade contemporânea. *Completare o ricostruire (...) è teoricamente l'unica risposta possibile, capace di far giustizia di tutti i luoghi comuni legati a questo tema; ed anche, sul piano pratico, l'unica via che ci viene indicata dalla storia dell'architettura delle nostre città* (Grassi, 1980, p.83).

O projecto do teatro torna-se uma oportunidade para afirmar uma ideia de arquitectura. Para Grassi, na definição do projecto, a avaliação das diferentes partes que compõem a unidade tipológica do edifício na sua dimensão utilitária e no seu reconhecimento como memória colectiva, são etapas primordiais.

O levantamento do estado anterior ao projecto, o reconhecimento de intervenções que de alguma forma foram permitindo a manutenção das ruínas, a avaliação das diferentes qualidades das intervenções que se foram sobrepondo ao original, a comparação de documentos e tipologias similares ao edifício objecto de estudo, produzem um corpo teórico que juntamente com os magníficos desenhos de projecto, constituem uma exemplar referência para a construção do teatro como um monumento da história e como arquitectura do presente.

A representação litúrgica na arquitectura da igreja de S. Maria em Marco de Canaveses

A complexidade da representação do percurso da vida e da dimensão do espírito do homem é, sem dúvida, constituída por edifícios religiosos que em relação à celebração de diferentes ritos realizam arquitecturas de grande importância para o espaço urbano.

O templo, a igreja e os lugares do espírito em geral, são os lugares onde o carácter simbólico tem precedência sobre fins utilitários. O tempo pelo qual medimos a duração da arquitectura que constrói o espaço não é comparável com os edifícios civis destinados à satisfação das funções domésticas.

O intervalo de tempo de vida humana não pode portanto, estabelecer-se como uma referência para a construção dos espaços destinados ao espírito.

Uma das lições mais interessantes e completas do espaço religioso contemporâneo como um lugar de representação ritual é proporcionada pela arquitectura da igreja de Santa Maria em Marco Canaveses (1990-1997) de Álvaro Siza. Uma obra distante dos grandes centros urbanos metropolitanos, de tamanho modesto, mas de grande significado pela forma com que um arquitecto, a partir das ferramentas disciplinar de

compreensão da história, da interpretação do lugar, da representação de uma visão colectiva e através das técnicas de modulação da luz, soube realizar um espaço de todos os tempos e para todas as diferentes fases da repetição de um ritual milenar.



Figura 4. Igreja de Santa Maria Marco de Canaveses. Interior: Vista do Altar com a presença de elementos para a representação do rito da crucificação. Fonte: autor.

Uma grande sala para reunião dos fiéis, onde o tamanho da porta de entrada está relacionado com a experiência de outra igreja distante no espaço e no tempo. Uma janela para a paisagem externa, que rompe a ideia de espaço abstracto e configura um lugar do divino ao mesmo nível dos participantes na celebração. O som da água que cai lenta da pia baptismal e a evocação de uma figura humana, produzida pelo engaste dos dois elementos – vertical e horizontal - de madeira da Cruz, constituem os materiais mais antigos utilizados na construção e *decoreção* de espaços que, como no teatro, realizam continuamente as histórias mais populares e memorizadas pela comunidade cristã.



Figura 5. Igreja de Santa Maria Marco de Canaveses. Interior: em primeiro plano a pia baptismal com a queda da água. Fonte: autor.

Conclusão

Os trabalhos apresentados neste estudo demonstram a importância das várias oportunidades do projecto para a verificação dos processos metodológicos utilizados na construção de arquitectura. Aparentemente distantes nos seus conteúdos programáticos e funcionais, as arquitecturas analisadas perseguem o mesmo

objectivo. A referência disciplinar da arquitectura é um denominador comum. O espectáculo como participação num evento colectivo é a linha que liga as três obras. Os eventos temporais, a razão funcional que constrói os diferentes espaços, as técnicas de construção e as expressões formais como resultado de um processo complexo, fazem parte de uma estrutura disciplinar que vê na arquitectura uma prática capaz de sintetizar a continuidade dos acontecimentos que constroem a cidade nas suas diferentes funções.

O modelo à escala natural é utilizado como a ferramenta de projecto. Protótipo que verificam todas as possíveis implicações no confronto com os lugares, com a história, com o tempo e com as tipologias usadas como referência na definição das arquitecturas e paisagens contemporâneas.

No primeiro caso, a condição “efémera” do Teatro do Mundo, permitiu, no breve tempo da sua construção e do seu uso, ser testado em vários contextos, participando, em cada uma das circunstâncias, na história e na paisagem arquitectónica dos lugares em que era colocado, transformando mesmo que por breve momento a imagem urbana e sua paisagem cultural.

No segundo caso, a controvérsia levantada pelo projecto da reabilitação do teatro romano de Sagunto, como um projecto de arquitectura contemporânea, testou todo o corpo teórico sobre a questão do restauro de monumentos e da necessidade de memória.

Um projecto que não cristaliza a ruína do teatro, mas restitui uma nova vida, transportando uma função milenar para o interior do processo de regeneração urbana e da sua arquitectura.

No último caso, a igreja de Santa Maria, em Marco de Canaveses, ainda que mantendo-se no âmbito de uma tipologia clássica de igreja de uma só nave com geometria rectangular, reporta-nos ao projecto do teatro total de Walter Gropius de 1927 (...) *conceptito per soddisfare, nel miglior modo possibile, le esigenze di un palcoscenico per un teatro di «azione», (...) aperto, non separato dal pubblico* (Frampton, 1993, p.156). A ideia de comunhão é entendida como a participação ativa na repetição de cenas que compõem o caminho que, da vida terrena e da materialidade dos corpos, transmigra

para a dimensão espiritual da eternidade. A fonte baptismal com a água que purifica e os vários momentos da administração dos sacramentos fazem parte de um espaço desenhado pela geometria da construção e pela atmosfera etérea das variações de luz.

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Michele Cannatà

Michele Cannatà (1952) arquiteto e docente da Escola Superior Artística di Porto (Portogallo). Doutor in "Composizione Architettonica e Progettazione Urbana" (2009) at Chieti-Pescara University Italy, IDEA departement: Infrastructure, Design, Engeneering and Architecture.

Com Fátima Fernandes, funda em 1984 a Cannatà & Fernandes, junto obtiveram a menção honrosa no prémio Palladio em 1989 e o prémio Piranesi em 1996. Em 2004 com a publicação *Moderno Escondido* obtiveram o Prémio de Archeologia Industriale. Muitas obras obtiveram prémios e foram publicadas em livros e revistas de arquitetura contemporânea.

ARTIGOS
ARTICLES

The contemporary scenography as an introspective architecture

Sara Franqueira

ABSTRACT

Referring to a paradigm shift in the twentieth-century European theater, Erika Fischer-Lichte identifies a change of internal communication from an external relation to a communication between action and audience. Creators such as Vsevolod Meyerhold, to whom the theatrical creation is based on the resolution of space problems/dynamics, find a scenic space apart from pictorial and illusory logics that frees itself from the illustration of a linguistic speech. It's an interior universe with individual laws that doesn't follow exterior references capable of definition or limit. In 2012, Didier Plassard uses the term *Abstract* to define a contemporary scene condition where the exterior give place to an introspective architecture in a search of an interior space, legitimized by individual references and finding discourse on subjectivity. It proposes the use of interpretation towards a veiled and interior truth, which introduces a poetic and critical order in reality.

Despite the theatrical expression characterized by a passage from the inside to the outside of the scene, the occupation, form, materiality and plastic expression of its space took an opposite direction: from the exterior to an interior, creating an introspective architecture.

Keywords: Space; Interior; Abstract; Poetic; Subjectivity

Referring to a paradigm shift in the twentieth-century European theater, Erika Fischer-Lichte identifies a change in the structure of theatrical communication from a focus on stage, centered on characters and their interaction to an external relation, an interface between action and audience (Fischer-Lichte, 1997, p. 41). In this understanding of theater emerges a sense of shared experience where the result of the interaction between stage and the spectator mind is a major force in the way we cogitate a theatrical experience.

Georg Fuchs labels this theater occurrence as a "dramatic experience" (*apud* Fischer-Lichte, 1997, p. 41), created only in the moment when it is being experienced by the viewer, who has to

complete it and define it. In this mode, the dramatic work happens neither in the book nor on the stage by itself, but inside the viewer. It's in the mind of the audience triggered by the entire event features that the truly dramatic moment is created.

This understanding creates for scenography a peculiar place of importance in the sense that it is a powerful device of communication that could influence the entire experience. The scenography language is not autonomous in regard to the performance, but adds its own expression as a microcosm of amazing possibilities and is able to create meaning in a unique way. It's role in performance is no more a complement of a text, a suggestion of a space for an action but a creation of a visual universe that is part of the performance identity, and like in the major visual arts of our time, contemporary scenography opens a dialogue with the audience searching the use of personal interpretation rather than general identification. Contemporary scenography designs not in a mimetic way but towards a veiled and interior truth, and in this sense, in an introspective mode.

In the performing arts the characterization of space is a major factor in the relationship that sustains the encounter. David Wiles reaffirms this way of conceiving the space from the point of view of its potential to produce a discourse that goes beyond itself:

Space is not a passive receptacle in which objects and forms are posited...

Space itself is an object [of creation]. And the main one!

Space is charged with energy.

Space shrinks and expands.

And these motions mould forms and objects.

It is space that gives birth to forms!

It is space that conditions the network of relations and tensions between objects.

Tension is the principal actor of space. (Wiles, 2003, p. 13-14)

Space supports and creates the performative act and has an artistic, poetic and critical root. By space I mean not only the physical and geometrical characteristics of the location but also all possible

characterization in order to create an environment or atmosphere as an identity of that space. The environmental dimension that accompanies every action gives it a kind of discourse that intersects the other parts of the event.

I understand Scenography as the field that constructs, creates, reflects and reinvents scenic spaces that could be any space where some kind of performative experience occurs. Each scenic space has its own character defined by the location, the materiality of the environment, the way that it is occupied, the objects that we can see and those we cannot, the light that permits its revelation and sometimes even its atmosphere conditions. Consequently, I understand scenography as a spatial creation and I also assume that the building or place where the performance occurs, as well as the stage where it is presented or represented, are variables of the same system in equation: the spatial characterization of an event.

It's the scenographic environment as an inhabited space that leads and allows a stage experience in the sense that only with the recognition of some sort of stage we can interpret the reality before our eyes with an artistic dimension. What we hear we understand in a given formal context, what we see is manipulated by a permanent three-dimensional relationship and therefore the messages that we interpret from a performance are a result of the spatial dynamics where we experience.

Scenography as the spatial characterization of a performative event shares with architecture the possibility of triggering diverse experiences, starting from a given material form and ending in a conceptual frame or vice-versa. But architecture, in spite of its capacity to generate some contemplation state, is created towards an exterior existence, the forms are projected for action, for physical spaces that are lived with real bodies and merge in with the life of the city or community and not necessarily or exclusively in the individual consciousness. Scenography has its own specificity and on a first instance its context inside a work of art places it inside a process that, as in others arts, is a process of looking into ourselves. Scenography is in the course to self-reflection and contributes to an act of looking into oneself, providing a privileged access to our

mental and emotional state. This route is opposite to external observation that is privileged in architecture because even when architectural thinking creates interior spaces, they are not necessarily designed to rescue the self-interior mental state. Scenography is. It's a kind of spatial creation that results in a form of reality existence designed to operate in an individual, interior and unique experience of the mind, a project to a reflective looking inward. And that's why some directors that transform the language of the stage since the beginning of the twentieth century understand scenography not as a representation of an architectural space that can be identified in real life but instead as a visual and spatial universe that escapes identification and proposed introspection.

Vsevolod Meyerhold was one of them, and he realized that the space for individual interpretation could address a key role in the aesthetic dimension of the work. He recognized staging as the spatial resolution of problems and dynamics and delineated the *mise-en-scène* based on relationships, geometric schemes of movement, form and structure complicity, as well as discourses of presence: a living space in a persistent equation apart from illusory logics that frees itself from a linguistic speech. Béatrice Picon-Vallin titled one of the chapters of a set of essays on Vsevolod Meyerhold: To see and give seeing; the vision against the illustration where Picon-Vallin advocated Meyerhold Theatre as a temporal and spatial construction of ideas in opposition to illustration:

This very vivid vision he infused within his collaborators has nothing to do with the illustration type of image. Meyerhold himself writes, in a radical way: to become a director, you need to stop being an illustrator. (Picon-Vallin, 2006, p.89, my translation)¹

The work of Meyerhold moves from the illustration of life, focused in an exterior sense of the world, to design a multidisciplinary experience in which a unique space has numerous possibilities of communication inside each of us. The contemporary stage created by the changes of the beginning of the century rethinks the spatial quality of a performance

from a way that can be considered exterior (since it pursues a vision of a recognizable and standardized world) to an interior one, legitimized by individual references that lead to interpretation, subjectivity and introspective relations.

In fact, looking at the work of creators like Meyerhold, we find proposals where the power of interiority and an inner state leads to a more customized, rich and intense experience of the performing arts: *External action in the new drama becomes [...] useless. "We want to penetrate behind the mask, behind the action, in the intelligible character of the person, and distinguish his inner mask".* (Meyerhold, 2008a, p. 174, my translation.)²

His work presents environmental structures for a different use of spatial language onstage, regarding the viewer as a catalyst and the builder of his own vision through its inner analysis. His project intended to sabotage the contemplative passivity of the audience by offering an intriguing universe, different from the everyday life: an interior universe with individual laws that don't follow exterior references capable of definition or limit.

This universe, neither standardized nor expected, could raise enough thought-provoking questions to lead the audience beyond superficial recognition. This artistic research that allows answers is a discovery of a new appreciation: the consciousness of the self by gazing at the other.

In 2012, Didier Plassard used the term "Abstract" (Plassard, 2012, p. 14) to define a contemporary scene condition in an attempt to refocus the concept of post-dramatic theater supported by Hans-Thies Lehmann. Plassard takes in this matter a general characterization of the abstract domain, the absence of a mimetic relationship between the work and the world in which we live, as understood by the visual arts. He says that, in the context of theatrical creation of the twentieth century, a form of passage to abstraction occurs, comparable to the one that crossed the arts in the first decades of the same century. With the establishment of abstract art, the autonomy and absolute value of the produced objects emerged definitely, in the sense that the visual identification or recognition did not lead nor to their production nor to their existence. These works use shapes, surfaces and concrete volumes

which aspire to be the origin of an interior dialogue. Its effects result from the interaction between the audience and the specific elements of language itself, and not the ability to mimic or replace other objects.

Plassard's proposal to designate as abstract this last theatre echoes of performative arts due to a common feature: the use of "dissociation mechanisms" (Plassard, 2012, p. 18). The author argues that this "dissociation mechanisms" do not erase the resurgence of classic forms, but it can aggregate the new dramatic forms distinguished by Lehmann: self-reflection, decomposition or separation. Plassard distinguishes dissolution of the narrative as one of the most clear dissociation operations, a transformation process through which the variety of actions, textual or not, fails to merge into a whole organized by a narrative. But the dissociation of visual elements from an identifiable space or from an universal logic of occupation can also be a major axis in the contemporary performance space.

The dissociation approach triggers a kind of fragmentation that is not only a way of organizing a set of information but also a process of spectator inclusion. After a dissociation procedure it is necessary, and even involuntary, an aggregation process, in which the spectator reconnects his experience, leaving the imagination to corrupt the ordinary logic. Meyerhold also recognizes the importance of dissociation resonances in his work: *The fantasy of the onlooker is the one which should fill-in the picture. We should be guided by the associative capability of the spectator.* (Meyerhold, 2008c, p.331, my translation)³

The scenography of some of the avant-garde proposals is by associative process an inhabited system in balance that navigates in a constant mutation. The more degrees of interior associations can be made, the richer is the process of constructing meaning:

Based on the associative capability of the spectator we can build, rather than images of immediate clarity, combinations capable of creating certain associations. The more intricate are these combinations, the greater it is the success. (Meyerhold, 2008c, p.332, my translation)⁴

We can think of abstraction and dissociation, identified by Plassard and celebrated by Meyerhold, in close relationship with contemporary scenography and understand it as a set of aesthetic relations where the association and the interpretation of spatial reality creates meaning. This kind of *space* doesn't depend on its materiality, nor is defined exclusively by its design or geometric qualities, but by its action. It cannot be captured completely in pictures or descriptions; it's a processual space that functions as an operating mode.

The scenographic space has a sense of a non-permanent project with no final configuration because this space is not controlled neither by the one who designs it neither by the one who inhabits it. And though often based on very strict intentions and assertive aesthetics, it doesn't end in its form or materiality, which is controllable and capable of external representation. It is an open project, established by internal and private reactions of the people who experience it, in the logic of Umberto Eco's proposal for the open dimension of the work of art. The recognition of the spectator - as someone who invests meaning in the work that is being presented - sets a new relationship with the stage and with the aesthetics of space in particular.

The spectator understood as producer and not as a receiver became in fact a sort of dramaturgical axis of the XXnd century's visual arts and that is why Johannes Meinhardt identifies a self-reflexive turn as a central factor that caused a fundamental change of attitude:

The most important factor in the history of abstraction was the self-analytical and self-reflective turn of modernist painting. Abstract painting in its radical sense, as it was developed between 1913 and 1917 (mainly by Vassily Kandinsky, Kasimir Malevich and Piet Mondrian), didn't arise from a gradual transition in a slow movement of abstraction, stylization and geometrization from a figurative painting; it resulted in a fundamental change of attitude ... (Meinhardt, 2005, p. 6, my translation)⁵

The same could be proposed for contemporary scenography: a fundamental change of attitude.

Breaking a canonical tradition of background linked to scenography induces a referential shift that takes the visual dimension of the stage to the field of suggestion, evocation and interpretation. Privileging the freedom of association instead of reproduction, accuracy and detail, this *space* is, simultaneously, a mirror of everyday life and a product that aims to create small grafts in the common place.

What changes in a revolutionary way in the scenography as a unrestricted spatial conception, it's not necessarily what it does or the way it is done in terms of materiality but how it is understood and how one responds to it. Investigating the consequences of a certain introspective mode is also questioning their *modus operandi*. The creation founded on dissociation gives rise to symbolic operations that have a dual nature, creating dynamics only possible by their metaphorical condition, with similarities with poetic discourse. They can play with contrasts, incongruities and contradictions, resulting in an expressive resource, which manifests itself in a spatial dimension - as architecture - but ruled by a poetic order.

Jan Mukarövký identifies poetic language not as a special kind of standard language but as an independent format. It has, from the point of view of the lexicon, syntax, distribution and evolution, an autonomous structure where several standard languages can coexist or even intersect.

Poetic language is not therefore a variant of the standard language. But that fact does not deny the close relationship that exists between them - relationship that consist, first of all, in the fact that the language standard serves as background for the poetic language. (Mukarövký, 1975, p.320, my translation)⁶

The creation of places for performance, spatial by nature and creative by inherence, meets the poetic discourse as an independent system. Following this thought we can assume the universe of architecture, for example, as a standard language that establishes special relationships with scenography, that is a poetic discourse grounded in freedom and in introspection. The foundation of these features is the disruption of the norm and the questioning of the standard: *The systematic violation of the norm*

allows the poetic use of language; without that possibility, poetry would not exist.´ (Ibidem)⁷

It's interesting to think that could be the *abstract* concept, which has proved to be so significant in visual arts, to open doors and facilitate a contemporary scenography full of independence and resonances with poetic skills.

If we look at scenography as a poetic creation - a unique space with its own rules of formation - it could be described as an introspective architecture that ceases to solve a figurative problem with exterior references to reach an individual and poetic interpretation path.

This predisposition does not constitute an aversion to any kind of reality representation and does not necessarily mean that the entirely scenic spaces should be converted to a disorderly strangeness. The recognition of the poetic value as the result of its abstract condition leads mainly to a change in attitude of how scenography is produced, how it integrates the performative event and how the public receives it. This question also arises in the field of linguistics regarding poetry. In spite of the deep relationship that mankind has with realism, poetry is independent of reality, and cannot be organized or determined through it. Nevertheless reality can be a component of poetry.

The theme of a poetic work cannot be evaluated according to its relationship towards the extra-linguistic reality entering the work, but instead is part of its significant aspect (by this we do not intend to assert that his relationship with reality cannot become one of the factors of poetic structure ...) (Mukarövký, 1975, p.326, my translation)⁸

To Mukarövký, the poetic language remains different from the standard language and has a curious significance and purpose: the update of linguistic manifestation. He elucidates that update is precisely the opposite of automation. The automation of any form is made through an inconsistent and continuous way, while an update comes from specific acts, from awareness of their intentions, and from questioning participation. Automation defines schemes, rules and assumptions

and the update implies a conscious deviation of these characteristics. From this point of view we can propose that the poetic structure of a scenography, as an introspective architecture, aims to update scenography as an artistic manifestation at the core of performing arts.

The scenic space is not only the materialization of theatrical expression but it drives and molds the entire experience, legitimizing its critical intervention and creative point of view. This development of scenography no longer illustrates a linguistic discourse or emphasizes identification of a familiar place; it increases, complements and questions the drama with a parallel dimension of reality.

In spite of Erika Fischer-Lichte proposing that the theatrical expression presents a passage from the inside to the outside of the scene, addressed in the beginning of this text, it seems that the way we conceive a scenography for a performance takes an opposite direction: from the exterior to interior, from exterior references to an inside echo in each viewer, that cannot be defined or delimited and finds discourse on subjectivity. The twentieth century embraces it categorically as an universe with its own laws, sustained by an introspective operability that serves the performance as a spatial artistic expression.

Endnotes

¹ `Essa visão muito viva que ele infundia a seus colaboradores nada tem a ver com a imagem-ilustração. O próprio Meyerhold escreve, radical: *para se tornar um encenador, é necessário deixar de ser ilustrador.*´ (Picon-Vallin, 2006, p.89)

² `La acción exterior en el nuevo drama, la manifestación de los caracteres, se hace inútil. "Queremos penetrar detrás de la máscara, detrás de la acción en el carácter inteligible de la persona, y distinguir su *máscara interior*".´ (Meyerhold, 2008a, p.174)

³ `La fantasía del espectador es la que tiene que completar el cuadro. Hay que orientarse por la capacidad asociativa del espectador.´ (Meyerhold, 2008c, p.331)

⁴ `Basándonos en la capacidad asociativa del espectador, podemos construir, en vez de imágenes de claridad inmediata, combinaciones capaces de crear determinadas asociaciones. Cuanto más finas sean estas últimas, mayor será el éxito.´ (Meyerhold, 2008c, p.332)

⁵ `O mais importante factor para a história da abstracção e na história da abstracção foi a viragem auto-analítica e auto-reflexiva da pintura modernista. A pintura abstracta, no seu sentido radical, tal como foi desenvolvida entre 1913 e 1917 (sobretudo por Vassily Kandinsky, Kasimir Malevitch e Piet Mondrian), não surgiu numa transição gradual, num movimento lento de abstracção, estilização e geometrização da pintura figurativa; ela resultou de

uma mudança fundamental da atitude...”(Meinhardt, 2005, p.6)

⁶ “A linguagem poética não é, pois, uma variante da linguagem-padrão. Mas essa circunstância não nega a estreita relação que existe entre elas – relação que consiste, antes de mais, no facto de a linguagem-padrão servir de fundo à linguagem poética.” (Mukaróvský, 1975, p.320)

⁷ “A violação sistemática da norma possibilita o aproveitamento poético da língua; sem essa possibilidade, a poesia não existiria.” (*Ibidem*)

⁸ “O tema de uma obra poética não pode ser avaliado segundo a sua relação com a realidade extra-linguística que entra na obra, antes faz parte do aspecto significativo desta (e com isto não pretendemos afirmar que a sua relação com a realidade não possa chegar a ser um dos factores da estrutura poética ...).” (Mukaróvský, 1975, p.326)

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Sara Franqueira

In 2010 completed the Master of Theatre Studies at Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, with a research focused on relationships and contaminations between scenography and contemporary art. Currently developing a PhD program at the Center for Theatre Studies of the same university, investigating the scenography experience nowadays. Selected for a PhD Studentship by the Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia. In 2004 graduated in Architecture by the Universidade Técnica de Lisboa and since 2005 works as a mediator of contemporary art for different entities. Author of several scenic spaces and responsible for performative and transdisciplinary projects.

ENTREVISTA
INTERVIEW

Interview with Louis Janssen

by Jorge Palinhos*

Louis Janssen is co-founder and creative director of Theateradvies® bv, a Dutch company specialized in building theatres, and the former president of OISTAT, the International Organization of Scenographers, Theatre Architects and Technicians. He has been working for the theatre Stadsschouwburg Groningen and the touring company Toneelgroep Amsterdam, and was the theater consultant for the renovation of Koninklijk Theater Carré, Stadsschouwburg Amsterdam, Casino Kursaal in Oostende, Haus der Berliner Festspiele and many other theaters in the world.

Louis Janssen planned and developed several new built theatres, like the Muziekgebouw aan het IJ in Amsterdam, Theater de Spiegel in Zwolle, the Schouwburg Almere, Wei-Wu-Ying Center for Performing Arts in Taiwan and many more.



1) What do you think are the current trends of the theatres and scenic spaces being built today?

The trend differs in many countries. In the not so rich countries they try to renovate and upgrade existing theaters for which there was no money in the last decades. In other developing countries, like Taiwan and China, new large Theater complexes are being built. This is because there is a connection to western culture. The trend is to build iconic buildings designed by star architects.

2) Having been responsible for several theatre projects around the world, in your view, what defines a good theatre venue?

A good theatre is a theatre where everything revolves around the engagement between artists and the audience. For that engagement to succeed, it is essential for the artist to feel surrounded by their audience and that the audience can almost touch the artist. To achieve that, you need a good auditorium.

But you need even more than that. The whole building needs to function effectively and efficiently as a performance space. From the audience point of view, that means to have parking space, a good foyer, enough toilets and other audience facilities.

From the production point of view it means excellent logistics, enough dressing rooms, and appropriate technical installations.

“A good theatre is a warm, lively venue for the audience to have a night out, a welcoming, inspiring performance space for artists and musicians and an efficient, safe workplace for technicians and others working in the theatre.”

3) You are a defender of natural light on stage. What are the advantages of this technique for the theatre scenes?

It is more than natural light only. My plead is for a more human theatre. Historically, in theatre it was all about art, the conditions backstage were such that, in the vision of most people, everything had to support the performance only. People, working backstage were totally not included in this equation. As a result, stages are painted black, the architecture is denied, work lights are scarce and daylight is not existing. Very depressing working conditions.

I promote a more human approach in which the architecture is not denied. The stage area should be an interesting area, the building material should show the natural colours of that material, brick = brick = brown or red, concrete = concrete = grey, etc. There should be good work light and of course daylight. All of these elements can be hidden with good masking so that the performance still can have the optimal conditions. But with all the above, people get a good working environment which is

not depressing but stimulating. On top of that, the stage itself gives the opportunity to act as a set when there are 'open' performances. Everybody wins with this approach.

4) You have also been involved in the creation of a data base with information about all the theatres in the Netherlands. Why the need to create this database and in what way has it made an impact in theatre building?

In the Netherlands we have a strong touring system. Productions tour and stay mostly one night in a theatre. All of the getting in the theatre, performance and getting out has to be done in one day, also with large productions. You only can do that if you are very well organised. That means that the theatre building has to have good facilities, the production is designed to allow for intensive touring and that there is good information available about all the theatres the production tours to. That is what we have set up already 30 years ago, a database of almost all theatres in the Netherlands and the Flemish part of Belgium. In this database are plans and sections of these theatres plus all kind of extra information. The impact on theatre buildings is that the planning of theatres is done for touring, good loading docks, short lines, space, easy access to catwalks, automated flying systems, etc. It still allows for variety in design of these buildings, it did not create a single model for every theatre, the theatre landscape is still interesting.

5) How can architecture deal with the challenges that are raised by contemporary theatre, which is heavily invested in formal experience and exploration of the limits of space?

A good theatre gives space and conditions, also for contemporary theatre. You have to plan for what purpose a theatre is being built, an opera is totally different from a drama theatre, a studio type flexible theatre or a music hall.

6) Why the need for an international organization like OISTAT for the work and education of scenographers, architects and technicians?

OISTAT is a network organisation. Through this organisation information can be exchanged in all aspects of theatre. Education, design, technology, research, history, architecture, you name it. By being part of this organisation you can put yourself in a larger perspective.

7) What are the main activities of OISTAT and what is their impact in contemporary theatre, set design and architecture?

OISTAT facilitates exchange through organising exhibits, events, workshops, making publications, etc. Please take a look at www.oistat.org

8) OISTAT is organized in several committees and working groups, covering areas like Space, Light, Sound, Costume-design, Education, Technology, Architecture and Research. How do these committees and groups work?

OISTAT has commissions and sub-commissions for Theatre Architecture, Performance Design, Technology, Publications, Research, Education, Lighting Design, Sound Design, Costume Design and Space Design. Every commission organises events in their field or they work together with other commissions for multidisciplinary projects. These activities are open for all OISTAT members and organised all over the world.

Acknowledgments

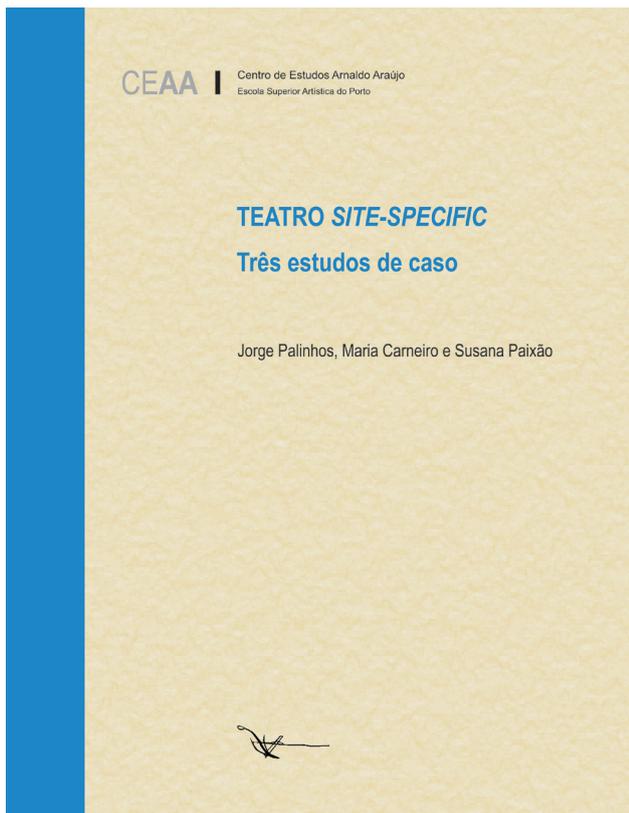
*This work was developed under the Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo and financed by FCT - Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia, I.P. national funds, within the project UID/EAT/04041/2016.

RECENSÕES
REVIEWS

Teatro Site-Specific:

Três Estudos
de Caso

Cláudia Marisa



O tom é, desde logo, presenteado pelos seus autores: uma escrita clara, traduzindo o movimento do pensamento sobre a relação entre artes cénicas e espaço arquitectónico e/ou paisagístico. Este é o princípio que orienta o livro que reúne três estimulantes artigos sobre a temática “*Site-Specific*” tendo em consideração a sua identidade, ontologia e dimensões artísticas. Sustentados em estudos de caso é concordante em Jorge Palinhos, Maria Carneiro e Susana Paixão a percepção do *Site-Specific* como “acontecimento cénico” que opera a passagem de um espaço objetivo a um espaço de profundidade, capaz de transformar sensorialmente o espaço físico. Note-se, no entanto, que uma perspectiva fenomenológica por parte do receptor da obra não a desliga da intencionalidade do seu criador, constituindo-se, desta feita, o espaço como matéria de linguagem artística.

Em *Visões Úteis: viagens performativas - a “Arte na Paisagem”* como trabalho *Site-Specific*, Jorge

Palinhos tece uma detalhada memória descritiva do percurso do coletivo teatral – *Visões Úteis* – dando particular ênfase aos projetos que esta companhia desenvolveu a partir da relação arquitectónica e performativa. O autor salienta as potencialidades dramatúrgicas que o *Site-Specific* pode trazer enquanto dispositivo cénico potenciador de fruição, quer “individual quer coletiva – que dá ao espectador a possibilidade de vivenciar um espaço e uma performance de forma não apenas consciente mas também corporal e sensorial” (p. 20).

Uma problemática análoga a de Palinhos - o espaço como percurso dramatúrgico e sensorial - é proposto por Maria Carneiro. No seu artigo, de forma metódica e elucidativa, discorre sobre a noção de “espaço” nas intersecções entre teatro e arquitectura, dando particular atenção às práticas artísticas que propõem a apropriação de espaços edificados como espaços cénicos. A partir da análise do espectáculo *Até comprava o teu amor* do coletivo - *Teatro do Vestido* - a autora procura responder à questão “como é possível construir dramaturgias em torno de espaços pré-existentes” (p. 21).

O lugar como espaço de representação é a temática abordada por Susana Paixão a partir da pesquisa desenvolvida sobre o processo criativo do encenador Lee Beagley, diretor da companhia *Produções Suplementares de Teatro*. Neste caso, o *Site-Specific* cruza-se com o lugar da representação que se deseja não convencional e arquitectonicamente teatral. Susana Paixão debruça-se sobre os processos de criação teatral viajando até ao “espaço vazio” proposto por Peter Brook e, a partir de Lee Beagley, sobre a importância do lugar do espectador na criação do espectáculo. “O espectador não está apenas a ver toda a cena, mas também a ser visto pelos outros, no que se refere por exemplo à sua expressão facial e a sua movimentação. Fazendo parte do cenário, é como que um figurante a participar num espectáculo e isto só é possível pela forma como a arquitectura do espaço é aproveitada.” (P. 40)

Numa temática como o *Site-Specific* em que a representação é matéria feita de dinâmicas e transformações morfológicas, este livro revela-se como “estado das coisas” que edifica a sua investigação numa relação contínua e participativa.

RECENSÕES
REVIEWS

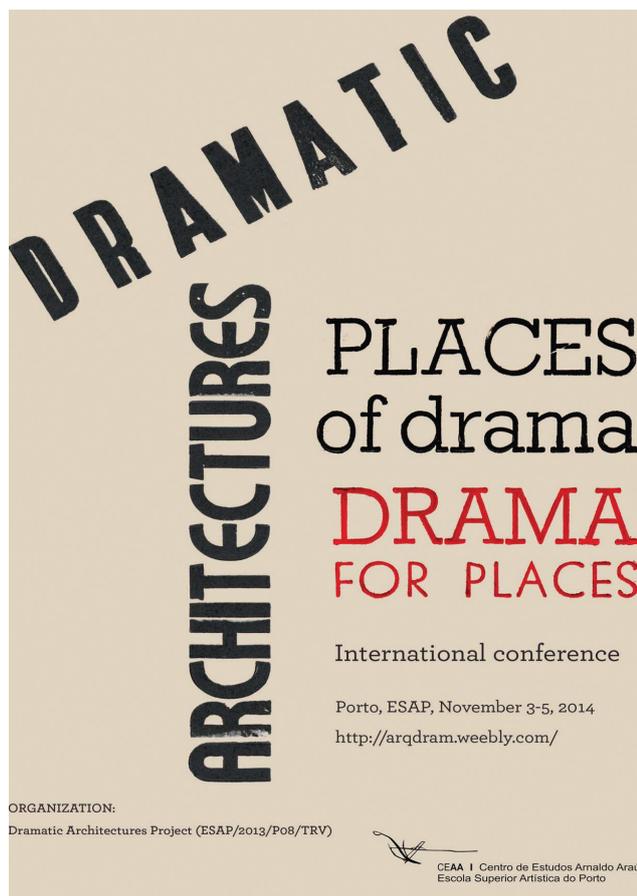
Dramatic Architectures:

Places for
Drama – Drama for
Places – Livro
de Atas

Juliana Gonçalves

Organização

Projecto *Dramatic Architectures* _ ESAP/2013/
P08/TRV
Architectural Studies Research Group
CEAA | Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo (uID
4041 da FCT)
Escola Superior Artística do Porto (ESAP), Porto,
Portugal



Arquitecturas Dramáticas é o título das conferências que tiveram lugar no Porto em novembro de 2014 e que deram origem ao livro de atas que reúne os temas (e artigos) que nela foram apresentados. São textos que relacionam e cruzam arquitectura e espaço com teatro e performance, em várias abordagens quer quanto à forma como se entende espaço/arquitectura quer como se

entende performance/teatro. O que é comum a este entendimento é que espaço e performance estão intrinsecamente ligados.

Esta relação está historicamente presente desde a antiguidade clássica. São objecto de análise alguns exemplos de edifícios teatrais históricos importantes e a evolução que sofreram essas arquitecturas ao longo do tempo, bem como as transformações históricas nos edifícios teatrais de raiz italiana (nomeadamente em Portugal) e como são vistos estes edifícios na contemporaneidade.

O questionamento disciplinar da arquitectura através da prática teatral é mostrado por duas vias: por um lado, a arquitetura teatral entendida como edifício (objecto arquitectónico), em que a evolução da prática teatral e as novas necessidades programáticas servem para questionar e reflectir sobre a construção arquitectónica do teatro enquanto equipamento; por outro lado, arquitectura teatral enquanto cenografia, como lugar de experimentação, como laboratório que permite o questionamento disciplinar (liberta das regras e leis que arquitectura deve cumprir).

De salientar o texto de Juliet Rufford, que aborda a interdisciplinaridade e transgressão dos limites entre teatro e arquitectura através de vários exemplos que questionam a funcionalidade da arquitectura teatral, pondo em confronto as arquitecturas 'espectaculares' (objecto arquitectónico) como símbolo e marco de poder, por contraste com uma arquitectura que serve e se faz através da *performatividade arquitectónica*, como o caso do Battersea Arts Centre (edifício que ocupa uma antiga Câmara Municipal do século XIX, que foi reconstruído para acolher as artes performativas), em cuja intervenção mais recente de reabilitação, o arquitecto opta por um faseamento dos trabalhos à medida das necessidades e com a participação dos seus utilizadores, onde o teatro é uma forma de ir construindo o espaço num processo em constante mutação – arquitectura em acção através do teatro.

Uma citação referida no texto de Sara Franqueira - *tensão* é o actor principal do espaço -, serve aqui para salientar um aspecto comum a vários artigos: 'tensão' entre teatro e arquitectura (espaço e performance) expressa de diversos modos. Em primeiro, a conturbação sofrida com as *avant-gardes*

modernistas, onde teatro e arquitectura estão em conflito num período de grandes transformações. É transposta esta tensão para a prática contemporânea e as suas transformações actuais, crescendo a necessidade de as artes performativas saírem do espaço convencional do teatro. As práticas teatrais saem à rua, utilizam o espaço urbano, ou reutilizam espaços que serviam outras funções no passado – são estudados vários exemplos de transformação funcional dos edifícios para acolher eventos artísticos (antigos edifícios industriais, hospitais, câmaras municipais, prisões, etc.) e das novas relações que se estabelecem com a cidade.

As transformações actuais trazem novas relações do espaço com público, e a ‘tensão’ assenta sobretudo na relação do espaço com o espectador. Deste modo, os casos de estudo das práticas contemporâneas referem-se sobretudo às propostas *site-specific*, e à noção de *espaço-evento*, em que a arquitectura é vista não como um objecto estático, mas como espaço dinâmico, enquanto parte da acção dramática pelas relações criadas.

É igualmente abordada a ‘tensão’ entre espaço físico e espaço emocional, na relação de proximidade que muitas práticas estabelecem com o espectador, o espectador é (ele próprio parte da acção) conduzido através do espaço (exemplos das experiências áudio-guiadas numa casa, num museu, num teatro ou dos percursos conduzidos pela cidade) – o espaço é entendido enquanto experiência que decorre da percepção e do movimento.

São estudados ainda outros elementos referidos como geradores das experiências perceptivas e que unem arquitectura e teatro, como a questão da luz e do som (ou do silêncio), enquanto construtores de atmosferas e criadores de simbolismo.

A importância do lugar para criar um lugar simbólico é em muitos casos determinante e intransferível, e a prática *site-specific* ganha cada vez mais importância na construção dramática, evidenciando a relação simbiótica entre *arquitectura* e *drama*.

NOTÍCIA
NEWS

A Mobilização da Intertextualidade da Dialética Cinematográfica

Nelson Araújo



Poucas artes refletem como o cinema a integração de outros textos na sua construção. O contexto artístico em que o filme é realizado perpassa uma tensão estética que explora múltiplos substratos deixando, na sua superfície, um rasto dessas integrações. A expurgação dessas marcas permite-nos mapear a dialogia que a obra fílmica mantém com as suas congéneres bem como com as mais diversas manifestações artísticas. Prognostica-se, o cinema, neste âmbito, como a arte que mais enfatiza a pluralidade textual nas suas possibilidades expressivas, sinalizando-se, neste perímetro, um território particularmente nutritivo para os estudos fílmicos. O projeto de investigação ESAP/2016/P28/DTC – *A Mobilização da Intertextualidade na Dialética Cinematográfica* propõe-se dinamizar e produzir conhecimento no território das manifestações artísticas que gravitam nas relações do cinema com as outras artes. Através da construção teórica e da análise das múltiplas manifestações artísticas, pretende-se identificar os percursos mutantes das artes e dos seus textos durante o processo dialógico que mantêm com o cinema.

Perante o desafio da conjetura declarada, a equipa do projeto – Nelson Araújo (CEAA/ESAP) e Rita Bastos (LabCom.IFP) integrou a comissão

organizadora do Encontro Internacional “O Cinema e as outras Artes” que decorreu nos dias 29 e 30 de setembro de 2016 na Universidade da Beira Interior e que contou com o apoio do LabCom.IFP, unidade de investigação daquela instituição. O evento contou com a presença de 58 investigadores, na sua maioria portugueses, mas também oriundos do Brasil (11), Espanha (6), Holanda (2), França (1), E.U.A. (1), Canadá (1) e Nicarágua (1). As comunicações foram integradas em mesas com as seguintes temáticas: Cinema e Desenhos Emergentes; Cinema e Dança; Cinema e Fotografia; Cinema e Filosofia; Cinema e Literatura (3 mesas); Cinema e Artes Plásticas; Conjeturas Artísticas; Paisagem, Cinema e Arquitetura; Sonoridades no Cinema; Cinema e Artes Performativas; Vanguardas Artísticas; Problemáticas da Narrativa e Autoria e Produção. Os artigos finais, selecionados pela comissão científica, integrarão um e-Book a publicar pelo LabCom.

O debate científico contou com a presença de João Mário Grilo que, em sessão plenária, apresentou a comunicação: *Cinema|Pintura: Muito barulho para (quase) nada?* Este investigador/realizador também exibiu, noutra momento seguido de debate, o seu último filme: “Viagem aos Confins de um Sítio onde nunca Estive - sobre a Obra de Rui Chafes” (2014). Esta dinâmica foi, igualmente, promovida com o investigador/realizador holandês Jord den Hollander que palestrou sobre o tema: “Scripted Architecture” e mostrou o seu filme: “Mission Statements: The Architecture of Dutch Diplomacy” (2011).

O contacto com investigadores com interesses afins permitiu, igualmente, a formação de um grupo de trabalho na Associação dos Investigadores da Imagem em Movimento (AIM) dedicado ao tema: “O Cinema e outras Artes” ficando como coordenadores: Anabela Branco Oliveira (Portugal - UTAD/LabCom); Nelson Araújo (Portugal - ESAP/CEAA) e António Fatorelli (Brasil - UFRJ).

