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The City as Theatre

The Performing Space

Tesi di dottorato di Giovanni Campus



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Future of Places III Conference, Public Space in the New Urban Agenda, organised by Axel and Margaret Ax:son Johnson Foundation in collaboration with UN Habitat and Project for Public Spaces, Stockholm, Sweden, 29 June to 1 July 2015. (Theatre as play, multilevel narrative)

Jane Jacobs 100, Her Legacy and Relevance in the 21st Century, Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft, Delft, Netherlands, 24-25 May 2016. (Jane Jacobs, the “sidwalk ballet” and the visual order)

La Ricerca Che Cambia, 2° convegno nazionale dei dottorati italiani dell’architettura, della pianificazione e del design, Università IUAV di Venezia, Italy, 1-2 December 2016. (Monument and memory, performative monuments)

Urban Learning Spaces, Organised by University of Sassari, Sardegna Ricerche and EcoUrban Lab, Porto Conte Ricerche, Alghero, Italy, 27 August 2017. (Studies on Lefebvre Architecture of Enjoyement, the “pedagogy of the body”)

Politics and Community Engagement in Doctoral Theatre Research, 8th Conference of Doctoral Studies in Theatre Practice and Theory, Theatre Faculty of Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts, Brno, Czech Republic, 3-4 November 2017. (Performing the political space, political protest as performance, “rhythmomimesis”)

Living Cities, Liveable Spaces, Placemaking and Identity, Valletta 2018 Fourth International Conference, Valletta, Malta, 22-24 November 2017. (Non-economic values of performing arts, community building, participation, ownership and vision)

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General Introduction

References to theatre and dance are abundant in urban studies. To point out just some prominent examples throughout the history of the discipline, we can go from Lewis Mumford¹ to Jane Jacobs² to the re-examination of the notion of *Theatrum Mundi* made by Sennet³. However, in all those references the performing arts serve exclusively as a metaphor.

Regarding the references to arts in general, Rossi has explicitly pointed out that «there is something in the nature of urban artifacts that renders them very similar – and not only metaphorically – to a work of art» (Rossi 1982 p. 32). That is the correct way to understand Lefebvre's definition of the city as Oeuvre: «And thus the city is an oeuvre, closer to a work of art than to a simple material product.» (Lefebvre 1996 p. 101)

If this relationship is not only metaphorical, then it would be useful to clarify its nature, with the certainty that knowing more about one concept, we will learn something on the other.

Furthermore, what is true for art in general should be true for performing arts, but since scholars of urban studies tend to consider arts only under their visual appearance, they constantly miss investigating their specificity⁴. However, there must be more than a metaphor or, to get a little deeper, that metaphor should be operating on a level such as to produce results on perceived, conceived, and lived reality.

The question, then, would be about the kind of work of art a city is.

Indeed, we should recognise that from the ancient rituals to the contemporary civil and religious ceremonies in urban open spaces, an intentional and staged action is supposed to play a central role not only in the processes of sense giving and community building, or in what today is called “placemaking,” but also in the production of space.⁵

In this scenario, my research tries to investigate and define some instruments for the analysis of the performing practices in an urban environment. In particular, it aims at investigating the theoretical basis, and some of the regularities of performing arts in the urban practice – nowadays so often called in question in projects aimed at re-activating and regenerating public spaces. But clarifying the specificity of performing arts will also allow us to clarify the performative aspects of every artistic intervention, that is always a combination of form and event.⁶

From practice and literature, I have therefore identified different paths, categories or tools to be tested for that purpose, such as: the rhythm analytical method, as sketched by Lefebvre (2004); the trialectical logic, as elaborated by the Situationist International, embraced by Lefebvre (1991) and developed by Soja (1996); and the category of liminality, as developed by Turner (Turner 1977, 1982, 2002). I also assume that these three theoretical tools or paths can be traced to unity, calling liminality the third element which turns every dialectic relation into spatial.

¹ «The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theater and is the theater. It is in the city, the city as theater, that man's more purposive activities are formulated and worked out, through conflicting and cooperating personalities, events, groups, into more significant culminations.» (Mumford 1996 p. 480; the original text is from 1938)

² The reference is obviously to the very successful “sidewalk ballet” expression: «The stretch of Hudson Street where I live is each day the scene of an intricate sidewalk ballet,” even if right before introducing the famous formula Jane Jacobs plays defence: «Although it is life, nor art, we may fancifully call it the art form of the city and liken it to the dance.» (Jacobs 1961 p. 50)

This is evident to some extent observing how she quickly dismisses that argument when introducing the expression “sidewalk ballet.” Nevertheless, being so powerful and adequate, that expression righteously occupies a prominent place in the book and in the history of its reception.

³ Notably Sennet also cites *The Drama of Social Reality* by Stanford Lyman and Marvin Scott: «All life is theatre; hence political life is also theatrical. And rule by theatre may be termed “theatrocracy.”» (Sennet 2002 p. 313; I ed. 1977)

⁴ That is exactly the case with Jacobs. When she calls “taxidermy” the result of the arbitrary mixture of “art” and “life,” she is referring to visual arts and only to that. Her polemical target is the *City Beautiful* movement with its monumental *allure*, and that is the reason why she associates the discourse on art in the chapter about *The Visual Order*.

⁵ The reference is obviously to Henri Lefebvre's eponymous essay (1991).

⁶ As foreseen by the still little known work of Carlo Diano (see Diano 1967, 1956).

So I propose to consider the *liminal element* of a working performance as either the place or the phase where, or when, given certain circumstances, *space is produced*. I also propose, following Lefebvre, to identify *rhythm* as the unifying element of space and time.

My thesis finds arguments in a strongly interdisciplinary field, at the intersection of urban studies, performance studies, art history, anthropology, and philosophy.

Furthermore, regarding philosophy, arguments are both in the fields of so-called “continental” and analytical philosophy, combining, hopefully, the nuances and the relentless questioning of the History of the first with the call for cleanliness of the second.

Amongst the conclusions and the suggestions for further investigation derived from my research path, the most remarkable is the perception of the continuity between architectural and performative *gestures*.

The very act of building being either done by hand in his real scale or started by hand in the act of drawing, of designing: by hand or with the instruments that are an extension of the body or that became an extension of the body through the process of *innervation*⁷.

In a sort of scale of permanence, it is very hard to separate purely performative interventions, from temporary installations, from sculptures or buildings. Furthermore, it is possible to affirm that the shape of the built environment can often be explained by movement, repeated for ritual or functional reasons, which gives shape to the urban landscape.

The proposed research tools also prove to be suitable to analyse various kinds of political protests, seen as performances related to the occupation/production of space and identity or community building through synchronisation.

The relation between theatre and politics is indeed radical, and the recent tendency towards forms of performative and participatory public art, radically shifting the politics of spectatorship (Bishop 2004,

2006, see 2012), seems to call for the reconnection of these concepts.

The second conclusion, which retroactively influenced all the structure of my research, is that when we think *in terms of performance*, we are compelled to question many of the pre-existing categories which give shape to the debate in the field of urban studies and to the general and political debate about city life.

Finally, I just want to point out that English is not my native language, and so part of my thoughts will probably be lost in translation.

⁷ We can briefly define innervation in Walter Benjamin's terms as the positive *mimesis* through which man takes control and incorporates external objects and especially technologies. Eugenio Barba uses this term referring to the performer who «by a process of innervation, develops new

neuro-muscular reflexes which result in a renewed body culture, a 'second nature', a new consistency, artificial but marked with bios.» (Barba 1995 p. 22)

Structure of the work

The book is divided into two main parts. The first part aims at showing key concepts and analysis tools in a most classical way used in urban studies and philosophy: proceeding by definitions and argumentations, with the support of case studies and bibliography.

In that part I will try to develop and apply some conceptual tools, the key points fixed as our instruments of analysis to show how, by introducing them into the debate, we can achieve a shift in perspective on some common issues of urban studies.

The second part is the *Atlas*. While working as a repertoire of case studies supporting the main text, the Atlas also is intended to work autonomously by building a parallel discourse through images. Some images of the Atlas will therefore not be referenced in the main text but will serve as intermediate passages to explain the articulation of choices or, hopefully, as new starting points for development of further research. That *parallel* section will encompass various case studies and examples of performative events giving new meaning to places, establishing, empowering or representing communities, which create new *monuments* and collective memory.

There will be examples from the history of arts, little local events, theoretical starting points, schemes and diagrams, but most of all *sequences* and possible interdisciplinary reading paths.

Anyway, the structure of this book is largely free and available for creative reassembly, deeply rooted as it is in the culture of hypertext; it simply aims at giving a path in a field which can be crossed in many ways, connecting the dots differently. It is indeed possible and easy to conceive an alternative index dividing the definitions and theory from examples and case studies more strictly, rearranging both in a more standard "disciplinary" fashion.

Both the order of the images of the Atlas and the captions are supposed to reinforce the main argument of this work: performing arts are no more just a metaphor to be used in urban studies, but an instrument with some logic and some rule of its own. Moreover,

there is a continuity between the architectural gesture and the performative gesture that make performing arts work *also* as a metaphor.

Finally, I added a section of interviews with choreographers and directors, who gave me great insight through my research about the *magic* of theatre. In that section it will be possible to notice that there is indeed very little of *magic* involved, and instead a lot of awareness, discipline, and research. That section will hopefully supply a supplementary evidence of the soundness of previous chapters, showing how practitioners with a theatrical training and background and researchers moving from more philosophical or theoretical approaches, all come to very close conclusions.

My research has the aim of both engaging with relevant theoretical questions and of helping solve some practical and urgent issue.

The first order of tasks includes not only the general questions about meanings and regularities of performing arts, but also the new relationships which is possible to establish between the research tools sketched: between *trialectics* and *limen*, between "liminal space" and "liminal phase," as well as the investigation of the origin and the developments of the concept of *rhythmanalysis*.

The practical aspects primarily involve the strategies and tactics for designing events in urban spaces. This will provide urban actors, not only urban planners but rather also decision makers politicians, activists, and community members, with rational tools to operate change and/or promote their agenda. Secondly, the research outcomes may be useful to promote public investment in the so-called *immaterial* aspects of public life in urban areas. This will also foster the redefinition of the present framework which privileges the visual arts in public and private financing related to urban renewal projects.

History (and geography) of my research

The research presented in this dissertation started from fieldwork, emerging as a connection of several questions about the nature, inner workings, and regularities of urban arts and especially street theatre.

I would like to give a brief account of how these questions have formed through my personal research, and my professional and life path. I think that giving some preliminary information about those circumstances could help to understand not only the context and reasons why those questions emerged, and so their exact point of focus, but also the intellectual tools available to me, which have undoubtedly given some shape to the kind of answers I have found.

After graduating in philosophy, focussing on medieval philosophy and philosophy of law, in 1999, I worked briefly with a psychologist, who was conducting research in the field of colour perception, particularly on the improvement of a psychological test which used choices between couples or groups of colours to reveal certain personality traits or the predisposition for some psychological or neural pathology.

The idea was to adopt and revive Goethe's theory of colours, notoriously developed against the Newtonian model, and to use it as a basis for developing further items of the test. Why use that exotic model? Briefly, if Newton considered colour as a property of the object, Goethe rather considered it a property of the eye: a quite intriguing hypothesis for a psychological work, especially with the promising perspective to work with psychiatrists and neurologists.

Another psychiatrist was then working in the same clinic, who happened to be a contemporary art enthusiast, and the brother of a well-known jazz musician. Talking with him, my focus quickly shifted from the theory of perception to the history of art, to the pinacles of contemporary artistic research and to the pleasure principle and the functions of art in the individuals and society. His name is Antonello Fresu, and I will never thank him enough for putting me suddenly

in the direction, and for giving me means, opportunities and motivations for *doing* things with art projects. Together with his partner Giannella Demuro, he also founded a small but very ambitious art magazine – which aimed at reporting not only the local art scene but at extending its scope to the whole Mediterranean area. So I suddenly quit working with the psychologist, and I went to work for the magazine. The couple also worked with the younger brother of his, Paolo, organising a jazz festival in their native town, Berchidda – an international event of huge impact, especially considering how small the town is, and how deeply that event affected the place, its economy, the social image and self-perception of the local population.

So, I also started to work for the festival and with other cultural projects which, at that time, seemed to be much more intriguing to me than doing research. I worked in that team for four years, both at the magazine and in the organisation department of Time in Jazz Festival, while writing my first texts about art for our magazine and our exhibition catalogues.

I was always suspicious about “gallery art” and the elitist agenda of too many contemporary artists and collectors. Still, our exhibitions always had a considerable success. For some reason, even non-educated people from nearby small towns came to listen hip and esoteric jazz concerts, and many of them also came to visit our contemporary art exhibitions.

After two more years working as a journalist always writing about art, but also about technology, economics, industry, and in short everything helping survive doing this profession, my new phase began when I met the theatre company *Theatre en Vol*, led by the Dutch director Michèle Kramers and her partner in life and art, the Italian (Sardinian) actor and scenographer Giuseppe “Puccio” Savioli. My interest in performing arts was already born, as well as in the organization of art events aiming at transforming boring and *sleepy* places by mixing media and sensations. I worked with *Theatre en Vol* for six years, touring around Europe and participating in the drafting of various cultural projects.

During those years I saw very special things happen at performances in places otherwise hostile, deserted, *off*. During the six years at *Theatre en Vol* I begin to

elaborate some theory to explain why some performances were very effective, while others were neglectable. I began to call certain kind of works which had gone really well as *performative urbanism*. It was 2006 to 2012, nobody was talking about *Tactical Urbanism* yet, let alone in Italy, but later I acknowledged that many of our intuitions were of the same kind of the ones of the movement which now goes under that name. Though the instruments were quite different, since we worked almost exclusively with performances and very ephemeral temporary installations.

In 2005, a year before I started working for the company, which is indeed what made me know them, *Theatre en Vol* had organised a EU-funded *Culture 2000* international conference titled *Habitat Imaginari* (Imaginary Habitats) – on the use of art in the reactivation of urban spaces. That project has somehow continued and the Imaginary Habitats name is still in use for a pluriennial project of urban installations and urban actions [ATLAS: 2.17; 2.18] which, in my last years with the company, involved a group of planners associated to the University of Sassari (the TaMaLaCà group). [ATLAS: 2.67] My desire to explore the theoretical foundations of our work has begun to find a way in the field of Urban Studies or, rather, in the *limen* where they meet philosophy, my too cumbersome background, but also still my favourite key to access reality.

These are the bases on which the research project of my PhD was founded.

An integral part of my PhD project was organising an international conference on the theme of urban art. I intended it to be a sort of “10 years after” edition of the *Habitat Imaginari* conference organized by *Theatre en Vol* in 2005.

The urban scenario had changed in ten years, but what had changed much more was the relevance of those topics and their diffusion, which appeared to be rather different. Urban art had meanwhile become relevant even for the official art system, so had its use in projects of urban renovation regeneration or re-development.

Nevertheless, a deeper understanding of those processes was much needed. The relations among artists,

curators, communities, planners, decision makers had to be clarified and even redefined.

When introduced into a discourse, culture – and so art as its expression – cannot survive for too long as a simple object of analysis. It inevitably takes the centre of the stage, as the practitioners of applied research in the field of art know too well. Culture thus defines the values and hence also the paradigms of research.

The occasion was given by a call by UN-Habitat, the United Nation Agency for Urban Settlements, inviting to host international meetings as a part of the *World Urban Campaign*, an initiative intended at promote debate and give inputs to the process of construction of the New Urban Agenda, which had to be signed during the Habitat III Conference in Quito in October 2016.

Those meetings were called *Urban Thinkers Campus*, and 26 initiatives were realised around the world in 2016. The purpose was developing a shared document, called *The City We Need*, with specific requests, and present it to the global conference in Quito. Our proposal name was *The City We Need: Open for Art*, because unsurprisingly we could find no mention to art in any part of the process of construction of the Agenda up to the moment when we applied to host the Campus.

Our proposal was accepted, and the conference took place in Alghero from 18 to 20 February 2016. A brief overview of the process and of the outcomes of this exciting part of my work will be presented below in part 1.1.3.

An important part of my research was carried out in Belgrade, Serbia, at the Faculty of Architecture under the direction of my co-tutor Zoran Dukanović, who created the *PaPs, Public Art & Public Space* program, more than XX years ago, integrating architectural and urban planning education with artistic education in the academic curriculum.

The scene of the Balkan countries, and notably of Serbia, is very peculiar and relevant for performing arts at a global level. It is enough to remember that Belgrade is the Marina Abramović’s hometown. And indeed Abramović’s work does not come from nothing,

it arises from a background which allowed her to produce such refined works moving from advanced positions.

As far as my studies are concerned, I have had the opportunity to deal with directors, intellectuals and of course academics.

The idea I have derived from this is that the inheritance of nomadic tribes who had to carry their monuments with them meant that it was all the more natural to consider performing arts as public art there, a role that in Italy is preferably reserved for visual arts.

However, there is a curious circumstance. In Serbian there are no words equivalent to “public art.” For this reason, the *PaPs* program was given an English name. Putting the terms Art and Public together in Serbian, as my professor explained to me, would be like accusing art of “prostitution.” Art at everyone’s disposal in an unpleasant sense. In any case, they do not use these terms, which seems rather interesting to me, a fact which should be understood correctly.

But if language is the spirit of a culture, what brought me to Serbia was also the desire to better understand the semantic contiguity between the terms *Slavs* and *Slava*. Where the *Slavs* are the people, and the *Slava* is the most important celebration of every family, or community. In short, the group is totally identified with its celebration. Or it is as if the community and the *Slava* in which it joins were the same thing.

This resonates exceptionally well with the dimension of *fête* as the most authentic urban dimension claimed by Lefebvre. *Slava* could be the best example of Nancy’s *inoperative community*.

⁸ The main references here are de Certeau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* and the big project of the *Critique of Everyday Life* developed by Lefebvre. While de Certeau’s position (1984) is that in the tactical approach to everyday life the individual can find their freedom and the opportunity to evade the strategical systems of control with their attempt to «bring to light the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of discipline» (p. xiv-xv), Lefebvre insists on the ideological origin also of most of those practices.

⁹ There is a research tradition on that field at the Architecture department of the University of Sassari, guided by one of the founders of the department, prof. Silvano Tagliagambe, and today by prof. Fabio Bacchini, philosopher and

Theoretical coordinates

My basic need was explaining how urban performances and street theatre work or *should* work, and how to tailor that kind of initiatives and use them consciously to improve the city life experience, also in the long term.

That challenge quickly revealed to be harder than expected.

It appeared to be unproductive or even impossible to consider performance merely as something which takes place in an architectural or urban scenario. Rather, it appeared as something supposed to interact with the scenario with the ability of modifying it on different spatial and temporal scales.

It also appeared a no go to consider *city life*, and the so called “everyday theatre,” as an object of study because my purpose is to analyse theatre as an agent for transformation, which is not often the case in ordinary life⁸. So, the real object to focus on seemed to be the twofold relation between the city shapes (or forms?) and the city life (or events)⁹.

The use of terms as *form* and *event* would have been impossible at the time, but— derived from the familiarity with post-Marxism and post-structuralism — there was an awareness that immaterial institutions can give form to city life directly or by the means of the built environment. The limitation of human movement starts with the body and continues with the institutions and buildings. And of course, there should be nothing to consider above the body. The limit of that perspective would be to speculate on a “free” condition of the body, not influenced by material and

epistemologist. Among the prominent results of those studies it is important to mention three PhD dissertations that laid the groundwork for the development of the present research: *Spazio-Corpo-Mente: Lo spazio come luogo di invito all’azione* by Fabrizio Pusceddu; *Lo spazio dell’azione, corpo e Progetto* by Sergio Berlinguer and *Sugli spazi pubblici. Discorsi sulla sfera pubblica della città contemporanea* By Enrico Cicalò (Pusceddu 2010; Berlinguer 2008; Cicalò 2007). The first two works based mostly on an analytic philosophy perspective, with a strong support from recent discoveries in the field of neuro-biology, the first with a more architectural-design perspective, the second with a more philosophical approach, while the third explores, from a perspective of urban theory, a field of relations still little integrated into the architectural disciplines.

social constructions. Something that is not historically founded nor philosophically justified.

L'homme dont on nous parle et qu'on invite à libérer est déjà en lui-même l'effet d'un assujettissement bien plus profond que lui. Une « âme » l'habite et le porte à l'existence, qui est elle-même une pièce dans la maîtrise que le pouvoir exerce sur le corps. L'âme, effet et instrument d'une anatomie politique ; l'âme, prison du corps. (Foucault 1975)

There is *The soul is a prison to the body*, as stated by Foucault in his work dedicated to the prison as a material institution, built of walls, and architecture which reflects «the mastery that power exercises over the body» (see also Montag 1995).

Above the body, then, there are social relations and institutions defining, beyond architecture and urban design, even the *soul* as one of the instruments of social control, or of social integration, depending on our political standpoint. But in any case, all this happens *around the body*.

The control of the bodies seemed to be the primary purpose of all construction activities, social or material. Control could take the shape of protection, as in the case of dwelling, but sticking to the line of Foucault's thought (as many scholars do) would have meant to privilege the first function over the second.

Since the very early stages of my research it became clear that studying the performing arts in the city would mean to study the city *from the point of view of performing arts*, and of performance in general, of movement, of event, and that would require a huge shift of paradigm from what is usually done and accepted in the field of urbanism.

There are notable and successful exceptions, often cited and not so often followed in the practice of planning. The first to tell urbanists about the necessity to look at the city life and not only to architectural shapes (that indeed give form to the life inside) was of course the mighty Jane Jacobs. In her famous «attack on current city planning and rebuilding, » she warned against the mystifications of great architects who promoted their design utopias under “humanistic” labels. Garden City, City Beautiful, Radiant City

¹⁰ Organized by the chair of Spatial Planning and Strategy of the Delft University of Technology, the OTB Research Institute for the Built Environment, and the Rotterdam Erasmus

«These always were primarily architectural design cults, rather than cults of social reform. » (Jacobs 1961 p. 375)

That was also coherent with her critique to the city as a work of art, or to say better: «the unsuitable aim of converting cities into disciplined works of art. » The question here again should be about *the kind of work of art a city is*. Or to be more respectful of Jacobs words, what kind of work of art can find his proper place in the city.

In a memoire for her 100th birthday, recurring in 2016, Saskia Sassen wrote:

She continuously returned to the issue of “place,” and its importance when considering the implementation of urban policies – notably the loss of neighbourhoods and erasure of local residents’ experiences. Her input made me shift my thinking to more “micro” levels; I am still doing quite a bit of work today on the need to relocalise pieces of national and city economies. (Sassen 2016)

And questioned: «so perhaps now, on the 100th anniversary of her birth, we should all be asking: what is it that Jane Jacobs made us want to see in the city? » A couple of relevant books (Schubert 2015; Laurence 2016), a new biography (Kanigel 2016), and at least one international conference in TU Delft (the Jane Jacobs 100 conference¹⁰) keep the interest in the author alive, but as Sassen wrote in the cited article «In the early 1900s, the city was a lens for understanding larger processes – but half a century later, it had lost that role». For scholars that means that economy has shifted away from production, it appears to be made of finance and thus, it has moved to the virtual spaces. Nonetheless Sassen studies in first place continue to remind us that there is a material place where value is reproduced and stored, and that the land value in the city is still the most relevant symptom of how inequalities are reflected (or constituted) in a spatial way.

Sassen's recent work, presented in a number of articles and lectures collected under the title *Who Owns*

University College on 24-25 May 2016. Website: <https://janejacobs100.co> (accessed 10/10/2017)

*The City*¹¹ (or similar) (Sassen 2015), attempts to explore the relationship between the physical space of the city and the global mechanisms of value production from an economic standpoint.

We could push that concept a little further and admit that the transformation of place in abstract space corresponds to the virtualization of *value* as economic, scalable value.

Value is indeed a strange word, indicating alternatively an ethical category and now almost only a numeric amount: the economic value. During my research I have been confronted with many of these words: *spectacle*, *play*, *experience*, *mimesis*, and the word *performance* itself. All of them have a double *value*, in our discourse they often occupy almost the place of what ancient Latins called a *vox media*, which can mean one thing and the opposite, the perfect example being the ancient Greek “Farmakon,” meaning both medicine and poison.

This kind of words occupy a special place in philosophy: they mark special points in the historical articulation of the structure of our cultural discourse, as the knots of a net, and by investigating their origin and their use it is possible to understand how our culture is historically shaped. This is the task of the studies which move from philosophy toward other disciplinary fields using the methodology of the history of ideas or of what Foucault called *l'archéologie du savoir* (archaeology of knowledge).

On one of these apparent oppositions, that concerning the Word *causa*, indicating in Latin, and in modern Italian, both a trial in front of a court and/or the reason why something happens, another author of reference for my research starts his reasoning in his last and long-awaited book: the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, a master in this methodology.

A constant reference for my investigation, for many years Agamben has been engaged in a redefinition of categories, such as that of border and *field*, of life form, extremely useful for the redefinition of that paradigm of urban study which seems to be implied by

the present research. Lately, moreover, the theme of the gesture which had already been dealt with in various essays, including *Notes on Gesture*, of 1992 included in *Means Without Ends* (Agamben 2000), has taken centre stage in his thought, and now occupies a conclusive place in his last long-awaited – especially by me! – work titled *Karman: breve trattato sull'azione, la colpa e il gesto* (*Karman: A Brief Treatise on Action, Guilt, and Gesture*) (Agamben 2017).

The other author who has shaped my research path – for very similar reasons but in a very different way – is the often cited, rarely understood, and never followed Henri Lefebvre.

His reflections on the contemporary city, on the production of space and perhaps more than anything else his confidence in the fact that philosophy can still provide strategic answers for the solution of practical questions, have been decisive in convincing me of the very possibility of dealing with this work, and to face it with this methodology.

His idea of the city as a work of art also seems to suit very well the performing arts, and it was at the basis of the idea that these could play a greater role than normally believed in the contemporary city.

«Leaving aside representation, ornamentation and decoration, art can become *praxis* and *poiesis* on a social scale: the art of living in the city as work of art. » (Lefebvre 1996 p. 173)

Even if this quote from *The Right to the City* is referred to a utopic situation where art is «at the service of the urban» and where also the very idea of art can be surpassed by a new idea of the urban, Lefebvre notes that to this day «Art brings cases and examples of appropriate ‘topics’: of temporal qualities inscribed in spaces. Music shows how expression and lyricism uses numbering, order and measure. It shows that time, tragic or serious, can absorb and reabsorb calculation» and «Coming back to style and to the oeuvre, that is, to the meaning of the monument and the space appropriated in the *fête*, art can create ‘structures of enchantment’. » (Ivi)

versity of Cambridge and sponsored by Development Securities plc in 2011 which showed that the 52% of office space in the City of London was already foreign-owned. (Lizeri et al. 2011)

¹¹ The title *Who Owns the City?* was first used by a research report, completed by a Land Economy team (Professor Colin Lizieri, Jan Reinert and Professor Andrew Baum) of the Uni-

The music, the *fête* (a term not translated into English because it indicates the holiday, the festival and the celebration and something more at the same time, as the Italian *fiesta*), inserted into an architecture, or into a designed landscape that could «neither restrict nor create possibilities» on their own.

In the introduction to his book about Lefebvre, Stuart Elden cites the autobiographical note for an anthology of French contemporary thinkers, in which he stated that he «Sees philosophy as a critical conscience on real life. Places theatre above philosophy (as he conceives it, not as it is!). Has only accomplished a small part of the programme of life and work that he has planned. Doesn't hope to arrive at the end.» (Elden 2004 p. 1)

The interest in his work is constant or even growing in recent years. His most important epigone is undoubtedly the geographer David Harvey, who promoted his expression *Right to the City* and to the ideas of the existence of an urban class with new characteristics compared to the first industrial society, as well as of the city as a privileged place of conflict (and this is certainly linked to the idea of the city as a place of representation).

Harvey paid a huge tribute to Lefebvre in the introduction of his *Rebel Cities* in 2012, the convincing point made about the aptness of the French philosopher to respond to the challenges of our time surely materialised an interest that was already rising. Only looking at the books published in the following years, in 2014 we have seen the publication of the previously unavailable *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment* (Lefebvre 2014b) and the one-volume edition of the *Critique of Everyday Life* (Lefebvre 2014a), plus a *Lefebvre for Education* (Middleton 2014) and a *Lefebvre in Social research and Architecture* (Stanek et al. 2014). In 2015 a *Lefebvre for Architects* (Coleman 2015) and a *Lefebvre and the Humanities* (Fraser 2015), and in 2016 we had the publication of the English translation his *Metaphilosophy* by Verso, edited by Stuart Elden.

It should also be noted that the work of Henri Lefebvre is cited today more by urban planners than by philosophers, even if, as said, this does not have many outcomes in urban planning practice.

With a notorious theatrical metaphor, Aldo Rossi defined architecture, as «the fixed stage for human events» (Rossi 1982 p. 22) and Lefebvre was trying to cast a light on what was happening – and also on what should happen – on that stage. Was it the *spectacle* of production, or the *oeuvre* of the *fête*?

The cited Aldo Rossi was undoubtedly another main inspiration for this research: his questioning about the role and nature of the monument in connection to the rite, the category of permanence, and even the tension between his two main works, *The Architecture of the City* and his *Scientific Autobiography*, condense and polarize almost the entire debate about urban theory and architecture in Italy which still, for cultural and historical reasons, keeps a certain impact on a global level.

The Italian city was and still is a model of liveability and equilibrium all over the world; not only in the western world, not only in the northern hemisphere. In no other country and in no other tradition the terms of art and city are so constantly and deeply related.

Even if the urban culture and the city life of Italian cities today have lost most of their special character, their shape, architecture, and the huge documentation that we own continue to question us about the fact that economic efficiency, security, and military defence are or not sufficient to explain why and how we congregate to live in the city and give shape to the urban landscape.

Nevertheless, when we decided to send our message for the art not to be completely forgotten in the writing of the New Urban Agenda, it appeared beautiful and right and almost necessary for this message to rise from Europe and the Mediterranean, and especially from Italy.

1 Part I

1.1 To Dance About Architecture / Specificity Vs Specialization

There is a funny quote attributed from time to time to Frank Zappa, Elvis Costello, Laurie Anderson, and many others, which says that to «write about music is like to dance about architecture».

It seems this quote is so old no one knows exactly where it comes from.¹² Nevertheless, it is common sense believing that different languages or media imply or are defined by the fact of not being freely interchangeable, and this is certainly true, even when those different languages or media do refer to the same object or operate in contiguous semantic spaces.

Yet this does not mean that is not possible to “dance about architecture,” and a huge point in my research is to show that is not only possible, but that people has always done it, as well as they speak, and write, about music, and have always done it.

If this statement were true, one consequence would be strengthening the disciplinary boundaries, when it is indeed necessary to do the opposite: to constantly cross these barriers and go against specialization.

The trick of the quote above, which made it seem to work, is that both music and architecture are languages, and languages are notoriously the most slippery objects to speak about, even with language itself. In order to treat a language as an object, we shall need metalanguage, but it does not mean that the real languages cannot interoperate. That is exactly what happens with the “writing about music” as a critical discourse that will eventually feed back on the social system on which both the writing and the music are based. In any case, being either metalanguage or a social system, at third element is needed to make two languages interoperate. But this third element generated by the overlapping of the two languages will indicate our real object of analysis.

¹² It seems that its first appearance in print is attributed to actor and musician Martin Mull in 1979, but there are other very close versions of this remark that can be traced back to

In this sense, interdisciplinarity is the way to come to specificity of the object. To say it differently, the very language of the object showed emerge from the crossing of the disciplinary languages on that point. With all the difficulties and ambiguities that a process like this will entail. Nevertheless, no research method is risk-free if it attempts to be productive, and it challenges the paradigm from which it originates.

I would like to call it a Lefebvrian method.

We know how hostile Lefebvre was to the idea of specialization.

«[...] given Lefebvre’s own well-grounded suspicion of specialization, a Lefebvrian method is not a method for specialists. Instead, as we will see, it is a method for returning intellectual specializations to the totality from which they have been extracted by a certain conception of knowledge [...]». (Fraser 2015 p. 4).

There was also an ideological reason for this: namely the general opposition to the idea of division of labour, that comes from the Marxist tradition. This instance is at the origin of the call for the use of philosophy as a vision of the totality. For sure, it is a philosophical method, but Lefebvre himself was not satisfied, realising that philosophy was just one of the discourses which can overlap with others. This is also the reason why he envisaged the program of his *Metaphylosophy* (Lefebvre 2016).

But talking about urban facts, there is another order of reasons to avoid specialization, a reason certainly tied to those stated above, which yet appears to be more practical and acceptable, regardless of our ideological positioning.

Those reasons are related to the *Specificity of the City*, as it is defined by Lefebvre in chapter 7 of the canonical *Right to the City*.

Until recently, theoretical thinking conceived the city as an entity, as an organism and a whole among others, and this in the best of cases when it was not being reduced to a partial phenomenon, to a secondary, elementary or accidental aspect, of evolution

1918. A huge research work on that topic has been published by Garson O’Toole on the website <https://quoteinvestigator.com/> (O’Toole 2010)

and history. One would thus see in it a simple result, a local effect reflecting purely and simply general history (Lefebvre 1996 p. 101)

Those conceptions «were ideologies rather than concepts and theories, » Lefebvre denounces, and for this reason they failed to grasp the urban specificity. If it is true that the city is in relation with society as a whole and with her own physical constitutive elements, as well as with economy and institutions, indeed «the city's transformations are not the passive outcomes of changes in the social whole, » because the urban site is also the place of «direct relations» and «immediacy, » and so

It is situated at an interface, halfway between what is called the *near order* (relation of individuals in groups of variable size, more or less organized and structured and the relations of these groups among themselves), and the *far order*, that of society, regulated by large and powerful institutions (Church and State), by a legal code formalized or not, by a 'culture' and significant ensembles endowed with powers, by which the far order projects itself at this 'higher' level and imposes itself.

Thus, it is always the liminal nature of the city, its "interface" position, which defines their specificity as the connecting point of two discourses, one too general and the other too fragmented.

From an ideologically different, and almost opposite, direction, we find a confirmation in the words of Jane Jacobs says, when at the end of *Death and Life of Great American Cities* she tries to define *The kind of problem a city is*, presenting her theory about *organized complexity*.

City processes in real life are too complex to be routine, too particularized for application as abstractions. They are always made up of interactions among unique combinations of particulars, and there is no substitute for knowing the particulars. (Jacobs 1961 p. 441)

The "particulars" corresponds to what Lefebvre called the "near order," while the "abstractions" do not correspond exactly to the "far order," due to the different political and philosophical vision of the two thinkers. Jane Jacobs, interested only in *theories about* the city, could not conceive the role of knowledge as organic to the disciplinary power, and so she could envision a situation where these abstractions are *not* applied,

while for Lefebvre that might only be possible after some social revolution. There is one more difference: while in her careful attention to the *place* Jane Jacobs's focus of was about the uniqueness of every urban situation, Lefebvre was far more interested in the general regularities also present in the "near order" as they emerge in the intersection with the "far order."

I would rather not choose between these two approaches, and here I intend *specificity* not only as the particular socio-historical conditions of a time-place marking an experience as unique, but also as the opportunity of defining the object of research through interdisciplinarity.

I will then find and focus our object at the intersection of the different perspectives of different authors in different discourses or different fields of analysis.

Therefore, for each of our proposed interpretation paths, we should try to give a starting point, and make them converge to our point of interest. Our "object" will then be our point of perspective, our *vanishing point*.

If all of that sounds too abstract, to go back to *Spaceship Earth*, perhaps no one has expressed that concern in a simpler and sounder way than Buckminster Fuller in his 1969 *Operating Manual*:

Of course, our failures are a consequence of many factors, but possibly one of the most important is the fact that society operates on the theory that specialization is the key to success, not realizing that specialization precludes comprehensive thinking. (Buckminster Fuller 2008)

In our case, we add another specificity to specificity: the specificity of the work of art is added to that of the city. And the two, as we have seen, are kind of related.

1.1.1 Discipline and/or Authority

The problem with interdisciplinary research, however, is that it must confide in a sort of principle of authority. Not being able to dominate all the disciplines, not even a portion of them, we need to refer to the research work carried out by the relevant experts, published under the control of institutions dedicated to

the scientific method or in publications which have had their autonomous spread and impact (as often happens in the case of philosophy).

At a meeting of urban planners in Prague (a collateral meeting of the European Regional Meeting in preparation for the global Habitat III Conference), during the preliminary stages of the work of a group of academics committed to contributing to the New Urban Agenda, I heard an American scholar inviting «to consider and include both fact-based and interdisciplinary research. » He was thus implying that interdisciplinary research is not fact-based. While acknowledging my work rather falls within the second, I found that distinction interesting and even correct, but needing some other clarification. Inter-disciplinary research is also based on something, mostly on other research, which is either fact-based or interdisciplinary. And in any case, is it not possible to consider that other research as fact? But the status of *fact* is what should probably be (and indeed it was, many times) put into question. Are we considering its *truth*, or are we considering its *history*? Is it possible to separate it from its perception, its interpretation, and communication? This is an old philosophical question, and our answer depends on our philosophical believing.

In a way, multidisciplinary research would somehow plunge into an old mistake which we considered outdated: that of the principle of authority.

The end of the principle of authority is indeed the «emergence from immaturity» to which Kant refers to in *What Is Enlightenment* «Enlightenment is man's emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one understanding without guidance from another. »

This argument is normally referred to the predominance of science over the dictates of religion. But in order to be able to discard the principle of authority and allow independent investigation, science had to adopt the principle of reproducibility, which is very hard to achieve in human sciences. The very idea of “place” as it is used in urban studies denies this possibility. What is true here *could* also be true there, but it is certainly *different*.

The same conditions are found at the particular intersection - even spatiotemporal - which in some parts is

never reproducible, and the very “controlled conditions” of science become an abstraction, as is evident in disciplines such as urban planning or geography.

However, this is not a “problem” affecting multidisciplinary research only, but science itself has increasingly opened up a question of reproducibility.

This is also a question of specificity, which today reaches other scales: less and less often scientific experiments are “reproducible” - because they increase their specificity - and the outcomes appear only in certain very particular conditions. It is therefore not just a problem of so-called “p-hacking”. (Carroll 2017)

Not to mention the principle of authority systematised by academia and by the publishers of scientific journals, p-hacking and other procedures of manipulating scientific results have indeed rather material causes, and should be object of socio-economical, epistemological, philosophical, interdisciplinary research, in order to protect us from the perils of “fact-based” research.

1.1.2 Philosophy and Totality

One thing that we do not lack are the defences of the prerogatives of philosophy. They are probably the most diffused philosophers' exercises, and mine will try not to be the next. If we consider philosophy as a practice, trying to justify it would be the same as declaring its scarce usefulness; if we consider it as a discipline, it should not just result in the effort of its own definition. In any case, after Foucault, the word *discipline* should also be regarded a suspicious.

The most renowned of Foucault's friends, Gilles Deleuze, once said (“La philosophie selon Gilles Deleuze” 1989) that philosophy is *about inventing new concepts*, so that it can be considered as a creative activity. Creating new concepts, he specified, when there is some necessity for them. As for a good movie, as for good art, there must be some need for a new meaningful concept to be produced; and not any kind of reflection is philosophy, unless the task of creating – or fabricating, adopting Deleuze's expression – new concepts is undertaken. Unfortunately, it is not possible to prove the necessity of a concept with certainty.

This vision of philosophy as a creative practice is also sound because it can be referred both to analytic and to the so-called continental philosophy, even if it is more likely to be recognised by the latter. Philosophy practised and written in French and Italian language is especially more often connected to creativity and arts, because it is far more likely to refer directly to, and to adopt expressions from, poetry, literature, cinema, and architecture. As for philosophy conceived in English language, vastly dominated by the analytic approach, there are meaningful exceptions: the history of ideas, some oases of critical theory and, recently, a number of authors moving at the borders of philosophy and cultural studies, who accept the troubles of using a less conventionalised and more “evocative,” or adventurous, language.

Many of these authors are, notably, women, who also try to escape and criticise the dominant discourse of academia with their choices of language and argumentation strategies. Not surprisingly, many of their reflections also happen to cross the paths of performance and theatre studies, marking a common ground between the (leftist) social critique and the re-assertion of the centrality of the body.

Judith Butler still leads the pack, with the merit of introducing innovative ideas of performativity, body, and gender. Representing a new generation of scholars, Elizabeth Grosz nowadays explores the relation of body with territorialisation, and works to define a philosophy or ontology of the arts on a Deleuzian basis, stating that «Art and science are not alternatives to each other» and that «art, science, and philosophy are three relatively autonomous ways to approach chaos.» (Grosz 2008).

Her notable predecessor Susanne K. Langer already stated in her 1942 book *Philosophy in a New Key: a Study in the Symbolism of Reason, Rite, and Art*:

The universality of the great key-change in our thinking is shown by the fact that its tonic chord could ring true for a mind essentially preoccupied with logic, scientific language, and empirical fact, although that chord was actually first sounded by thinkers of a very different school. Logic and science had indeed prepared the harmony for it, unwittingly; for the study of mathematical “transformations” and “projections,” the construction of alternative descriptive systems, etc., had raised the issue of symbolic modes and

of the variable relationship of form and content. But the people who recognized the importance of expressive forms for all human understanding were those who saw that not only science, but myth, analogy, metaphorical thinking, and art are intellectual activities determined by “symbolic modes”; and those people were for the most part of the idealist school. (Langer 1948)

It is certainly unfair to give such a dominant role to the idealistic tradition only, but it is clear what the author is referring to (we should perhaps call it the “Platonic” tradition) and what her intentions are.

We need not assume the presence of a transcendental “human spirit,” if we recognize, for instance, the function of symbolic transformation as a natural activity, a high form of nervous response, characteristic of man among the animals. The study of symbol and meaning is a starting-point of philosophy, not a derivative from Cartesian, Humean, or Kantian premises. (Langer 1948)

Langer’s book is dedicated «to Alfred North Whitehead, my great teacher and friend.» Whitehead, who should be acknowledged as having a certain influence, direct or indirect, on most of the Anglo-American philosophers (e.g., his doctrine of *particulars* could have indirectly influenced the cited idea of Organised Complexity by Jane Jacobs, although no studies exist on this issue), tried to reconcile science and philosophy throughout his life.

The study of philosophy is a voyage towards the larger generalities. For this reason in the infancy of science, when the main stress lay in the discovery of the most general ideas usefully applicable to the subject matter in question, philosophy was not sharply distinguished from science. To this day, a new science with any substantial novelty in its notions is considered to be in some way peculiarly philosophical. In their later stages, apart from occasional disturbances, most sciences accept without question the general notions in terms of which they develop. (Whitehead 1978 p. 10)

That idea of “larger generalities,” which allows to accommodate science with particular and local knowledges, or *fragmentary sciences*, is the same that Lefebvre proposes in *Right to the City*.

The purpose is not to present a philosophy of the city, but on the contrary, to refute such an approach by giving back to the whole of philosophy its place in history: that of a project of synthesis

and totality which philosophy as such cannot accomplish. (Lefebvre 1996 p. 86)

Philosophy as such should be intended as: under the present situation, when philosophy is losing its aspiration to totality. But, here is the interesting point, the existence of philosophy as a separate activity should be seen as the result of the technical division of labour which is realized *in the city*.

For philosophical meditation aiming at a totality through speculative systematization, that is, classical philosophy from Plato to Hegel, the city was much more than a secondary theme, an object among others. The links between philosophical thought and urban life appear clearly upon reflection, although they need to be made explicit. (Lefebvre 1996 p. 86)

But the division of labour is rooted in spatial practices, starting from the separation between town and country: «The social division of labour between town and country corresponds to the separation between material and intellectual labour, and consequently, between the natural and the spiritual. » (Lefebvre 1996 p. 87) And this is the kind of contribution we should praise in Lefebvre's philosophy, in his interpretation of materialism always bringing back any idea *down to earth*, where the relationships of power are realized.

But the philosopher and philosophy attempt to reclaim or create totality. The philosopher does not acknowledge separation, he does not conceive that the world, life, society, the cosmos (and later, history) can no longer make a Whole.

Philosophy is thus born from the city, with its division of labour and multiple modalities. It becomes itself a specialized activity in its own right. But it does not become fragmentary, for otherwise it would blend with science and the sciences, themselves in a process of emerging. (Lefebvre 1996 p. 88)

The activity of the philosophers in the city is reconnecting to the mythical past of what was before separation. Following the lesson of his mentor Heidegger, the traces of this mythical origin of separation(s) are prevalently found in language, as in the examples of the words offering an (apparently) double meaning mentioned earlier. These words can be considered as

markers of separations, of stems. Fortunately, the activity of investigation (and collecting) is not limited to verbal language.

The oeuvre of the city continues and is focused in the work of philosophers, who gather opinions and viewpoints, various oeuvres, and think them simultaneously and collect differences into a totality: urban places in the cosmos, times and rhythms of the city and that of the world (and inversely)

The reference to Heidegger with which Lefebvre culminates (and which probably originates) his argument is interesting because the same argument of logos as gathering and harvesting being «in itself a choice of what needs a shelter» is the argument Heidegger uses about *dwelling* when discussing about art and space, that is, in his case, about sculpture.

Sculpture would be the embodiment of places, opening a region and preserving it [sie verwahrend], holding a free area gathered around it which affords [gewährt] a tarrying to the respective things and a dwelling to the humans in the midst of things (M. Heidegger, *Art and Space*, cited in: Mitchell 2010 p. 83)

But really, enough with Heidegger.

As I anticipated in the introduction, there is also the necessity to summon the forces of both analytical and “continental” philosophy for the purpose, which is indeed an unusual task.

Following a simple but meaningful definition given by Michel Foucault in a series of lectures at Berkely University in 1983,¹³ philosophers today are divided not by the different conceptual tools they use, which are the most evident exterior mark of the distance between the two “schools” of the so-called “analytical” and “continental” philosophers. This difference of tools, corresponding to different languages, is also what too often prevents communication between the two. But the main difference seems to be in the object of their philosophical analysis, on in the questions which they try to answer. In the case of analytic philosophy, which Foucault refers to as “formal ontology of truth” or “critical analysis of knowledge,” hence including also epistemology, the questions are: «what is truth, how is it possible to know the truth. » That,

¹³ *Lecture* took place on 12 April 1983. It is available online, in five parts: (SocioPhilosophy n.d.)

Foucault continues, «is the power of philosophy as formal ontology of truth or as critical analysis of knowledge. » Coming to “continental philosophy,” which obviously he never mentions under that name, he states: «at the other pole you find such questions as what is our actuality (he uses the French term *actualité*), what are we as part of this *actualité*, what is the target of our activity of philosophising insofar as we are part of our *actualité*. » Foucault defines this kind of approach as «historical ontology of ourselves» or as «critical history of thought. »

The search for the truth is probably the oldest philosophical questions of all, but soon after we have the quest for the present and presence, history, that is the historical condition of the subject, his nature, society and politics. It is easy to understand how he is positioning himself between the two.

Comprehending these two quests together would be to acknowledge that a programme of the philosophical enterprise today should be to seek the truth and continuously unmask its contingent nature¹⁴.

So, for example when we too often refer to experimental science to confirm our arguments – and I will also do it in the course of this dissertation – we should always remember that science questions and paradigms are derived from questions, paradigms, *discursive orders*, and in the end from an idea of subject and object and of society, from an idea of science itself derived from philosophy or which can be clarified by philosophy.

When we happen to find confirmations of philosophical ideas which are emerging in the debate, as we will see later with the case of neuro-biology and neuroaesthetics, we ought to know that these scientific findings are the *sign* of the fact that a change of paradigm is already happening and, in my specific case, also of the idea of subject, or to better say it, the sign of a political conflict rising around the idea of subject. We should try then not only to take that conflict into

account, but also support it, and try to push it toward the most productive direction.

Finally, both methodologies, the idealistic one – to use Langer’s definition – and the “fact based” one, have been present in the western philosophical tradition since the beginning. And so they have been in the very beginning of the “urban studies,” a central topic of Greek philosophers: while Plato wrote of an ideal *Republic*, Aristotle collected the actual constitutions of Greek cities. Aristotle’s methodology was so much better that he was bound to become the undisputed *authority*.

In the middle ages *Ipse dixit* was the formula scholars used to indicate him. Tomas of Aquinas was made a saint for basically transposing Aristotle’s doctrine into religious terms.

The «emergence from immaturity» of the enlightenment was, then, also the rise against the first champion of *fact based research*.

Indeed, while asserting that «All human discourse which bases its claim to consideration on the truth of its statements must appeal to the facts, » the cited Whitehead conceded that

in the case of philosophy the difficulty arises that the record of the facts is in part dispersed vaguely through the various linguistic expressions of civilized language and of literature, and is in part expressed more precisely under the influence of schemes of thought prevalent in the traditions of science and philosophy.

Mentioning the «prevalent schemes of thought» and the traditions of science as well, he then surrendered to the necessity of some kind of *history of ideas* to come back to the *recorded facts* or, at least, to the necessity of that *tradition*. Then, in the same page he famously stated that «The safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato. » (Whitehead 1978 p. 39)

¹⁴ That is also the research program of the *Critical History of Ideas*, a group of scholars, gathered around an academic journal *Giornale Critico di Storia delle Idee*. (*Critical Journal of History of Ideas*), is working to define and improve. The journal is edited by the universities of Sassari and Milano San Raffaele and I am proud to be part of its editorial board.

The most comprehensive article about research program is the thematic issue *Che cos'è la storia critica delle idee* (n.8 2013), for example (Ghisu 2013). The journal also regularly hosts methodological contributions to question its paradigm and to rise the debate. Most materials are available online at <http://www.giornalecritico.it>

The loss of the principle of authority seems to coincide with the loss of the possibility of *experience* as something that can be transmitted (Walter Benjamin's *Erfahrung* (see Agamben 1993)).

But if this is true for the experience of language, some other recorded experience secretly survived, and may be possibly recovered. The experience of theatre, of dance, of oral tradition which can be transmitted only as an *experience*.

1.1.3 On Derrida's Corpse: Archi-scripture and Archi-itecture

Since we are talking about theatre, and about a peculiar form of experience, about theatre as a form of transmission of experience which should be favoured, we cannot move forward without considering the greatest critic of the *metaphysics of presence*: Jacques Derrida.

Trying to even give a partial account of Derrida's work here is out of the question. What we can point out is how, at the intersection of ideas from which we are moving, the French author can be more an ally than an opponent. Moreover, by crossing these ideas of theatre, of architecture, of presence, we can also better understand the conceptual tools of *archi-writing* and *trace* which he has introduced.

In his *Philosophy for Architects*, when confronting architecture in relation with deconstructionism, Branko Mitrovic points to the relation between speaking and writing as one of its issues, which, in his opinion «ultimately leaves no space for drawing»

On the one hand, if one were to drop the assumption that all thinking is verbal/conceptual, then Derrida's analysis of arche-writing, and with it the rejection of the metaphysics of presence, would become meaningless. (Mitrovic 2011 p. 163)

while acknowledging the importance of thought and deconstructionist practice in architecture:

Deconstruction can thus provide, and it did provide, an important source of inspiration to a generation of architects, but it would be unreasonable to expect to find in it the philosophical basis of a coherent account of architectural practice in more general terms. (p. 164)

If concerns about function, scale, and context are to be rejected, because they stand for the metaphysics of presence, aesthetic qualities are relative, and it is engineers who worry about the structure of buildings, then it becomes unclear what architects actually do. (p. 164)

Concluding that

Architectural education from this point of view was no more than a process of enculturation, in which students learn to behave, dress, and talk in a way that is considered culturally acceptable for architects-and this position did have a substantial following among architectural educators during the 1990s. (p. 164)

When talking about theatre in relation with the forms of the city and therefore also to architecture, this *rejection of the metaphysics of presence* seems the first question to which we have to reckon.

After all, what is the exaltation of theatre if not the exaltation of this metaphysical idea? Derrida's critique cannot be sidestepped, but the solution he proposed – and which we need to take into account – seems to be going in a different direction from the one suggested by Mitrovic. On the contrary, it seems that starting from the critique of the *metaphysics of presence* – considering its theatrical aspect – it is possible to understand the concept of *archi-writing* in relation to that of *architecture* in a different way.

First of all, it is remarkable that Mitrovic does not perform, as no one else does, the operation of bringing the two terms together. The wording used is indicative: *arche-scripture* to translate the French *archi-écriture*, underlining the aspects of writing as principle (*arché*) instead of writing as architecture.

Although Derrida in *De la grammatologie* explicitly states that he wants to go «au-delà de ces considérations formelles et architectoniques» (Derrida 1967 p. 75) – perhaps intending by this going beyond structuralism – it could be argued that voice and writing are in the same relationship as event and form, and in this relationship, at least in this similarity, they are in the same relationship as dance (and theatre) and architecture.

The critique of the *metaphysics of presence* is directed to the privilege conferred on one of these aspects due to the illusion of unitary metaphysical grounds.

The archi-writing is in relation to the *differance* in its

sense of deferral, that is to say, in the sense of the passage of time and survival, that is, permanence.

I believe that the argument between performance in a city, i. e. the relationship between the movement and the shape of the city and of its monuments, streets and houses, should be understood in this sense.

Salingaros, who is a critic of Derrida and of his influence in architecture, is not far from this conception in his idea of the *Information Field* (Salingaros 1999) of urban space. The main difference is the idea of the point of view as a prerogative of the subject – not even as a foundation of the subject - while Derrida's reflections are upstream of any definition of *information field* as well as of any definition of subject. However, this does not appear to be a nihilistic perspective, but rather a historical-critical one.

Mitrović's question about all thinking being verbal/conceptual in Derrida's consideration is non-resolutive. A single word in Derrida's system would be as abstract as a single line in drawing. The meaning is built only in relation to other *traces*, but that is also true for architecture and drawing. However, saying that "all thinking is meaningful" for Derrida would be a much weaker argument...

The structuralist lesson remains in Derrida's anti-structuralism, in the fact that even here there are only differences «sans termes positifs» and it is man who sets the first difference, that is, he builds it.

One of Derrida's merits was precisely that of making the post-structuralist perspective dynamic, showing how the paradigms of thought evolve even in the absence of revolutions.

The constellations of ideas become constellations of *traces* which form their intricate mosaics in historical moments that are photographed in the act of narration or *performance*. The traces are visible elements of the archi-writing. However, this is a somewhat blurry photograph.

¹⁵ Besides *La parole soufflée*, Artaud is the dedicatee of Derrida's *Le théâtre de la cruauté et la clôture de la représentation* (The Theater of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation, originally a lecture of 1966, also including *Writing and Difference*) and *Forcener le subjectile*, included in a book by Paule Thévenin containing unpublished drawings

Rather, we need to wonder what leads him to assert the privilege of presence and voice in the Western tradition, and to condemn it.

Wanting to use Derrida's method against itself, one would have to wonder what leads him to seek a strong opponent only to feel part of a "community of the oppressed," some fringe and losing tradition. Not a very original strategy for a philosopher.

Derrida's work on Antonin Artaud,¹⁵ instead, suggests that it was the theatre itself to arouse this reflection. In a 1965 text on Artaud, *La parole soufflée*, the word trace is used like this: «The error is Artaud's history, his erased trace on the way to truth. » (Derrida 2005 p. 214)

So it is starting from the author who rebelled against the text that Derrida rebelled against the *metaphysics of presence*. As metaphysics which ultimately makes the text itself absolute.

when we appear to regret a silence or defeat before the unique, it is because we believe in the necessity of reducing the unique, of analyzing it and decomposing it by shattering it even further. Better: we believe that no commentary can escape these defeats (Derrida 2005 p. 218)

The critique of the metaphysics of presence does not disassemble the whole building, but rather reveals its temporary character. The permanence of writing is therefore not opposed to the ephemeral, but to eternal. Derrida considers the world much more like a theatre than a book (which he in fact identifies as the opposite of writing).

Thus, it is not about ancient writing but writing as construction, in which the elements support each other for a certain time. Nothing too different from a *structuralist* structure, but constantly moving and with deferred localizations, so that it is no longer possible to identify the breaking lines. The possibility of revolution is cancelled.

But something of the revolutionary charge of the structuralists has remained. Starting from his works,

by Artaud (Artaud, *Dessins et portraits*, 1986, English edition (Derrida & Thévenin 1998)). The last work on the subject was *Artaud le Môme*, a lecture held at the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1996, published in French in 2002 and now also available in English thanks to the Columbia University Press (Derrida 2017).

it is in fact possible to devise a theory of non-capitalisable value.

If «an unerasable trace is not a trace,» (Derrida 2005 p. 289) then the permanence is opposed not so much to the ephemeral as to the eternal. The permanence is such because it is something which does not last.

1.1.4 The Presence of the Voice

I have spoken both of “sound” and “voice.” I mean to say that the sound was one of distinct, of even wonderfully, thrillingly distinct, syllabification. M Valdemar *spoke*, obviously in reply to the question... He now said:

“yes; -no;-I have been sleeping-and now-now-I am dead” (Derrida 2011)

This quote from Edgar Allan Poe’s *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar* opens Derrida’s *Voice and Phenomenon*.

In the French original the text is cited as “Histoires extraordinaires”, without any author’s name, referring to Baudelaire’s classic translation.

The same text is quoted in Nancy’s *La communauté désoeuvrée*, completing the process of the *French* appropriation and apparently mistaking it for a similar novel by Villiers de l’Isle-Adam (and wrongly spelling the name as Waldemar):

The phantasm of this metaphysics, the phantasm that Descartes (almost) did not dare have but that was already proposed in Christian theology, is the phantasm of a dead man who says, Villiers’ Monsieur Waldemar, “I am dead”-*ego sum... mortuus* If the *I* cannot say that it is dead, if the *I* disappears in effect in *its* death, in that death that is precisely what is most proper to it and most inalienably its own, it is because the *I* is something other than a subject.

All of Heidegger’s research into “being-for (or toward)-death” was nothing other than an attempt to state this: *I* is not-am not- a subject. (Nancy 1991 p. 14)

(But again, *enough with Heidegger!*)

Nevertheless, this sentence has been said so many times in theatre plays. Shakespeare placing his ghost behind the curtain – which can be considered as a metaphor of the theatre *apparat* – reveals the theatrical nature of the ghost, that is always faking it.

Still we can trust and follow Nancy in his solution. If I cannot speak my death, Nancy noted, what is

properly mine is away, and I am not a subject. *Writing* here plays the part of the voice of the impossible. What would be impossible to say – I am dead – in writing becomes possible and can be shown on stage. We can trust Nancy: by means of the technique, Valdemar *becomes* a subject.

Remarkably, Poe’s M. Valdemar, the dead man talking, is the *subject* of an experiment of human magnetism, he is *mesmerized*, and consequently, for a certain time, he is not able to perceive his own death, delayed by technique. If we should trust Nancy, that is the technique of the production of the subject.

One’s own death is the only thing the voice cannot speak, and Agamben himself puts language and death in an ineliminable relationship.

Acknowledging the importance of the work of Derrida while criticising it. For Agamben the question relates to the relationship of the voice with the language, more than of the voice with the *gramma* (the articulation of the writing).

This means that, from the beginning, Western reflections on language locate the *gramma* and not the voice in the originary place. In fact, as a sign the *gramma* presupposes both the voice and its removal, but as an element, it has the structure of a purely negative self-affection, of a trace of itself. Philosophy responds to the question, “What is in the voice?” as follows: Nothing is in the voice, the voice is the place of the negative, it is Voice—that is, pure temporality. But this negativity is *gramma*, that is, the *arthron* that articulates voice and language and thus discloses being and meaning. From this point of view it is possible to measure the acuteness of Derrida’s critique of the metaphysical tradition and also the distance that remains to be covered. (Agamben 2006 p. 38)

If this is the type of permanence which writing allows one to experience, then it is again quite probable that Derrida’s *archi-writing* has more to do with *archi-architecture* than with archaeology.

So, we should grant that the perfect legitimacy of such a sentence during theatrical performance – or which rather, with its very being pronounced, presupposes a theatrical act – is also the guarantee that behind every play there is always a text, even when we suppose that there is not. And this text is written with the characters of the *archi-writing*.

If on the point of view there is the spectator, on the vanishing point there is the spectre.

1.2 Beyond Economy: A City Open for Art

The idea that urban art can be a powerful driver for change, for social integration, and economic development is not new. Much less popular is the idea that street theatre or urban performing arts can have the same functions. In general, when we speak of urban arts we refer to visual arts, and sometimes to architecture.

When also noted that «there is something in the nature of urban artifacts that renders them very similar – and not only metaphorically – to a work of art» (Rossi 1982 p. 32), he gave us also a further key for deciphering that relation.

The question of the city as a work of art, however, presents itself explicitly and scientifically above all in relation to the conception of the nature of collective artifacts, and I maintain that no urban research can ignore this aspect of the problem. How are collective urban artifacts related to works of art? All great manifestations of social life have in common with the work of art the fact that they are born in unconscious life. This life is collective in the former, individual in the latter; but this is only a secondary difference because one is a product of the public and the other is for the public: the public provides the common denominator. (Rossi 1982 p. 33)

If the public art, and the public space, are all about public, there is no reason for not including performing arts, which derive their very existence from the presence of the public/audience.

Furthermore, from relational to participatory act, the “individual” life of the work of art has long been put into question (and so has the meaning of that “unconscious life”).

1.2.1 The rise and fall of the Rise of the Creative Class (revisited)

After the great influence of Richard Florida’s work about the *Creative Class* (Florida 2004, 2005), and Charles Landry’s works about the *Art of City Making* (2006) and the *Creative Cities* (2008), the studies about culture-based urban regeneration processes have mostly considered the economic aspects, the

creative industries, and the ancillary activities, not focusing on what happens to the daily lives of the inhabitants of the affected areas, and, above all, what perspectives their future can bring.

But since those processes are showing their limitations nowadays, also as a result of the consequences of the economic crisis that shook the western economies in 2008 (aka the Great Recession), now even «Richard Florida Is Sorry,» as Sam Wetherell wrote on the Jacobin Magazine website (Wetherell 2017) reviewing Florida’s last work, *The New Urban Crisis* (2017), in which the author recognizes that many “urban regeneration” policies which were also inspired by his work have resulted in greater inequality. Florida acknowledges how, nowadays, the appeal to consider culture in the urban regeneration processes finds detractors in both the right and left: the right claims that public money should not fund artistic activities, which are considered fanciful; the left considers the improperly called “urban regeneration” processes encouraging the establishment of the so-called “creative class” in underutilized areas, especially historical centers and abandoned industrial suburbs, a cause of gentrification.

Both the conventional wisdom and economic research tell us that people do better economically in large, dense, knowledge-based cities where they earn higher wages and salaries. But when a colleague and I looked into how the members of each of the three different classes fared after paying for housing, we uncovered a startling and disturbing pattern: The advantaged knowledge workers, professionals, and media and cultural workers who made up the creative class were doing fine; their wages were not only higher in big, dense, high-tech metros, but they made more than enough to cover the costs of more expensive housing in these places. But the members of the two less advantaged classes—blue-collar workers and service workers—were sinking further behind; they actually ended up worse off in large, expensive cities and metro areas after paying for their housing. (Florida 2017)

Rise in housing prices being only one part of the problem:

In time, my work generated a considerable following among mayors, arts and cultural leaders, urbanists, and even some enlightened real estate developers who were looking for a better way to spur urban development in their communities. But my message also generated a backlash on

both sides of the ideological spectrum. Some conservatives questioned the connection I drew between diversity and urban economic growth, countering that it was companies and jobs, not the creative class, that moved the economy forward. Others, mainly on the left, blamed the creative class and me personally for everything from rising rents and gentrification to the growing gap between the rich and the poor. (Florida 2017)

In fact, the right is concealing the (ancient and well-founded) fear that culture funding generally fosters its political counterpart, since most artists, not only in urban backgrounds, express explicit and militant political positions, which is even more evident in the field of theater and performing arts. For this reason, criticizing culture funding as “politically directed,” actually means “directed toward our opponents.” The political left, instead, blames the creative class for global dynamics rooted in the financial markets that increases the phenomenon of *expulsion*, not only in urban areas. (see Sassen 2014).

Florida’s merit was indeed to translate different – also cultural – needs into economically attractive terms, providing scientific coverage to processes that sometimes proved to be deserving.

Depending on the levels of participation it can generate, in fact, creative industry can have very different consequences, and after a decade of impasse this aspect continues to be seriously studied. (Ferilli *et al.* 2016)

From our perspective, it is not surprising that the most successful case study in the cited paper is that of Saint Michel – Montreal. The strategic actor involved in the regeneration process was the *Cirque Du Soleil* which decided to move into the area in 1997 establishing its new international headquarters, the TOHU¹⁶, and the “Cité du Cirque.”

While the authors focus on the participatory strategies as the reasons for the success or lack of success of projects, we would suggest that the nature of the activities is also very important.

On the one hand, however, this does not mean that performance aspects cannot be traced, and even used

as participation tools, in not intrinsically performative activities.

On the other hand, it is also clear that examples from different sociocultural and spatial contexts cannot be compared as a matter of principle, not even with quantitative methods.

Economy, thrown out of the door, comes back from the window: *experience economy* (Pine & Gilmore 1999) is just another expression used to render a kind of intrinsically *qualitative* activity in a way which is more digestible for decision makers.

1.2.2 The “intangible” heritage

When we speak about cultural heritage, we think we should separate, and thus we too often forget to include, the so-called “intangible cultural heritage” – maybe just because of the imperfection of that definition.

Intangible cultural heritage, following the official UNESCO definition (ICH UNESCO website n.d.), is constituted by «oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals, festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe or the knowledge and skills to produce traditional crafts. » A very broad definition indeed, but also considering cultural phenomena which are not, or at least not completely, *intangible*.

If certain forms of knowledge can be considered intangible, oral traditions are definitely tangible, and indeed they *do exist* only if performed. Therefore, they exist since they are perceived by senses (in contrast to what happens to some still undiscovered book or archaeological remains, which may be, conversely, considered as tangible).

If we are supposed to use the very reductive definition of tangible as *touchable*, thus excluding the other senses, then we should definitely include at least dance and theatre, or any performing art involving physical contact. When not performed on a stage, as

environment and community involvement. Since its 2004 inception, it has become an example of sustainable development through culture,» as they proudly state on their website. (“About - Tohu” n.d.)

¹⁶ TOHU is the main structure «Located at the centre of the Cité des arts du cirque, TOHU is a place for dissemination, creation, experimentation and convergence of culture, en-

in the peculiar case of western theatre, performing arts do often include contact. In the *teatro all'italiana*, what is now the space reserved for the audience was in origin, and until not so long ago, a place where spectators would dance.

In urban contexts, again, the spectator's passive role is something that we would like to avoid.

Malcom Miles in his *Art Space and the City* traces a useful distinction between urban development and urban regeneration, also underlining the different role that visual and performing arts can play,

Regeneration means creating sustainable economies, and it includes the means of sociation—a sustainable sense of neighbourhood and 'street life'. One of the roles assigned to visual art is to give the impression of the difference, whilst in actuality having a negligible input to the local economy and lacking the capacity of the performing arts to engender sociation. (Miles 1997 p. 67)

Now we have then to face a double challenge. First, we need to recognize a role to the arts in the construction of urban life; second, we need to seek integration and recognition of the specific role of performing arts in the urban context.

New possibilities for allowing the arts to change and improve urban life can be experimented and even made possible only by introducing urban performing arts into the definition of urban arts in the first place, but most likely, considering all arts *in terms of performance*¹⁷, as proposed by philosopher Dave Davies's groundbreaking work (Davies 2004, 2011).

1.2.3 Bringing the Arts into the New Urban Agenda

[ATLAS: 2.80]

With reference to the first of these tasks, I would like to focus on the outcomes of an initiative organized by the Department of Architecture, Design and Urban

¹⁷ *In Terms of Performance* is a project and an interactive publication. A «keywords anthology designed to provoke discovery across artistic disciplines,» realized by the Arts Research Center at University of California, Berkeley, and the

Planning of the University of Sassari and partners in 2016.

2016 has been an important year for the future of our cities or, at least, it still has to become one, though the impact of what happened is still to be verified. In October 2016, the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, the so-called Habitat III, was held in Quito, Ecuador. Habitat conferences are held every 20 years: the first took place in Vancouver in 1976, the second in Istanbul in 1996, and the third and last one in Quito ("What's the History of the Habitat Process? | Citiscope" n.d.).

The final outcome of that meeting was a document, called the "New Urban Agenda," aimed at defining the shared goals and at shaping the evolution of the cities for the next twenty years.

The usefulness of this kind of global, politically conditioned initiatives is controversial among the community of urban planners. What is certain is that an international agreement, although under the aegis of the United Nations, has neither the legal force to shape the local governments legislation, nor the force in itself to change the urban reality.

In any case, it is safe to recognize at least some value to the process: trying to get all the major global actors, with their different paradigms and their agendas, around the same table, in an attempt to reach a common language, if not to build a common "Agenda" for all, is an effort that should be praised as such.

An almost utopic attempt, given the differences between themes, problems, and urban cultures of the cities of Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and again considering the differences between small, medium, big, and global cities.

These are almost worlds apart. Yet the utopia of this attempt is the same as the one on which the United Nations is founded, the democratic dream in which the very process becomes the most important thing. From direct experience, I can testify that this idea is well rooted in the high-level officials who oversee

Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, Philadelphia, available online at <http://intermsofperformance.site> ("In Terms of Performance" n.d.)

these processes. So deeply rooted, that the democratic exercise is seen as a pedagogical exercise (I myself have heard this expression) with regard to the actors involved. According to this approach, once the democratic process prevails and the actors agree to sit around the table, the very content of the documents they sign will somewhat lose its importance. They will have accepted that developing a common language and reaching an agreement is a form of conflict resolution and prevention, and therefore a factor for shared progress. We call them actors and not stakeholders. After all, this exercise has much to do with theatre.¹⁸

It is certainly true, as it was noted, that «what will determine the effectiveness of any New Urban Agenda is whether it is relevant to urban governments and urban dwellers, especially those whose needs are not currently met, and gets their buy-in» (Satterthwaite 2016), but it is also true that the level of engagement will also depend on the methodology adopted for the construction of the document and on the implementation methodology adopted from now on.

Undeniably, the agenda contents also have a certain value *per se*.

In fact, communities often appeal to the general principles recognized by international assemblies when they bring their demands to local and national governments. And therefore, these agreements of the highest level, almost abstract, end up falling back on

the national rules even through traverse and almost bottom-up routes.

A particular story in this sense has been the dispute over the inclusion of the expression “Right to the City” in the New Urban Agenda. Representatives of some governments with a more liberal tradition, particularly the United States of America, opposed the insertion of this expression, which had already found its legal place, or almost, for example, in French¹⁹ or Brazilian²⁰ legislation, because they were concerned that this would lead to claims about the “right to a home,” which sounded fanciful and would still require a debate of different kind and in different locations.

The conclusion, rather poor, was that the expression found its place in the text of the Agenda preamble, called the *Quito Declaration on Sustainable Cities and Human Settlements for All*. Paragraph 11, at the beginning of the section, almost ironically titled *Our Shared Vision*:

We share a vision of cities for all, referring to the equal use and enjoyment of cities and human settlements, seeking to promote inclusivity and ensure that all inhabitants, of present and future generations, without discrimination of any kind, are able to inhabit and produce just, safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements to foster prosperity and quality of life for all. We note the efforts of some national and local governments to enshrine this vision, referred to as “right to the city,” in their legislation, political declarations and charters. (United Nations 2017)

¹⁸ As a part of an ongoing research on the architecture of spaces of political congregation started in 2010, the architecture office XML exhibited ‘Theaters of Democracy’ at the International Architecture Exhibition at the Biennale di Venezia 2014, an installation in which the world’s parliament houses were compared to theater houses. A sort of peep-show was also available to observe panoramic views of the parliament houses from a particular perspective. The research outcome is an interesting book, *Parliament* (XML 2016), with an online extension: <http://parliamentbook.com/>

¹⁹ In France the *Loi d’orientation pour la ville* (Urban Development Act, Loi n° 91-662), also known as the “Anti-ghetto Law,” adopted on 13 July 1991, stated in its opening article, «Afin de mettre en oeuvre le droit à la ville, les communes, les autres collectivités territoriales et leurs groupements, l’Etat et leurs établissements publics assurent à tous les habitants des villes des conditions de vie et d’habitat favorisant la cohésion sociale et de nature à éviter ou à faire disparaître les phénomènes de ségrégation. Cette politique

doit permettre d’insérer chaque quartier dans la ville et d’assurer dans chaque agglomération la coexistence des diverses catégories sociales.» A letter dated 31 July 1991, from the Ministry to its officers, clarified that the opening article—the right to the city—had “no normative nature” (See Gilbert & Dikeç 2008). That article was later abrogated by the Law n° 2014-173 on 21 February 2014, about urban planning and cohesion, which lacks to mention the right to the city, shifting to a very different sounding “national and local solidarity”: «La politique de la ville est une politique de cohésion urbaine et de solidarité, nationale et locale, envers les quartiers défavorisés et leurs habitants.»

²⁰ In Brazil, reference to a “right to the city” was even included in constitutional rules, and it was introduced in 2001 by means of the City Statute (Law 10.257), a federal law based on the Federal Constitution of Brazil aimed at creating a new legal-urban order to provide land access and equity in large urban cities.

Therefore, in the end, the assembly, in search of a shared vision, was not able to do better than acknowledge the efforts of some national governments (this way rewarding the efforts of others), but this very mention should be considered, in this context, a defeat.

The process of building the Habitat III conference and the new urban agenda was certainly long and complex. Officially launched in 2014, it involved a number of United Nations agencies, especially of course UN-Habitat, the Nairobi-based agency on Urban Settlements - which curiously was not "owner" of the Habitat final conference, during which some even asked for its suppression - as well as non-institutional actors, dedicated study groups and, only in the last phase, national governments.

It would be too long to describe this process in general terms and would require a separate work, but it should be acknowledged that the structure has tried to increase the participation base of the process, including preliminary participation in the main mechanism of involvement.

The part of this process which I am interested in remembering here is the Urban Thinkers Campuses, a series of rather open and horizontal discussion forums that were part of the World Urban Campaign of UN-Habitat, a campaign of mobilization and awareness raising aimed at aggregating public and private partners initially around the writing (and rewriting) of a programmatic document called *The City We Need*, to be presented during the Habitat III conference in Quito, and successively through the collection of good practices (called: *Urban Solutions*).

In any case, what we realized was that in the process of building the Agenda, in the months and years of work, there was no reference to art. From the point of view of those who deal with art in relation to urban events, and probably even more so from that rather particular observatory which is Italy, the thing seemed disconcerting to us. We decided to join the World Urban Campaign and to offer our partners a meeting dedicated to the relationship between art and the city, with the purpose of sending our message to Quito.

The organization of this conference was part of my PhD project, on which I spent about a year of almost complete commitment, including preliminary studies, organization, and the actual conference, which took place at the headquarters of our department in Alghero between 18 and 20 February 2016.

The title chosen was *The City We Need: Open for Art*. The first part of the title obviously refers to the title of the main document on which we would have worked from our particular point of view. The second part should have sounded better in English as "open TO art," but it was a kind of word game about "open for business." In fact, we wanted to point out from the outset that all the objectives and points of view presented so far in the process of building the new urban agenda were focused on economy. Topic of which art itself, and urban art, is anything but exempt, but which needs to lose its centrality. Or which, from the periphery of art, it is at least possible to question. We therefore wanted to talk about another kind of openness.

Within each Urban Thinkers Campus there were working groups called "Constituent Groups." The following groups were represented on our Campus: Local and sub-national authorities, Research and Academia, Grassroots organizations, Children and Youth, Business and Industries, and Women.

In addition to these standard subdivisions of the audience used to keep consistent the work of the various Campus, which in this first phase were 26 throughout the world, we proposed to add two groups, particularly significant for the theme in question and our angle of approach: Citizens and New Citizens (aimed to gather all city users: indigenous people, migrants, refugees, expats) and Artists and Art related.

In total, around 120 people from 13 countries participated in the Campus, representing 33 organizations. During the Campus lectures, workshops, performances, concerts, urban actions and art exhibitions were organized.

The Academia group stated that «*Cities Open for Art* means that cities not only perform functions or provide services. Nor are they mere depositories of cultural heritage. Cities, as well as all other settlements, are places where the form of cultural expression we

call “art” is constantly produced and re-produced, » but also that

The concept of “City” defies quantifiable parameters such as population, size, or density. The defining character of “the city” is its ability to create, express, treasure and transmit culture. The city itself is a product and expression of culture over the years. In this sense, all cities are “works of art.”

The local authorities gathered with unexpected enthusiasm around the topic agreeing on the great opportunity of being heard on a global level with their proposal and not just with recriminations.

The artist group also asked for a more active role stating in their final document that «The City We Need must be co-produced by artists to challenge the status quo». The grassroots organizations advocated for a «Right to the center» not only as a generic claim of the need to be central in the decision-making processes, but most significantly as a request for access and use of the physical *center of the city*. And considering what we stated above about gentrification and exclusion as consequences of the contemporary dynamics of land value and property, that request acquires a very meaningful sense.

Whereas the “new citizens” group decided to work together with the “children” group, recognizing the common goal of acquiring citizenship while being already holder of a special kind of *de facto* citizenship.

In our final document sent to the World Urban Campaign organizers, we stated that

Cities neither perform functions or deliver services, nor are they simply depositories of cultural heritage. The City We Need is the place where the art as essence of cultural expression is constantly produced and re-produced.

And that

The City We Need offers all citizens a creative way to design, explore, experiment and experience alternative futures. Art, in its freest form, expresses creative voices, ways of seeing, imagining and producing space; empowers and encourages awareness, learning, achievement, belonging and pride; generates values and inspires people’s critical view on established norms, procedures and practices; art contributes to psychological wellbeing and health; enables people to claim ownership of urban spaces and generate higher values that can be employed in improving the quality of

life and stimulate creative work and a diversified and creative economy; public art embodies the principle of free, equitable and unlimited access to the best that a city can offer to its citizens.

We may have not been alone in bringing a message of this kind into the process of building the Habitat III conference, but we were certainly among the very few.

Did we succeed? Apparently, we had a slight success, although we were struggling with Leviathan. As is evident from the index of the agenda topics, art is present, and so are performing arts.

Although with just one reference each, in the 13,600 words that make up the 175 paragraphs of the two sections of the Agenda (the *Quito Declaration*, which contains the premises and general principles, and the *Quito Implementation Plan for the New Urban Agenda*).

At paragraph 38, we find the only reference to the arts:

We commit ourselves to the sustainable leveraging of natural and cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, in cities and human settlements, as appropriate, through integrated urban and territorial policies and adequate investments at the national, subnational and local levels, to safeguard and promote cultural infrastructures and sites, museums, indigenous cultures and languages, as well as traditional knowledge and the arts, highlighting the role that these play in rehabilitating and revitalizing urban areas and in strengthening social participation and the exercise of citizenship.

At paragraph 60, the reference to the performing arts:

We commit ourselves to sustaining and supporting urban economies to transition progressively to higher productivity through high-value-added sectors, by promoting diversification, technological upgrading, research and innovation, including the creation of quality, decent and productive jobs, including through the promotion of cultural and creative industries, sustainable tourism, performing arts and heritage conservation activities, among others.

The call to the economy as a public investment in the first reference, in which the role of the arts is recognized in a different context from the economic one, becomes much more explicit and more limiting in the second mention. In fact, the reference to performing

arts, which is also included in the Agenda (and therefore we should consider it a success) is at the end of a descending climax within the general category of Urban economies, starting with “high-value-added sectors,” through expressions as “creation of quality” and “cultural and creative industries.”

There is no doubt that performing arts can be a sector with high added value, in which “quality” is and can be created for other sectors as well, but this is not where their main *value* should reside.

If we were to confine ourselves to these aspects, the investment mentioned in the previous paragraph would always be uneconomic.

It is curious to note how this totalizing centrality of the economy comes from that Anglo-Saxon tradition which is supposed to consider theatre - thus a most immaterial heritage - as cornerstone. But this may require a further philosophical and genealogical investigation in the future.

Acknowledging the «long English tradition of avoiding seriousness in theatrical art,» Peter Brook, undoubtedly the most prominent living stage director, in his foreword to Jerzy Grotowski's *Towards a Poor Theatre* stated, «Our aim is not a new Mass, but a new Elizabethan relationship - linking the private and the public, the intimate and the crowded, the secret and the open, the vulgar and the magical. » (Brook, in Grotowski 2002 pp. 11–12) For that is the power of theatre.

A further indication can be found in the subject-index of the Agenda, where we can find, «arts: see also culture. »²¹

This is probably a solution prompted by the embarrassment arising from the fact that this crucial term was included in the document, but it is also an evidence of the reason why things could hardly have gone differently.

Indeed, there is a general problem that arises every time we talk about culture in strongly ideologized contexts such as this, in which more or less self-conscious ideological levels meet. If, in fact, the political

ideology of the actors is generally conscious, albeit in a generic way, then less so is that much of liberal ideology which is now a legacy of both the political right and left. And at an even more subconscious level, in both we find the ideology of representative democracy and that of the organization's technique, the bureaucratic ideology of the process to which its “technical” rulers respond, to the government of what Aristotle would call the *formal cause* of the discourse.

It therefore happens that, even if we try to consider culture as one of the variables of the equation (for example, as one of the voices under the category “development”), it tends to move towards the center of the scene and question the paradigm, since this paradigm itself is based on choices of values and pre-comprehensions which are in turn cultural. Making choices on the subject of “cultural policy” means then to interact directly with what Foucault called the *order of discourse*.

1.2.4 Values not Value

The American Planning Association, in its Applied Research Program on Arts Culture and Creativity «developed a series of briefing papers to illustrate how planners use arts and culture strategies to achieve economic, social, environmental, and community goals, »²² identifying among them those meant to «preserve, celebrate, challenge, and invent community identity. » The paper editors chose to separate «Community Character» and Sense of Place, «community heritage and culture» and «Community Engagement» (and of course «Economic Vitality»), stating that «The main creative tools for exploring community values and needs are visual-art techniques and storytelling. » Despite the fact that all of the examples given are indeed of participative and performative nature, those briefing papers represent a good example of the overlooking of the specific role of theatre and performing arts in planning practice.

In the construction work of the “Open for Art” conference, we have instead tried to identify some “non-

²¹ <http://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/subject-index/>

²² All the briefing papers are available online at <https://www.planning.org/research/arts/> (“Arts, Culture & Creativity” n.d.)

economic” but recognized and recognizable themes, or values of art in the urban context, which we gathered under the labels of “community building,” “ownership,” “participation,” and “vision.”

The meaning of these terms should be self-evident. Here, besides a brief definition, we will simply show some example of how performing arts can provide all these elements to the highest degree.

By community building we mean the ability of artistic activities to bring together people from different backgrounds, living in the same neighborhood or city, often isolated due to the lack of common references or opportunities.

As in Malcolm Miles’s aforementioned quote, here we are referring to the capacity of performing arts to «en-gender sociation. » (Miles 1997 p. 67)

For example, as in the activity of Grupa Skart, a collective founded in 1990 at the Architecture Faculty of Belgrade, Serbia. Between the many activities and installations, they developed community *choirs* accepting everyone, with no relation to their ability or experience in singing. Their purpose was just gathering different and dispersed people, relying on the “minimum theatrical common.”²³

Ownership is the sense of belonging with a double value towards the urban territory: on the one hand, the bond with the territory which may also become pride; on the other hand, the responsibility towards the territory itself.

A very evident example, also showing how the performative aspects of the visual arts, themselves can be exploited, can be found in some mural art projects, such as the one by the renowned street artist JR, *Women Are Heroes*, especially famous and powerful in his realization in the favela of Moro de Providencia «a place of which the name has become synonymous for violence in Rio de Janeiro. However, the reason this favela located in the center of Rio appeared on television screens in August 2008 wasn’t the regular scenes of clashes between drug dealers and the police

but to present the art exhibition *Women*, » the artist proudly states.²⁴

A greater focus on participation is in what has to be considered the *Inside Out* project, in which people and communities from all over the world are invited to create their own images and use the visibility of the project to promote their statements.

Participation differs from community building since it concerns the acquisition of political capacity. That is, in the ability to intervene in decision-making processes in a formal or informal way, understanding their mechanisms, defending rights or those that are perceived as prerogatives by the community.

Claire Bishop, editor of *Participation* (Bishop, 2006), a collection containing writings by Bourriaud, Eco, Rancière, Nancy, Barthes, and artists such as Carsten Höller, Alan Kaprow, Guy Debord, Joseph Beuys, and Thomas Hirschhorn and others, gives us what is still the most complete theoretical overview of what is meant by participation in the artistic field.

The connection with “community building” is evident in Rancière’s quote: «art no longer wants to respond to the excess of commodities and signs but to a lack of connections. » But Bishop’s aim is precisely to show how art was moving from the phase of Relational Aesthetics as in Bourriaud to a new phase that she first explicitly defined as participation.

Bishop confirms this trend, also in her latest work *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* (2012), despite the time gone by. Although it seems to suggest that things did not turn out very well for the spectator, the title comes from a 1921 writing by Breton (Available in Breton 2003) who, under this ironic reference to Baudelaire’s masterpiece, gave a report and assessment of the first *dada* performances.²⁵

The difference between participation in the artistic and in the political field as meant here, which urban planners still read within the framework of Arnstein’s “ladder of participation” (1969), is that in the former

²³ Very little documentation on the work of this very interesting group is available, although pictures and some text can be found on their website: <http://www.skart.rs/> (“škart” n.d.)

²⁴ <http://www.jr-art.net/projects/women-are-heroes-brazil>

²⁵ It is also interesting to note that Bishop, in the conclusions of her book, quotes the cited scheme of the “Ladder of Citizen Participation” by Arnstein. While identifying the source correctly in the references, the diagram is reported as “Anonymous.”

the questioned role of the decision-maker is played by the artists themselves, who surrender or rather try to surrender power more or less explicitly (and for purposes which may differ from case to case).

This often leads to paradoxical outcomes, which in turn can be used with artistic aims and, in cases of greater awareness, may become part of the work of art.

However, there is at least one case in which art is actually used for political decision making, and theatre is obviously involved. Augusto Boal, the theorist of the *Theater of the Oppressed*, was also the creator of another technique, or rather of an application of the *Theater of the Oppressed* techniques when he ran for, and was elected *Vereador* (the Brazilian equivalent of a city councilor) in Rio de Janeiro, from 1993 to 1996. Boal himself named this technique *Legislative Theatre*, and wrote about this experience in 2004. (Boal 2004)

Boal defines this system as a transitional democracy, placing it halfway – in the limen, and indeed it is a transition – between direct and representative democracy.

«As the function of *vereadors* is to create laws and to ensure the proper enactment of those that already exist, the people’s participation in this process could be achieved by means of theatre: transitive democracy. » (p. 12) About twenty new laws were created using that technique.

«How can this participation be organised, without demagogy? » Boal asks: «We are trying», is the answer. (p. 18)

However, the most famous and powerful example of non-institutional participative performance also comes from South America, but from Argentina: the «circular, ritualistic movement around the square» of

the Madres de Plaza de Mayo and the staged, carnevalesque performances of H.I.J.O.S. Hijos por la Identidad y la Justicia, contra el Olvido y el Silencio, “Children for Identity and Justice, against Forgetting and Silence,” - the children of the *desaparecidos* – described by Diana Taylor in the seminal article “You Are Here, the DNA of Performance” (Taylor 2002).

The last aspect which is generally overlooked is vision. It mainly concerns urban communities as well as planners and experts: art yields ideas of the future, dreams, and imaginative solutions which can sometimes be experimented.

The greatest visionary is probably the former mayor of Bogotá, Antanas Mockus. Besides going around sometimes dressed like a superhero to promote particularly initiatives, he hired mimes and actors who worked on the streets to teach citizens traffic regulations,²⁶ and also provided citizens with yellow and red cards to punish drivers with what he considered the worst punishment, poking fun at them.²⁷

A number of his extravagant, but rather effective, initiatives was described in *Cities on Speed: Bogota Change* (aka *Bogota – Doctor city*), a documentary about Mockus by the Danish director Andreas Dalsgaard.²⁸

Mockus is still very active and his current projects can be followed on the website of his think-tank and action and research group, “Corpovisionarios,” which states,

Somos anfibios culturales que habitan entre dos mundos: la investigación y la acción, la estadística y el arte, la filosofía y el diseño, la academia y la gestión pública [...]

Una vez identificamos las oportunidades de intervención, diseñamos e implementamos acciones pedagógicas orientadas a la transformación de los puntos críticos, apuntando a elementos de la interacción humana que con frecuencia son desconocidos o subordinados, tales como las normas

²⁶ At first 20 professional mimes were hired to shadow pedestrians who didn’t follow crossing rules: A pedestrian running across the road would be tracked by a mime who mocked his every move. Mimes also ridiculed reckless drivers. The program was so popular that 400 more people were trained as mimes. (Caballero 2004)

²⁷ See also (Gilbert 2006) for indicators of the progress of the City of Bogota in areas such as fiscal responsibility, public services, public behavior, public honesty, and civic pride,

even if the author somewhat minimizes the importance of the role played by Mockus in the general positive trend of the city. Indeed, one of the point of strength of the Mockus administration was trying to keep a good level of continuity with previous administrations while applying some very creative solution.

²⁸ Produced by Upfront Films and co-produced by NHK and Dundance Channel.

sociales, las emociones, las representaciones culturales y la comunicación, entre muchos otros. Para lograrlo recurrimos al arte, a la comunicación, a la poesía, e incluso a la economía experimental, con el fin de proporcionar intervenciones efectivas e innovadoras. (“Corpovisionarios | Nosotros” n.d.)

1.2.5 A Question of Democracy

Stating that arts and culture have a value which transcends economy may seem an obvious point. And so is stating that theater and performing arts, on the basis of what we still call their *intangibile* (but should perhaps call unmeasurable) nature, represent those non-economic values at their best, which could seem simple common sense. But to make that common sense accepted by scholars and decision makers we still have a long way to go. It is indeed true that we cannot always rely on common sense, and that we should constantly question it, but one of Jane Jacobs’s lessons (even if she was a “mentor” of Richard Florida as well (Hospers & van Dalm 2005)) is that we should sometimes believe our eyes.

In her 2012 book *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Marta Nussbaum «builds a convincing, if at first counterintuitive, case that the very foundation of citizenship—not to mention national success—rests on the humanities and arts,» as stated in Ruth O’Brien’s foreword (Nussbaum 2012 p. xi). The fact that this sounds *counterintuitive* is possibly related to our present desire to measure everything.

Maybe we can get some refreshing inspiration from professor Darko Radović’s work, who, in his pluriennial *Measuring the Unmeasurable* program in Keio University in Tokyo, has been doing research for years on the relationship between urban categories such as intensity (unmeasurable) against density (measurable): «The primary focus of the research project Measuring the non-Measurable - Mn’M, within which the research for this book has been conducted, is at two systems of urban phenomena which resist (easy or any) quantification - culture and sustainability. Mn’M enters the field of debates about urban quality by challenging the very idea of measurability. ‘Measuring’ in

Mn’M is, thus, just a shorthand for all efforts to capture and represent quality solely in a ‘scientific’ way» (Radović 2014) Radović’s answer to the challenge is a revised complexity theory which takes account of the «system theory (social sciences and engineering) and assemblage theory (Deleuze, De Landa, Dovey). Its cross-disciplinary theoretical frameworks rely on place theory, Lefebvrian social theories and the idea of eco-urbanity (Radović). At methodological Levels, the project combines standard research practices with emerging sensibilities and some resurgent critical practices, such as Situationist subversions and psychogeography (Debord). »

We can agree with Julian Meyrick, Professor of Creative Arts at Flinders University, when he states that, at present, «measuring things has replaced evaluating things. »

Thomas Hirschhorn’s drawing titled *Spectre of Evaluation*, placed at the very first page of Claire Bishop’s seminal book about politics of spectatorship (2012), acts as a sort of counterattraction to the deceptive Ladder of Participation reproduced in the last pages: we could take that suggestion from the artist, to take the ancient art of evaluation back into consideration. Evaluation has indeed its own rules, based on different *values*, probably as arbitrary as economic values.

Rosalyn Deutsche in *Art and Public Space: Questions of Democracy* recognises that

Recently, artists and critics eager to counteract the power exercised through neutralizing ideas of the public have sought to reappropriate the concept by defining public space as a realm of political debate and public art as work that helps create such a space. For this purpose, they have sometimes had recourse to the category of “the public sphere,” a term which in its general sense designates either a set of institutions through which the state is held accountable to citizens or a space-though not necessarily a physical or empirically identifiable terrain-of discursive interaction. There, people talk to each other, generate political discourses that may be in principle critical of the state, and construct and modify political identities in encounters with others. “The public,” in contrast to, let us say, an art audience, does not exist prior to but emerges in the course of the debate. (Deutsche 1992 p. 39)

Although this distinction between audience and public is essential, the author neglects, however, completely to mention the performing arts, or to consider the performance aspect of public art at the very least, focussing instead of the value of the Post-Modern poetics in relation to subjectivation processes.

The reference to the *public sphere* indeed comes from the very successful Hannah Arendt lexicon. Butler criticizes «Hannah Arendt, who, in *The Human Condition*, quite emphatically distinguishes the private sphere as one of dependency and inaction from the public sphere as one of independent action. » (2015 p. 44) with the argument that it cannot be separated from the *private sphere* as long as it is not only the sphere (the space) of subjectivation, but as well the space of *embodiment*.

That Arendtian presupposition from *The Human Condition* presumes that the body does not enter into the speech act, and that the speech act is understood as a mode of thinking and judging. (Butler 2015 p. 45)

The sound of what they speak, or the graphic sign of what is spoken, is as important to the activity of self-constitution in the public sphere (and the constitution of the public sphere as a condition of appearance) as any other means. If the people are constituted through a complex interplay of performance, image, acoustics, and all the various technologies engaged in those productions, then “media” is not just reporting who the people claim to be, but media has entered into the very definition of the people. It does not simply assist that definition, or make it possible; it is the stuff of self-constitution, the site of the hegemonic struggle over who “we” are. (Butler 2015 p. 20)

The lack of the idea of embodiment and the lack of consideration for the performing aspects of public art appear to be of one and the same nature.

But Arendt appears very aware of that fact, defining the theatre as «the political art per excellence», connecting it to the mimesis process as a truth-revealing process:

However, the specific revelatory quality of action and speech, the implicit manifestation of the agent and speaker, is so indissolubly tied to the living flux of acting and speaking that it can be represented and “reified” only through a kind of repetition, the imitation or mimesis, which according to Aristotle prevails in all arts but is actually appropriate only to the drama, whose very

name (from the Greek verb *dran*, “to act”) indicates that playacting actually is an imitation of acting.¹¹ But the imitative element lies not only in the art of the actor, but, as Aristotle rightly claims, in the making or writing of the play, at least to the extent that the drama comes fully to life only when it is enacted in the theater. Only the actors and speakers who re-enact the story’s plot can convey the full meaning, not so much of the story itself, but of the “heroes” who reveal themselves in it.

Culminating her argument about the theatre as «the political art per excellence».

This is also why the theater is the political art par excellence; only there is the political sphere of human life transposed into art. By the same token, it is the only art whose sole subject is man in his relationship to others. (Arendt 1998 pp. 187–188)

1.3 Conceptual Tools

From practice and literature, I have therefore identified different paths, categories, or tools to be tested for this purpose, such as: the rhythm analytical method, as sketched by Lefebvre (2004); the trialectical logic, as elaborated by the Situationist International, also embraced by Lefebvre (1991) and developed by Soja (1996); and the category of liminality, as developed by Turner (Turner 1977, 1982, 2002).

I also assume that these three theoretical tools or paths can be traced to unity, identifying as liminal the third element that differentiates a dialectical discourse from a spatial practice.

The existence and the relevance of a “third” element is acknowledged by a line of thought going from the Situationists’ first idea of trialectics to Gilles Clément’s “third landscape” (2004) via the “discovery” of the thirdspace by E. Soja (1996). Soja, while relying on the work of Lefebvre, was possibly the first to consider the outcomes that a process of «thirthing-as- Othering», as he calls it, should have on the spatial plane.

Following that perspective, from the dialectical couple in/out we can derive the triad: in/threshold/out. In that case the process of “othering” give us the threshold, the liminal element, as what we normally forgot when we try to describe a spatial practice, or relationship, through a logical (verbal) discourse, which on the contrary seem to require us to think in a dialectical fashion.

Here the ontological and epistemological plans of the discourse are interleaved.

We can indeed consider the trialectics in two ways. In the first we are adding a level of complexity to the traditional dialectic, in the second we are considering the traditional dialectic as a reduction in the temporal plane of the spatial plan of reality.

In both cases, however, the elements would not necessarily be three, but rather always $n + 1$, which is then the proper meaning of “Othering”. This idea is also present in the original theory by Asger Jorn, who considered the choice to use three terms equally arbitrary as that of considering two. The ontological nature of the trialectic scheme, accepted in a rather uncritical way by Lefebvre, instead probably derived from Hegelian elements surviving in its Marxist formation.

Nevertheless, such spatial trialectics also appears to be related to the concept of “camp” «as biopolitical Paradigm Of The Modern» proposed by Agamben (1998).²⁹

In my proposal, I consider that third term as the spatial materialisation of the “liminal phase” identified by Turner as a feature of a functioning performance.

Moreover, I propose to consider that third or *liminal element* as either the place or the phase where, or when, given certain circumstances, *space is produced*.

I also propose, following Lefebvre, to identify *rhythm* as the third and unifying element between space and time. A common instrument of analysis for both the spatial and the temporal fields would thus be provided by the rhythm analysis, of which we find interesting antecedents in De Certeau (1984) and Rasmussen (1962), as well as in Bachelard (Bachelard 1936) (and in Pinero Dos Santos (1931), cited by Bachelard).

²⁹ That is the title of the part three of the classical “Homo Sacer”. The use of the English word of “camp” make this statement weaker if compared to the Italian text, in which the original word is “campo,” which can be translated also as “field” when referring, for example, to knowledge or to cultural processes. Thus, giving a wider sense to the idea of inclusive exclusion as a symbolic mechanism.

«Language is the sovereign who, in a permanent state of exception, declares that there is nothing outside language and that language is always beyond itself. The particular structure of law has its foundation in this presuppositional structure of human language. It expresses the bond of inclusive exclusion to which a thing is subject because of the fact of being in language, of being named. »

1.3.1 Trialectics

[ATLAS: 2.40]

The origin of the idea of trialectics developed by Lefebvre and later by Soja has to be certainly attributed to the Danish painter Asger Jorn (see Vazquez Pizzi 2011).

Nevertheless, a notable predecessor of this concept was the Romanian philosopher Stéphane Lupasco, who, starting from the middle 1930s, developed a critique of the classical binary logic and of the principle of *tertium non datur*, conceiving a state of co-existence of two contradictory terms in what he called the “T-State” (or: third included).

Already in 1936, in a notable review of Bachelard’s *Dialectique de la durée*, which he rightly reads in opposition to the dominant Bergsonism, he manifests his awareness of the outcomes of the new scientific theories of quantum physics, describing a universe made of undulatory movements and discontinuities, and declares his fascination for the proposal of the rhythm-analytical theory proposed by the author (Lupasco 1936).

One of Lupasco’s points in his 1945 paper was that if there nothing existed of “antigéométrique,” because the task of geometry was describing existing objects, so nothing is supposed to exist either outside of the field of logic.

Aristotelian logic, with its principle of non-contradiction, was hence to be considered as a particular case of a general system which instead allowed the co-existence of *actual* and *potential*, or, to use different terms, of *true* and *false*. A logic with judgement of true and false was then to be considered closer to ethics than to geometry, but hopefully this situation would be surpassed in the future by the affirmation of a “metaphysics of pragmatism”: «Ou bien enfin, l’on se résignera à une métaphysique du pragmatisme» (Lupasco 1945 p. 2).

It has to be said that in his work Lupasco never uses the term trialectics and refers to his system only as *trialectics*.

It was actually Jorn, a prominent member of the Situationist movement and founder of the COBRA group, who introduced the term trialectics. For Jorn,

as well as for Lupasco, the introduction of a third element in logic was a reaction to rigid binary dialectic, but it was only Lefebvre who further developed the concept.

The revision of Hegel’s dialectic was also central to him: «Such understanding of dialectics implies a revision of dialectics as conceived by Hegel, which reverberates in Marx’s value theory;»

«By including a third term in theorizing dialectics (or “trialectics,” as Edward Soja named it) Lefebvre rethinks the dialectical contradiction as irreducible to the idealist contradiction between two terms that are removed, preserved, and raised to a higher level.» (Stanek 2011 p. 157)

However, probably Lefebvre did not fully realise the relevance of that shift, and, as a Marxist, he was not very prone to completely abandon the idea of dialectic.

This is the philosophical implication of Lefebvre’s proposition that dialectics could be extended into ‘trialectics’, in which a position is opened up for otherness within dialectical materialism. As we shall see, Lefebvre himself does not appear to fully grasp or exploit the importance of this shift: his description of a ‘dialectique de triplicite’ as merely a ‘three-way dialectic’ consisting of a thesis with not one, but two, anti-theses is confusing. (Shields 1999 p. 120)

Maybe for this reason, Lefebvre never used the term trialectics, and it was Soja who restored popularity both to the term itself and to the Lefebvrian concepts on which it is based, even if he also missed something of the revolutionary charge of the concept while translating it into a postmodernist paradigm.

What the trialectical approach can teach us is not only that there is always a third element in every apparent dialectical confrontation, but also that the dialectic system itself is based on a discursive approach, a narrative without space and place.

With a third element *on the ground*, it is far easier to see that the dialectic as a condition is never resolved: not resolved inside the subject, and possibly present *only inside* of the subject. Only from the subject’s point of view there is something like a “dialectic” movement, while on the spatial practices point of view there are different positions or perspectives existing at the same moment in the same space.

Words move, music moves / Only in time, to use T. S. Eliot's words. And the dialectical logic mimics the structure of verbal discourse from the perspective of the subject, which moves in time only.

But if only a straight line can be drawn between two points, we can use a third one to define a space.

There is another triad in the history of thought which would be interesting to make interact with Lefebvre's triad of *conceived*, *perceived* and *lived* spaces, which is Lacan's triad of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real. Unfortunately, too extensive and specific work would be required to explore the complex relations between the two; it is however interesting to give at least some hint considering the huge role played by Lacanian triad plays in Žižek's thought.

Łukasz Stanek engages in a little excursus regarding the meaning of *jouissance* in both authors in his introduction to *Toward an Architecture of Enjoyment* (Stanek in Lefebvre 2014b pp. vii–lxi) while Derek Gregory (1995) engages in a complex analysis of the topic, but without touching the relationship between the “two triads”. «In *La production de l'espace* Lefebvre refers directly to Lacan on only four occasions, always in footnotes and never in the body of the text. But his debt to Lacan is much greater than these few citations suggest.» (Gregory 1995 p. 29) Nevertheless he rightly notes «an oblique, and at times almost subterranean critique of Lacanian psychoanalysis» (p. 19) in Lefebvre's work and begins to point out the ambiguities of relation between the Real and the Symbolic order and Lefebvre's description of the *Production of Space*. It is rather possible that this is the direction where to look for further developments and some surprise. For example: «This is not how Lefebvre constructs his own architectonics, let me say, but what is important about such a psychoanalytics of space, so he argues, is that it prepares the ground for an analysis of the spatial inscription of «phallic verticality» and horizontal partition. In his history of space he pays particular attention to the phallic centrism of abstract space and to the use of «walls, enclosures and facades... to define both a *scene* (where something takes place) and an *obscene* area to which everything that cannot or may not happen on the scene is relegated.» (p. 29, citing Lefebvre 1991 p. 36)

Since the trialectical approach reminds us to always consider a third element in every apparent dialectical confrontation, and that there is no need for continuity or for non-contradiction principles (Lupasco and Jorn). Again, as dialectic itself is based on a discursive approach, without spatial character, and we have learned from Lefebvre and Soja the necessity to shift from a temporal to a spatial scale, then there should also be a *thirdspace*, for example, between that *scene* and *obscene* (theatrical metaphors too, here) – a sort of liminal space where the two can meet. The open possibility of producing such spaces – or to say it better: of producing such a condition and hence of producing space – should be taken into account.

To take trialectics seriously in the way defined by Lefebvre and specified by Soja means having the tools to understand when production of space actually happens, that is when this space is *perceived*, *conceived* and *lived*.

But taking trialectics seriously also means to recognise that, in the triad of perceived, conceived and lived spaces, the lived space is the *space of representation* in a very literal sense. The place where theatre occurs. Which means, more or less, the necessity to produce some kind of theatre in order to produce space.

But shifting from a temporal to a spatial perspective through trialectics also means shifting from the perspective of the subject to the perspective of the community. The dimension of a *lived* conflict.

We should take Soja's definition quite literally, when he states that the *thirdspace* is the “representational space.” And thus we interact with *thirdspace* with our *representations*.

Hence, in order to produce some change in the lived space, we have to consciously engage with the symbolic order. To produce space, we must engage with the symbolic order.

Kipfer includes his reading of trialectics in what he thinks to be the *Urbanized Gramscian* analysis of Lefebvre. That is, in terms of hegemony.

Lefebvre insisted that produced space has perceived, conceived, and lived dimensions. To put it differently, processes and strategies of producing social space can be looked at in their material

(perceived) aspects, their representational, institutional, and ideological (conceived) aspects, and their affective-symbolic (lived) aspects. The production of urban space contributes to hegemony insofar as it fuses the contradictory immediate realm of lived space with processes and strategies of producing conceived and perceived space. (Kipfer 2008)

In theatre every relationship is always trialectic. Indeed, in theatre, the relationship to a third element is what establishes the relationship, working as a link between *space* and time of narration, and turning a tale into a situation: «One of the best-known basic formulas of drama was provided by theorist Eric Bentley in 1965: ‘A impersonates B while C looks on.’ The two verbs are key, with the first stressing the idea of active imitation and the second that of spectatorship.» (Carlson 2014)

If we compare this definition with Peter Brook’s:

«I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged» (Brook 1996)

we see that a third element is always present, though in both definitions we are presented with only two people, one with the function of actor and the other “acting” as audience. The Bentley’s definition seems more reductive because it requires the actor to “impersonate” someone else, something not explicitly required in contemporary theatre, and something that certainly would not fit in the definition of “everyday theatre,” nevertheless should be considered acceptable as a minimum level of self-consciousness of the *mimesis* is required to produce theatre. This definition for us has the advantage of bringing to light the fact that even in a static monologue the relationship is triadic.

In Brook’s definition, conditioned by the different vision of theatre which he is practising and promoting, a kind of theatre more connected with movement than to the spoken word, it is indeed the movement that establishes the relationship (as triadic). The advantage of Brook’s definition is that it makes more explicit the element of *time*, that is necessary for the theatre to happen.

The time spent moving in front of the audience defines the scenic action. It occupies the “empty space”

which is of course an abstraction: no space is “empty” as long as every space is produced, nor the theatre stage, which on the contrary is full of symbolic meanings, and where a huge amount of work have to be done by theatre people to reactivate it as an actual space of representation.

Grotowski, the master of the sacred theatre which is also a poor theatre, used this definition: «we can thus define theatre as “what takes place between spectator and actor”.» (Grotowski 2002 p. 32)

Here the theatre is the *place between*, which *happens*, and together with the trialectical relation established by theatre through *mimesis* is that *liminal element* of that *intermediate space* which has now come into focus.

In this case, what acquires the role of third element is exactly the theatre as something which is happening.

1.3.2 Rhythmanalysis

[ATLAS: 2.43; 2.63; 2.78]

The Rhythmanalytical program, as conceived by Lefebvre, was only drafted but never undertaken by the philosopher, nor any major author has still developed the concept after him. But there is some lesson we can learn from it and there should be some truth behind it, more evident today thanks to the convergence of many scientific researches towards the relation between rhythmic structures and the way we feel pleasure, or get engaged in an action or a spectacle³⁰.

Studies about the mathematical patterns in literature can also be considered as hints if not confirmations of the soundness of that program³¹.

A different argument will be that nowadays we are investigating in this direction - and founding what we are looking for - because a theoretical basis for the research was set up by philosophers, giving space for raising questions about rhythm as a formal, quantitative structure.

But from our point of view, and out of any possible objection of that kind, it is interesting to note that the first apparition of the word “eurhythmia,” term used by Lefebvre in relation to the definition of his first experimental paradigm, can be found in Vitruvius’s “De architectura”.

Exactly, in the first paragraph of the second chapter of Book 1 – about the general principles of architecture – it states: «Architecture depends on Order (in Greek τάξις), Arrangement (in Greek διάθεσις), Eurythmy, Symmetry, Propriety, and Economy (in Greek οἰκονομία). » The third paragraph partially explains the concept: «Eurythmy is beauty and fitness in the adjustments of the members. This is found when the members of a work are of a height suited to their breadth, of a breadth suited to their length, and, in a word, when they all correspond symmetrically. »

³⁰ Reference is to the field of Neuroaesthetics. Cfr. infra 1.5.1.

³¹ Two recent researches also reported by the Scientific American (Drozdź *et al.* 2016; Reagan *et al.* 2016), the first about recurring structure in fiction books, the second showing the fractal pattern in sentence lengths in literature, also

So Eurythmy is a kind of symmetry but *not exactly* symmetry.

Classical tradition is at the basis of Rasmussen’s remarks about rhythm in his equally classical work on *Experiencing Architecture*: indeed, the author shows the continuity between the classical concepts of rhythm and eurythmy and more modern concepts: psychological, biological, phenomenological perspectives. All of these were included and underpinned in the classical formulation and underline the *specificity of the element of rhythm*.

I am quite sure that most people would notice that all of these facades are rhythmically divided. And yet if you were to ask them what rhythm in architecture means it would be difficult for them to explain, let alone define. The term rhythm is borrowed from other arts involving a time element and based on movement, such as music and dancing. (Rasmussen 1962 p. 133)

The term is “borrowed”: Rasmussen keeps moving in terms of metaphor. But why this term, coming from the arts of movement, ended up talking about architecture remains unclear.

Rhythm is connected to work, physical work, when there is a sequence of tension and relaxation.

Such regular alternation to lighten work is called rhythm-and by “work,” here, I mean every kind of muscular exercise. Dancing for instance is a good example of such work. (p. 134)

So, dance is just an example of a metaphor. But rhythm is also associated with experience, so closely that it cannot be conceived outside of the experience.

There is something mysterious about the stimulating effect of rhythm. You can explain what it is that creates rhythm but you have to experience it yourself to know what it is like. A person listening to music experiences the rhythm as something beyond all reflection, something existing within himself. (p. 134)

And here is the connection with architecture:

But to experience architecture demands time; it also demands work – though mental, not physical, work. The person who hears music or

demonstrate the promising results of big data analysis when applied to art studies. See also website <https://neuroaesthetics.net>, with bibliography (“International Network for Neuroaesthetics” n.d.).

watches dancing does none of the physical work himself but in perceiving the performance he experiences the rhythm of it as though it were in his own body. (p. 135)

But then he introduces a brilliant example of application of these concepts to the famous Piranesi rendering of *Piazza di Spagna* in Rome as an example of an architecture not only inspired, but shaped by the movement of a dance, concluding:

«in the Spanish Steps we can see a petrification of the dancing rhythm of a period of gallantry; it gives us an inkling of something that was, something our generation will never know.» (p. 136)

Firstly, it should be noted that he chooses to refer to a representation of the steps and not to the actual stairway, even if he is supposed to talk about architecture and not about drawing or engraving. Second, even if we could consider the “petrification of the dancing rhythm” as a metaphor itself, there is clearly something more than a metaphor here.

Rasmussen tries to keep the idea of rhythm as a “borrowed word” for architecture, but he is instead borrowing the language of painting, and this is why an image is chosen instead of a real place. That particular image certainly gives the idea of the kind of relationship people had with the space, but for this very reason it would also be better to take the idea of *petrification* of movement more literally as a driving force of architecture.

Gustave le Bon, in his seminal study considered a precursor of the psychological studies of the masses (Le Bon 1896), had already tried to define a «psychological law of the mental unity» of the crowds.

It can be said that Le Bon considers the crowd as representing both the medium of diffusion of an idea or action, but also as the principle of inertia of that action. A sort of resistance. In this ingenuous position, linked to the adventurous scientific climate of his time, which brought from Mesmer’s studies on animal magnetism to the scientific hypnotism of Jean-Martin Charcot [ATLAS: 2.78] *Études cliniques et physiologiques sur la marche* and his student Gilles de la Tourette, the *medium* became the *substance*, that is the *fluid* connecting distant subjects and objects.

Many think that these studies were the basis for – or the anticipation of – the advent of fascism, mass society, and totalitarian regimes, and that is possibly Canetti’s position. In one of his novels, Thomas Mann presented a parody of Mussolini as an hypnotizer; in Italy Cavalletti based an intriguing study on “the power and the limits” of political fascination on that novel (Cavalletti 2011).

Someone (Carroy 1991) comes to the conclusion that we have “produced” the contemporary *subject*, which is the condition for modern psychology, by means of these kinds of research. What is certain is that Gilles de la Tourette started his career with an important and innovative study about walking, *Études cliniques et physiologiques sur la marche*, presented as his doctoral thesis in 1885 (Charcot was the president of the commission) and published one year later (de la Tourette 1886). The importance of this study was pointed out by Agamben in the opening of his short treaty on the gesture included in *Means without ends* (Agamben 2000), regarding the recording of the action of walking (Charcot developed a system for recording the footprint of the subject he studied on canvas, and the pictures are presented in the book) as the *memoir* about what was still probably the last pre-conscious, and hence non-ideological gesture of men. Charcot’s following career can give us a hint of the correlation between that *gesture* and *suggestion*, or even hypnosis.

«Rhythm is originally the rhythm of the feet» Canetti states in his *Crowds and Power* paragraph dedicated to *Rhythm*. And «The earliest writing he learnt to read was that of their tracks; it was a kind of rhythmic notation imprinted on the soft ground and, as he read it, he connected it with the sound of its formation.» «The large numbers of the herd which they hunted blended in their feelings with their own numbers which they wished to be large, and they expressed this in a specific state of communal excitement which I shall call the rhythmic or throbbing crowd.» «As long as they go on dancing, they exert an attraction on all in their neighbourhood.» «When their excitement is at its height, these people really feel as one, and nothing but physical exhaustion can stop them. Thanks to the dominance of rhythm, all throbbing crowds have something similar in their appearance.» (Canetti 1981 pp. 31–32)

Tout se tient.

Movement is the first conjunction of people, the means of synchronization, and every processional performance relies on this power.

In passing, it is interesting to note that Canetti, commenting a description of a “haka” dance of New Zealand Maoris in that context, states that

It is as though each body was taken to pieces, not only the arms and legs, but also the fingers, toes, tongues and eyes; and then all the tongues got together and did exactly the same thing at the same moment; all the toes and all the eyes became equal in one and the same enterprise. Each part of each dancer is seized by this feeling of equality; and it is always represented in action of increasing violence (Canetti 1981 p. 33)

Thus, by confronting that to the descriptions of Japanese Noh theatre, or of the exactly coded hands movement of Indian Mudra, we can figure out what a *subject* could look like *before* the invention of the subject. More than a *body without organs* perhaps we have *organs without a body*³², or with a larger, social body: the body of a community instituted through synchronization. There is no unitary human figure, but instead what we will now consider a “dismantling” of the parts (a mental process which is only possible starting from our idea of subject). Thomas Hobbes’s *Leviathan* is made of bodies; Maori *Leviathan* instead had its hand made of 350 hands, its leg made of 350 legs, its eyes made of 700 eyes.

Sub-divisions of the body and unifications of bodies in rhythm are one and the same. That is perhaps the shape of every *Leviathan* of the dance. A community and not a state.

³² The very idea of a *Body without organs* indeed came from theatre, from Antonin Artaud’s last work, and «first true spectacle of the theatre of cruelty»: *Pour en finir avec le jugement de dieu* (*To Have Done With the Judgement of god*) a radio-drama never broadcast because of preventive censorship, later published in a volume. «Il faut se décider à le mettre à nu pour lui gratter / cet animalcule qui le dé-mange mortellement, / dieu / et avec dieu / ses organes / Carr liez-moi si vous le voulez, / mais il n’y a rien de plus inutile qu’un organe»

Artaud’s goal was condemning, through the organ, the idea of organization which he thought had transformed man into a production machine. The liberated body would no more

«the great problem of repetition, one of the most difficult problems facing us». (Lefebvre 1987, p. 10 cit. in Zayani 1999 p. 1)

Like Deleuze (in *Difference and Repetition*) but in a different way, Lefebvre also wanted to put his hands on classical dialectics – possibly on Hegel dialectics – and transform it, or at least reform it.

In *The Production of Space* there are several, often obscure, references to mirrors and mirroring, also expressed as symmetry. These references can be explained thinking about the rhythm analysis program which Lefebvre already had in mind, and they represent the element of connection between this reform of dialectic (which will become the trialectics) and the previously overlooked element of rhythm through the notion of *mimesis*.

Seen from a certain perspective – abandoning, if possible, the perspective of the subject – the dialectic represents itself not as a series of contradictions but as a series of repetitions (as structure) which indeed gives origin to a continuous variation.

Deleuze’s interrogation is about the nature of the differential element and when and how it enters in the cycle of repetition, or how the difference is differing from repetition. That is an ontological question.

Lefebvre’s question is very close to this last formulation, but it is more connected to the historical situation: how historically the differential element represented by individuals and groups escape the structural repetition of the industrial Society.

What is also common between these two visions and re-visitation of dialectics is that, the moment in which they introduce the third element as difference, they

need the organs. The perspective is still that of the classic, individual subject, defined by his body.

In his desperate attempt to save the idea of subject, but reverting it, using “the subject against the subject,” Slavoj Žižek used that same reversed expression of *Organs Without Bodies* as the title of his book on Deleuze and his influence on contemporary philosophical debate «What, then, does it mean, exactly, that the (partial) object itself starts to speak? It is not that this object is subjectless but that this object is the correlate of the “pure” subject prior to subjectivization. Subjectivization refers to the “whole person” as the correlate of the body, whereas the “pure” subject refers to the partial object alone.» (Žižek 2004 pp. 174–175)

transform a dialectic which was running through time in a spatial matrix.

In the field of rhythm, certain very broad concepts nonetheless have specificity: let us immediately cite repetition. No rhythm without repetition in time and in space, without reprises, without returns, in short without measure. But there is no identical absolute repetition. Indefinitely. Whence the relation between repetition and difference. When it concerns the everyday, rites, ceremonies, fêtes, rules and laws, there is always something new and unforeseen that introduces itself into the repetitive: difference. (Lefebvre 2004 p. 6)

Here the reference to Deleuze is clear if not explicit, with the proposal of a non-metaphysical definition of the categories of difference and repetition.

In *Rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean Cities* Lefebvre also reconnect the idea of *space of representation*, the third element of what Soja will call trialectics, with the rhythms.

Thus public space, the space of representation, becomes 'spontaneously' a place for walks and encounters, intrigues, diplomacy, deals and negotiations - it theatricalises itself. Thus the time and the rhythms of the people who occupy this space are linked back to space. (Lefebvre 2004 p. 96)

It seems to suggest that space theatricalises itself through the rhythms. A hypothesis which should not be hard to accept. We can also add that space, through the rhythms, becomes public.

1.3.3 Limen

[ATLAS: 2.41; 2.42; 2.44; 2.45; 2.48; 2.50]

Kershaw in *The Politics of Performance* relies on Schechner and on Turner's classical studies to connect notions such as *entertainment* (that we can also split into *spectacle* and *performance*), *spectatorship*, *location*, and *liminal*.

So the precise nature of the audience's role will vary. However, the anthropologist Victor Turner (who worked with Schechner) has pointed out that in some respects the role is always similar to that experienced by participants in ritual. It is a liminal role, in that it places the participant 'betwixt and between' more permanent social roles and modes of awareness.

[...]

Hence it is a ludic role (or frame of mind) in the sense that it enables the spectator to participate in playing around with the norms, customs, regulations, laws, which govern her life in society (Turner 1982:11). Thus, the ludic role of spectator turns performance into a kind of ideological experiment in which the outcome has no necessary consequence for the audience. Paradoxically, this is the first condition needed for performance efficacy. (Kershaw 2002 pp. 23–24)

This is precisely what we mean when we say that the representational space is where the symbolic order is at our disposal and we can actually *play* with it.

To Lefebvre, heterotopy seem to have the character of Limen:

Compared with the countryside, the town retained its heterotopic character, marked by its ramparts as well as the transition to suburban areas (Lefebvre 2003 p. 11)

What is it that makes such a place different? Its heterotopy: a difference that marks it by situating it (situating itself) with respect to the initial place. This difference can extend from a highly marked contrast all the way to conflict, to the extent that the occupants of a place are taken into consideration. These places are relative to one another in the urban complex. This assumes the existence of a neutral element, which can consist of the incision-suture of juxtaposed places: street, square, intersection (intersection of streets and paths), garden, park. (Lefebvre 2003 p. 38)

Lefebvre's is an implicit response to Foucault, as noted also by Neil Smith in his introduction to *The Urban Revolution*:

His discussion of heterotopy clearly engages Foucault. Where Foucault's heterotopias are evoked almost randomly in relation to time and space—cemeteries, malls, rugs, brothels, colonies, gardens—Lefebvre envisaged heterotopias in a more critical register, rooting them in a sense of political and historical deviance from social norms. The archetypal heterotopias for Lefebvre are the places of renegade commercial exchange, politically and geographically independent from the early political city: caravansaries, fairgrounds, suburbs. (p. xii)

It is almost impossible to avoid thinking about Jane Jacobs's *Curse for Border Vacuums*, because to Jacobs these *vacuums* (which are not at all empty) are created not because of the nature of the neighbouring

areas, but in the sutures between homogeneous areas where a single function overwhelmingly prevails. So it is natural to find these *vacuums* – and hence these existing or potential heterotopias – at the borders of stadiums, railways, highways, large residential areas, as transition passage areas toward other functions, and these areas will be all the wider the more extended or intense the homogeneity of the areas sharing this border will be. For this border is not a boundary, but a space, indeed a *fault line* in which this space can be produced.

Then it is possible to describe this homogeneity of functions as homogeneity of rhythms, and these border areas – areas, not edges – as changes of rhythm from one function to another.

Jane Jacobs was surely not concerned about the existence of boundaries *per se*. On the contrary, she insisted for a clear and evident distinction and separation between private and public spaces. The challenge was indeed to *multiply* these borders.

Multiplying diversity means multiplying the *limen*, *spraying* smaller, hence easier to cross, liminal areas all over the city.

But the *limen* is also in relation to *mimesis*. This is the reason why Girard says there is no difference between the “rites of passage” and other types of rites.

Il n’y a donc aucune différence entre les rites dits de passage et les autres. Le modèle qui sert à perpétuer le statu quo est aussi le modèle du changement qui, de toute façon, doit ramener le même. Il faut toujours rejouer la crise, en fin de compte, pour accoucher à nouveau de la résolution pacificatrice et ordonnatrice. (Girard 1978 p. 38)

Liminal is the sacred belt of the *Pomerium*³³, an area on both side of the Roman city walls, with a number of prescriptions associated to it, related to buildings but also to dressing, weapons, burial, cultivation, corporal punishments, and administration of justice.

It was a peculiar type of space of which it is now hard to grasp the exact sense and functions. As a matter of

³³ «Unlike the Greek city, where the wall was often an afterthought, the Roman city began with such a wall; and the city, partly for religious, partly for utilitarian, reasons, took the form of a rectangle, setting the standard pattern for the overnight camp the Roman legionary later dug for himself.

fact, even the ancient Romans had lost its original meaning, but they preserved its rituals.

Agamben, who has extensively discussed the category of *camp* (campo), briefly discusses this figure in *The Kingdom and The Glory* (Agamben *et al.* 2011).

This *limen* is in connection with excluding inclusion as much as with what is *inside* as with what is *outside*.

It is the *No man’s land*, and this is the space of transformation.

Maciocco and Tagliagambe (2009), also on the base of the studies of La Cecla, identify the intermediate space, or third space, as a communication space which is changed by practice from its original nature of barrier into a space of communication, as well as with a productive use of the *misunderstanding*.

«becomes “intermediate space,” precisely because it is through the initial misinterpretation, and the misunderstanding that is a result of it, that the differences, the various ways of seeing the world and the variety of styles of thought are defined. In the space of the encounter/clash the misunderstanding becomes a stimulus and occasion for translation of languages, a sort of compromise aimed at achieving understanding» (Maciocco & Tagliagambe 2009 p. 138)

This process takes time and opens what the authors recognize as the “space of the project,” concept already explored by Tagliagambe and used to indicate a time interval between the stimulus and the response. During this time the subject selects the stimuli and reprocesses them for the application of the projected action. Apparently when this time interval, internal to the subject’s mind, moves into society it becomes a spatial interval.

Our position is that theatrical practice can promote and accelerate this process by providing a seemingly common language to practice in this intermediate space, opening it, in fact, also through what we have called *misunderstanding*, or expanding it.

When this happens in liminal or unsanctioned spaces, the process speed is greater because of the lack of

From this religious definition of the city possibly sprang another feature, the *pomerium*, a sacred belt inside and outside the wall, where no buildings might be placed. The military advantage of this practice for the defenders of the city may have added extra force to the religious sanction.» (Mumford 1961 p. 206)

ideological prejudices on the symbolic function of the space. Under certain circumstances those prejudices could even be rather positive, because the symbolic function of space is considered at disposal of the subject/group.

Mubi-Brighenti calls this space *interstice*:

The interstice as a void space within a substance (Lavoiser 1793; Baudrillard 1975) can therefore refer to notions of porosity (Marx 1886 [1863]), permeability (De Certeau 1980), infiltration and passage (Bhabha 1994), interval (Barthes 1970; Virilio 1984; Cache 1995; Zardini 1997), spacing (Gaudin 1992; Tschumi 1993), transition, threshold and border (De Certeau 1980; Remy 1986). Interstices are also often associated with the idea of fault (jaille) (Foucault 1966), fissure (Chenet-Faugeras 1994), slit, hole, opening, breach or, in this vein, crack, crevice, cavity or cranny (Thrasher 1927). In addition to its spatial character, the interstice refers to a temporal dimension. (Mubi Brighenti 2013)

1.3.4 Mimesis

«L'homme diffère des autres animaux en ce qu'il est le plus apte à l'imitation.» With that quote from Aristotle Poetics, René Girard opens his famous *Des choses cachées depuis la fondation du monde* (1978). Very ambitious title indeed, but this is the book in which Girard finally exposes and develops his theory of mimesis almost fully.

Almost, because although Girard's hypothesis may still sound extreme, it is possible that following his polemic targets he has failed to consider all its implications. As the core of his thought are the strategic target of deciphering and de-structuring Christian tradition and culture, and the ideas on the role of the victim, on sacrifice, on the control of violence, the idea of mimesis and of mimetic mechanisms, the analysis of which occupies a large part of the book, appears to be a secondary aspect.

But the mimetic desire to be fully understood and to be integrated in the network of similar intuitions by other philosophers and scientist needs to be consid-

ered as a *desire without object*, namely: only the mimetic, the desire of mimesis itself should be put at the foundation of the system.

Violence is one of the things which can be imitated and is certainly the most dangerous for the surviving of an organized society, but it has not a special, ontological or anthropological character which makes it more desirable than any other human activity.

Aristotle's full quote, in George Whalley's English translation, says:

«To imitate is, even from childhood, part of man's nature (and man is different from the other animals in that he is extremely imitative and makes his first steps in learning through imitation); and so is the pleasure we all take in copies of things - as we can tell from experience, for there are things that we find painful to look at in real life - misshapen animals, for example, or corpses - and yet we take pleasure in looking at the most accurate images of them.» (1997 p. 57, Part II, 5-10)

The Greek word *μμητικώτατον* is translated here as *extremely imitative*, but since it is the superlative of *μμητικός*, we have to consider Girard's translation as absolutely correct.

Nevertheless, being man the most imitative of all animals or simply extremely imitative, what is clear is that the idea of pleasure of imitation *per se* was present from the beginning of the research on theatre.

Lefebvre was very aware of the ontological meaning of mimesis.

We are confronted by a double surface, a double appearance which is governed by a single law and a single reality, that of reflection/refraction. The maximum difference is contained in every difference, even a minimal one. 'Every form belongs to the subject. It is the apprehension of the surface by the mirror.'

If we wanted to believe in an autonomous and neutral genesis of scientific progress and scientific discoveries, such as the very idea of mirror neurons, we could be surprised by the insightfulness of that statement, which is indeed based on a fragment by Friedrich Nietzsche³⁴. Reflection, or refraction, here becomes the

³⁴ The cited Nietzsche's fragment is referred to as «Friedrich Nietzsche, *Das Philosophenbuch/Le livre du philosophe* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1969), fragment 120, p. 118.»

only reality on which other spatial and temporal entities are built.

By thus engendering surface, image and mirror, reflection pierces the surface and penetrates the depths of the relationship between repetition and difference. Duplication (symmetry) implies repetition, yet it also gives rise to a difference constitutive of a space. It should not be conceived of on the model of numerical iteration (1 and 1 and 1, etc.), nor on that of serial recurrence. Rather the opposite: duplication and symmetry/asymmetry call for causal notions irreducible to classical (serial and linear) ideas. When the mirror is 'real', as is constantly the case in the realm of objects, the space in the mirror is imaginary - and (cf. Lewis Carroll) the locus of the imagination is the 'Ego'. In a living body, on the other hand, where the mirror of reflection is imaginary, the effect is real - so real, indeed, that it determines the very structure of the higher animals. (1991 pp. 181-182)

The implicit quotation of an author is a standard procedure for Lefebvre, in this case referencing Deleuze and his *Difference and Repetition*, useful here to illustrate the continuity between duplication and repetition, which to Lefebvre means also continuity between duplication and rhythm, and the peculiar nature of rhythm generating at the same time, the space and the subject.

As he adds in the note to the text above,

The interest and importance of the mirror derives not, therefore, from the fact that it projects the 'subject's' (or Ego's) image back to the 'subject' (or Ego), but rather from the fact that it extends a repetition (symmetry) immanent to the body into space. The Same (Ego) and the Other thus confront each other, as alike as it is possible to imagine, all but identical, yet differing absolutely, for the image has no density, no weight.

And what is interesting to us is that the idea of mirroring applies not only to objects and actual mirrors, but also to movement:

One truly gets the impression that every shape in space, every spatial plane, constitutes a mirror and produces a mirage effect; that within each body the rest of the world is reflected, and referred back to, in an ever-renewed to-and-fro of reciprocal reflection, an interplay of shifting colours, lights and forms. A mere change of position,

or a change in a place's surroundings, is enough to precipitate an object's passage into the light: what was covert becomes overt, what was cryptic becomes limpidly clear. A movement of the body may have a similar goal. (1991 p. 183)

Which means to Lefebvre «the point of intersection of the two sensory fields, » one connected to the natural space and the other to the social space. One to be lived, the other to be *deciphered*. «Where natural space exists, and even more so where social space exists, the movement from obscurity to enlightenment - the process of decipherment - is perpetual. » And this "movement to light," which should be taken quite literally as the movement of bodies into space, may be the body facing me or the movement of my body facing an object, the changing of light giving shape to the objects, as in a painting by Picasso or Braque: happening «not in an arbitrary manner but according to a specific sequence, order or articulation.» This is a reference to the symbolic order implied in a process of deciphering but, as Lefebvre specifies: «Space - my space - is not the context of which I constitute the 'textuality': instead, it is first of all my body, and then it is my body's counterpart or 'other', its mirror-image or shadow: it is the shifting intersection between that which touches, penetrates, threatens or benefits my body on the one hand, and all other bodies on the other. » (1991 p. 184)

Being a strict materialist, Lefebvre is careful about not confusing the deepness of the symbolic with the arbitrary nature of a *text*. So he tries to describe the whole process as a physical interaction with its *natural* rules and structure, and this is why he calls both the natural *and* social spaces "sensory fields." But the mirror is *the point of intersection* between the two, keeping the scheme triadic.

Indeed, from that moment on, Lefebvre turns his reflection to poets, such as Tzara, Bataille and Eluard who *reflected* on the ambiguous nature of mirrors, who just confront us with the deep morass of the symbolic. And leaving out all further interpretation about the natural, physical, and/or psychological nature of the symbolic order (notably in his excursus Lefebvre cites Althusser, Baudrillard,³⁵ and Lacan as

³⁵ As a personal note related to that, I just can remember how my grandmother, born in 1911, called the big mirror in her bedroom. She called it "The Temptation".

examples of incomplete reflections on the meaning of the mirror, and notes that this topic is «Oddly absent from Bachelard's *La poetique de l'espace*»), here we can argue that mirroring in itself is the symbolic order. A symbolic order without any content, any symbol, possibly without any *archetype*.

Girard, that conceded that Shakespeare saw so many things about nature of the conflicts between men better than philosophers, should have conceded also that he was so true about mimesis as well.

Hamlet:

Suit the action to the word, the word to the action, with this special observance, that you o'erstep not the modesty of nature: for any thing so o'erdone is from the purpose of playing, whose end, both at the first and now, was and is, to hold as 'twere the mirror up to nature: to show virtue her feature, scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure.

(Hamlet Act 3, scene 2, 17-24)

The spectator mimics the actor, as well as the nature imitates theatre recognising the truth of mimesis. If the actor is good enough to get rid of its own ego (and that is the purpose of many ancient as well as contemporary theatres techniques), then the spectators will also lose their own, and dissolve themselves in the community (or communion).

1.3.5 Rhythmomimesis and rites of sync

If you end up in a religious procession, maybe in some of south European country where the popular religious feeling is still very strong, the rites retain an intimate character without being entirely turned into a show, you may find yourself thinking about a mythical past, or about some mythical place where the theatre was sacred.

But living in those times, in that place, you would not even dare to call that theatre in the sense you give to the term today, you would simply call it "sacred." But this is what is happening to the participants to the procession, and at least partially to you.

The more we are culturally close to understand the motivations driving its participants, the less we are willing to consider the procession as a performance.

A *processional performance* in which, through synchronization and other psychological devices, the community tries to establish and consolidate itself.

Here perhaps we have to look at Girard's work on Mimesis, but in a new sense which is no more anthropological or sociological, but ontological. Recognizing the principle of mimesis as a founding one, probably the founding one, we might make sense of what seems to be this always dislocated, absent-centred subject.

«Girard's emphasis on imitation must not be understood in the superficial sense of the term, however. His theory is not an anthropological caricature of human beings, portraying them as a merely imitative species, but rather a description of the fundamental—if not extreme—openness of humans to others.» (Palaver 2013 p. 36)

But here the idea is to look at mimesis even at a much smaller scale. The scale of the ceremonial rite where the structure of mimesis itself is represented.

Some synchronization takes place in all forms of ritual, through repetition, whether in temporal and/or spatial form. Rhythm and mimesis coincide in the rite, and mimesis operates before and beyond the level of the sacred, and of course before and beyond the level of the subject.

In the space created by the ritual – or to say it better through that space, or even better in the production of that space – what we experience is a sense of community encompasses inter-subjectivity.

It was indeed the original separation of the idea of the subject which allowed us to perceive the community and the world as separated and external, and to separate time from space as two separate entities.

The sphere of the subject is hence perceived as inscribed in the sphere of the community, which is in its turn inscribed in the world. The community hence assumes the character of *limen*, and again, of a space of representation. This sense of community as a state of transition is indeed related to what Victor Turner (1977) and, later, Edith Turner (2012) called *Communitas*. The latter also uses the term "alignment" to describe this state, or "shift," as in the description of an African Tumbuka ritual drumming:

The whole becomes an entirely different, stand-out acoustical apparition, showing the spirit presence itself. It gives a sudden sense of expansion that bears a terrific charge of energy, heat, and glory, real, not other-worldly but of this world—belonging to the time and space of the world we occupy. One does not have to believe it—the spirit is simply there. The music has slipped the people out from one level into another, by means of a this-world pattern that uses many things at once with great subtlety. Something in people can accomplish this. When we are in that moment, it is pure joy. The shift has taken place.

In this context, we can call our tactic of interaction with the community *theatre*. Not the impossible task to act as a community, because, in Nancy's terms, the Act itself is something which defines the subject, and the community should be described as *inoperative* (Nancy 1991). The person is shifted from *acting* to *gesture* and experience the *ecstasy of the community*.

A psychological explanation trying to keep the idea of the subject alive, while substantially transforming it from "interactive" to "interpassive" comes from Žižek who revisits the Lacanian idea of a "subject supposed to know," considering it like a special case of a more general "subject supposed to believe."

In a 1998 lecture at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, he explained the concept as follow:

There are some beliefs, the most fundamental ones, which are from the very outset "decentered" beliefs of the Other; the phenomenon of the "subject supposed to believe" is thus universal and structurally necessary. From the very outset, the speaking subject displaces his or her belief onto the big Other qua the order of pure semblance, so that the subject never "really believed in it"; from the very beginning, the subject refers to some decentered other to whom he or she imputes this belief. All concrete versions of this "subject supposed to believe" (from small children for whose sake parents pretend to believe in Santa Claus to the "ordinary working people" for whose sake Communist intellectuals pretend to believe in Socialism) are stand-ins for the big Other. (Žižek 1998)

While introducing this concept in *How to Read Lacan*, he uses a quote from the French psychiatrist which very appropriate in our context:

And what is a Chorus? You will be told that it's you yourselves. Or perhaps that it isn't you. But that's not the point. Means are involved here, emotional means. In my view, the Chorus is people

who are moved. Therefore, look closely before telling yourself that emotions are engaged in this purification. They are engaged, along with others, when at the end they have to be pacified by some artifice or other. But that doesn't mean to say that they are directly engaged. On the one hand, they no doubt are, and you are there in the form of a material to be made use of; on the other hand, that material is also completely indifferent. When you go to the theatre in the evening, you are preoccupied by the affairs of the day, by the pen that you lost, by the check that you will have to sign the next day. You shouldn't give yourselves too much credit. Your emotions are taken charge of by the healthy order displayed on the stage. The Chorus takes care of them. The emotional commentary is done for you. (Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, p. 247, cit. in Žižek 2007 p. 22)

What about the people who participates to the ritual without any internal motivation, but only respecting the formal dispositive?

Even «the subject who maintains his distance towards the ritual is unaware of the fact that the ritual already dominates him from within.» (Žižek 2008 p. 5)

What is worse is that if we leave a man without his mimetic references within his community, his solution will be to look for them further, perhaps in the media or in fashion, in remote, fragmentary and uncertain models.

This tendency is translated, in Lefebvre's terms, into the difference between *present* and *presence*.

The processes of subjectivation can indeed happen into virtual communities which still have positive impact on the development of social fabric and of the city, but only when they are able to get their *feet on the ground*, joining or forming real communities of physical proximity, which is luckily often the case.

A critical catalyst for the formation of crowds, as Elias Canetti has explained, is physical touch, whereas for collectives it is being in touch: a distracted but persistent form of communication through various digital protocols and platforms on the Internet that is sustained through short messages, images, and perpetual links with "friends," "followers," and "visitors." These two groupings have separate existences but can act together in complex choreographies that architects continue to explore. (Khan 2015 pp. 127–128)

This kind of imitation, of mimesis again, relies not on content, but on structure (can we say on form?). That is to say, on rhythm.

Marketing strategies exploit these kinds of mechanisms to sell the same kind of shoes around the world, or the same motorcycle. They do the same today, also when they create events to gather all the buyers of a certain brand or commodity. They generate a compulsive behaviour with the hypnotic cycle of stimulus and response, both in the spatial and in the temporal perspectives, showing the mimesis as a ruling principle with no qualitative properties.

It is through rhythms that this model establishes itself. Would it be its (trinity: activity-repose-entertainment) triadic character that confers generality upon it? Perhaps: it would be a paradigm of old rhythms edified on a physiological basis, which is to say the human body. Needs and desires produce themselves in the interaction. (Lefebvre 2004 p. 41)

A consequence of this is the difficulty in distinguishing real spaces from virtual spaces, when virtual space itself becomes innervated. Moreover, if there were positive ethical qualities inherent in performative activity, these should result from what Lefebvre calls *eurythmia*, meaning compliance with man's biological rhythm. This can be observed in traditional rituals, which reflect the natural orders of the seasons, the sun or the stars on self-similarity scales, ensuring synchronisation of communities and harmony of the individual. In technology society, however, it remains to be demonstrated that technology itself cannot be innervated so that a new *eurythmia* is built. In this case, harmony of the individual would be nothing more than that same synchronisation with community, built on an arbitrary rhythm.

This is what is seen in the rituals of the mass dictatorships of the Twentieth century, which show that the ritual of the body performance does not need *eurythmy* to be effective but is most probably founded solely on *mimesis* as an *empty* principle. [ATLAS: 2.8]

1.3.6 Form and Event

To use the categories of form and event is quite different than to use the classical categories of form and substance or substance and accident.

Already at the first glance, confronting these three pairs we see that event shall correspond to accident in the third pair, but it should also correspond to form in the second, as it is confronted with substance. Indeed, the substance is not the form, because it indicates something which should be behind and above the accident, while the form is something which is *given* to the event, as a category, even when it is found in the event, that still needs a category to be recognised as a form.

Substance is derived from Greek ὑποκείμενον (*hypokeimenon*), meaning literally "what is underneath," while in the categories of form and event there is little or no space for the "underneath."

The distinction between substance and accident, of course, descends from the Aristotelian tradition, but in Aristotle's terms, indeed, form should also be opposed to *matter* and not to *event*.

Per-form-ance is to give form, or the event of *giving* form. So, we can consider it – in a trialectical fashion, as the third element *proceeding* from event to form *and vice versa* – the vice versa should be the form of the project to the realization, from strategical to tactical plans, from the *conceived* to the *lived* through the *representation*.

Spectacle, experience, mimesis, all these words as well as performance share the fact of having a double meaning. Spectacle is the *bad* spectacle of Debord's vision, as well as performance itself. The two experiences are the lived one and the shareable one – *Erlebnis* and *Erfahrung* in Benjamin's lexicon, while mimesis indicates both imitation and identification – the *mimesis of appropriation*, in Girard's terms.

But the pleasure of spectacle – the semi-erotic pleasure of the spectacle deriving from the *mise en scène* of an imitation of life – reveals the *truth* of imitation as the formal content of the aesthetic experience. In

this phenomenon we can recognize a character of the *intelligence of the body* to which Lefebvre referred³⁶.

It was philosopher and philologist Carlo Diano who introduced the categories of form and event to explain some apparent contradiction and interpretation problems that arise studying Greek literature.

Beside the Aristotelian syllogism which belongs to the realm of form, grounded on the necessity of the concepts, he describes the far less known Stoic syllogism, which is based on facts happening right now. A different system of logic built on that basis flourished in the Hellenistic civilization. Although Aristotle's formal system appeared to be triumphant again from the Middle Ages on, the spirit of the form is still operating underground in European languages and culture. So while his first book on that topic, *Forma ed evento* (Form and Event) (Diano 1967), was dedicated entirely to the ancient Greek world, later on Diano realised that the power of these conceptual tools would allow them to be applied to almost any cultural expression of the western world, and he began to explore in that sense with his following *Linee per una fenomenologia dell'arte* (Lines for a Phenomenology of the Art) (Diano 1956). Unfortunately, his works have never been translated into English, and they are also out of print in Italian. Now the time has come for his rediscovery and I have first-hand information of prominent scholars preparing an English edition, which will surely draw attention to this incredible thinker on a global level.

1.4 Specificity of Performing Practices

De Certeau gives a long excursus on the difficulties of legitimating knowledge made of arts or practices.

If every research implies a method which is a practice, why are the only practices recognized as "science" the ones which stick to a discursive structure?

The frontier thus no longer separates two hierarchized bodies of knowledge, the one speculative, the other linked to particulars, the

one concerned with reading the order of the world and the other coming to terms with the details of things within the framework set up for it by the first; rather it sets off practices articulated by discourse from those that are not (yet) articulated by it. (p. 65)

We can focus on that (*yet*) in brackets. It cleverly indicates that we allow access to knowledge only to the practices we can adapt to the discursive practice, and that, given enough time, our system of knowledge tends to reduce every practice to that "articulated discourse."

Unfortunately, spatial-based practices, as well as mimetic practices, are very unlikely to fit into the "discourse" as an argumentative dialectical time structure.

We can find a similar intuition in Ricoeur – whereas Ricoeur's aim is investigating the origin of our notion of time, the Twentieth-century one, that is the time of consciousness, of romance and novel.

Theatre, on the contrary, presents the immanent conflict both as simultaneous and ephemeral. Artaud's intuition that 'Theatre has nothing to do with the text' goes in this direction.

Unable to present the immanent conflict, the "discourse" needs, by its structure, to solve it and transform it into a story.

We shall not be fooled into thinking that we can find a *confirmation* of this idea in Artaud or other in contemporary theatre masters. It is actually the other way around. Through contemporary philosophy, nowadays we are *articulating* the intuitions which required staging to be translated *into the discursive practice*. Artaud, who was a writer, after all, was the first to move towards this articulation. This does not imply that his insights have (yet) been completely articulated.

For example, this intuition passed from Artaud to Francastel to Lefebvre, and in other ways from the same Artaud to Bataille, to Blanchot, to Derrida. But an even more interesting (and less explored) line goes from Artaud to Bataille to Nancy. In the introduction

locus of potentiality. For, long before the analysing, separating intellect, long before formal knowledge, there was an intelligence of the body. » (Lefebvre 1991 p. 174)

³⁶ Although he situates it in a mythical time before (or elsewhere from) the separation of time and space: «Long before space emerged as a medium of far-off possibilities, as the

of *The Inoperative Community* Nancy cites a passage from Bataille:

If I "mimic" absolute knowledge, I am at once, of necessity, God myself (in the system, there can be no knowledge, not even in God, which goes beyond absolute knowledge). The thought of this self -of ipse- could only make itself absolute by becoming everything. [...] But if in this way, as if by contagion and by mime, I accomplish in myself Hegel's circular movement, I define-beyond the limits attained-no longer an unknown, but an unknowable (Nancy 1991 p. 5)

Here Bataille, and Nancy after him, introduces the word "contagion," referred to this "mime" of absolute knowledge. Contagion is (not) incidentally is the same word used by Peter Brook to define the "magic" of theatre.

In Nancy/Bataille version, we could "hold the mirror" not only to nature but also to the impossible, that is the «absolute knowledge». As the unknowable takes shape mimicking knowledge, and the impossible becomes a reality through imitation.

Individuation detaches closed off entities from a formless ground-whereas only communication, contagion, or communion constitute the being of individuals (Nancy 1991 p. 27)

And as well Nancy, following Bataille, insists on that "contagion" they both exclude it from their conclusions. Even if the two authors diverge at a certain point, when Nancy is approaching the "sacred".

Hence the the inoperative community is to be found in the vicinity of the "sacred," it is only inasmuch as the "unleashing of passions" is not the free doing of a subjectivity and freedom is not self-sufficiency. (Up to a certain point, Bataille failed to recognize to what extent a very classical and very subjective concept of freedom weighed on his thought.) But the "unleashing of passions" is of the order of what Bataille himself often designated as "contagion," another name for "communication." What is communicated, what is contagious, and what, in this manner - and only in this manner - is "unleashed," is the passion of singularity as such. (Nancy 1991 p. 32)

Mimesis here, presented in the form of "contagion", is still considered as a means, probably because it is not recognisable as a "substance", which cannot be. The mimetic action is in fact almost the opposite of a substance. For that reason, it appears to Bataille, and

Nancy, as a sort of *pathological* substance (contagion). But as long as we are looking for substances, it would be very hard to find a definition of mimesis. The maximum we can find, and what is attained by Nancy, is the comeback of the old idea of *clinamen*.

Singularity never takes place at the level of atoms, those identifiable if not identical identities; rather it takes place at the level of the *clinamen* which is unidentifiable. (Nancy 1991 p. 6)

Clinamen is the most exact name that we can give to the – under that system, still unidentifiable – event of mimesis.

Coming back to De Certeau, one thing which is easy to forget is his religious perspective. A perspective which never abandons him, offering a safe ontological harbour to come back to under any circumstance.

But the quasi-mystical meaning of community which we can find in De Certeau is close to the "Ecstasy of community" of which we can read in Jean Luc Nancy.

Nancy's approach has indeed many advantages and appears to be more appealing on a philosophical basis, or at least on the basis of philosophical debate, being instituted in a language which is more conventional and accepted, also for the argumentation style.

The advantage of De Certeau's approach, instead, is that it allows not only to reduce subjects to the common, but to fragment those subjects into practices, not caring, and perhaps underlining the fact, of the internal incoherence of the subject.

Thus, analysing practices and not the subject or communities, we could find the proper space of the clinamen.

Incidentally, clinamen is a word of Nancy's vocabulary, and not of De Certeau's: «Still, one cannot make a world with simple atoms. There has to be a clinamen» (Nancy 1991 p. 3).

The reason should be obvious: the epicurean physics should not fit the vision of the religious man.

What this clinamen is about and what are - if there are any - the rules and regularities in the clinamen is still to be discovered. Here we can at least conclude that it must be connected to the community.

If we wanted to forget about looking for substances, then we could see a world in which there is nothing

but mimesis and action. Which occur in the form of repetition (and difference – or *clinamen*), or in the form of “contagion”.

If this is possible to think, it is because theatre itself is at the base of our current paradigms. But this is also the reason why it is so difficult to define it.

1.4.1 Art & the Street

But for Lefebvre, the road should not simply be a means of passage and circulation, but is central to social and urban life. The road is a meeting place, and both links up the other meeting places such as cafes and halls and makes them possible. These meeting places animate the street, which is a spontaneous theatre, where we are both spectator and spectacle. The street has an informative function, a symbolic function, a ludic function. (Elden 2004 p. 145)

In my research I have been interested as little as possible in “Gallery art,” and in the so-called “art system,” and as much as possible in art having a popular character. That is, art which really happens to engage a casual audience, or an audience of non-experts. Nevertheless, this popular character happens to be also present in institutionalized “high art” more often than I was keen to believe, and some of the examples where taken into account (as is the case of Christo and Jeanne Claude’s works or certain works by Thomas Hirschhorn).

The general question is: Why do planners turn to artists so often when making projects of “urban regeneration?” When there is to give “new life” to a neighbourhood, to dismissed industrial areas, squares, buildings or parts of them?

Public art is linked to emotional connection to places and thus, to placemaking.

Architects and urban planners often look at public art for its role in regeneration, activation, reactivation, and transformation of - not only public or open - places.

The environment, its physical systems, ecologies, and constructed settings for events no longer define the image of the city, but rather that is determined by its “image dimension,” what a 2012 World Bank report identified as “the totality of perceptions, experiences and feeling that people hold about that city to ensure that it is as distinctive, compelling and memorable as possible.”³⁷ Today’s policy-makers construct an image of the city as a marketable “brand” in order to garner international attention, attract tourism revenue, and solicit global investment. Indicative of how globalization and urban entrepreneurialism operate, a host of cultural representations of a city’s values and identity conveyed through public art events and signature buildings are produced and circulated widely in print and online media. A city’s image dimension is neither spatial nor experiential but predicated upon the aesthetic aspect of marketable symbolic representations that circulate within the global streams of information, media, and data. The influences of globalization operate not only upon urban economic restructuring, but also upon the symbolic production of the image of the city. (Wilson & Gooden 2015 p. 106)

But art is not only about placemaking: it is about *production of space*.

In Italian there is no good translation for “Performing Arts.” We could use the (rather ugly) “arti performative,” but usually we render that expression as “arti dello spettacolo” (arts of spectacle) or “spettacoli dal vivo” (live spectacle). But the connotation of the term spectacle is, after Debord, completely compromised. The city as a theatre is not (only) the place of spectacle, that is to say: of the “experience economy,” following Pine and Gilmore’s definition (1999), that would feed the needs of the World Bank, or the place of the Disneyization of Society (Bryman 1999).

Nicholas Whybrow, referring to Lefebvrian concept of production of space uses the expression: «the city can be said to be performing itself into being» (Whybrow 2005 p. 23) where the word “performance” means action, as in Latin and English actor (Italian: *attore*). In this ambivalence between action and spectacle we can find the trace of the juxtaposition of the two

³⁷ See the World Bank’s definition of the city brand. The report also notes that along with planning infrastructures, urban planners should manage the “intangible dimensions” of a city’s image. See Dr. Belinda Yuen, *Directions in Urban Development* (Washington, DC: Urban and Resilience Unit, The

World Bank), December 2012, <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/2012/12/18257092/city-brand>. (Geiger 2015)

terms of “use value” and “exchange value” made by Lefebvre.

«Oeuvre is use value and the product is exchange value,» as it is clearly stated in *Right to the City* (Lefebvre 1996 p. 66).

In performing arts what is at stake, together with the spectacle, is the possibility of creating non-economic relationships. In other words, something is at work, and something is *not* working. Some part of the performance (and of the city) should be *inoperative*.

«The separation of performance activities from productive work is a most interesting, and unifying, factor of play, games, sports, theater, and ritual. What J. Huizinga and Roger Caillois say about play applies to all performative genres³⁸.» (Schechner 2012 p. 9)

I am convinced that what has to be taken into account is the ability of art to operate as an *event*, fitting in (or creating) liminal places and acting as a “constituent power.” If that is true, then there would be no reason not to rely only on the power of performing arts to achieve this scope and, I argue, this choice will bring many advantages.

Here I will try to understand what the mechanisms are – although this word is probably wrong – which make this process possible.

Music (including recorded music) and plays also serve as demand goods. It is curious that relatively little is done with these in parks, because the casual introduction of cultural life is part of the historic mission of cities. It is a mission that can still operate full force. (Jacobs 1961 p. 109)

The scope of bringing art, even high art, on the city streets was already clear since the first *dada* performances, before the situationist realized that the urban environment had to become an object of the performance and not only its stage.

As Breton writes in *Artificial Hells*, the text which also gives the title to Claire Bishop’s book: «We imagined guiding our public to places in which we could hold their attention better than in a theater, because the very fact of going there entails a certain goodwill on their part.» (Breton 2003)

Psychogeography and derive will then become central concepts, and disorientation a central feature of the situationist city, in the quest for a *Unitary Urbanism* (Sadler 1998), proposals which must have sounded more like oddness than utopias even at the time.

«Leaving aside representation, ornamentation and decoration, art can become praxis and poesis on a social scale: the art of living in the city as work of art.» (Lefebvre 1996 p. 173)

When Lefebvre calls the city “Oeuvre,” his Marxist lexicon may have been influenced by the expression “classe ouvrière,” that is the working class, which, in Marx’s terms, was the natural subject of the revolutionary mission. In a lesser known article appeared in “L’Homme et la société” in 1971, titled *La classe ouvrière est-elle révolutionnaire?*, Lefebvre proposes the question which must have sounded like blasphemy (something of which he is aware, and quick to propose in some less brutal formulation).

What Lefebvre is pointing out is that intellectuals and politicians should look no more at the *ouvrière* as merely the factory worker, but as the *bringer of the negative*, the element of contradiction which can drive social change or even the «destruction of the existent,» and that character was not exclusive of the working class anymore.

«Marx part d’une identité entre classe ouvrière et négativité d’un côté la négativité étant conçue de façon hégélienne,» Lefebvre notes, and «La classe ouvrière est universelle en tant qu’elle porte l’identité du négatif, c’est-à-dire de la capacité radicale de destruction de l’existant et du positif, de la capacité de construire un autre monde entièrement nouveau» (Lefebvre 1971 p. 150), that is a big deal.

The focus should then be shifted, or broadened – being the two inextricably linked – from the relations of production to the reproduction of social relations:

les rapports sociaux ne se produisent et ne se reproduisent pas seulement dans le lieu social où la classe ouvrière agit, pense, se localise, c’est-à-dire l’entreprise. Ils se reproduisent sur le marché au sens le plus large, dans la vie quotidienne, dans la famille, dans la ville ; ils se reproduisent aussi là où la plus-value globale de la société se

³⁸R. Schechner, *Performance Theory*, Routledge, New York-London, 2012, p. 9.

réalise, se répartit, se dépense, dans le fonctionnement global de la société, dans l'art, la culture, la science [...] (Lefebvre 1971 p. 152)

Calling out fields like *everyday life*, *city life*, and *art*, *culture* and *science* explicitly, he opens the door not only to acceptance of new places of social conflict, but also to new subjects and new instruments of the struggle³⁹.

C'est visible dans l'analyse du phénomène urbain et de ses contradictions internes puisqu'il est simultanément aujourd'hui le lieu de la reproduction des anciens rapports sociaux, le lieu de leur décomposition, le lieu de la formation de nouveaux rapports et de leurs contradictions.

A côté de la classe ouvrière se produit une prolétarisation gigantesque qui résulte de cette vaste décomposition. Avec des éléments conflictuels nouveaux. (Lefebvre 1971 p. 153)

The city as Oeuvre thus could also mean the product of a non-alienated labour, an autonomous construction complying with the needs and desires of the non-alienated man.

This same idea is at the core of David Harvey's rethinking of the right to the city: not only the urban dimension is identified as the new space of social and class conflict, but the idea that the "working class" has been replaced by an "urban class" that inherited its relationship with the means of production and a form of life subjugated to production first and then to the abstract logic of the capital.

1.4.2 Theatre and text

Andrew Bielski, translator and curator of the English edition of Badiou's *Eloge du theatre (In Praise of Theatre)*, identifies the role of this set of writings on theatre as a "clinamen" in the otherwise systematic structure of the author's *corpus*.

In doing so, it makes clear the degree to which the theatre serves - from the early Theory of the Subject, to the in-progress The Immanence of Truths - as the diagonal for Badiou's philosophical project, sweeping across its systematic armature like

the clinamen of the ancient atomists, and animating its subjective possibilities. (Badiou & Truong 2015 p. ix)

This definition, while confirming our perception of the liminal quality of theatre among human activities, is used to explain the peculiar nature of the "idea" in Badiou. To Badiou, the idea is something partly transcendent and partly immanent, and this is the reason why theatre should be regarded as the perfect instrument of truth. Theatre is a place where truth is revealed, as Badiou would put it, or – as someone else could say – a place where truth is produced, because something *happens*, coming from another dimension, the dimension of transcendence.

It is not relevant to our scope to guess if this is an «evental emergence of artistic truth» (p. XII) or a place where truth can be realized as event, or something else. This would be too a subtle distinction for our trivial scope.

More interesting to us is the relation of this idea, or evental emergence, with the *text*, which Badiou still considers an essential part of theatre.

Being the theatre home of "the truth" or not (and in whatever sense), the idea of the text as the symbolic order is not worthless. And this is not in opposition to the Derridean idea of "archiscripture." It is easy to guess that when Badiou talks about a theatrical text, there is no reason for it to be a written text.

Badiou's insistence on the necessity of the text – that is, to separate everyday theatre from Theatre – resonates with his militant attitude as a philosopher. In our terms and for our purpose, it means not cancelling the theatrical nature of everyday theatre, but asking for planned and staged actions which rely on a coherent symbolic order including the possibility of the event as something extraordinary.

the notion of the "spect-actor" in Augusto Boal's "theatre of the oppressed" is perhaps exemplary, though this notion is also central to the phenomenon of the Happening, the work of companies such as the Living Theatre, and a good deal of contemporary site-specific theatre. (Bielski 2015 p. XX)

³⁹ Lefebvre's polemical target in this article was the so-called workerist current of Marxism (operaismo).

Most of this critique raises from the aversion of that identified line of thought (descending from Artaud through the mandatory passages of Deleuze and Derrida) to the theatrical text, that is where Badiou thinks the “truth” of the theatre is. Since, in a very old fashion, a truth is there, to be discovered.

The question is that indeed there is always a text. In the sense of the archi-scripture, of course, and we can concede that in everyday theatre that should well be the text of ideology, but in a much coarse sense, talking to theatre directors, and looking at practical examples, there is always a text. Simple as it can be: an object, an argument, a conflict .

1.4.3 Everyday Theatre and Tactical Theatre

We owe Erving Goffman’s *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Goffman 1956) the idea of a social performance as a constitutive part of our associated life.

Deriving from Goffman’s work and pushing it into its last consequence, we could argue that the success of the cities as forms is not due to their economic efficiency but to their efficacy as representational spaces.

Spatial practice is defined as producing a spatiality that “embraces production and reproduction, and the particular locations (*lieux specifies*) and spatial sets (*ensembles*) characteristic of each social formation.” It “ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion” and “implies a guaranteed level of competence and a specific level of performance” (terms he borrows from linguistics but warns should not be seen as subordinating the knowledge of space to its disciplinary hegemony). The spatial practice of a society “secretes that society’s space; it propounds (*le pose*) and presupposes it (*le suppose*), in a dialectical interaction; it produces it slowly and surely as it masters and appropriates it.” Spatial practice, as the process of producing the material form of social spatiality, is thus presented as both medium and outcome of human activity, behavior, and experience. (Soja 1996 p. 66)

A “staged” street theatre can be conceived as a tactical approach to the “theatre of the everyday” of the street scene.

The theatre of the everyday is, indeed, not always tactical in the sense which De Certeau has given to the

term. It is instead involved in ideology and relationship of power and consumption so deeply that it mostly responds to a global strategy which keeps away any content or purpose to the action of the individual or the group.

Returning to an action which is not totally devoted to the logic of production, or we can say to biopolitics, is part of the tactical approach which works on the interstices of space and of society to regain (to produce) spaces of movement.

That’s the main reason why we need a text. That is not a paradox, as we will see from Badiou’s work.

1.5 From Time to Rhythm

The literature contains many examples of attempts to define a theory of the urban design pattern. From simple symmetry to the generic “harmony,” to differential repetition to fractal.

What is now necessary to point out is that these repetitions are on a continuum between the spatial and temporal scale.

Salingaros wrote in 2000:

From small man-made objects, such as sculptures, pottery and textiles, to buildings, the best examples share a particular geometrical quality. Though it is not usually viewed from this perspective, I shall argue that the form of cities and the urban fabric is also governed by the same general rules. (Salingaros 2000)

The author, giving some scientific flavour to Kevin Lynch’s intuitions about visualization, derives from the science of optics a theory of the information field of the urban environment.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to remark that information works over both space and time. In fact an idea of information is well suited to describe both urban actions and lived experience, and the built environment, as well as representations and maps, and symbolic values.

On the other side, the process of visualization presents itself as visibility – which is to say that repeated events emerge as forms and become visible. As well as a path becomes a street.

1.5.1 Neuroaesthetics

Neuro-biology discovers, from mirror neurons to the emerging field of neuro-aesthetics, nowadays seem to conform to this vision, but we should try not to be fooled or amazed by such a coincidence. Or at least we ought to consider these arguments as non-resolutive.

Attempts to trace the activities of thought, or every human activity, back to a rigid mechanical explanation existed well before the advent of modern science. This kind of approach may be filed under the name of reductionism nowadays. In any case, what we can best hope to obtain is an explanation of the mechanism not of the causes. We shall also remember that a certain scientific paradigm can emerge only when the appropriate *culture medium* is already present.

This culture medium – the order of the discourse, if one prefers – must have already shown some signs of revolution, evolution, cracking or dynamism for a new paradigm to emerge.

«By knowing more about the workings of the brain in general and of the visual brain in particular, one might be able to develop the outlines of a theory of aesthetics that is biologically based.» «It is yet more evidence to support the view that artists are unknowingly exploiting the organisation of the brain.» (Zeki 1999). These studies are mostly related to visual arts, especially in early times. In relation to performing arts, while proposing a “General Model for Neuroaesthetics,” Marin (Marin 2015) notes the special difficulties which limit the studies of perception of performing arts: «the investigation of aesthetic responses to static images of different kinds may be easier than the study of dynamic images, such as film, video art and the performing arts, and the study of dynamic art forms, such as music and poetry.» And (Calvo-Merino *et al.* 2008), in a preliminary study on performing arts, stated that «increasing knowledge of the neural mechanisms that represent the bodies and actions of others, and which contribute to empathy, make a neuroaesthetics of dance timely,» and concluded that «sensorimotor response may explain why dance is widely appreciated in so many human cultures.» For a recent and wider perspective on dance (Christensen

et al. 2017). See also (Birringer 2007) and a special issue of Dance Research journal (Vol. 29, No. 2, Winter 2011) dedicated to dance and neuroscience: «the topic of kinesthetic empathy is an example of how research from different disciplinary standpoints can stimulate debates and lead to new perspectives» (Reynolds *et al.* 2011).

1.5.2 “The pleasing shape”

[ATLAS: 2.53; 2.59]

According to Brenda Laurel (1993, 2009), who developed this concept in the field of human-computer interaction, self-similarity is the “pleasing shape,” imitating nature, that authors should pursue – following Aristoteles’s *Poetics* prescription – to get their audience’s engagement. Self-similarity is obtained through sequences of intensification and release which manifest themselves at every scale of the structure (be it a stage play, a musical composition, or a painting). Furthermore, Laurel identifies the basic model of this shape in a revised version of the curve of dramatic action notoriously proposed by Gustav Freytag. A fractal version of this curve could well represent that *pleasing shape*.

It is clear that we are talking about rhythm here, and understanding this kind of self-similar structures is what we think should be the contemporary scope of the rhythm analytical project.

But in *real life*, there is always some kind of distortion in the transmission or generation of the sequence. As Mandelbrot put it: «the theme is that much in nature is ruled by “pathology”» (Mandelbrot 1999 p. 3).

If we try to confront this apparent contradiction with Deleuze’s concepts of difference and repetition, we can argue that is the conjunction of these two elements which makes reproduction happen.

There is clearly a relation between self-similarity and life, but moving from the virtual into the real requires differentiation (Deleuze, 2001, p. 211). Differentiation could be through time, in a Bergsonian fashion, in which every instant of time is different by definition, but does understanding it that way allow us to re-join space and time through rhythm, as in Lefebvre’s pro-

posals? Perhaps we have to think of a substantial differentiation which brings repetition to life – something like what Latin poet Lucretius called the *clina-men*. But the logic consequence of this idea would be that the code to be transmitted is what we ordinarily call “noise.”

We could say that it is the repetition of the differentiation which gives his hypnotic power to rhythm, and which differentiates the rhythm from symmetry.

A noise that I would also like to call *limen* or *clinamen*. Both on a temporal or on a spatial perspective⁴⁰.

1.6 From Occupation to Production of Space

«A performance is something I can conceive of only after the Revolution; only the Revolution can offer me the artists and listeners I need». That quote from Richard Wagner, from a 1851 letter to his friend Theodor Uhlig is cited by Erika Fischer-Lichte in her chapter titled *Policies of Spatial Appropriation*, in a volume curated with Benjamin Wihstutz, titled *Performance and the Politics of Space* (Fischer-Lichte & Wihstutz 2013).

Apart from showing how far back we can go in searching the roots of revolutionary instances connected to theatre and performance, the interesting point is that the author of the essay cannot separate at any point the artists' frequent and manifested request for social transformation from the request, or the practice, of transformation of performing space, or at least the transformation of the place where the performance occurs.

So, the “spatial appropriation” of the title is the appropriation of new spaces for performance as well as an ideal of artistic freedom and the quest for a new form of experience.

The space of the project, the design, the ideal space is *conceived*, or *represented*, and it would remain a utopia if it did not “fall to earth,” while the space is *representational* where and when “the artists and the

listeners” recognize themselves and each other in the *lived* experience.

Wagner, for his part, insisted on the necessity of a “temporary theatre,” which he wished to set up along the banks of the Rhine. No need to point out the symbolic value of this proposal.

«The theatre was therefore called upon to shift the boundaries between it and other life-world domains. Its appropriation of the meadows that lined the Rhine was to be both aesthetic and political, for this freely accessible space would be turned into a “fairground” (*Festwiese*), and the individuals present transformed into members of the new festival community. » Community brings itself to life in the process of space production.

1.6.1 Performing Political Protest

[ATLAS: 2.52]

On 9 October, 2011 Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek made a famous speech to the Occupy Wall Street protest participants at Zuccotti Park, New York City.

Apart from some slogans, some key concepts, the speech was given in a remarkable way: the “human microphone” technique, also known as “People’s Mic”.

Žižek begun his talk with his famous story about “red ink,” that goes like this: a German worker gets a job in Siberia; aware of how all mail will be read by censors, he tells his friends: “Let’s establish a code: if a letter you will get from me is written in ordinary blue ink, it is true; if it is written in red ink, it is false.” After a month his friends get the first letter written in blue ink: “Everything is wonderful here: stores are full, food is abundant, apartments are large and properly heated, movie theatres show films from the West, here are many beautiful girls ready for an affair—the only thing unavailable is red ink.”

⁴⁰ See also Voss-Carke cit. in Laurel, *Designed Animism* (2009) – for some interesting reflection of a possible nature and regularity of this noise. A noise that we could call life.

Žižek's conclusions are the following: «we have all the freedom we want, but what we're missing is the red ink: the language to articulate our non-freedom».

However, here his struggle to articulate the “non-freedom” presents itself not as a new language, but as a different “medium.” This medium, the “human mic,” is possibly the most ancient: the human body and the “presence of the voice.”

As Deseriis argues, «Because those who join the Microphone in call and response occupy simultaneously the position of medium and that of addressee, the Mic allows us to return to an ancient notion of medium as a middle ground that is associated with the public and the common.» (2014)

Also, the notions of “public” and “common” interact with Žižek's own theory of the subject.

In a recent book about Žižek and Performance (Chow & Mangold 2014), academics try, for the very first time, to articulate the implications of Žižek's work in the new open field of performance philosophy.

Still, they overlook the role of protest participation as a performative act, even if, over the years, the field of performance studies has extended to cover not only music, theatre and performance art, but also political demonstrations⁴¹.

The only reference to the Occupy movement in the cited essay is in Peter M. Boenisch's *Who's Watching? Me!: Theatricality, Spectatorship, and the Žižekian* (2014). It is a very short and casual reference, as the author discusses rather classical forms of theatre, but in that context we find a precious quote for our purpose:

Subjectivity is not dismissed as a form of misrecognition; on the contrary, it is asserted as the moment in which the ontological gap/void becomes palpable, as a gesture that undermines the positive order of Being, of the differential structure of Society, of politics as police. (Žižek 2000 p. 232)

⁴¹ «The irony is that, while philosophy has begun to shed some of its anti-theatrical prejudices, theater studies have been attempting, meanwhile, to take themselves out of (the) theater. Reimagining itself over the course of the past decade as the wider field of performance studies, the discipline has moved well beyond the classical ontology of the

Žižek here beats subjectivisation via subjectivisation itself, the author comments. To be fair, Žižek here is just giving his interpretation of the progress made by Rancière, Badiou, and Balibar from Althusserian theory of the subject. But it is true that he takes that as his starting point to elaborate his own theory of the subject away from *the postmodern and/or deconstructionist morass* (lvi).

Lefebvre notes that in ritualised repetition «parties can image themselves elsewhere: as being absent».

Repetition, perhaps mechanical in (simply behavioural) animals, is ritualised in humans. Thus, in us, *presenting ourselves or presenting another* entails operations not only stereotyped but also consecrated: rites. In the course of which interested parties can imagine themselves elsewhere: as being absent, not present in the presentation. (Lefebvre 2004 p. 39)

This temporary status can easily meet the definition of the «Absent Centre of Political Ontology,» as it is called in the subtitle of Žižek's *The Ticklish Subject* (2000).

«Here - Lefebvre says - the old philosophical question (of subject, object and their relations) is found posed in non speculative terms, close to practice.» (2004 p. 36)

Chun (2011) also comes to a similar conclusion reflecting on human-computer interaction, and about the power of iteration/repetition he notably cites Derrida: «the sovereign 'names itself. Sovereign is the violent power of this originary appellation', (Derrida, 2002) —adding: an appellation that is also an iteration. Judith Butler similarly argues that it is through iterability that the performative utterance creates the person who declares it. Further, the effect of this utterance does not originate with the speaker, but rather with the community s/he joins through speaking.» (Butler, 1997)

the subject is the incoherent and mobilized imbrication of identifications; it is constituted in and through the iterability of its performance, a repe-

black box model to embrace a myriad of performance practices, ranging from stage to festival and everything in between: film, photography, television, computer simulation, music, “performance art,” political demonstrations, health care, cooking, fashion, shamanistic ritual...» (Parker & Sedgwick 1995 p. 2)

tion which works at once to legitimate and deligitimate the realness norms by which it is produced. (Butler 1993 p. 131)

Taking part in the “Human Mic” can possibly bring us close to have an experience of this “absent center” of the subject.

It would then make sense trying to apply Lefebvre’s rhythm analytical method to the phenomenology of performance of Žižek’s speech (as a typical example) in order to analyse how the occupation of time/space through participatory performance can explain some weaknesses of contemporary subjectivation process.

Why does this specifically happen in a protest scenario? It is always Lefebvre’s Rhythmanalysis that comes to hand: «All becoming irregular [dérèglement] (or, if one wants, all deregulation, though this word has taken on an official sense) of rhythms produces antagonistic effects. It throws out the order and disrupts; it is symptomatic of a disruption that is generally profound, lesional and no longer functional. It can also produce a lacuna, a hole in time, to be filled in by an invention, a creation. That only happens, individually or socially, by passing through a crisis.» (Lefebvre 2004 p. 44)

All this “resonates” again with Žižek’s theory of the subject in a very sophisticated way, as Žižek himself elsewhere defines the contemporary subject exactly as post-traumatic (Žižek 2008, 2010).

That of political protest is the case where the theatrical “exception” separates the everyday life from ordinary language.

Lefebvre also traces a distinction between presence and the present. We would like here to argue that presence is the manifestation of the theatrical exception from performative language. The present is referred to conventional mass-media, and what Lefebvre says about the media comes to hand here: «The important: that time is - or appears – occupied.» (Lefebvre, 1992) So the presence is a counter-occupation, not only of space, but also of time.

This new finding of the radical difference of an old media, as the human body, can tell us something new about not only the structure of communication, but on the nature of the subject as well.

1.7 Play as a Serious Topic

[ATLAS 2.67]

“Playing,” “playacting,” and the “play” have a common linguistic root, and it is not a chance coincidence. But it is important to keep the two apart as well; childhood play is preparation for a certain kind of adult aesthetic work, yet certainly not the same as that work. It is equally important to divorce inquiry into the cultural meaning of play from the current celebration of play as a revolutionary principle. This celebration identifies play with spontaneity, and that is wrong. The element of aesthetic training that goes on in play lies in accustoming the child to believe in the expressivity of impersonal behavior, when it is structured by made-up rules. Play for the child is the antithesis to expressing himself spontaneously. (Sennett 2002 p. 315)

From Johan Huizinga (Huizinga 1998) to contemporary thinkers such as Giorgio Agamben, the importance of play in the construction of a culture has been pointed out. Play can also be considered as a “third element” between the practical (or economic) and the sacred, the third motivation for human actions, and the development of new technologies and innervation.

The toy is what belonged - once, no longer - to the realm of the sacred or of the practical-economic. But if this is true, the essence of the toy (that ‘soul of the toy’ which, Baudelaire tells us, is what babies vainly seek to grasp when they fidget with their toys, shake them, throw them on the ground, pull them apart and finally reduce them to shreds) is, then, an eminently historical thing: indeed it is, so to speak, the Historical in its pure state. (Agamben 1993 pp. 71–72)

With this statement the philosopher wants to stress out the fact that historical process resides more on the ability of changing the meaning of things (and eventually changing “meanings” into “signifiers” and/or inventing new meanings for or from existing things) than on the supposed path from causes to consequences.

Because of this, play should not only always be a free action, but it also speaks about freedom: the freedom of changing our symbolic order through action, and thus of changing our environment.

Here we want to argue that successful urban projects can rely on the power of play as a driving force for action, which it is today still overlooked by planners and decision makers. Quentin Stevens, in his 2007 book about *The Ludic City*, underlines the “non-instrumentality” of play, citing authors from Lefebvre to Ghel, who pointed out the inherent opposition of play to instrumentality and to the issues of purpose, functionalism, and productivity (Stevens 2007).

Play appears to be a useful tool to devise and to conduct policies, projects, and urban events in order to promote urban quality of life, especially of ‘weak’ individuals living in marginal urban areas who have no access to most official cultural resources. Children in cities are the main representatives of these categories, being in the weakest position as citizens but with plenty of that subversive attitude of constantly defying pre-defined rules. Their ‘capability of disobedience’ might be used to change the city to their advantage and, consequently, to everyone’s advantage.

Children appear to be possibly the most disadvantaged group, with very little possibility of recognition for their citizenship and their “right to the city.” For their development they need to defy pre-defined functions, whereas in modern city almost every form pretends to follow a pre-defined (or arbitrary assigned) function. It is quite probable that the diffused hostility and the effective expulsion of children from the public spaces of modern cities is also due to their inability to use the places according to their designed function only.

Before the car came along streets were often a common-a place of popular sociality, a play space for kids (I am old enough to remember that was where we played all the time). But that kind of common was destroyed and turned into a public space dominated by the advent of the automobile (prompting attempts by city administrations to recover some aspects of a “more civilized” common past by organizing pedestrian precincts, sidewalk cafes, bike paths, pocket parks as play spaces, and the like). But such attempts to create new kinds of urban commons can all too easily be capitalized upon. In fact they may be designed precisely with that in mind. (Harvey 2012 p. 74)

We can see their tendency to ‘disobedience’ as a form of opposition they put up against those spaces and those streets which are not capable to adequately meet their need of autonomy and freedom. However,

unlike many other groups of inhabitants, children typically lack the capability to organize themselves and therefore urban policies aiming at improving children’s urban rights of accessibility and movement have to deal with this issue.

On a spatial perspective, children have the ability of re-design, or re-invent, spaces (and meanings) with the only help of their imagination. As the director of the San Donato School in Sassari told us during one of the TaMaLaCà projects: «children have the ability to transform the neglected corner of a neighbourhood in the hall of a castle, only with their presence, and their play. »

This ability to disobedience, together with this space transformation capacity, has also been described by Kevin Lynch: «One of the interesting things coming out of the interviews is that children seem to prefer to play anywhere but the playground. » (Lukashok & Lynch 1956)

The double meaning of the word “play” in English comes here very handy: play can refer to a game or a theatre play (and of course to music as well). As Umberto Eco noted in the introduction of the Italian edition of Huizinga’s cited classic, the English language has a further distinction between *play* and *game* which does not exist in Italian and in other Romance languages.

Nowadays game theory emphasizes the role of “narrative play,” also helped in this by gender studies. Women seem to prefer a game that is narrative, non-competitive, and possibly endless (open). It also seems that men also tend to accept easily this kind of gameplay, and the game industry (specially the video-game industry) is aware of this. As an example, we can mention the classic “Sim city” (a game, played equally by man and women, not accidentally involving the construction and design of a city), as well as “The Sims” and “Spore” by the same designers, or the current apotheosis of *Minecraft*. These games were conceived precisely with the idea of bearing a gender-neutral gameplay style, which means non-competitive, non-violent, narrative. It also means that we have to consider the idea of narrative quite differently than we do with novels and conventional stage plays.

The way children spontaneously play with dolls is an example of this. Characters are involved, not necessarily stable or well defined, new ones can be inserted, locations are absolutely fluid and the narrative, which is undoubtedly present, can be picked up and left in any moment, with no *ending* considered or involved.

Since it works so well, postmodern narrative heavily experimented and exploited that model of history construction, that is the game of *mimesis* in one of its purest form. The simulation is *per se* entertaining.

Brenda Laurel suggests that in order to keep control of what is more important in a narrative gameplay we have to look at the “formal cause,” which is to say to the *structure* more than to the “content” and the outcomes of the narrative. This formal structure also refers to the “rhythm” of the story, and thus of the gameplay. (Laurel 1993, 2009)

A good story gives you the audience’s attention, *gets* people engaged; but only a good “rhythm” – also intended in structural or architectural sense – *keeps* people engaged in the long run.

In any case, part of the attractiveness of a narrative game seem to lie in the fact that the player is able to influence the course of events, to change the story, that he is able to introduce new elements and to experiment with a basic plot and a basic set of rules. (Jenkins 2004)

The simpler the plot and the rules, the more players there can be; but the more players there are, the more complexity of *the formal structure* the designer has to manage. Some could argue that we consider the so-called social networks as such games⁴².

The quality which is promoted presents and represents as playful. By playing with words, one can say that there will be play between the parts of the social whole (plasticity) — to the extent that play is proclaimed as supreme value, eminently solemn, if not serious, overtaking use and exchange by gathering them together. (Lefebvre 1996 p. 172)

⁴² In a recent interview Sean Parker, Facebook’s founding president, has described the platform system as «a social-validation feedback loop ... exactly the kind of thing that a hacker like myself would come up with, because you’re exploiting a vulnerability in human psychology,» and «We

1.8 Notes on Gesture

[ATLAS: 2.3; 2.58; 2.63]

The most remarkable outcome of my research, what has changed in my understanding along its course, is the perception of the continuity between the architectural gesture and the performative gesture.

In search of the specificity of performative practices, we have also found their continuity with other kind of practices, along with a series of tools and categories which can be easily applied to different contexts. We have learned how the architectural gesture is always “softened,” modified in different time scales, from the beginning in its execution (in the drawing) and then in its realization in real scale, *in opera*, by the movement of the body and the instruments which are the extension of the body, and then, in its use.

«When the Irish poet W. B. Yeats asked, “How can we know the dancer from the dance?” he traded for metaphorical effect upon a distinctive feature of dance as an art form.» (Davies 2011 p. 189)

In some artefacts – Davies continues – it is possible to recognize the *facture* which is the «visible indications in the artistic vehicle of how it was produced by the artist, » giving the example of abstract expressionist painting such as Pollock’s. But we could also argue that the *facture* is always present in the *artefact*. Even when it is realized through more sophisticated technical instruments – even when it tries not to declare the instruments and the hand of man.

Nevertheless, the point for Davies is about when we do not have artefact at all: we have a dancing body, or a singing voice. The general question is if the human body can be considered a *medium* or not.

If this is the case, we should implicitly accept some sort of dualism between an “inner self,” looking for expression, and the body as the medium of expression of that “inner self”.

Shusterman appeals to mirror neurons in defending the possibility, proposed by Zeami Motokiyo,

need to sort of give you a little dopamine hit every once in a while, because someone liked or commented on a photo or a post or whatever.» (“Sean Parker unloads on Facebook” 2017).

a renowned teacher of Noh theater, that an actor, while acting, should not only “look ahead” to see the other actors, the audience, and his place in the full theatrical performance, but also “look behind.” To “look behind” is to “see” how one appears to those spectators who are behind one, and to modify one’s performance accordingly. (p. 194)

In *The Paper Canoe* Eugenio Barba describes that kind of performer, who attains the control of the expression through discipline, as what he calls the *North pole performer*.

The North Pole performer is apparently less free. S/he models her/his scenic behaviour according to a well-proven system of rules which define a style or a codified genre. This code of the physical or vocal action, fixed in its own particular and detailed artificiality (whether it be that of ballet or one of the classical Asian theatres, modern dance, opera or mime), is susceptible to evolution and innovation. (Barba 1995 p. 13)

He rightly as well as arbitrarily assigns that *North Pole* name «In order to avoid false associations with specific cultural and geographic areas,» because different styles «are often identified as ‘Oriental Theatre’ and ‘Western Theatre,» so he decides to «turn the compass around and use it in an imaginary way». Which seems a clever move.

In what does the training consist?

When I ask Balinese master I Made Pasek Tempo what the performer’s principal gift is, he answers that it is *tahan*, ‘the ability to resist’. The same awareness is found in the working language of the Chinese performer, who has mastery when he has *kung-fu*, literally, the ‘ability to hold fast, to resist’. This terminology brings to mind something which in another language could be translated by the word ‘energy’, the ability to persist in work. (p. 24)

The performer, through long practice and continuous training, fixes this ‘inconsistency’ by a process of innervation, develops new neuro-muscular reflexes which result in a renewed body culture, a ‘second nature’, a new consistency, artificial but marked with bios. (p. 25)

We can’t stress the use of the term *innervation* enough, which we have seen encompasses all technical devices. Starting from the body? We should say: and starting from the *language* seen as a second nature – or as a first technique.

In India, the hasta mudra are the basis for the elaboration of a ‘second nature’ of the hands. In Sanskrit, hasta (hand) mudra (seal) refers to a cipher-language articulated by means of the positions of the hands and the fingers. It originated in sacred statues and in prayer practices. When used by performers to emphasize or translate the words of a text or to add descriptive detail to them, the mudra assumes, above and beyond their ideogrammatic value, a dynamism, a play of tensions and oppositions whose visual impact is decisive in determining their believability in the eyes of the spectator. In spite of the ‘stylized’ artificiality of the gestures, the spectator perceives a consistency which is equivalent to, although different from, that which is manifest in daily life. (p. 26)

The focus on mirror neurons is so important because it helps us to show the correspondence of two aspects of this hypothesis: (1) the fact that the motor function is of the same nature as the cognitive activity; (2) that there is a physical mechanism behind empathy and mimetic activity.

As we see the results derived from experience with ancient theatrical traditions, rediscovered by contemporary theatre, converge with contemporary science.

In Grotowski’s words: «If the actor, by setting himself a challenge publicly challenges others, and through excess, profanation and outrageous sacrilege reveals himself by casting off his everyday mask, he makes it possible for the spectator to undertake a similar process of self-penetration.» (Grotowski 2002 p. 34).

The Foucauldian hypothesis of the temporary nature of the problem of “men” seems to be confirmed by the ability of the theatrical experience to connect us with an older tradition. The cancellation of the subject is possible for the actor through a practice which is rooted in the *sacred* theatre, developed at a time when the *subject* as we know it did not exist yet.

When Rasmussen, discussing rhythm in architecture, reports the example of the row-houses in Calle dei Preti in Venice [ATLAS: 2.58]. Although he says that «the facades were probably more uniform originally» (Rasmussen 1962 p. 132), the example is perfect due to his imperfection. Is clear where the eurythmy is and what “man measure” can stand for. These shapes are created, and modified through time, around and by human bodies, the human body of workers and in-

habitants as a measure, reflecting the harmonious diversities of these bodies. The *facture* in the art of building also connects architecture to its performing nature. The *facture* is the *trace*, also for its ephemerality.

Here the *virtuous* (virtuoso) dominates, not the *virtual*. The latter would be eternal because of its immateriality, while the former derives its value from ephemerality.

In these facades we can find all the richness and the expressiveness of the Italian *gesture*.

1.8.1 The Theatre Oppressed

Oppressed is the third term which lets the opposition emerge. And every dialectical opposition, we should say, is based on a hidden third term.

The «tradition of the oppressed,» evoked by Benjamin and by Agamben after him⁴³, corresponds in many points to the “theatre of the oppressed” conceived by Boal. In this case it appears as a theatre which we can call “tactical” but not “everyday theatre” as long as it follows his own political agenda, whereas the everyday theatre lacks self-consciousness.

This tradition is able to re-emerge in any moment on the urban scene, as long as it is immanent in the city and has its own tactics to evade the strategies of exclusion.

But this tradition does not appear as the *content* of a tradition, as a repertory of histories and legends, or as lost imagery, or through the re-emerging of forgotten, local stories or tradition of minorities, or what we consider as part of the *immaterial heritage*. When it emerges under this form, that is to say using this content, the content hides what is most peculiar of its

performative nature: the gesture itself. The unproductive, *inoperative* gesture, which has no place in an environment built for production.

This gesture is the form, if not the content of the tradition of the oppressed.

But if we can give time to that gesture to realise itself, it will also give shape to its environment.

Society is the “all-you-can-eat” of the capital. This is why we get so quickly from the Occupy movement “human microphone” to the *flash mobs* for selling soft drinks, and what is worst, we have come to this point often with the complicity of the artists.

But the *tradition of the oppressed* is not only a heritage of forgotten stories. Theatre in its formal aspects is part of this tradition, with its different rhythms and temporal scales, much longer or shorter of the times of production⁴⁴.

What is left of the subversive potential of theatre in the age of the information society and of semio-capitalism: that is still an open question.

It may seem that – being so inevitably linked to temporality as life-time – theatricality is not apt to the accumulation of capital – namely to the “value production” (accumulation), and for some reason even the re-definition and broadening of the *experience economy* has not absorbed its subversive power.

This is situated in that empty centre, “the negative” behind and before the subject, a black hole where every process of valorisation is always destroyed.

In his last book *Karman*, still not translated in English, that presents itself as a *treaty on the action, the guilt and the gesture*, Agamben gives a new space to the performing arts in his vision of political philosophy.

Relying on an intuition of Latin grammarian Varro, he identifies a third way of action apart from *praxis* and *poiesis*. Pure *mediality* subtracted to all relations with ends or aims. This idea completes his previous *Means*

⁴³ «The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the “state of emergency” in which we live is not the exception but the rule. We must attain to a conception of history that is in keeping with this insight.» Walter Benjamin, *Theses on the Philosophy of History*. The Italian translation has “state of

exception,” which Agamben understands as *inclusive exclusion* also on a social and on a spatial basis. (see Agamben 2000)

⁴⁴ Jan Fabre’s 24 hours performance *Mount Olympus* (2015) or Peter Brook’s nine-hour *Mahabharata* (1985) explicitly challenge “what is possible to do” with our time in the society of production.

without ends (Agamben 2000), which tries to get rid of both Cartesian subject and Kantian idea of ethics (which is indeed dependent on both a subject of the Cartesian kind and on the idea of finality).

In a crucial passage of the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle wonders whether there is such a thing as an *ergon*, a being-in-the-act, a being-operative, and a work proper to man, or whether than as such might perhaps be essentially *argos*, that is, without a work, workless [inoperoso] : «For just as the goodness and performance of a flute player, a sculptor, or any kind of expert, and generally of anyone who fulfils some function or performs some action, are thought to reside in his proper function [ergon], so the goodness and performance of man would seem to reside in whatever is his proper function. Is it then possible that while a carpenter and a shoemaker have their own proper function and spheres of action, man as man has none, but was left by nature a good-for-nothing without a function [argos]? “

Politics is that which corresponds to the essential inoperability [inoperosità] of humankind, to the radical being-without-work of human communities. There is politics because human beings are *argos*-beings that cannot be defined by any proper operation-that is, beings of pure potentiality that no identity or vocation can possibly exhaust.

(Agamben 2000 p. 140)

The distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* notoriously comes from Aristoteles. A distinction which is not so univocal and unproblematic, Agamben says. They are works having “an aim in itself” (*praxis*), and works where “something is left” after the work is done (*poiesis*).

Following Varro, Agamben calls this third category of human activities *gerere*, from which the word *gesture* is derived. Agamben suggests that these activities do not coincide with *praxis* or *poiesis* not only because it is impossible to decide if something is produced or not, but also because they defy the very idea of finality. And he goes further concluding: «le arti che noi chiamiamo “performative” costituiscono l’esempio di una azione umana che sembra sfuggire alla categoria della finalit » (what we call “performing arts” seem to escape the category of finality) (Agamben, 2017, p.131)

That is: performing arts defy the distinction between *praxis* and *poiesis* because they defy the idea of finality. Hence, performing arts could be considered *means without ends*, in Agamben’s lexicon. *Inoperative*, in Nancy’s terms.

But this is the purest category of the political, a space where to experience full freedom *without identity or vocation*.

2 ATLAS

2.1 The Ideal City



The Ideal City is desert (as long as it is ideal)

Unknown Author, *The Ideal City*, 1480-1490

2.2 The “Sidewalk Ballet” (Vivian Maier)

Illustrations

The scenes that illustrate this book are all about us. For illustrations, please look closely at real cities. While you are looking, you might as well also listen, linger and think about what you see.

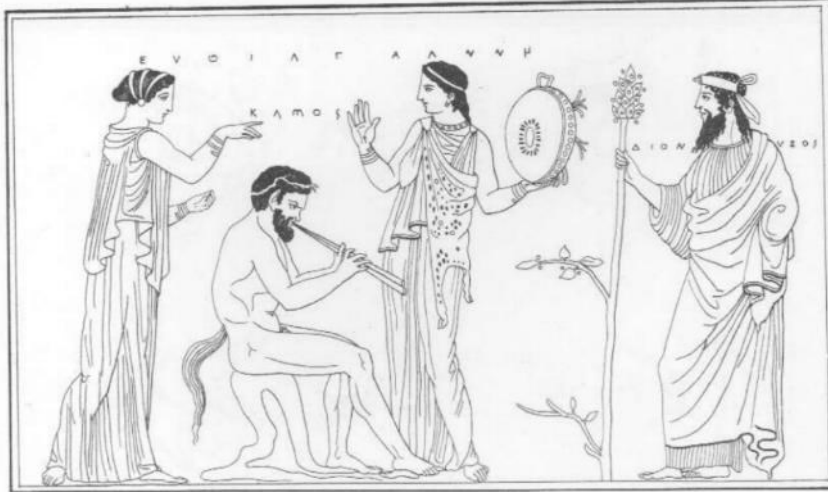
This little nice note appears on the first edition of “The Death and Life of Great American Cities”, right after the acknowledgements and the index. It is about the book “illustrations.” That note does not appear on many other editions, and it is certainly missing on all the Italian editions.

We can consider it as a joke, of course, as the book has hardly any illustrations, but as we will see going further into it, the act of looking, and looking directly, is a central instance in Jacob’s work.

Unfortunately, the original “illustrations” are lost forever. Or maybe they are not quite lost: at the same time, in the same places, there was another woman who walked, her eyes on the street, observing to look at and report the city at eye level. Her name was Vivian Maier, forerunner of modern street photography, whose personal story is almost a novel, and so the history of the rediscovery of her images, and of her figure, is also a sort of romance.



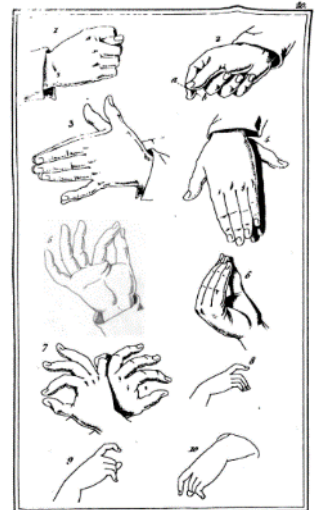
2.3 De Jorio: ancient gesture and modern mime



Andrea De Jorio's 1832 *La mimica degli antichi investigata nel gestire napoletano* (The Mime of the Ancients Investigated Through Neapolitan Gestures) (de Jorio 1832) is the first ethnographic work which investigates body language, finding a continuity between ancient (as presented in pottery, wall paintings, and archaeological remains) and present days gestures. A recent English translation is available in: Adam Kendon, *Andrea de Jorio: Gesture in Naples and Gesture in Classical Antiquity* (Indiana University Press, 2000).



Aby Warburg began these investigations that only the myopia of a psychologizing history of art could define as a "science of the image." The main focus of these investigations was, rather, gesture intended as a crystal of historical memory, the process by which it stiffened and turned into a destiny, as well as the strenuous attempt of artists and philosophers (an attempt which, according to Warburg, was on the verge of insanity) to redeem gesture from its destiny through a dynamic polarization. Since this research was conducted by means of images, it was believed that the image was also its object. Instead, Warburg transformed the image into a decisively historical and dynamic element (likewise, the image will provide Jung for the model of the archetypes' metahistorical sphere). In this sense, the Mnemosyne atlas that he left incomplete and which consists of almost a thousand photographs is not an immovable repertoire of images but rather a virtual movement representation of Western humanity's gestures from classical Greece to Fascism (in other words, something closer to De Jorio than to Panofsky). In each section, the single images should be considered more as film stills than as autonomous realities (at least in the same way in which Benjamin once compared the dialectical image to those little books, forerunners of cinematography, that gave the impression of movement when the pages were turned over rapidly). (Agamben 2000 pp. 53–54 Notes on Gesture)



2.4 Atlas (Mnemosyne)



The Pathos of the Baroque in the rape [of Proserpina]. Theater.

Aby Warburg, Mnemosyne Atlas, Panel 70.

The Baroque style (and the violence or excess which Warburg often ascribed to it) is explored as Rubens and Rembrandt become significant combinatorial elements in Mnemosyne's attempt to trace the "afterlife of antiquity." Rubens's *Rape of Proserpina* and other works by him or imitating him are juxtaposed with variations on the same theme by Tempesta and Moeyaert, and with illustrations for theatrical works by Vondel, Coster, and Struys. By contrast, Rembrandt's relatively early *Rape of Proserpina* offers, for all its theatricality, ornament, and violent motion, a unique solution to the problem of Baroque painterly expression. Here Warburg is drawing on material and insights described in his 1926 Rembrandt lecture. Source ("Mnemosyne: Meanderings through Aby Warburg's Atlas | Cornell University" n.d.)

2.5 To Dance About Architecture



Performances by Compagnia Il Posto, Venezia. Photo courtesy:
Il Posto vertical dance.

Devoted to the vertical dance from its beginnings in 1994 (the first Italian group specialised in this discipline), Il Posto (The Place) is dancer and choreographer Wanda Moretti's brainchild.

«Our work is always site specific. Performance is the search for uniqueness. Only two cities asked us to do a performance twice in the same place and it was awful. It is like having to say the same thing twice. The beautiful gesture is unique and unrepeatable. »

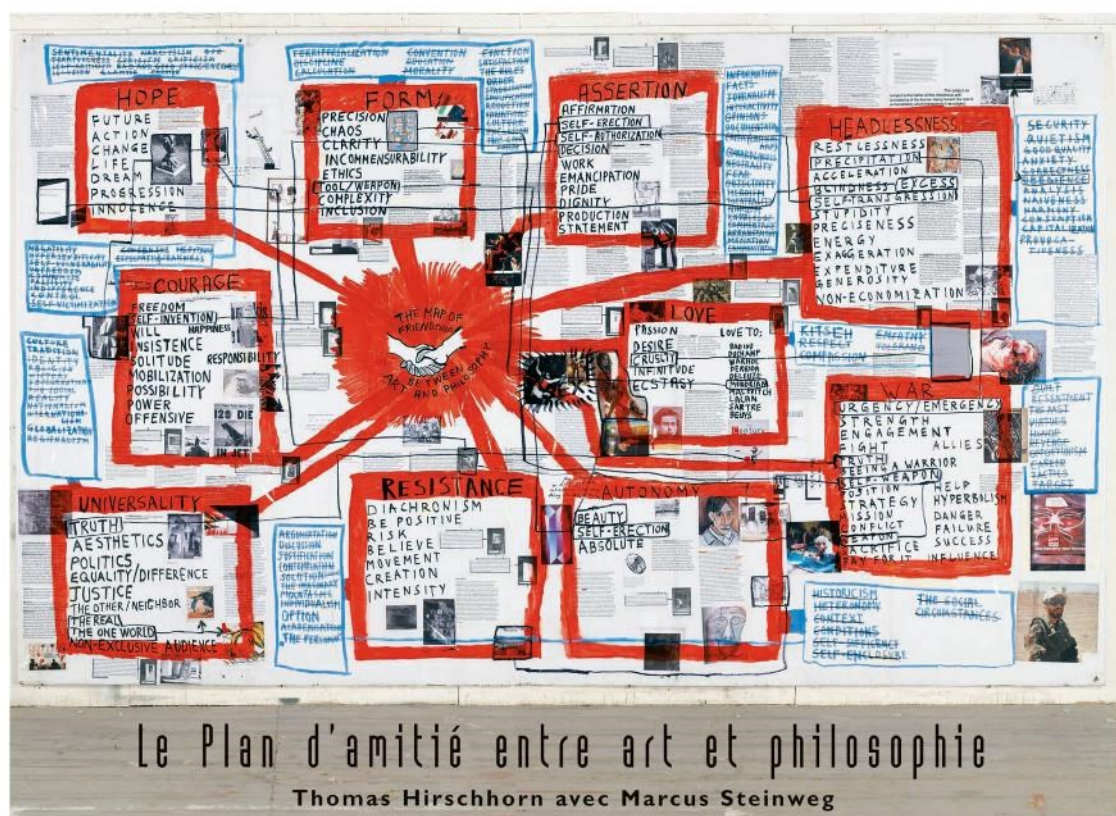
«The architecture with which I am at best? I know that there are refractory architectures and others which exalt the relationship and the work. »

«I always look for diversity. Our best shows are made in places that bring new relationships to life, between place, the people, the performers. »

«The best architectures are those which confront us with unexpected difficulties, asymmetries, gaps. You have to reorganize your choreography and your score - and so you also reorganise the space. »

(Source: personal interview, Venezia, 12 May 2017)

2.6 The Map of Friendship Between Art and Philosophy



Friendship between art and philosophy is based on the fact that both art and philosophy are assertions. This is the field of force and direction of impact that I share with Marcus Steinweg. Art and philosophy make sense as assertions. Art asserts form; philosophy asserts concept. This assertion creates truth, the truth created by form and the truth created by concept. And it requires courage and will to persevere against what is called common sense, and to assert a form or a concept. The philosophy is pure philosophy which acts and which creates something new, just as the art in which I am interested is active, is assertive, and creates new form. I understand art as the assertion of form and as grappling with form—which is necessary to the artist. Form here and now, form in chaos and in complexity, and form in the opacity of the world. (Hirschhorn *et al.* 2013 p. 71)

My friend Marcus Steinweg, a philosopher, and I made a map: the “Map of Friendship between Art and Philosophy.” With this map, we wanted to make a visual statement of this friendship and work out, give form to, and assert why Art and Philosophy are linked together: Art and Philosophy are linked by a shared admiration and passion, not by influence, discussion, illustration, explication, or justification, not by these static and hostile terms on which one cannot build friendship. Friendship is, or can be, built from shared admiration for somebody and passion for something. Friendship between Art and Philosophy does not mean that the artist needs the philosopher in order to do his work, nor that the philosopher needs the artist to do his own, but it means that Philosophy and Art really share the same movement, the same dynamic, the same interrogations, the same problematic, the same headlessness, in order to accomplish the constitutive creative artistic act. This artistic act is the assertion of a new truth. In Philosophy this truth is a new concept, and in Art this truth is a new form. (Hirschhorn *et al.* 2013 p. 89)

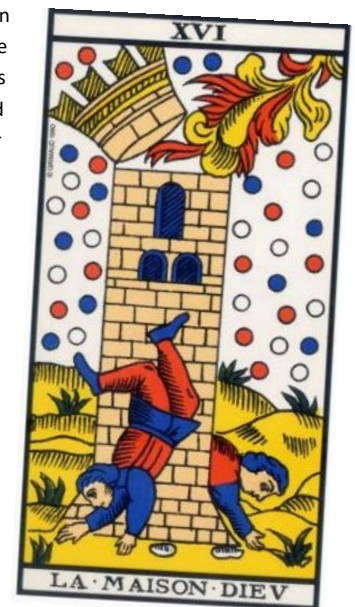
2.7 The Babel Tower



Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *The Tower of Babel*, oil on panel, 1563

‘What is holy?’ Goethe asks in a distich, and he answers: ‘What links many souls together.’ In this sense, we may say that the holy with the aim of this concord, and as this concord, has been the first content of independent architecture. The readiest example of this is provided by the story of the Tower of Babylonia. In the wide plains of the Euphrates, an enormous architectural work was erected; it was built in common, and the aim and content of the work was at the same time the community of those who were building it. And what remain the foundation of this social bond is not merely a unification on patriarchal lines; on the contrary, the purely family unity has already been superseded, and the building, rising into the clouds, makes objective to itself this earlier and dissolved unity as well as the realization of a new and wider one. The ensemble of all the peoples performed this task, and since they all came together to complete an immense work like this, the product of their labour became a bond which was to link them together (as we are linked by manners, customs, and the legal constitution of the state) by means of the excavated site and ground, the assembled blocks of stone, and the as it were architectural cultivation of the country.

In this case, the building is at the same time since the bond, which it is, it can only hint at; this is because the holy, the absolute unifier of men, can be only expressed in an external way in its form and shape. (Hegel 1975 p. 638)



2.8 Ideology and Mass Performance



Image of the public celebrations for Marshall Tito's birthday, or Youth Day in Serbia, from Ana Vujanović and Bojana Cvejić's book *Public Sphere by Performance*, members of the Belgrade editorial collective Teorija koja Hoda (Walking Theory). They were both born in Belgrade, and are currently living in the European Union and working on the international performance scene as theorists and practitioners.

The book is the outcome a two-year research project, during our residency at Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers near Paris (2011–2012), and it is part of a project also involving the documentary *Yugoslavia: How Ideology Moved Our Collective Body*, based on Serbian television and film archives during Yugoslavia's socialist period (1945–2000).

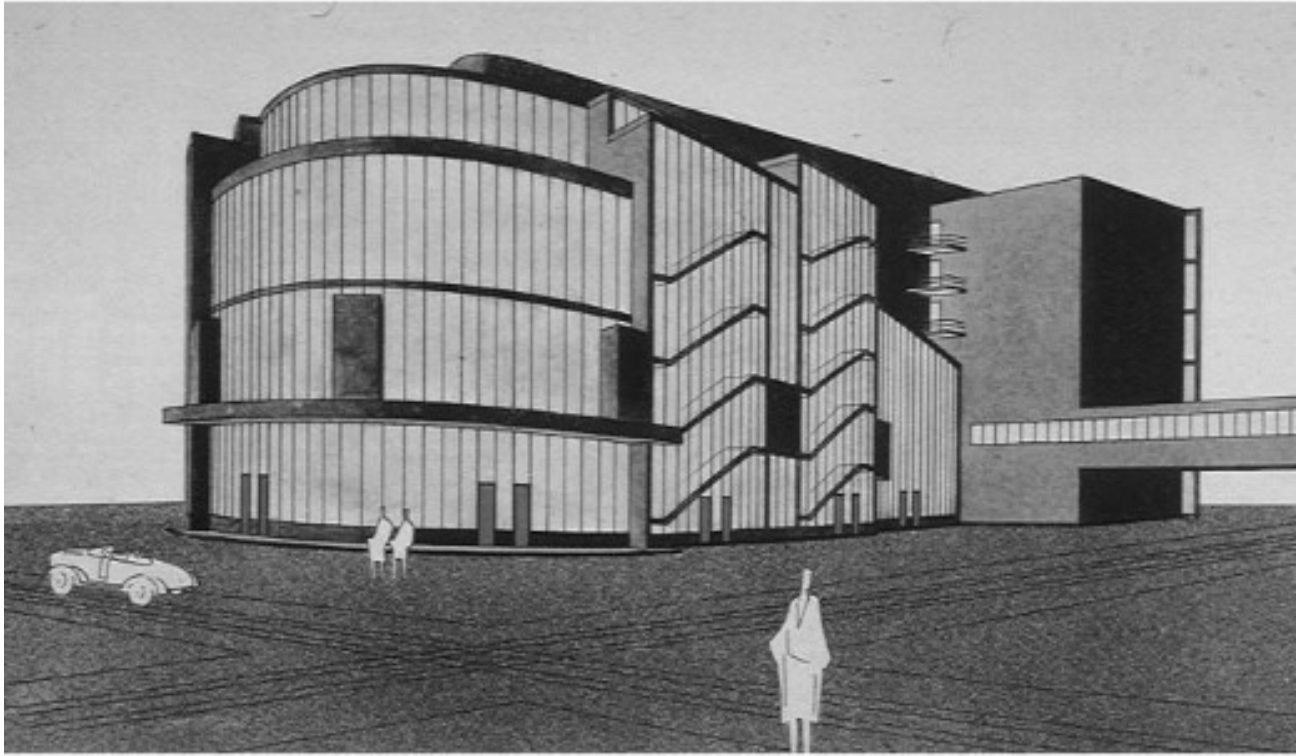
The authors' main thesis is that «the public sphere is constituted performatively through the concepts of action and performative act.» The book denounces «a crisis of representation in representative democracy» that should be taken quite literally.

A peculiar place is occupied by Slet, the youth parade in honor of Tito's birthday, held every twenty-fifth of May [...]

The social choreography of Slet staged a triangular bond between the people performing and watching the performance, the revolution as the object of the mass movement, and the leader whose honor was a moral and political pledge of revolutionary zeal.

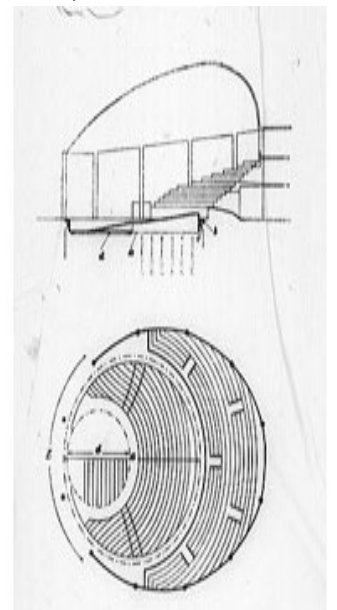
(Cvejić & Vujanović 2012)

2.9 Gropius, the Total Theatre



In 1927 Walter Gropius published his great project for a “total theatre,” realized in collaboration with director Erwin Piscator, containing a mobile stage and in which the technical means are able to stand up to amazement and continuous dynamism. The founder of the Bauhaus sought, together with the spectator’s involvement, an “alternative” and isolated dimension of the theatrical space from the urban space, making use of the best which technology could offer.

Gropius’s “total theatre” would have “a system of projections and cinematographic machines, through which the walls and the roof could be transformed into moving figurative scenes, instead of the flat figurative effects of traditional theatre.”



2.10 Aldo Rossi, la Torre scenica

The hidden spectacle of technique.



The Scenic Tower blends human labour and sophisticated gears in a delicate balance. The theatre is equipped with Four Stages, a main stage, a second stage behind the first, and two lower stages aligned with each other and managed by computerized electronic systems. These scenic handling systems, computerized lights, sophisticated control devices, are among the features which make the Carlo Felice theatre in Genoa a factory of emotions among the most important in Italy.

The *Machina* Of the spectacle becomes itself a spectacle for the urban scene and a monument with its formal values.



2.11 Il Teatro del Mondo



Realized by Aldo Rossi for the first edition of the Biennale di Architettura in 1980, the theatre becomes here an actor playing with the urban landscape.

It is somewhat ironic that Rossi famously defined architecture as a “fixed stage.” «Architecture, attesting to the tastes and attitudes of generations, to public events and private tragedies, to new and old facts, is the fixed stage for human events.» (Rossi 1982 p. 22)

Photo: Il Teatro del Mondo docked at Punta della Dogana

2.12 Swimming Cities



Swoon, *Swimming Cities of Serenissima*, 2009, Venice. Photo: Tod Seelie

2.13 La montagne de Venise



Yona Friedman, the master of *Architecture Without Buildings*, and his longtime partner Jean Baptiste Decavèle, created a visionary work with a strong performative character, the *Montagne de Venise* presented in Venice from 27 September to 1 October 2016.

Starting from a participatory construction of a structure based on modules designed by the architect-visionary, the “mountain” then travelled around Venice on a barge, temporarily changing the landscape, and using scenic nature of the Venice landscape itself, declaring the transformative power of art and certainly paying a tribute to Aldo Rossi’s work.

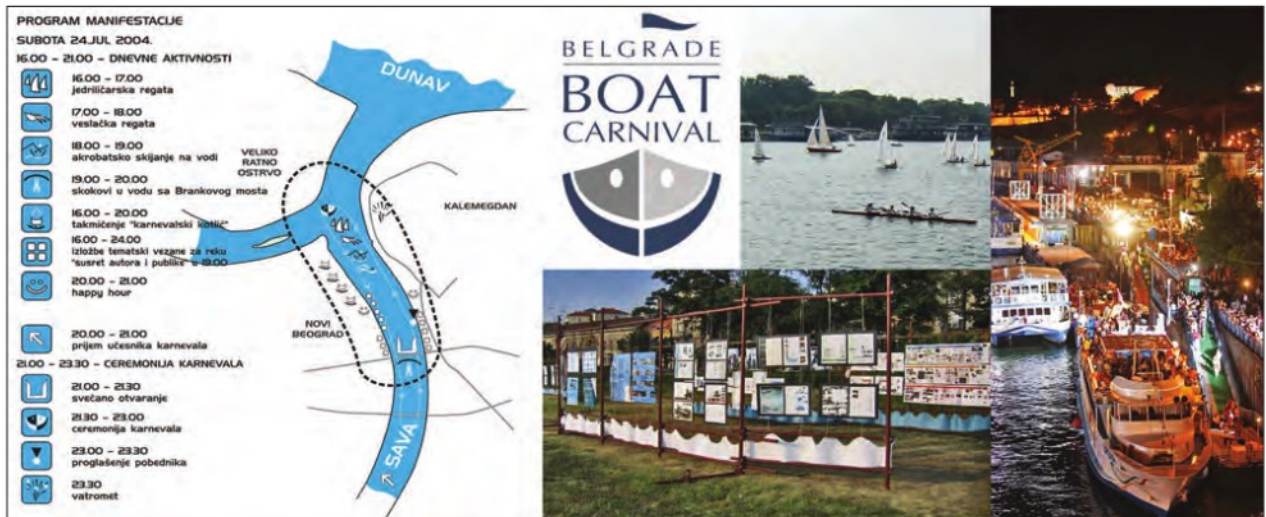


The formal element is very strong here, starting from a module designed by Friedman, but the participatory realization leaves room for the event, for a differential variation which, reintroducing vital elements, is also part of Friedman’s vision of architecture.

Venice landscape is an unquestionable landscape. Of course, there are no *mountains* in Venice. But for that very reason this landscape is open for large interventions without risking of losing its nature.

Venice, moreover, is the perfect scene of this game between performance and spectacle, between *monument* and *souvenir*.

2.14 Belgrade Boat Carnival



“Belgrade Boat Carnival” project (PaPs, 2004)

The second Public Art & Public Space experimental project was shaped by the recognition that neither citizens nor experts recognised aquatorium of Belgrade as a public space. [...]

the idea was to make the Sava River the main stage and to present it as an attractive public space. The goal was to make an event of excellence which will celebrate rivers of Belgrade; a memorable event that will change the meaning of the space and improve relation between people and the river. [...]

Belgrade has never had a carnival tradition, and neither had Serbia. At the same time, the idea of a carnival was a logical solution for a city regionally recognised as the “City of fun”. The First Belgrade Boat Carnival took place on 24th of July 2004 and included: daily events on the river (water jumps, sailing boats, rowboats and jet ski parade), events on the riverfront (student design exhibition, children’s theatre and workshops, boat models exhibition, fish soup cooking competition), and the final event: 250 boats in a carnival parade. Thirteen academic institutions, 24 national and 23 local public institutions, 25 institutions from the civic sector and 37 private sector participants were included in planning and delivering the project. Approximately 100,000 people attended this one-day event and it was followed by more than a hundred journalists. It was one of the most attended events in Belgrade that year.

(Đukanović & Živković: 2015)

2.15 Performative Urbanism

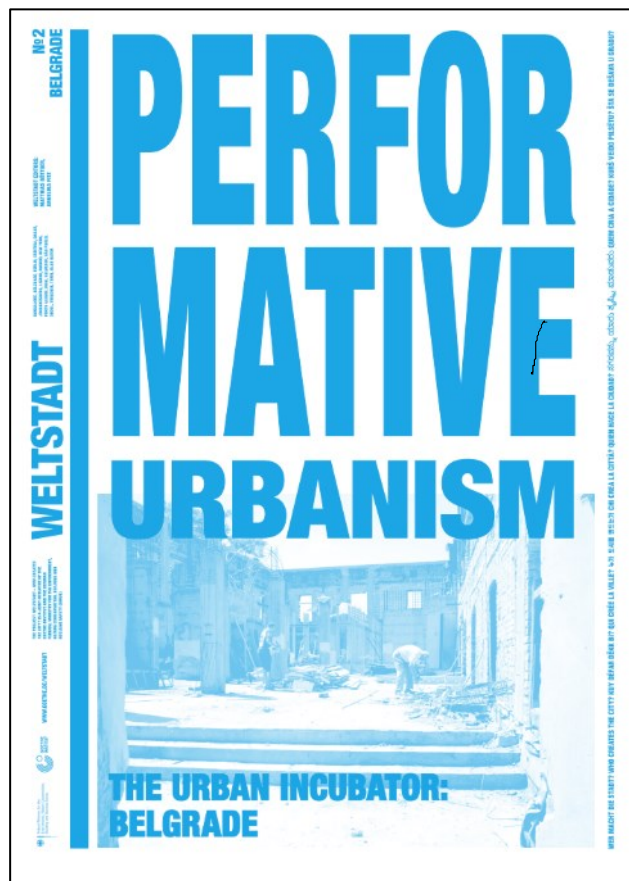


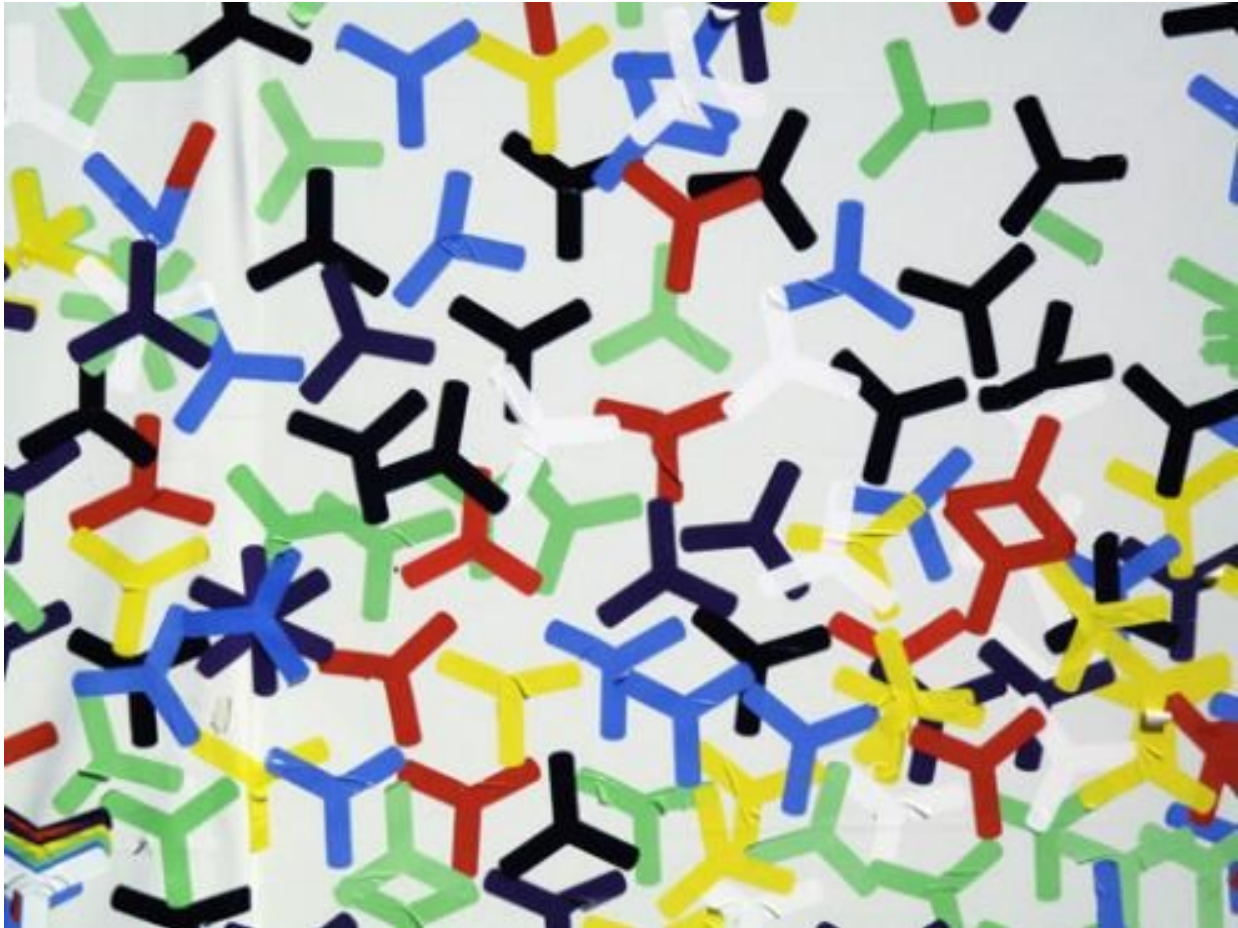
Image: front cover of the publication Weltstadt no. 2, Belgrade, Performative Urbanism

«The Urban Incubator is a Goethe-Institut ‘project of excellence’, supported by the City of Belgrade and the Municipality of Savski Venac, Dom Omladine/House of Youth, BHSF Architects and ETH Zurich, the proHelvetia foundation, as well as the Embassies of Switzerland and the Netherlands. Media partners include the most widely spread print, TV / radio and online media in Serbia, “Blic”, “B92”, and Politika. The Urban Incubator: Belgrade involves more than ten local and international projects from the fields of art, architecture, urbanism and social engagement, which have been operational in Savamala during 2013. Project authors include Raumlabor Berlin, the University of Technical Sciences (ETH) Zurich, “Third Belgrade” Artists’ Initiative (Belgrade), the University of Fine Arts of Hamburg, the Zurich University of the Arts, Nexthamburg (Hamburg), GingerEnsemble (CH), Camenzind (Zurich), Maja Popović and Boba Stanić (Belgrade / Amsterdam), GoetheGuerilla, and many others.» (Project Weltstadt 2014)

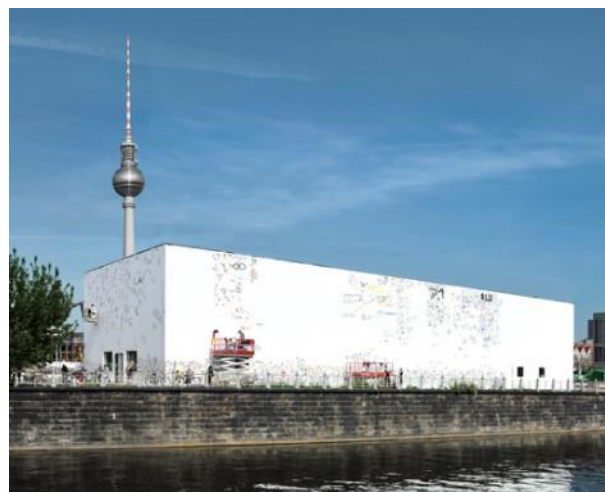
«Today, performance is the modality that pervades all areas of production in capitalist societies, whether sociocultural, technological or organizational. Performance is thus the hallmark

of the current relations of production in society. If, following Henri Lefebvre, we conceive of space as something that is produced, performance thereby becomes the practical element of the way in which this space is “made.” Accordingly, every type of social organization generates a living space that stands in direct causal context with social relations. In this way, a dialectic of space unfolds that interprets space both as a medium of social relations as well as the product that, as something that has been produced, can in turn retroactively affect society. This also entails that space is not objectively given, but instead is produced through social forces. Produced space is therewith dependent above all on our performance, and the performance of the technologies we utilize. Space and performance thus represent an interplay of relationships that permeates everyday life and has far-ranging effects on the intermeshing of individual and society. In summary, in industrial society, the individual was exposed to an absolute external control and supervision, and disciplined according to the principle of “discipline and punish.” In post-industrial society, by contrast, the performance principle tends to prevail inasmuch as supervision is shifted into the subject himself and social norms are internalized. Foucault formulated a theoretical basis for this power shift from a disciplinary to a performative model in his study, “The History of Governmentality.” Here, he describes how the unfolding of power in modern society never occurs one-sidedly, but is instead always characterized by an interplay of self- and other-determined governance. Not only is the Archimedean point of almost all social problems of our times thus described, but also our relationship to space and therefore our role as subjects in space, more concretely as users and actors can be attributed to this.» (Dell 2014)

2.16 Carsten Nicolai, *Autor*



Autor is a project realized on the facade of Temporäre Kunsthalle Berlin. It is conceived as a self-organizing process to which visitors can actively contribute by individually applying stickers designed by the artist. The installation title is derived from the Greek *auto* (founded on itself), plus the letter *r*, creating the *author* who brings forth something new. In the project context, the visitor takes on the role of the author, combining personal decisions with the tools provided by the artist to drive forward this interactive, creative design process. The regular geometric shape produced in seven different colours becomes a module that can be combined on the facade of the Kunsthalle into freely designed forms, clusters, and structures. *Autor* foregrounds the decisive influence of randomness and process in determining the overall appearance of the work.



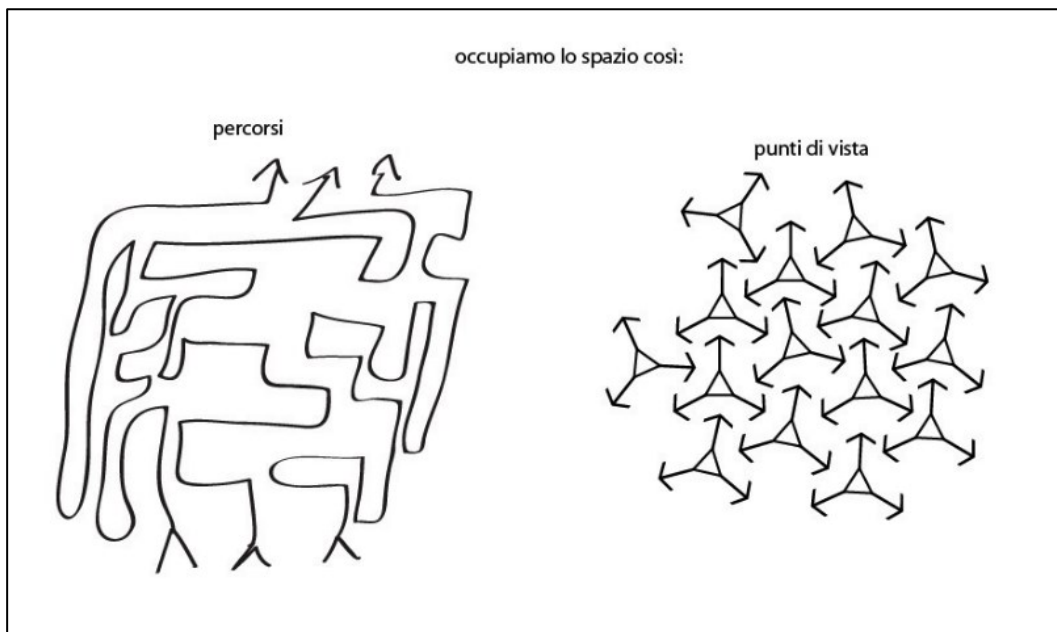
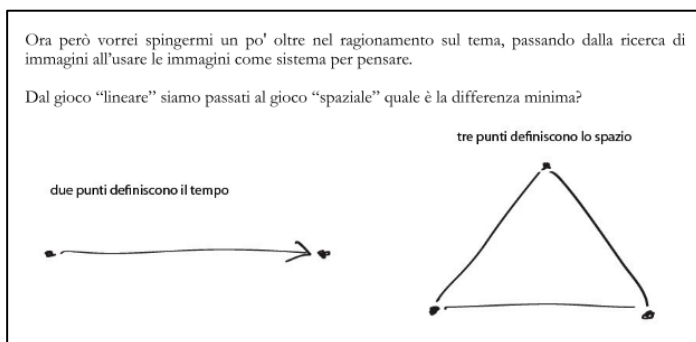
Source: www.carstennicolai.de ("carsten nicolai" n.d.)

2.17 Habitat Immaginari

The “Habitat Immaginari”, a pluriannual project organized by theatre company Theatre en Vol, consisted of paths of installations and performances in some areas of the old city, aiming at making its stories known and at opening them to citizens who do not normally attend. The project, especially in the years 2012-2014, implemented experiments on the comparison between a narrative-dialectical and a space-trialectic approach.

These were referred to as “paths,” “points of view,” and “convergences.” In the first case, the narrative solution consists in creating a story told as one walks through the city streets, varying the path at each encore performance, adding or removing scenes; in the second and third, narrative elements are dislocated in the space differently, in one case they are scattered around the point where the spectators arrive, so that they can look around and build their own image, or grouped towards a point of convergence reachable from different directions.

These strategies have already been studied in game design: «Narrative information must be presented redundantly across a range of spaces and artifacts, because one cannot assume the player will necessarily locate or recognize the significance of any given element.» (Jenkins 2004 p. 126)



Drawings from a study on the *Habitat Immaginari* project 2013: 1) from linear (temporal) to spatial play. 2) Different tactics to occupy the space: paths vs different points of view.

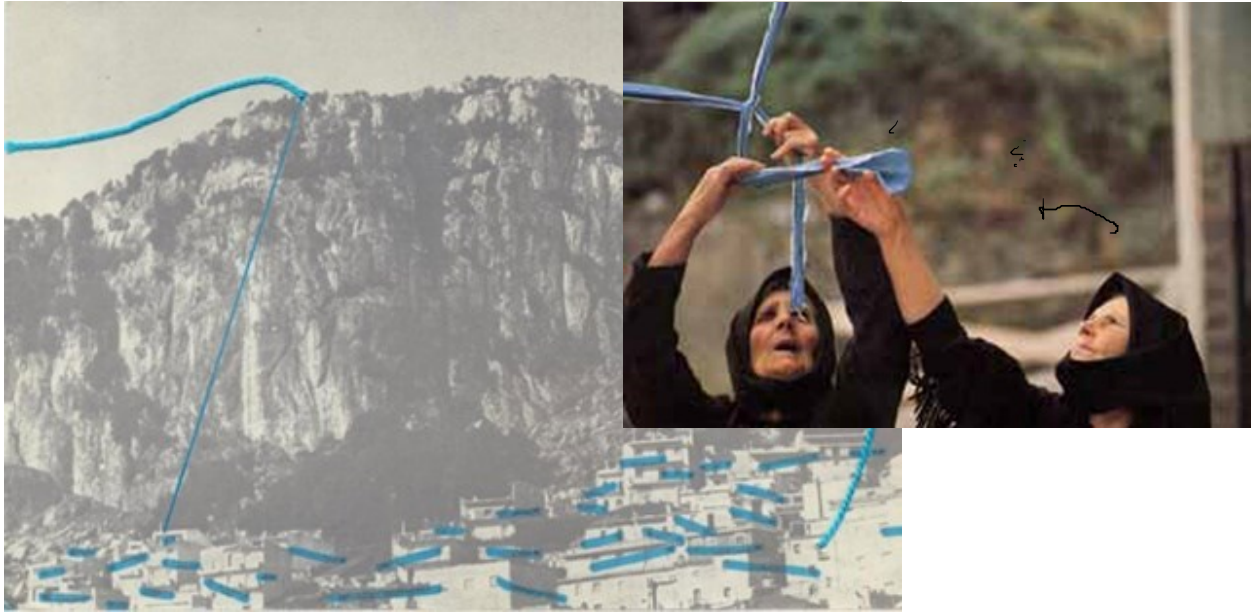
2.18 Habitat Immaginari / 2



Theatre en vol, Habitat Immaginari, Sassari, Italy, 2013.



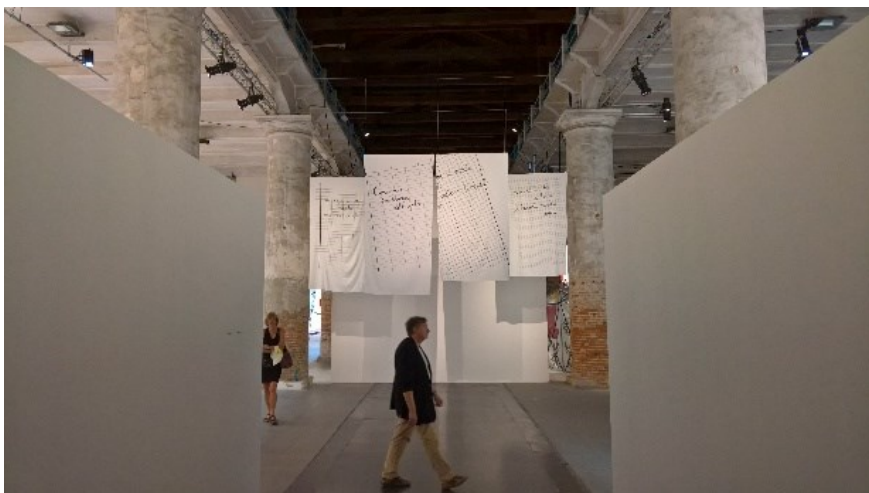
2.19 Legarsi alla montagna



Finally, the 57th Biennale in Venice has paid homage, in the pavilion entitled *Spazio Comune* (Common Space), to what is probably the masterpiece among the performing monuments: 1981 *Tying to the mountain*, in which Maria Lai staged the very structure of the social bond and of the link between community and territory, through a collective performance involving her whole hometown, Ulassai. The reference to a common cultural background, a village legend known to all – but with some variations – about a little girl and a blue ribbon, in various ways related to the overlooking mountain, literally tied collective memory and places together. The artist, who had been asked for a project to create a typical monument to the fallen soldiers, responded with the proposal to create a «monument for the living» instead, and therefore a performance.

The birth of a museum and art centre in the small town of Ulassai, called *Stazione dell'Arte*, is an enduring sign of the social impact of that work on the local community.

(see: Chiesa 2016; Francini 2013; Picciau 2014; Pioselli 2015; Sardu *et al.* 2012)



On the left: the works of Maria Lai exhibited at the entrance of the 57th Biennale pavilion *Spazio Comune*.

Giovanni Campus, *The City as Theatre*, Tesi di Dottorato in Architettura e Ambiente, Università degli studi di Sassari

2.20 The Floating Piers



Christo and Jeanne Claude, The floating Piers, Lago d'Iseo, Italy, 2016, photo by Federica Chung-I Ferraro

A recent example of a performative monument has been Christo and Jeanne Claude's *Floating Piers*, installed on Lake Iseo from 18 June to 3 July, 2016. Here the spectators' presence is integrated differently into the work of art and its action, of which that Jacobsian *ballet*, random but included by a *designated* form allowing the sharing of experience, is a fundamental element. «Like all our projects, The Floating Piers was absolutely free and open to the public,» Christo said. «There were no tickets, no openings, no reservations and no owners. The Floating Piers were an extension of the street and belonged to everyone.» (“The Project” n.d.; See also: “Projects | The Floating Piers” n.d.)

In Christo's words: «Il tempo è scaduto. Tutto finisce nella vita. Questa è la cosa importante di questi progetti: prima o poi finiscono, perché nessuno può possederli. La libertà non è possesso» (“Time is over. Everything ends in life. This is the key to these projects: sooner or later they end, since no one can possess them. Freedom is not possession.”) (“Floating Piers, Christo fa il bilancio” 2016)

2.21 Living Theater (Paradise Now)



2.22 Royal de Luxe



2.23 Vienna, the Open air Opera



Opera and ballet can also be followed outside the Vienna State Opera – live on a video wall. In April, May, June and September as well as around New Year's Eve, fans enjoy first-class performances free of charge in the open air on Karajan-Platz.

Opera means something to everyone in Vienna. You don't need an admission ticket to the Vienna State Opera to experience a great evening full of music and song. "Oper live am Platz" is held in April, May, June and September as well as around New Year's Eve - from 27 December to 2 January

The alternative to fighting over the hotly contested, low-price standing places in the Vienna State Opera every evening is to sit outside on Karajan-Platz in comfort and for free. 180 chairs are set up for each live broadcast. Information on the opera and the cast is provided on the video wall about half an hour before the performance begins.

Source: <https://www.wien.info/en/music-stage-shows/opera-operetta/open-air-opera> ("Opera for All" n.d.)

2.24 Marina Abramović



In a recent interview, celebrated performance artist Marina Abramović suggested that relegating the theatre to the status of merely one among many performance genres in fact stopped short of the coup de grâce it deserved. “To be a performance artist,” Abramović insisted, “you have to hate theatre. Theatre is fake: the knife is not real, the blood is not real, and the emotions are not real. Performance is just the opposite: the knife is real, the blood is real, and the emotions are real.” Andrew Bielski, “Alain Badiou and the Untimely Stage: Translator’s Introduction” in (Badiou & Truong 2015)

2.25 A Golden Statue for Netanyahu



A monument properly based on its own destruction was recently created (December 2016) in Tel Aviv by the Israeli artist Itay Zalait. A statue of conservative leader and prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu was built to appear as of gold and provocatively placed in the square dedicated to Yitzhak Rabin, murdered by an extremist Jewish settler in 1995. The provocative act was immediately condemned by the authorities and, as Israeli law prohibits the erection of monuments to living people, the artist was ordered to remove it. This was part of the operation in which he himself invited the citizens to help him break down and destroy the statue on site, generating a very effective performance. (Source: "Rebel Metropolis | Performance Art, the Commons, and a Monster Named Netanyahu" n.d.)



Giant golden statue of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu mysteriously appears in Tel Aviv's Rabin Square, December 6, 2016. Credit: Moli Mirod

- Artist behind toppled golden Netanyahu statue 'intrigued' if it will lead to punishment
- Netanyahu toppled: Golden statue of PM taken down by Israelis

2.26 Blu Is Deleting Its Murals



Murales cancellati da Blu a Kreuzberg, Berlino, 2016. Foto: Giovanni Campus.

Memory is also connected to loss. So a cancellation could be a monument. This was Italian street artist Blu's strategy, who cancelled his graffiti in Kreuzberg, Berlin, following the purchase of the area by a developer who planned to build luxury apartments in a what was a flourishing *hip* district.

His gesture of cancellation was mostly interpreted as a protest, but it can also be read as an artistic performance. A counter-inauguration of his work which that way would be neither touched nor exploited by the new property.

Few days after, helped by volunteers from local activist groups, Blue cancelled several of his murals in Bologna as well, as a protest against an exhibition on street art promoted by the local municipality which had planned to detach some murals from private walls to bring them into an art gallery.

2.27 The Gramsci Monument



Thomas Hirschhorn, Gramsci Monument, Forest Houses, Bronx, New York, USA, 2013.

Swiss artist Thomas Hirschhorn explicitly addressed the theme of the monument in four works dedicated to as many “dissident” philosophers. After works devoted to Spinoza, Deleuze and Bataille, the Gramsci monument was certainly the most relevant. The construction of the ephemeral building represented and allowed the construction of the social bond. So its destruction, as in an ancient myth, contributed to its monumentality.

The monument was realized in the form of a big ephemeral structure build with poor materials, that hosted for 77 days a community centre with every possible activity for the residents of the neighbourhood, including community radio, computers, a meeting hall with open lectures and free speech for everyone. On the entrance, a writing badly executed with spray on a precarious banner reported a quote from the *Prison Notebooks*: «Quality should be attributed to human beings, not to things.»

«There is an active and a passive part. The plastic aspect of the monument is precarious: cardboard, wood, tape, garbage bag coverings, neon lights. It means that the monument will not stay here for eternity. This monument does not come from above. It will not intimidate. It is made through admiration; it comes from below. In this way it shows its precariousness and its limitation in time. This enforces the precarious aspect of the monument. It conveys the idea that the monument will disappear, but what will remain are thoughts and reflections. What will stay is the activity of reflection» (Hirschhorn 2015 p. 217; The text has been reprinted in: Dia Art Foundation 2015)⁴⁵.

⁴⁵ Angelo Lüdin has also made a documentary as part of the operation in 2015. Cfr. also (Hirschhorn *et al.* 2013) for the poetic idea and methodology of Hirschhorn and (Westcott 2007) on the concept of “superficial engagement”, that comes from the title of another Hirschhorn 2006 work.

Giovanni Campus, *The City as Theatre*, Tesi di Dottorato in Architettura e Ambiente, Università degli studi di Sassari

2.28 A Monument to Outlast Humanity



Probably one of the greatest, most fascinating misunderstandings of the relationship between art and the city, Michael Heizer's *City* is a dystopic scenography in the middle of the desert.

Heizer, a pioneer of the earthworks movement, began "City" in 1972. 1.5 mile long and inspired by ancient ritual cities, it is made of rocks, sand, and concrete mined and mixed on site.

Photo: Jamie Hawkesworth for The New Yorker

2.29 Begat Theater, Histoires Cachées



A different kind of invisible theatre. The audience of the performance, supplied with “special” headphones, is endowed to listen to other people’s thought, never knowing if they are actors or passers-by. The audience can actually choose who and what is part of the performance. «The spectator himself is the editor, choosing which images to synchronize to the sound track being played in his ears.» Four parallel stories develop following ordinary objects (a matchbox, an orange, a newspaper) working as a *trait d’union* between stories and characters.

This kind of poetic audio-guide of the city does not only indicate spaces but dictates times and distances.

Hearing the city with someone else’s ears, or hearing what’s going on in someone else’s mind, can be both an alienating and revealing experience.

«The anonymity of city life, sometimes suffocating and other times liberating, is the question at the heart of the piece. ‘How can I live in a city of thousands, or even millions, and yet still feel so alone?’» (citations from the official presentation of the performance, source: <http://begat.org/en/spectacle/hidden-stories>, accessed in November 2017)

2.30 A Split Bunker as a Monument



An architectural *gesture* full of meaning, the cutting of a bunker in Holland by the landscape architects RAAAF and Atelier de Lyon. Cutting the structure makes it inefficient and therefore peaceful, and exposes its secret interior. To achieve its maximum effectiveness, the cut must be declared as a gesture and not as a form, being able to be indefinitely continued in transforming a barrier into a passage.

From the official text of the project description:

Bunker 599

In a radical way this intervention sheds new light on the Dutch policy on cultural heritage. At the same, it time makes people look at their surroundings in a new way. The project lays bare two secrets of the New Dutch Waterline (NDW), a military line of defence in use from 1815 until 1940 protecting the cities of Muiden, Utrecht, Vreeswijk and Gorinchem by means of intentional flooding.

A seemingly indestructible bunker with monumental status is sliced open. The design thereby opens up the minuscule interior of one of NDW's 700 bunkers, the insides of which are normally cut off from view completely. In addition, a long wooden boardwalk cuts through the extremely heavy construction. It leads visitors to a flooded area and to the footpaths of the adjacent natural reserve. The pier and the piles supporting it remind them that the water surrounding them is not caused by e.g. the removal of sand but rather is a shallow water plain characteristic of the inundations in times of war.

The sliced up bunker forms a publicly accessible attraction for visitors of the NDW. It is moreover visible from the A2 highway and can thus also be seen by tens of thousands of passers-by each day. The project is part of the overall strategy of RAAAF | Atelier de Lyon to make this unique part of Dutch history accessible and tangible for a wide variety of visitors. Paradoxically, after the intervention Bunker 599 became a Dutch national monument.

Of course, a video of the cutting operation (which lasted 40 days) was shot and it is available on the architectural firm website, together with other pictures and documentation. ("Bunker 599 - Projects – RAAAF" 2013)

2.31 The Utoya (unrealised) Monument



A model of Memory Wound, Jonas Dahlberg's commemorative artwork for the victims of the 2011 Utøya massacre. Photograph: Jonas Dahlberg Studio/AFP/Getty Images

Finalizing the Norway's July 22 memorial site competition, Director of KORO/Public Art Norway Svein Bjørkås decided that Swedish artist Jonas Dahlberg would build three July 22 Memorial sites in Norway. In order to commemorate the attacks in Oslo and Utoya (a small island outside of the capital), the artist presented a proposal to cut a gap into the Sjørbråten peninsula, which faces Utoya. [...] The cut will be excavated and moved to Oslo, where it will be part of a second memorial. ("Norway Landscape Wound Commemorating Utoya Mass Shooting" 2014)

Nevertheless, the monument was never accomplished and the project was cancelled in 2017.

But about 20 locals, including some who helped save lives during the massacre, sued the state to overturn the project, describing it as a "rape of nature" that would damage the landscape and their community.

They argued that the "hideous monument" was too invasive and they would find it difficult to live with such a dramatic visual reminder of the bloodshed on Utøya. Some geologists had also expressed doubts about the feasibility of the project. (Henley 2017)

2.32 Diller + Scofidio, The Cloud



As many people know, we refer to the Blur Building at Yverdon-les-Bains, created for the Swiss Expo in 2002. The building breaks with all previous conventions in architecture and it is set up as an authentic new paradigm for the architecture of the future. In Yverdon-les-Bains the building (clearly made of flesh and blood, in this case a metallic framework) never stays the same. The great oval 90 meter long cantilevered structure “is” in this case, first and foremost, information. Using a complex system of sensors, the building constantly changes as certain parameters for reading the external information change. The degree of humidity, temperature, and wind are all measured by a series of sensors which, via transformation programs, control thousands of nozzles spraying nebulised water in various ways. The mist constantly changes with respect to the building, continuously altering it, sometimes making a prow emerge, then a terrace, or a bridge, or nothing. Without the reading and transformation of the environmental information, there would simply be the pure metallic skeleton of a panoramic platform (beautiful in itself, nonetheless, à la Buckminster Fuller). The Blur story is not, however, an extreme view of industrialization but it was wholly projected into the 21st century, part of the past history, still to be written, of the computerization of architecture. (Marotta 2011)

The *Blur Building* created by Diller-Scofidio on Lake Neuchatel, Switzerland in 2002 is indeed a performative building, and non-accidentally prof. Antonello Marotta titled

his monography about the American duo *Blurred Theater*. (Marotta 2011)

The border between architecture and art is *blurred*. This kind of architectures plays very often with the definition of border, and of *limen*. By means of technology, Diller-Scofidio were able to question the solidity of the building as a requirement. Where the modern system of production seem to require flexibility, an evanescent building is as follow.

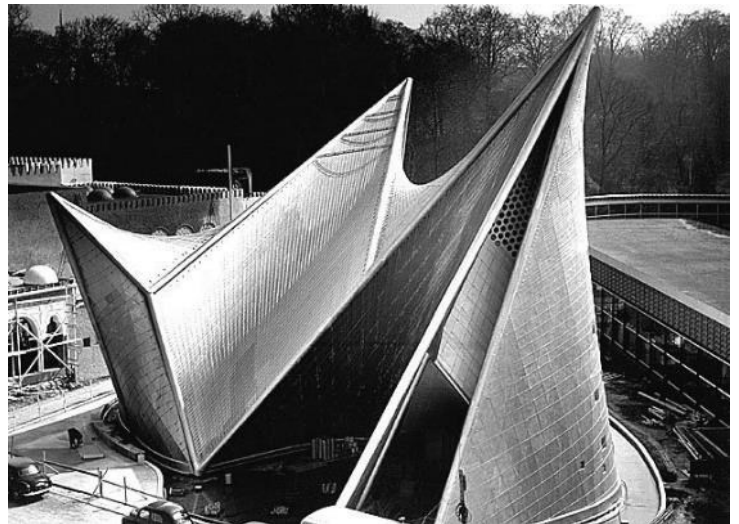
2.33 The Shape of Suond 1: Xenakis & Le Corbusier

The Philips pavilion, designed by Iannis Xenakis for the Brussels International Exhibition in 1958.

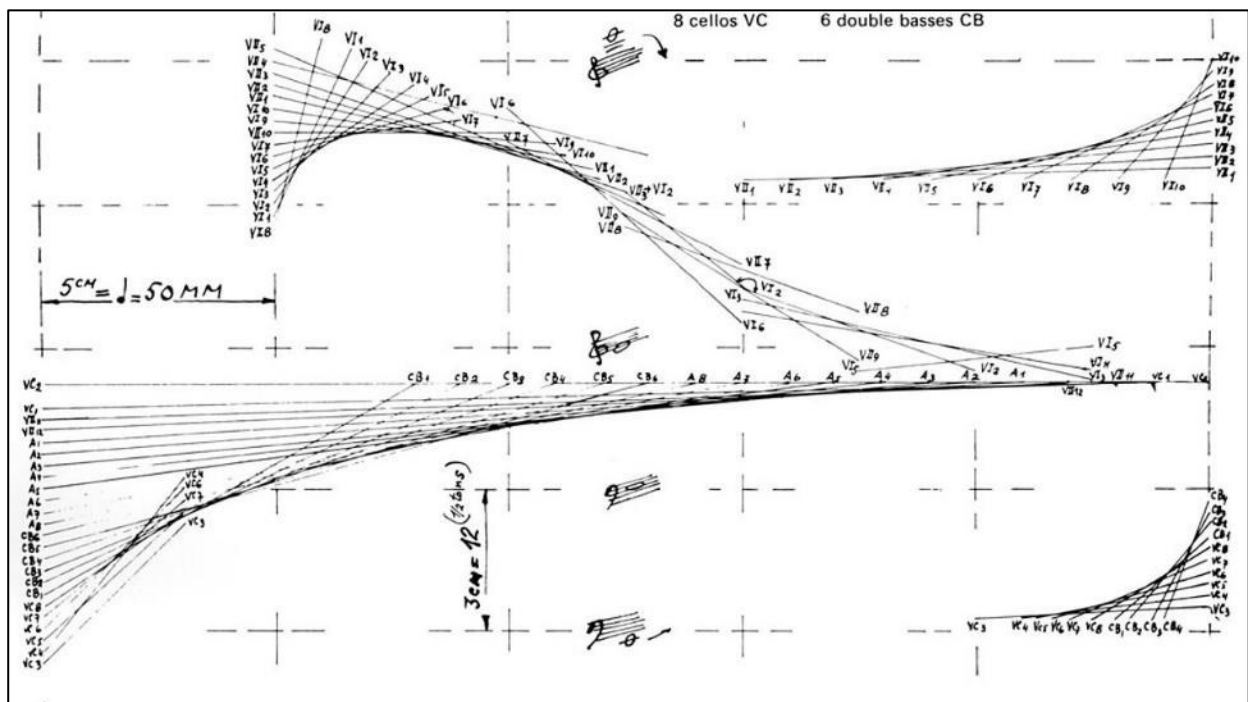
Still one of the most remarkable examples of the direct relationship between music and architecture.

The pavilion hosted a composition by Edgar Varese, but it was designed around a composition by Xenakis, called *Metastasis*.

The composition movement is reflected in two ways: the first in the identity of formal structure – the kind of structural identity Wittgenstein referred to – which is also expressed in the composition by the visual rendering of the musical score.

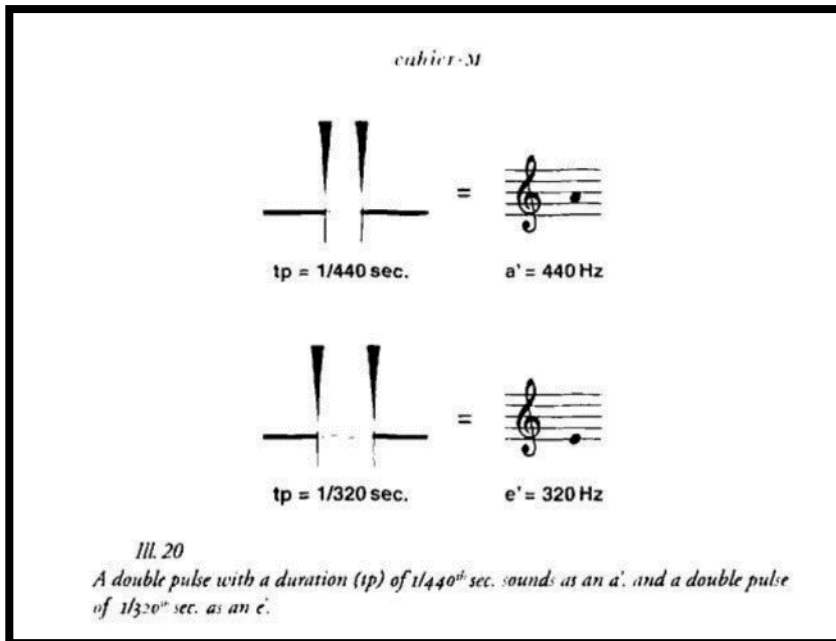


The second is a mathematical relationship. Mathematics is indeed crucial in all Xenakis's work.



String Glissandi, Bars 309-14 of *Metastasis*. Source (Xenakis 1992)

2.34 The Shape of Sound 2: Raaijmakers



Source: (Raaijmakers 2000 p. 88)

Scientist, composer, theatre author, and philosopher Dick Raaijmakers also worked at the Physics Laboratory of Royal Philips Electronics Ltd., from 1954 to 1960. He considered his 1959 *Piano-forte* piece as his first “real work of art” (Raaijmakers 2011 p. 5).

And the date at least should be a hint of the relation between his work and Xenakis’s (author whom he also analysed in his *Chaier M*). Interested in the principles of sound generation, also in relation to his work, he developed art and theory about the spatial dimension of music. The illustration here is from his

Chaier M; it illustrates the spatial-temporal dimension of single notes, and the continuity between frequency as tone and frequency as rhythm.

He called the repetitions of elements through space *plastic* and the layering of repetitions in the harmonic spectrum, in temporal and spatial perspective, *morphology*.

When used to refer to sound as a time-based phenomenon, the word ‘repetition’ implies that a sound can but be repeated when it has ‘passed’ in a temporal sense. When talking about layers, shifts, and translations, however, we do not mean chains but rather towers of sound that loom about. Here again, temporal and plastic representations appear to mix. (Raaijmakers 2000 p. 81)

Before going any further, it is a good idea to note that most structures we encounter in our environment can in fact be reduced to time-based or plastic repetitions. Morphology indeed refers to the way in which a given fundamental formula — a primary body, the initial pattern, the mother of all cells — is repeated. (Raaijmakers 2000 p. 2)

Raaijmakers also wrote an interesting essay titled *The Destructive Character*, roughly inspired by an eponymous short text by Walther Benjamin, in which he also advised against the risks of repetition and the attempt of some artists to escape its “mystical” power.

But repetition also has its downside. A repetition procedure that is too emphatic can easily turn into a sort of ritual, and unwanted symbolic, and even mystical, elements may creep in. That’s why most Fluxus artists prefer the third, more or less alternative variant: the destruction of an initially given order by means of aggressive, quite immediate disassembly. (Raaijmakers 2011 p. 55)

2.35 Philippe Petit / Twin towers



When, in 1974, Baudrillard described the Twin Towers and their indistinguishable mirroring, it was as if he had identified or marked an objective.

Whose fate was then somehow determined.

Twice this stasis has proved to be fragile, impossible to maintain, with the breaking in of a new third element. That is like saying: theatrical.

The dialectical paradox, or the impossible dialectic. In Baudrillard's terms, the achievement of a binary condition is an indication of the end of history.

An attempt to freeze dialectics in the photograph of a frame.

2.36 Eduardo Chillida / Monument to Tolerance / Real Sociedad



Notably Chillida is always consolidating a form out of a movement. His sculptural work is easy to understand in terms of performance.

Monument to Tolerance was a truly crazy and disturbing project. Opposed by environmentalists and never accomplished. Undoubtedly magnificent, a monument to negative space. This time, no less, not traced by the movement of the body but by that of the sun, though driven within lines which had nothing natural, so perfectly human. Therefore, on an inhuman scale.

Lefebvre:

«A kind of pedagogy of the body, its rhythms, a kind of teaching, will fill the enormous gap. But such unpleasant words: pedagogy, teaching, fill! Of course, the body cannot be appropriated with speech, and references to language fall on their own at the appropriate moment. What is needed is a practice, addressed to lived experience, to lead it to the level of the perceived world. How can we reeducate bodies for space? Sport is inadequate (although the body of a soccer goalkeeper admirably appropriates its space and is perfectly suitable for it) as is what is known as physical expression, mimetic learning.

» (Lefebvre 2014b p. 34)

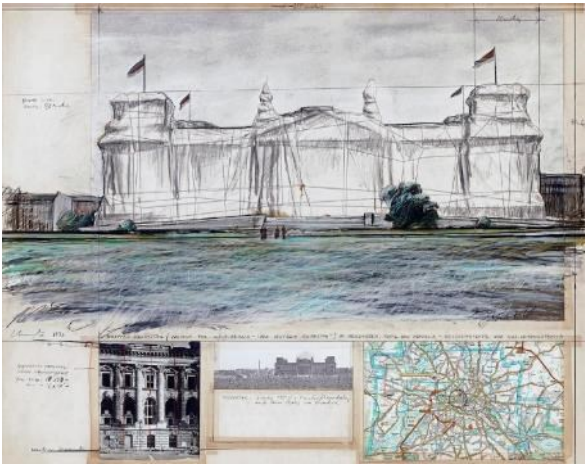


Left: Martin Heidegger in front of a Chillida's work.



Right: Chillida as the goal keeper of Real Sociedad.

2.37 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Wrapped Reichstag



2.38 Galleria del Sale



La Galleria del Sale, public art project. Open air art gallery, organization: Urban Center Cagliari, Italy.

<http://www.urbancenter.eu/>

2.39 KUD Ljud, Streetwalker Gallery



One of the many street art operations conceived by this brilliant Slovenian company. In this case, a city itinerary is walked through and presented by a guide as if it were a contemporary art gallery. This idea reminds (and quotes) Dadaist “Excursions and Visits” which Claire Bishop mentions among the first experiments of participatory art.

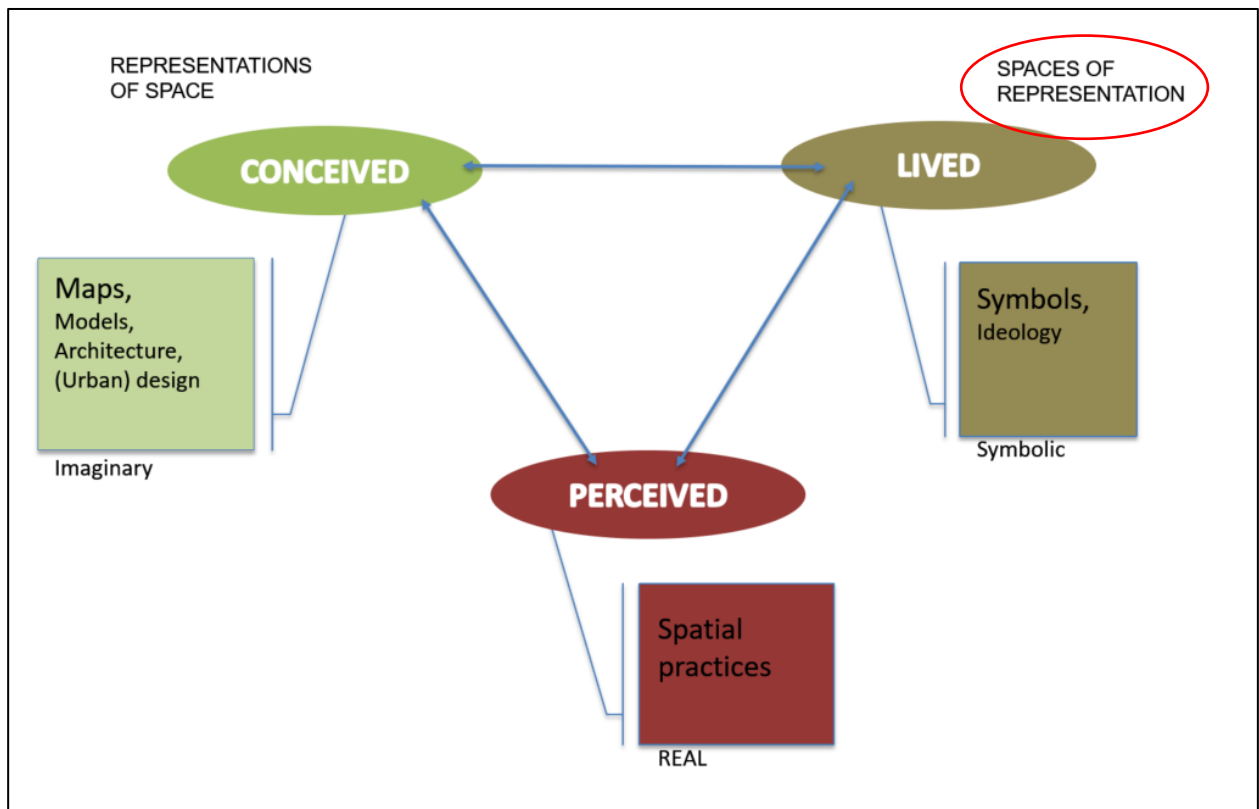
The first part of the Season involved ‘Excursions and Visits’, projecting Dada events into a new type of public realm beyond that of the music halls. The first of these excursions was scheduled for 14 April 1921 at 3 p.m., meeting in the churchyard of Saint Julien- le- Pauvre: ‘a deserted, almost unknown church in totally uninteresting, positively doleful surroundings’. The Surrealist writer Georges Hugnet described the excursion as an ‘absurd rendez- vous, mimicking instructive walks, guide à la clé. The fliers advertising the event, which were also published in several newspapers, stated that the artists wished ‘to set right the incompetence of suspicious guides’ and lead a series of ‘excursions and visits’ to places that have ‘no reason to exist’. (Bishop 2012 p. 67)

The streetwalker gallery contains the element of theatre improvisation and some very effective scenic gimmicks (all spectators entered the “gallery” through a door placed in the middle of nowhere, therefore through an explicit request to accept the fiction and participate in the “game”).

In addition, urban exploration also takes place through hearing alone – by listening to a particular square or street with closed eyes, what is heard is (also rightly) presented as a John Cage composition – or with the sole touch, by touching the walls of the houses while proceeding, with eyes closed, in a narrow street.

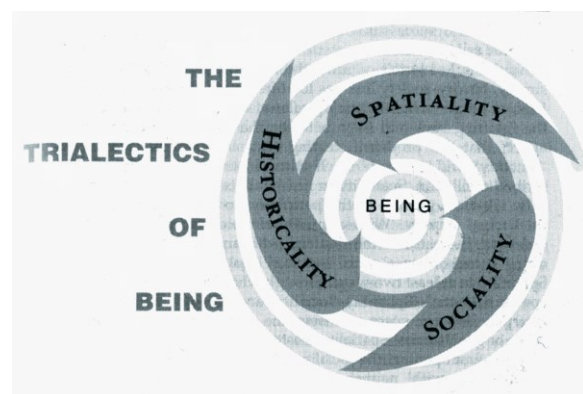
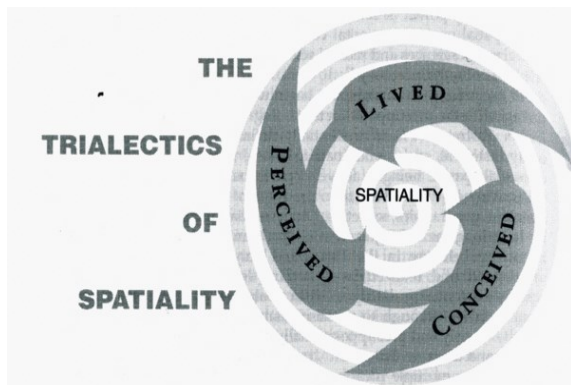
Thus, the ironic element here is functional to a genuine request to reform one’s point of view on the urban environment, re-learning to see it spontaneously.

2.40 Trialectics



Integrating Lacan triad into trialectics. Situating theatre. Diagram based on Lefebvre, 1991

Below: diagrams from From E. Soja, *Thirdspace* (1996)



2.41 Manu Invisible, Limen



Manu Invisible featuring Sem, *Limen*, graffiti, Monastir (CA), Italy, 2016

2.42 Italian Limes



In the 1990s, observations by the Istituto Geografico Militare started to acknowledge the problematic uncertainty of the limits between Italy and its adjacent countries. A new definition of “moving border” was eventually enacted into law, by means of an agreement between the governments of Italy and Austria (2006) and with Switzerland (2009). Since 2008, the Istituto Geografico Militare has been carrying out high-altitude surveying campaigns every two years, with the goal of detecting any new shifts in the borderline and updating the official state maps.

«Italian Limes explores how natural borders—apparently unquestionable and self-evident—are in fact exposed to the complexity of long-term ecological processes, unveiling the problem of territorial representation and its political implications.»



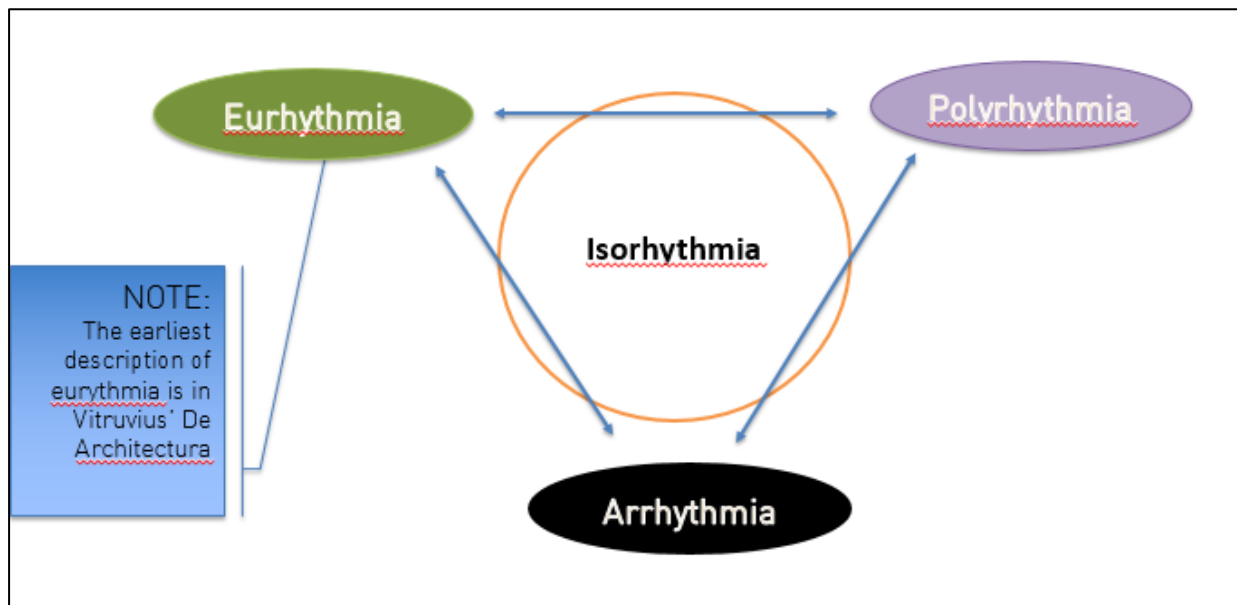
«The drawing machine—an automated pantograph controlled by an Arduino board and programmed with Processing—translates the coordinates received from the sensors on the glacier into a real-time representation of the shifts in the border. It is activated directly by the visitors of the exhibition, and it prints a series of unique maps of the border between Italy and Austria, each of them time-stamped on the exact moment of his visit to the installation.»

Italian Limes, installation setup inside the Arsenale. Monditalia, 14th International Architecture Exhibition, la Biennale di Venezia (2014).

Source: <http://www.italianlimes.net> (“Italian Limes” n.d.)

See also : <http://www.bldgblog.com/2014/06/where-borders-melt/> (Manaugh 2014)

2.43 Rhythmanalysis



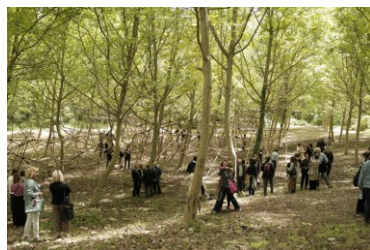
Changing the rhythms. Diagram based on Lefebvre, 2004.

2.44 Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Running Fence



Christo and Jeanne-Claude, Running Fence, 1976.

2.45 Yona Friedman and Jean-Baptiste Decavèle, No Man's Land



Yona Friedman e Jean-Baptiste

Decavèle, *No Man's Land*, 2016.

2.46 Broken Tympanums



Bernardo Buontalenti, Uffizi, Porta delle Suppliche, ca. 1580

In mannerist architecture, between the Renaissance and the Baroque, the apparent solidity of the tympanum is so often broken. Buontalenti brought that movement to its paradoxical consequences. What was it about? Life – the explosion of life celebrated by the Baroque, breaking out of the austerity of the Renaissance – breaking out of a too rigid form, preserving the appearance of solidity, but with no real function. Buontalenti's masterpiece has even a window (*finestra lucifera!*) where the two sections of what is left of the tympanum join. That is where the light gets in.

2.47 Lucio Fontana

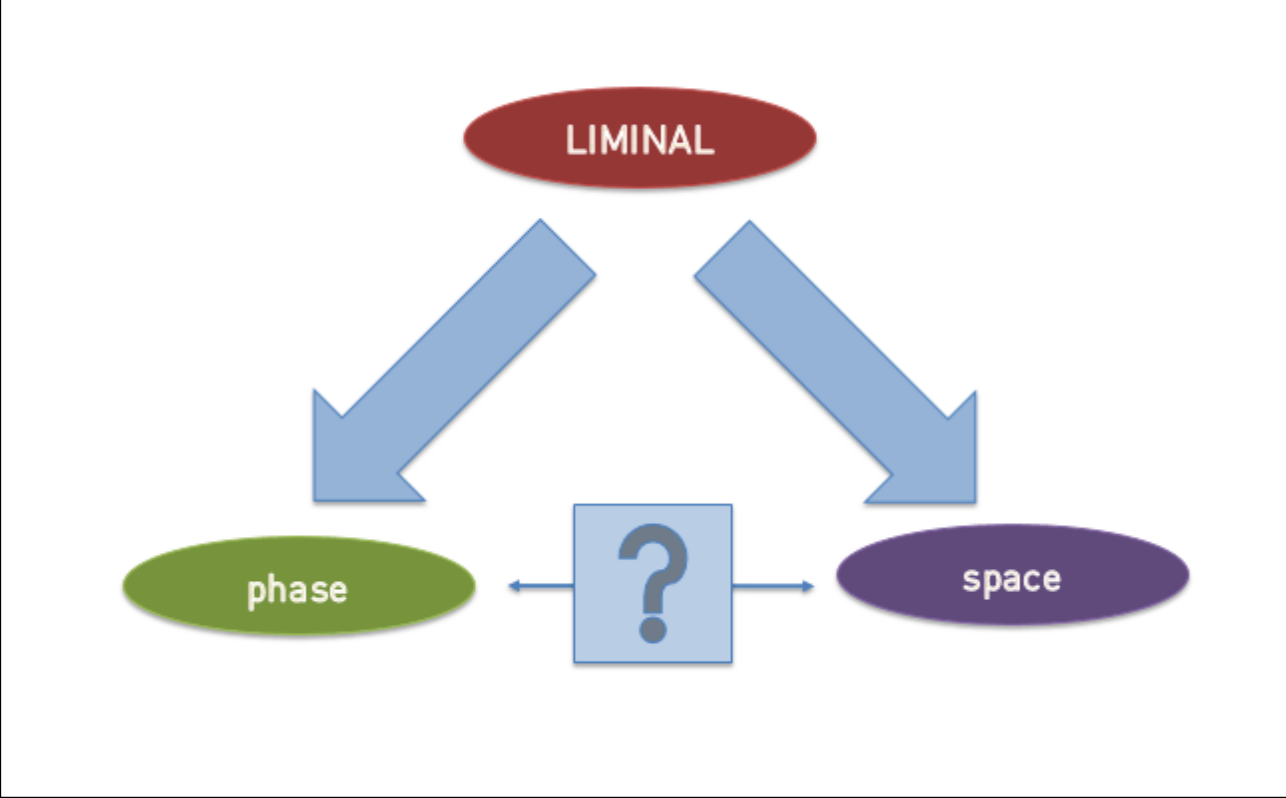


Matta Clark. (Photo: The artist in his studio, Milan 1964. Photo Ugo Mulas. © UGO MULAS HEIRS).

There is a *gesture* which surpasses the canvas.

What is relevant here is the passion for the Baroque shared by Fontana and Matta-Clark.

2.48 Liminality



2.49 Gordon Matta-Clark

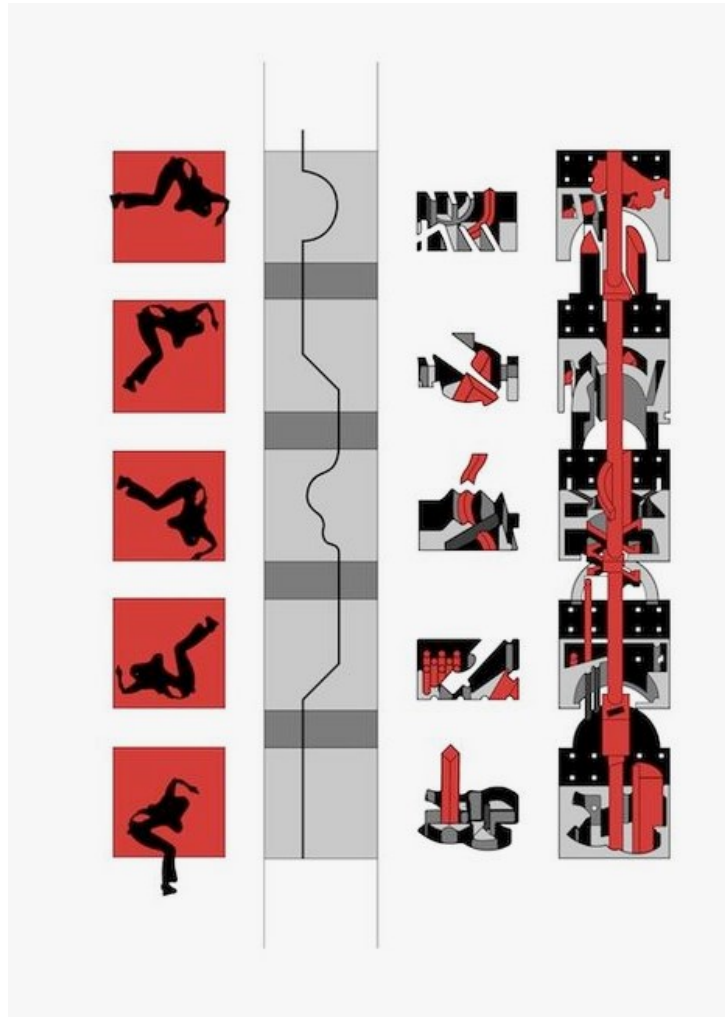


Gordon Matta Clark Splitting 9 (Documentation of the 'Splitting' action, realised in New Jersey in 1974)

2.50 Paris Interstitial Playground



2.51 Bernard Tschumi, Parc de la Villette



In association with Jacques Derrida

A current important project for public spaces in Paris has been presented in terms of just such an architecture, an architecture that Derrida has described as “spaced out” (or “spacy”). Bataille’s 1929 article interpreted the storming of the Bastille as the revolt of the mob against the monuments. The Parc de la Villette would realize a paradoxical storming of architecture-by itself. A Bastille in no way different from its own storming. “Architecture against itself,” Bernard Tschumi, the park’s architect, labels it: architecture against architecture.

As if a donjuanesque architecture would escape finally from the stiff, punitive order of the Commendatore. It would enter into games and begin to dance. “The program can challenge the very ideology it implied.” Such a project calls upon a loss of meaning, to give it a dionysiac dimension: it explicitly takes issue with what Tschumi describes as an essential premise of architecture, “the idea of a meaning immanent in architectural structures”; the park, a postmodern “assault on meaning,” claims as its main purpose to “dismantle meaning.” (Hollier 1989 p. xi)

2.52 Žižek, The Human Microphone at Zuccotti Park



S.Z.: They tell you we are dreamers

Choir: They tell you we are dreamers

S.Z.: The true dreamers are those who think

Choir: The true dreamers are those who think

S.Z.: things can go on indefinitely the way they are

Choir: things can go on indefinitely the way they are

S.Z.: We are not dreamers

Choir: We are not dreamers

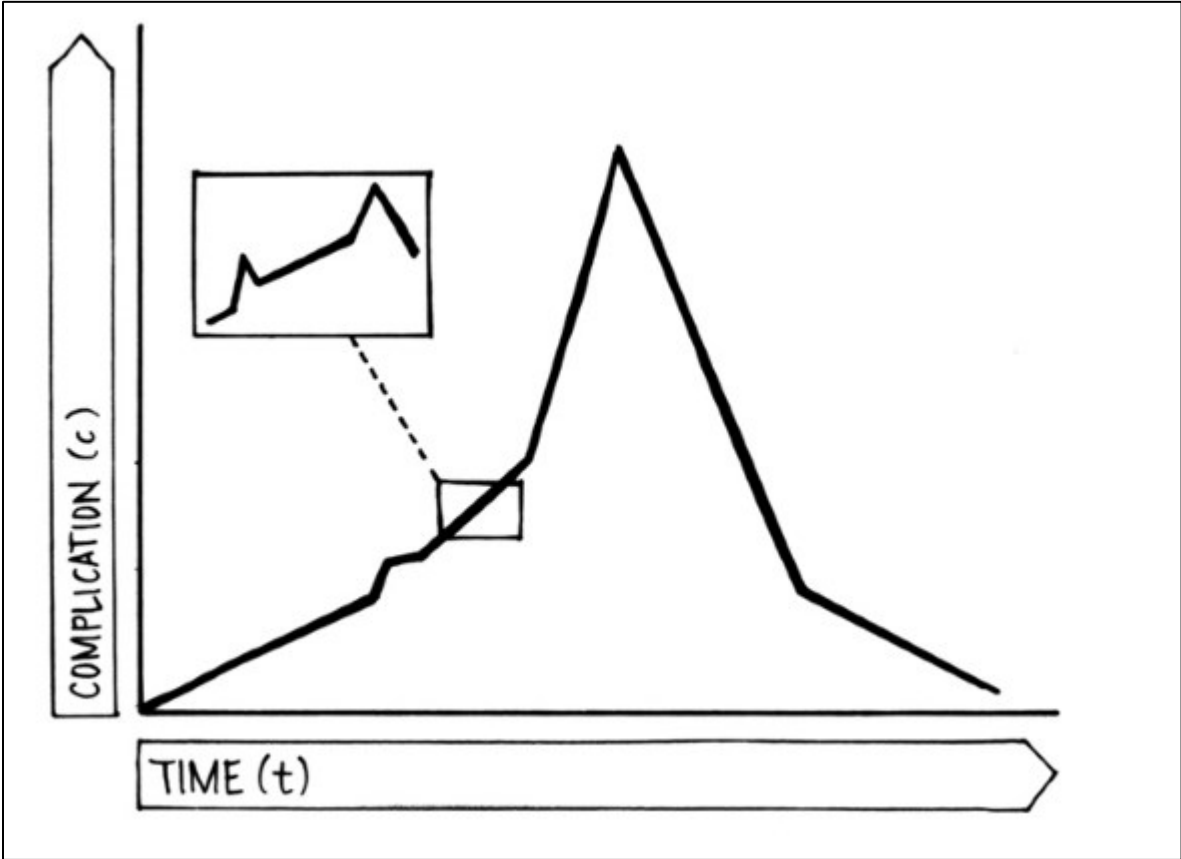
S.Z.: We are the awakening

Choir: We are awakening

S.Z.: from a dream that is turning into a nightmare

Choir: from a dream that is turning into a nightmare

2.53 The Pleasing Shape (as Form)



Curve of the dramatic action + self-similarity (diagram from B. Laurel, *Computers as Theater*, 1991)

2.54 The Unveiling Ceremony



Unveiling of Thomas Schütte's glass sculpture *Model for a Hotel* in Trafalgar Square's fourth plinth, 7 November 2007.

«Monuments, signs of the collective will as expressed through the principles of architecture, offer themselves as primary elements, fixed points in the urban dynamic.» (Rossi 1982 p. 22)

Not only contemporary graffiti, tagging, and all artistic forms linked to space-marking deal deeply with performance, but every classical monument, as well as every place, also marks a point in time. The otherwise inexplicable “unveiling ceremonies” are the relics of a once full-working performance.

2.55 The Erection of the Obelisk

Image from *Della Trasportazione dell'Obelisco Vaticano et delle Fabriche di Nostro Signore Papa Sisto V* (Fontana 1590)



The obelisk which is now

at the centre of Saint Peters Square in Rome used to be located behind the Vatican Basilica, until 1586, when Pope Sixtus V commissioned the architect Domenico Fontana to relocate it in front of the church. It was a complex, delicate, and long operation. More than 800 workers and 100 horses were employed to operate the winches and ropes. During the works, the rule of absolute silence had been imposed throughout the square, under the threat of immediate death.

After months of transportation, in the heat of the last day, when the obelisk was almost in vertical position and almost in its new place, something started going wrong. Smoke came out of the ropes which were overheating due to the heavy load, and were about to break.

At that point a navy captain from Sanremo, Benedetto Bresca, who was in the square with many other people staring at the incredible enterprise, aware of what was about to happen and caring less for his life than for the success of the operation, shouted «water on the ropes!». The order was immediately repeated by the architect and executed. The ropes cooled down, and tightened, and the operation was completed.

Instead of punishing Bresca, the Pope awarded him with the exclusive privilege of supplying the Vatican with the palms for Palm Sunday ceremony, a monopoly which was to be granted to him and his descendants.

This legend has become part of the monument, no one can separate it from the story, nor form the place. The monument of an incredible performance.

This episode can be read as a representation of Italian common sense: too rigid rules are dangerous, and experience is worth than institutional knowledge. Yet the legend can also be an even more general, *ontological* metaphor: you need some *clinamen* to makes things go straight.

2.56 The toppling of the Vendôme Column

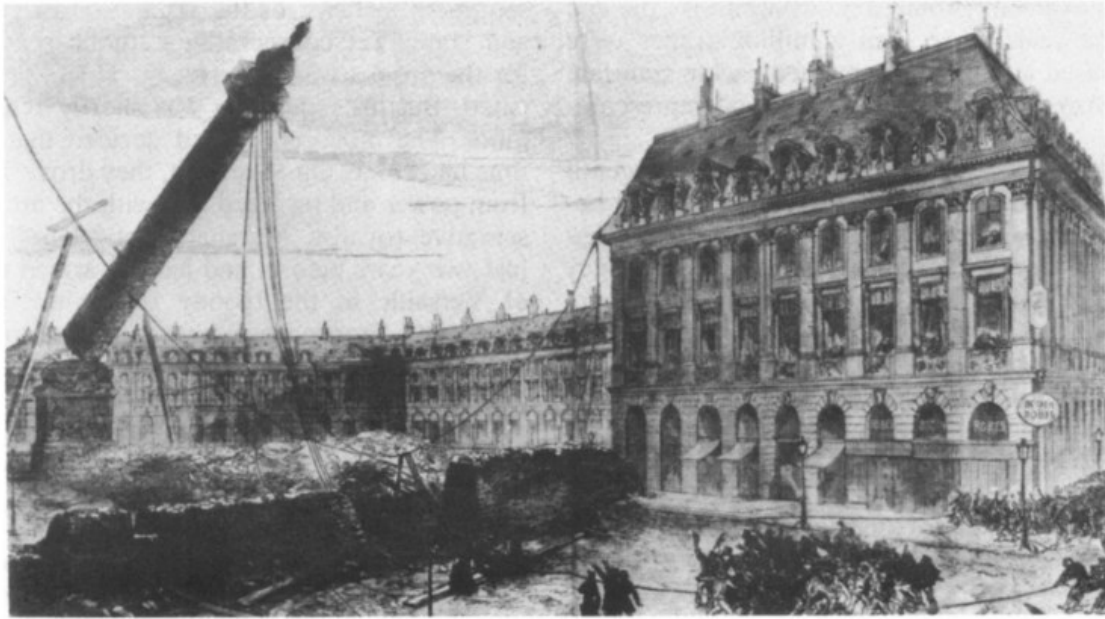


FIG. 7. The toppling of the Vendôme Column by the communards.

Source: (Harvey 1979)

David Harvey, already in an early essay of the 1979 titled *Monument and Myth*, told the troubled history of the Basilique du Sacré-Coeur in Paris, built in a site marked by the important events of the *Commune*, identified as a vital spot in the city and a vital monument due to a still perceivable conflict.

2.57 The 4th Plinth



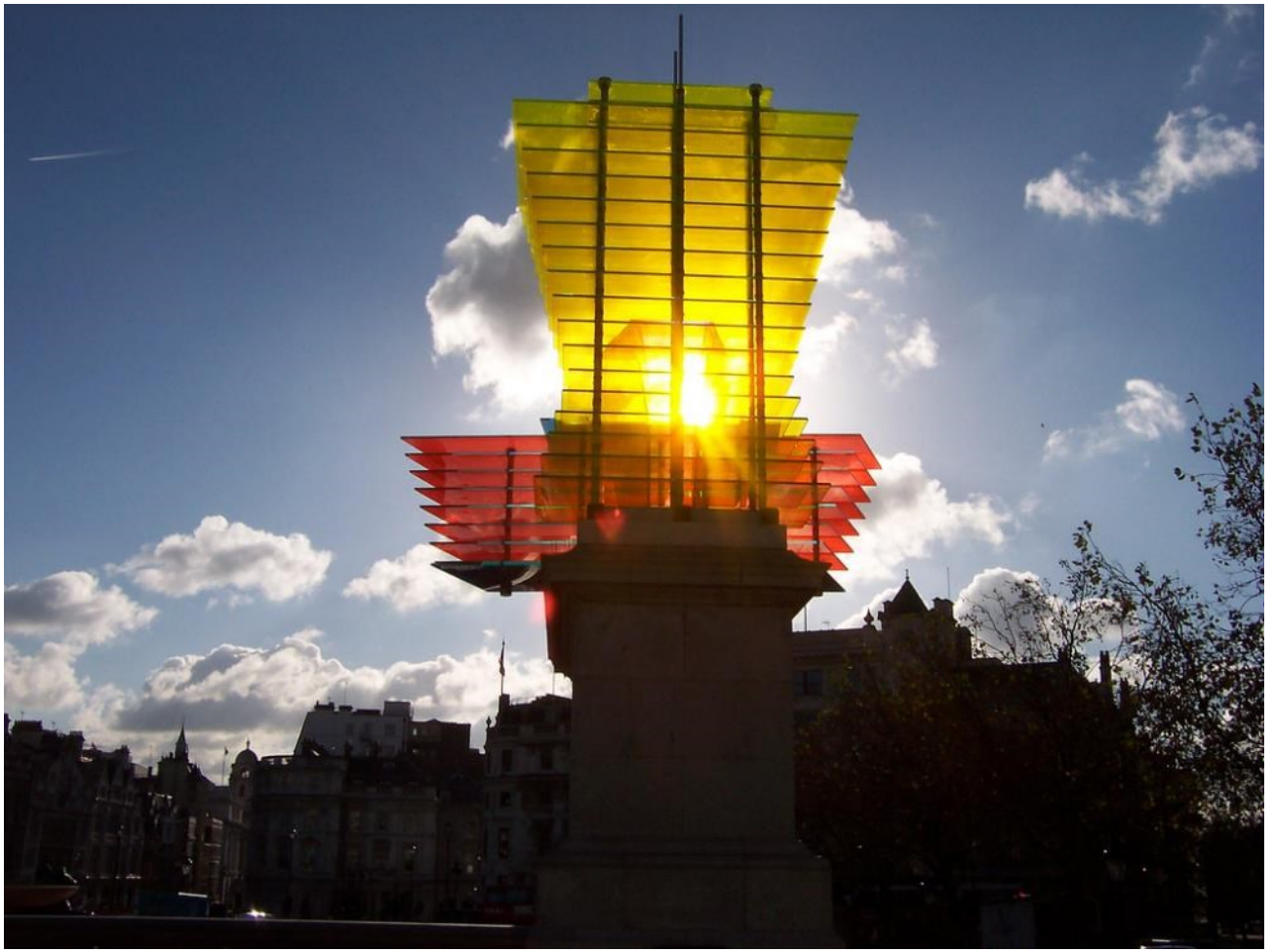
Anthony Gormley, *One and Other*, Fourth Plinth, Trafalgar Square, London, 6 July - 14 October 2009. One of the 2,400 randomly selected participants is hoisted on the pedestal for an hour. Photo by Alan Stanton, license Creative Commons by-SA 2.0.

The Fourth Plinth in London is an example of a monument reuse in a performative manner. Monument “absent” but from the significant location: Trafalgar Square, close to Nelson’s Column. Built in 1841 to house a statue of Henry IV, the Plinth is in fact a pedestal which has remained empty for 158 years, until 1999, when the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport decided to start a permanent program of temporary works.

Among the many artists hosted, Thomas Schütte with his 2007 *Model for a Hotel* and the duo Elmgreen and Dragset with their 2012 *Powerless structures, Fig. 101*. The former proposed a glass structure with several openings, which was originally named *Hotel for birds* (Searle 2007) – title eloquently anti-monumental. The latter realized a bronze figure of a child on a rocking horse, ironic reference to the equestrian sculpture as a statement of power.

But the Fourth Plinth itself is, according to Whybrow’s words, a «rolling counterpoint to the militaristic, nineteenth-century monuments adorning the rest of the site.» (Whybrow 2011 p. 107) According to mayor Sadiq Khan, it «reflects the best of London in so many ways-it is inventive, pioneering, surprising and a source of delight, discussion and debate» (“Trafalgar Square’s Fourth Plinth artwork shortlist announced” 2017). The realisation element is precisely what makes it a true monument of the democratic era⁴⁶.

⁴⁶ Documentation and updates on the project: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/art-and-design>
Giovanni Campus, *The City as Theatre*, Tesi di Dottorato in Architettura e Ambiente, Università degli studi di Sassari



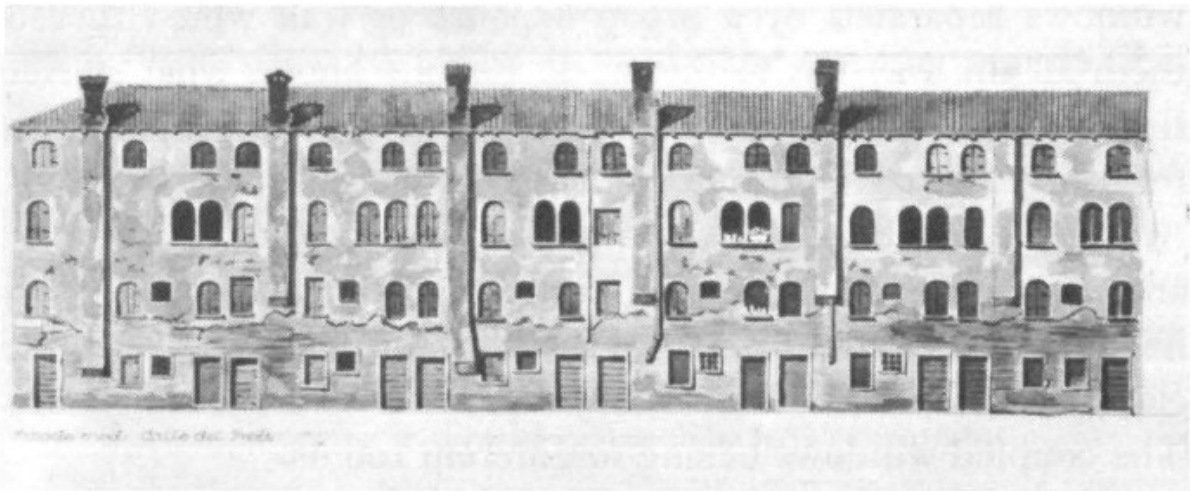
Thomas Schütte, *Model for a Hotel*, 2007.



Elmgreen and Dragset, *Powerless Structures*, Fig.101, 2012.

Giovanni Campus, *The City as Theatre*, Tesi di Dottorato in Architettura e Ambiente, Università degli studi di Sassari

2.58 Calle dei Preti: Italian Gesture / Italian City



I am quite sure that most people would notice that all of these row-houses from the 15th century in Calle dei Preti near Via Garibaldi in Venice. The façades were probably more uniform originally. Each story had its own rhythm which was repeated with strict regularity across the entire row, the houses being separated by the regularly placed chimneys. Each flat was in two stories, one street-door leading to the dwelling on the lower floors, the other to the one on the two upper floors façades are rhythmically divided. And yet if you asked them what rhythm in architecture means it would be difficult for them to explain, let alone define. The term rhythm is borrowed from other arts involving a time element and based on movement, such as music and dancing.

The regular alternation to lighten work is called rhythm - and by "work" here I mean every kind of muscular exercise. Dancing for instance is a good example of such work.

But experiencing architecture demands time; it also demands work - though mental, not physical, work. Those hearing music or watching dancing do none of the physical work themselves, but in perceiving the performance they experience the rhythm of it as though it were in their own body.

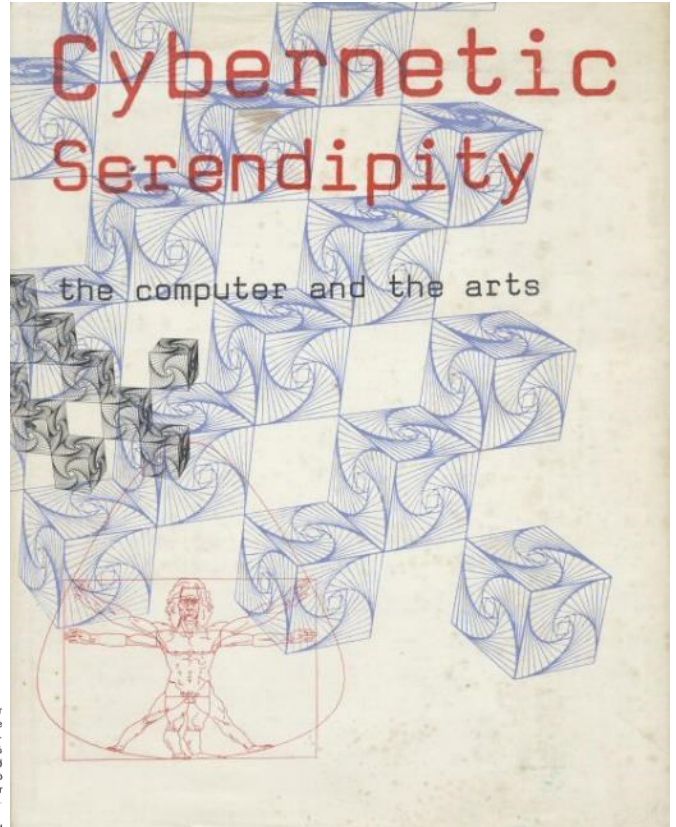
Rhythmic experience spreads easily from one person to another. A crowd of people who are gathered together to watch dancing or some sporting event, or to hear music, can be completely absorbed by the same rhythm.

People who live in the same country at the same time often have the same sense of rhythm. They move in the same way, they get pleasure from the same experiences.

Source: (Rasmussen 1962 pp. 132–135)

2.59 "add noise to the system!"

Cover and some internal pages of the Cybernetic Serendipity exhibition catalogue, an exhibition of cybernetic art curated by Jasia Reichardt and held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, from 2 August to 20 October 1968. Later it toured the United States.



Programming stochastic computer graphics

Georg Nees

To produce the graphics, I used a drawing-board controlled by a punch tape and a digital computer producing the pilot tape. Each graphic has random parameters. The programme for each graphic repeats generative fundamental operations so that the mere repetitions, the aesthetic redundancy, produce the random parametric values of the

aesthetic improbability of the graphic during each repetition. The graphics *8-corner* and *23-corner* alter one basic figure each when programmed as follows:

8-corner Distribute eight dots inside the figure-square and connect them with a closed straight edge line.

23-corner Beginning anywhere within the figure-square draw a straight edge line with 23 sections inside the square, each section of random length, alternating horizontal and vertical lines. The horizontal lines may go right or left at random, the vertical lines up or down. Connect the starting and end points of the straight edge rectilinearly.

Axis-parallel maze

Beginning at one corner of the rectangular frame, draw a straight edge line within the frame. The line should consist of 4,000 sections of random length, each one under 15 millimetres long, alternating horizontal and vertical lines—the horizontal lines either to the right or left at random, the vertical lines up or down. The programme produces a continuous shape or form.

The *Curtains* graphic was discovered through a programming error, thus it possesses improbabilities in a twofold sense. The programme may be described roughly as follows: Draw 60 parallel lines along the narrow side of the rectangular frame, so that the lines, together with the random abscissae, accumulate against the narrow side.

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Top left, Georg Nees, *23-corner graphic*

Top centre, *8-corner graphic*

Above, *Corridor*

Programme for this picture was constructed as follows:

Two separate linear-rectangular progressions were generated on the left wall. Then the pattern was copied symmetrically on the right wall. A set of cubes were spaced randomly on the ceiling and the floor pattern was drawn.

The programme was written in ALGOL, run on a Siemens 2002 computer and plotted with a Zuse-Graphomat

Far left, *Axis parallel maze*

Left, *Curtains*, graphic discovered by error

79



Automation is the orchestration of industry

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103

2.60 The Sea Organ



Situated in Zadar, Croatia, inaugurated in 2005. Part of the project of the waterfront redesign by architect Nikola Bašić. The waves interact with the “organ” creating a continuous stochastic harmony.

2.61 Monument to NATO



The signs of the bombing that hit the Radio Television of Serbia headquarters in 1999 are deliberately left in sight. That makes of the damaged building the most prominent contemporary monument of the centre of Belgrade.

2.62 Time in Jazz Festival



Less than 3,000 people live in the village and about 35,000 visit the little village during the 10 day Festival. Source: (CISSET *et al.* 2017)

Photo: Antonello Fresu.

2.63 (Piranesi's) Spanish Steps



The Spanish Steps, Rome. Detail of an engraving by Piranesi

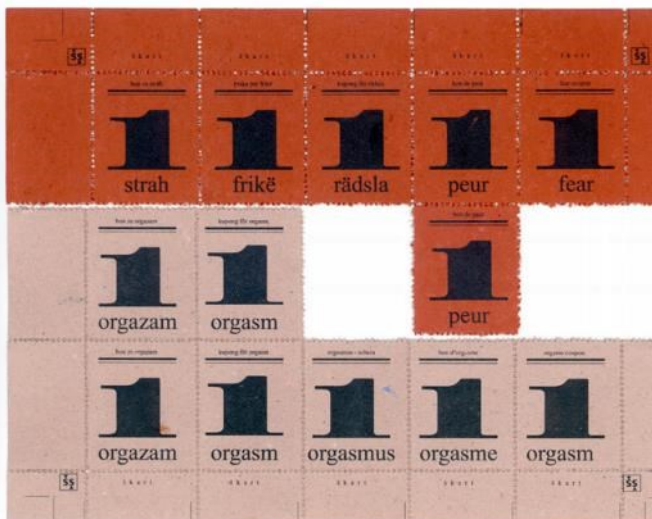
«Piranesi's engraving gives a faint idea of how the men and women of that day conducted themselves. They knew little about walking but so much the more about the very ceremonious dancing of the period, and therefore they could move gracefully on those steps which so closely resemble the figures of one of their dances—the men in high heeled shoes with toes turned out as they had learned from their fencing masters, the women in tight-laced bodices above their dipping and swaying farthingales. Thus, in the Spanish Steps we can see a petrification of the dancing rhythm of a period of gallantry; it gives us an inkling of something that was, something our generation will never know.» (Rasmussen 1962 p. 136)

2.64 Grupa SKART



(above) Grupa Skart Orkeskart choir, Belgrade, s.d.

(left) Kuponi, 1995



Source: <http://www.skart.rs/>

2.65 Bojana Cvejic, Spatial Confessions



Bojana Cvejić in collaboration with Christine De Smedt, Marta Popivoda, and Ana Vujanović

Spatial Confessions 2014

Performed as part of BMW Tate Live: Performance Room, Tate Modern, 22 May 2014

Photo © Tate

<http://www.tate.org.uk/research/publications/performance-at-tate/case-studies/bojana-cvejic>

2.66 Antanas Mockus



Antanas Mockus, mayor of Bogotá, as “Superciudadano” (Screenshot from *Bogotá - Doctor City*, Andreas Dalsgaard, 2009), and urban actions with actors replacing traffic officers.

2.67 TaMaLaCà Group: The Power of Play



Urban actions realized during the *Extra-Pedestrian* project in the neighbourhood of San Donato, Sassari, 2015. The signs read: 'Children-measure spaces,' 'Vitruvian Children,' 'We are listening, listen to us,' 'Every space is playable,' and 'Organic architecture.' Photos: Giovanni Campus

Sicne 2013 TaMaLaCà is an official spinoff of the University of Sassari offering professional consulting services for the design and management of policies, projects, and events aimed at promoting the quality of urban life and the construction of an inclusive city. TaMaLaCà is a bizarre acronym from the verse "Tutta Mia La Città" (The Whole City Is Mine) from a popular song from the '60s.

As a conceptual framework, they explicitly refer to Amartia Sen's works on the capability approach, as developed by Martha Nussbaum as well (Nussbaum & Sen 1993; Sen 1992, 1999, 2009), and, at the same time, to the 'Work in Progress' concept as defined by Accolla and the Design for All (DfA) approach (Accolla 2009). Their work's original perspective emerges from this particular intersection and from the attempt to bring together the two apparently distant Capability and DfA approaches.

The group also received the first prize for its category at the 2013 Biennial of European Towns and Town Planners in Cascais (Portugal) for the project *FLPP: Fronte di Liberazione Pizzinni Pizzoni*, which was also listed in the in the publication "Global Public Space Toolkit", edited by UN-HABITAT (Public Space Toolkit 2015).

Urban action from the project Extra-Pedestrians, Sassari (Photos: Giovanni Campus and PIPE Studios, editing by Ta-



MaLaCà).

2.68 PortaColori



The space called “*Portacolori*” in the Sassari Monte Rosello neighbourhood (Images courtesy TaMaLaCà).

The playground new fence is conceived as a playable space (Images courtesy TaMaLaCà).



In the “*PortaColori*” (Colour-bearer) project, as the name suggests, TaMaLaCà explores the use of colour as the main, fast, and inexpensive tool to change the perception, and the use, of a space.

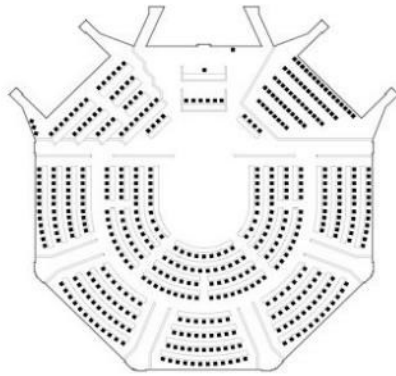
PortaColori is a playground located in the primary school courtyard in Monte Rosello, Sassari.

A participated process involving children, parents, and teachers led to the collective construction of the project to restore the schoolyard of the primary school. That courtyard has always been perceived and used as a public space for the neighbourhood, and not simply as an area belonging to the school. TaMaLaCà intended to devise a project that could give an efficient answer to the children’s realistic demands and requirements arising during the participated design phase and, at the same time, could support - multiplying and enriching them - the actual and present uses of the space by the other inhabitants.

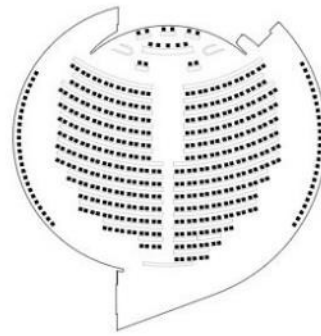
The use of colour has granted the space a strong visual identity, reinforcing the sense of belonging of a space everyone now knows, considers their own, and regularly visits.

Colour highlights the public, “popular” character of the place, allowing it to emerge in a carefree, creative way from the widespread surrounding greyness. Furthermore, in this case colour is also an instrument of joyful contagion; it attracts glances, encourages games and free time activities, and brings them back into the public space dimension of the neighbourhood.

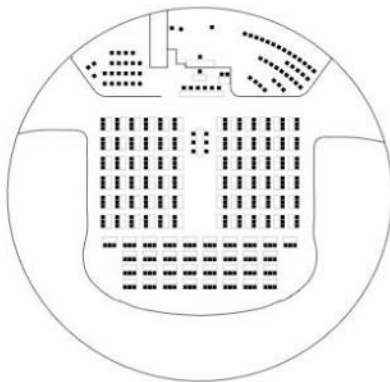
2.69 Theatres of Democracy



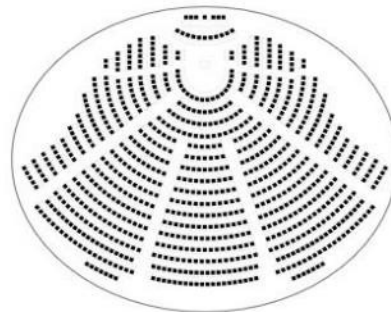
Bangladesh



Brazil



Chandigarh



EU Brussels

Source: XML Studio <http://parliamentbook.com/spaces>

(XML 2016)



2.70 Writing of the Space

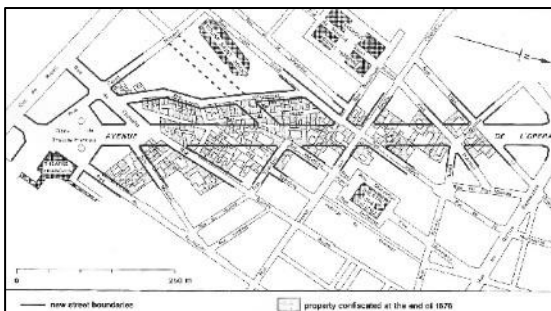


Act One. Baron Haussmann, man of this Bonapartist State which erects itself over society to treat it cynically as the booty (and not only the stake) of the struggles for power. Haussmann replaces winding but lively streets by long avenues, sordid but animated 'quartiers' by bourgeois ones. If he forces through boulevards and plans open spaces, it is not for the beauty of views. It is to 'comb Paris with machine guns'. The famous Baron makes no secret of it. (from *Right to the City*, in Lefebvre 1996 p. 76)

When we think about what Lefebvre defined as the "urbanistic ideology," we should think also about this.

The city as a theatre of military operations.

The voids have a meaning: they cry out loud and clear the glory and power of the State which plans them, the violence which could occur.



2.71 Estate Romana



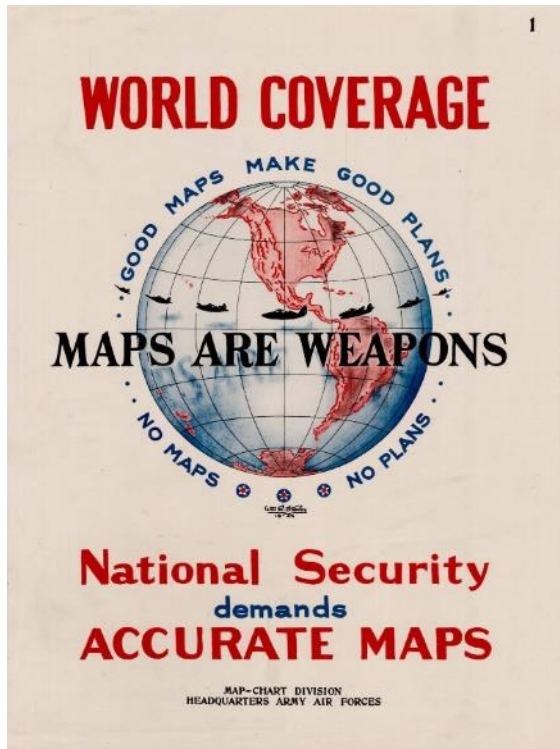
Those were dangerous years in Italy, the “Years of Lead” (it. Anni di piombo), from the lead of the countless bullets shot in the streets. Years of political violence, terrorism, when the streets of the major cities seemed no more safe.

In that difficult context, Renato Nicolini, architect and responsible of the Department of Culture of the municipality of Rome, envisaged an innovative high quality program of cultural events to reach all the city population and not only the cultural elite. Open air cinema, theatre, dance, and music were hosted in the stunning locations of the historical centre of Rome, places of great symbolic meaning such as the Basilica of Maxentius, in the Roman Forum, the biggest civil building of the ancient Rome erected by the last emperor who resided in the *Urbs*.

The number of people, of the most diverse social extractions, attending the events was also stunning, and even the organisers were surprised. Many other cities in Italy and abroad quickly decided to follow the steps of the Roman administration. The debate about the opportunity of using public money for what was called, often with critical intent, *the ephemeral*, was widespread. Nevertheless, the success of the initiative was unquestionable.

Photo: a film screening at Circo Massimo.

2.72 Representation of Space: the Control



Between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the map became more autonomous. No doubt the proliferation of the “narrative” figures that have long been its stock-in-trade (ships, animals, and characters of all kinds) still had the function of indicating the operations-travelling, military, architectural, political or commercial—that make possible the fabrication of a geographical plan. Far from being “illustrations,” iconic glosses on the text, these figurations, like fragments of stories, mark on the map the historical operations from which it resulted. Thus the sailing ship painted on the sea indicates the maritime expedition that made it possible to represent the coastlines. It is equivalent to a describer of the “tour” type. But the map gradually wins out over these figures; it colonizes space; it eliminates little by little the pictural figurations of the practices that produce it. Transformed first by Euclidean geometry and then by descriptive geometry, constituted as a formal ensemble of abstract places, it is a “theater” (as one used to call atlases) in which the same system of projection nevertheless juxtaposes two very different elements: the data furnished by a tradition (Ptolemy’s Geography, for instance) and those that came from navigators (portulans, for example). The map thus collates on the same plane heterogeneous places, some received from a tradition and others produced by observation. But the important thing here is the erasure of the itineraries which, presupposing the first category of places and conditioning the second,

makes it possible to move from one to the other. The map, a totalizing stage on which elements of diverse origin are brought together to form the tableau of a “state” of geographical knowledge, pushes away into its prehistory or into its posterity, as if into the wings, the operations of which it is the result or the necessary condition. It remains alone on the stage. The tour describers have disappeared. (de Certeau 1984 p. 121)

2.73 Augusto Boal, Legislative Theater



Augusto Boal's "Legislative Theatre".
Politico-Teatral program for the re-election campaign of 1996.

(Boal 2004)

Source: <https://institutoaugustoboal.org/tag/boal-vereador/>

2.74 The Three Sided Football



Street variant of Three Sided Football

Although the three-sided football has always found estimators and a small number of players around the world, it is believed that the first official game was played only in 1993

The first 3SF World Cup took place in 2012 in Silkeborg, the city of painter Asger Jorn, who theorised the game back in 1962, and home of Museum Jorn. The second World Cup was held in Kassel, Germany in 2017 as a part of Documenta 14.



2.75 Triadic Dance

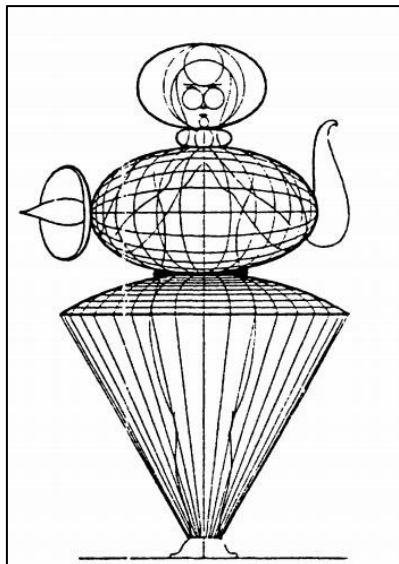
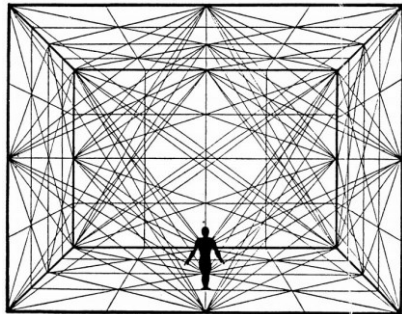
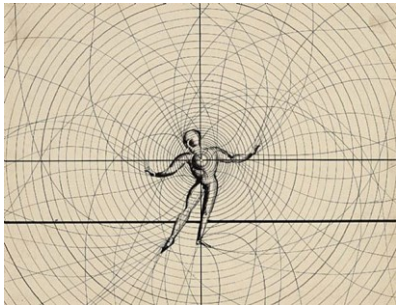


Figure 1. *The laws of motion of the human body in space*, drawing by Schlemmer, 1924.

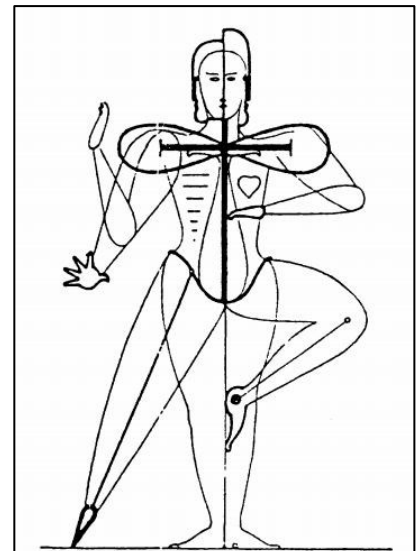


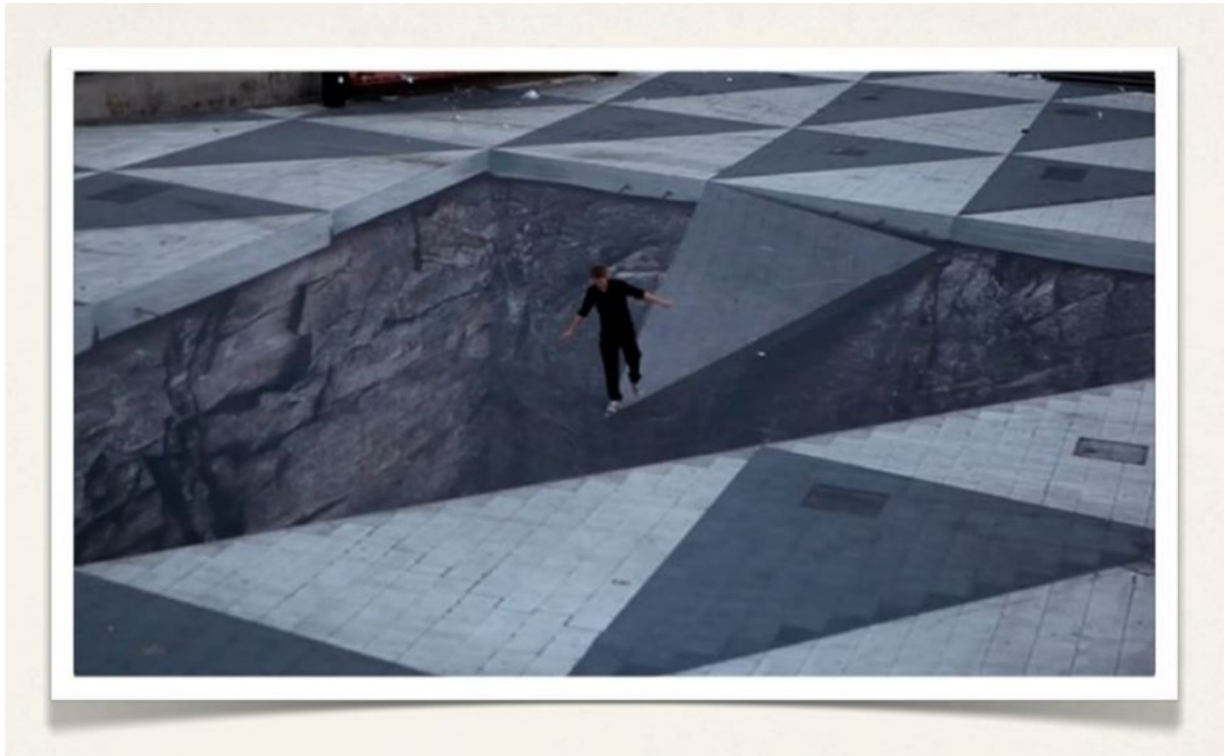
Figure 2. *The metaphysical forms of expression*, drawing by Schlemmer, 1927.

O. Schlemmer's studies on motion, expression and occupation of space through movement.



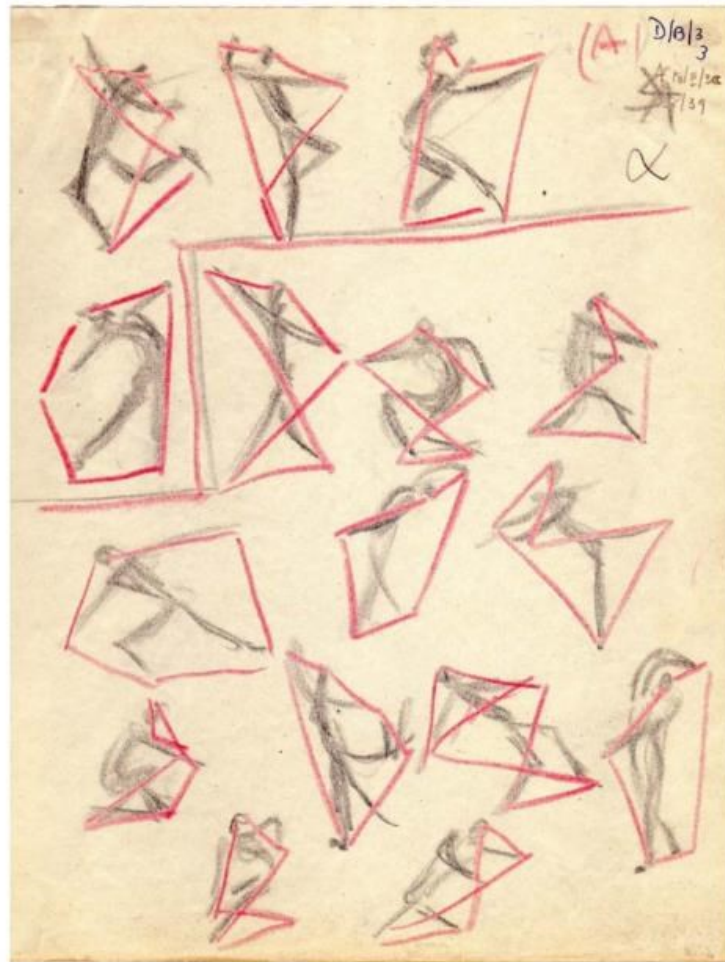
O. Schlemmer, Stage costumes for Triadic Dance, Stuttgart Staatsgalerie. Photo: Giovanni Campus

2.76 Watch your Step



Eric Johansson, Mind your step, Sergel's Torg, Stockholm, 7 to 12 June 2011

2.77 Rudolf Laban



Pentagonal shapes used to generate poses. Source: Rudolf Laban Archive L/C/1/87, L/C/1/88 ©NRCD.

Reproduced in (Moore 2009)

Laban evolved methods based on spontaneous processes and an overall sense of design. The result was something he eventually called "Movement Choir." Drawing on improvisational impulses, musical theory and visual design structures, this form was devised and spontaneous, participatory and performative. It was contemporaneous produced and particular folk dance, with contributions from each individual and a resultant communal sense of identity. (Bradley 2009 p. 8)

Laban developed a choreographical notation system, known as Labanotation, still in use today.

Influences on Laban's evolving theory included the then-popular notion of naturally occurring symmetry in both nature and art, and the idea of a shared symbology in dreams, a la Jung. Laban utilized such ideas in developing the early symbols for notation, which were imagistic. Laban attempted the alchemical in his notation system: he was trying to capture the very nature of change.

2.78 Études cliniques et physiologiques sur la marche

Pages and schemes from (de La Tourette 1886)

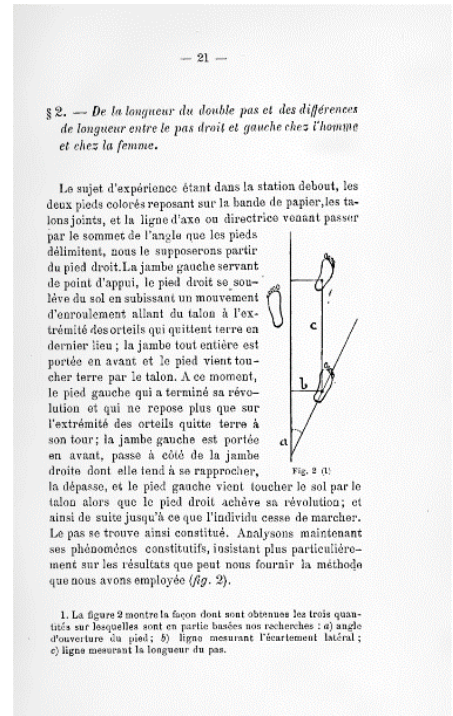
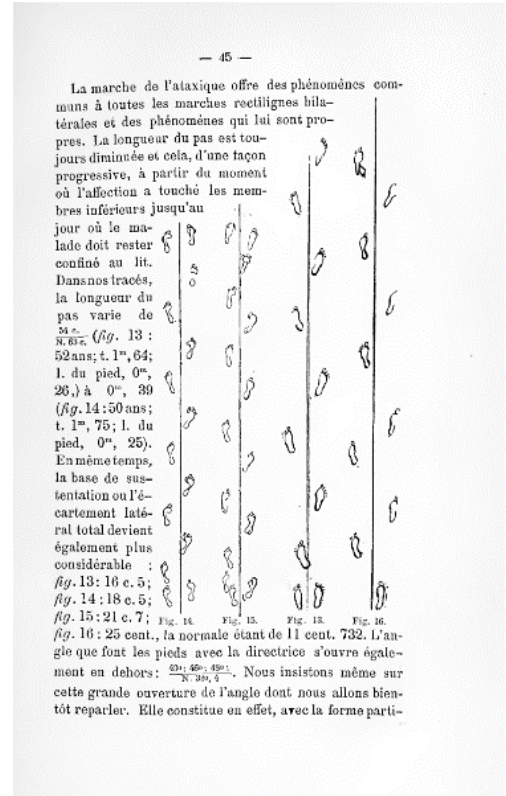
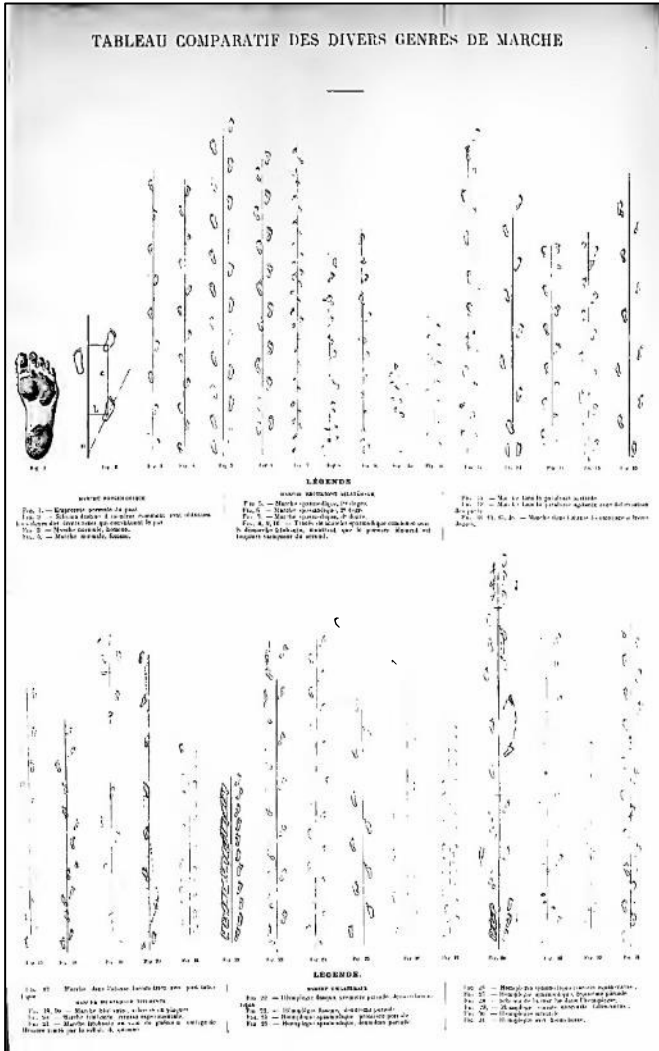


TABLEAU I. — Moyenne des valeurs chez 10 hommes marchant sur une piste de 8 mètres et faisant de 90 à 100 pas à la minute. (Le premier et le dernier pas ne sont pas comptés.)

| N° d'ordre. | AGE | TAILLE | LONGUEUR du pied. | LONGUEUR du double pas. | ÉCARTÉMENT LATÉRAL des pieds. | | ANGLE D'OUVERTURE des pieds. | |
|-------------|--------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| | | | | | P. D. | P. G. | P. D. | P. G. |
| 1 | 24 ans | 1 ^m 63 | 0 ^m 24 | 0 ^m 6733 | 0 ^m 0311 | 0 ^m 0273 | 13° 12' | 14° 12' |
| 2 | 25 ans | 1 ^m 60 | 0 ^m 25 | 0 ^m 69 | 0 ^m 037 | 0 ^m 06 | 17° | 12° 12' |
| 3 | 17 ans | 1 ^m 55 | 0 ^m 25 | 0 ^m 62 | 0 ^m 067 | 0 ^m 063 | 11° 42' | 9° 24' |
| 4 | 16 ans | 1 ^m 50 | 0 ^m 24 | 0 ^m 606 | 0 ^m 038 | 0 ^m 023 | 14° | 20° 18' |
| 5 | 33 ans | 1 ^m 64 | 0 ^m 25 | 0 ^m 66 | 0 ^m 031 | 0 ^m 069 | 30° | 13° 30' |
| 6 | 53 ans | 1 ^m 73 | 0 ^m 27 | 0 ^m 745 | 0 ^m 058 | 0 ^m 078 | 20° 30' | 11° |
| 7 | 27 ans | 1 ^m 52 | 0 ^m 25 | 0 ^m 59 | 0 ^m 0588 | 0 ^m 062 | 12° 12' | 12° 6' |
| 8 | 50 ans | 1 ^m 82 | 0 ^m 29 | 0 ^m 577 | 0 ^m 072 | 0 ^m 082 | 13° 36' | 17° |
| 9 | 42 ans | 1 ^m 73 | 0 ^m 28 | 0 ^m 54 | 0 ^m 074 | 0 ^m 074 | 21° 36' | 25° 42' |
| 10 | 44 ans | 1 ^m 58 | 0 ^m 24 | 0 ^m 61 | 0 ^m 079 | 0 ^m 089 | 21° 30' | 30° 12' |
| Moyennes | 33 ans | 1 ^m 63 | 0 ^m 258 | 0 ^m 62923 | 0 ^m 05459 | 0 ^m 06273 | 16° 21' | 15° 33' |
| | | | | Pas D. 0 ^m 6458 | | | | |
| | | | | Pas G. 0 ^m 629 | | | | |
| | | | | | | Écartement total 0 ^m 11732 | | Angle total 32° 4' |

2.79 Spencer Tunick



Spencer Tunick, Mexico City, Mexico, 2007

2.80 Open for Art



Practice and theory. Diverse activities during the Urban Thinkers Campus held in Alghero (Italy) in 2016. The common aim: bringing the art into the New Urban Agenda.

2.81 Olivier Grossetête



Landerneau. Le pont en carton, 2016

2.82 Assemble Collective / Theatre on the Fly



Assemble designed and built an experimental temporary venue for a season of new plays at Chichester Festival Theatre, in the open parkland surrounding Powell & Moya's Grade II listed Chichester Festival Theatre.

It was commissioned by the theatre as part of their 50th anniversary celebrations, and hosted a full season based around three new plays, one by each of the theatre's apprentice directors.

Neither an indoor nor an outdoor theatre, Theatre on the Fly provided a space capable of both intimate performances and wide dramatic productions that extended into the surrounding parkland. The design of the theatre was inspired by the machinery of the flytower, a theatrical device used for the hoisting and lowering of objects and scenery onto a theatre's stage during a performance. Theatre on the Fly exposed these mechanisms which are normally hidden from view, giving the building an active role in each performance.

Assemble are a collective based in London who work across the fields of art, architecture and design. They began working together in 2010 and are comprised of 18 members. Assemble's working practice seeks to address the typical disconnection between the public and the process by which places are made. Assemble champion a working practice that is interdependent and collaborative, seeking to actively involve the public as both participant and collaborator in the on-going realisation of the work. For more information please use the contact details below.

Source: <http://assemblestudio.co.uk> ("ASSEMBLE | Assemble" n.d.)

Assemble won the Turner Prize in 2015. It was the first time in his history that the prize was awarded to non-artists (Higgins 2015).

2.83 Edicola Radetzki Milano



Edicola Radetzky, (Radetzky Newsstand), overlooking the Darsena of Milan, is a small architecture of the early '900, characterized by the structure of iron and glass and a large pagoda roof. The ruined newsstand Radetzky after a recovery carried out by a collective of artists has been transformed into a space dedicated to contemporary arts exhibition and research. This micro-gallery is today one of the most interesting artistic projects in Milan.

Newsstand Radetzky is a property of the Municipality of Milano but is managed by the group *Progetto Città Ideale* (Ideal City project)



2.84 JR Women Are Heroes



JR, *Women Are Heroes*, Action dans la Favela Morro da Providência, Maria de Fatima, Night View, Rio de Janeiro, Brésil, 2008.

Source: <http://www.jr-art.net/projects/women-are-heroes-brazil>

2.85 Willi Dorner. Bodies in Urban Spaces



2.86 Protestival in Slovenia

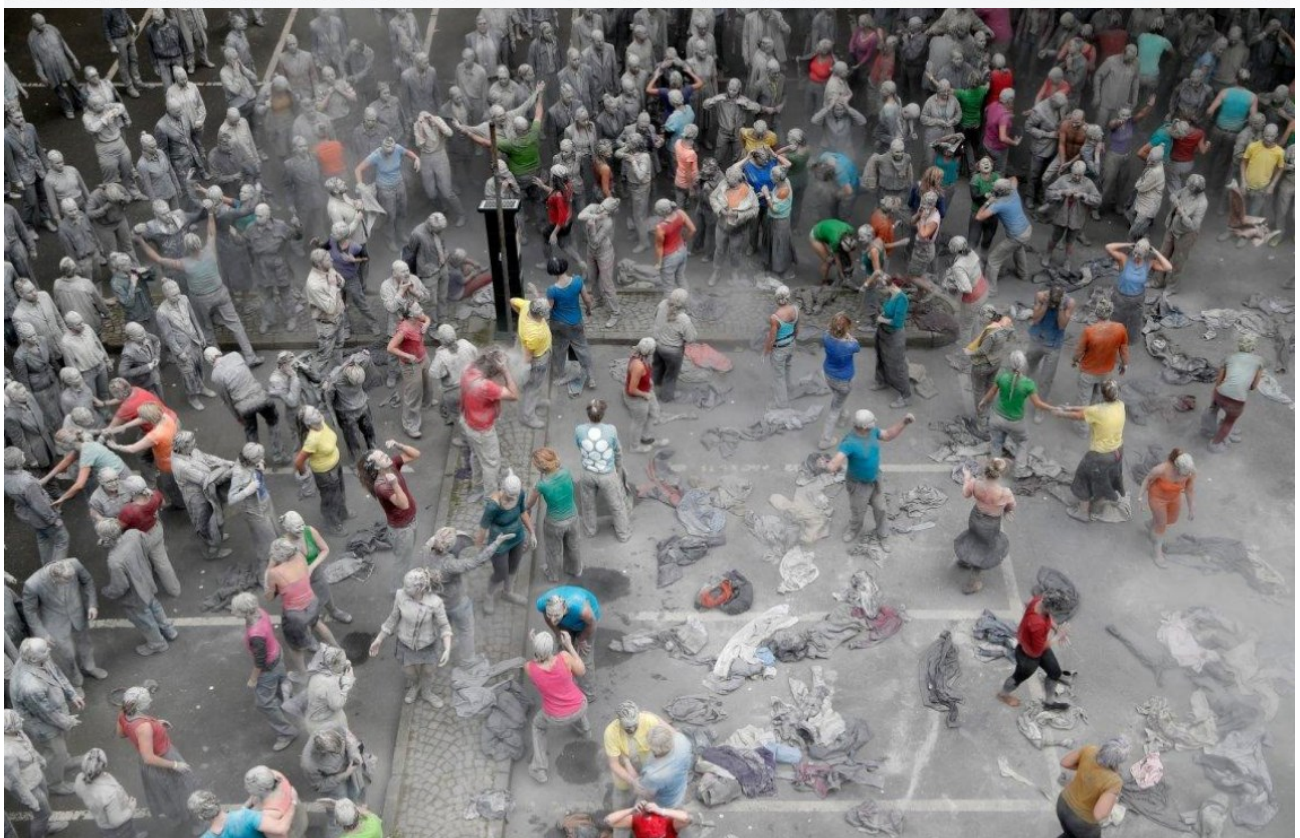


Half political protest, half festival. The demonstrations against the government in Slovenia in 2013 took the form of a protestival.

Photo by Urska Boljkovac, courtesy KUD LJUD

About protestival, (St John 2008)

2.87 Zombie in Amburgo



"Zombies" gather in Hamburg to protest against the G20 summit.

Source: <https://1000gestalten.de/en/> ("1000 Gestalten" n.d.)

2.88 The March of the Immortals



The March of the Immortals, Belgrade, 9 May 2017; Photo: Giovanni Campus

The 'Immortal Regiment' march to commemorate those who fought or died in the Soviet Union's Great Patriotic War against Nazi Germany in 1941-1945 was first held in the Siberian city of Tomsk in 2012. It has quickly become very popular in all eastern countries and on the wave of the rise of a new Slavic pride sentiment is perceived as a traditional event.

Every family brings the pictures of their relatives who fought or died in the war.

2.89 Invisible cities / DAH



The main goal of the project In/Visible City was to make the multi-ethnic structure of the cities in Serbia and the richness of different ethnic cultures more visible. To re-discover what has become hidden, even though it has been part of our culture for centuries.

Through performances on public buses “telling” the multi ethnic history of the cities.

The hidden history of our city also manifests itself through the lack of clear information about what happened to certain places and what was the initial purpose of certain buildings.

Source: <http://www.dahtearcentar.com/>

2.90 Theatre for Torture



«It was in the theater meant for mass torture that the architectural form reached its highest development»: this is not a quote from a situationist manifesto against architecture, and even Foucault could not have expressed the incredible power of architecture over life with such a concise and powerful statement. But the quote comes from Lewis Mumford's peaceful classical *The City in History* (1961 p. 233), and the obvious reference is to the Roman Colosseum.

An architecture built for exhibitions, conceived around performance, it was at the same time the best killing machine and an architectural masterpiece.

It is hard not to think of the exceptional bursts of violence which rise periodically in football stadiums nowadays. It seems like the shape of the arena preserved something of its ancient terrible power.

Many efforts of architects and designers are focussed today on the safety features of those kind of buildings, as well as for theatres and other places.

Indeed, in recent years, modern stadiums have served as places of torture and *concentration camps* very well.

It seems that the so terrible "domain of technique" is not something terribly new.

2.91 Beaubourg



When we talk about performance related to architecture, we usually refer to the efficiency of certain characteristics such as thermal or acoustical efficiency, or to the ability to withstand crashes and damage or natural events.

Today indeed, and not surprisingly, there is a tendency to refer to *performative architecture* as the use of digital technology to integrate the design process - especially through simulation - applying new technology to «multiple realms, from spatial, social and cultural to purely technical,» ranging from kinetic elements to active walls, to structural design, with the result of «blurring the distinctions between geometry and analysis, between appearance and performance.» (Kolarevic & Malkawi 2005)

At the urban scale, architecture operates between the opposing poles of “smooth” urban space (by blending in) and urban landmarks (that stand out). Contemporary avant-garde architecture advances the latter towards architecture as performance art, which takes the urban setting as a stage on which it literally and actively performs. (Kolarevic & Malkawi 2005 p. 205)

This attitude in contemporary architecture originates from Rogers and Piano’s Centre Pompidou, where the display of inner functioning (a building with “les tripes en dehor,” journalist and critic René Barjavel said at the time of inauguration (1977), inventing an expression still popular today between the citizens of Paris) is justified by the alleged function of freeing the interior space for exhibition, but an exhibition of technology in itself.

2.92 Generik Vapeur



2.93 La Fura dels Baus



2.94 Kamchatka!



Festival Internazionale di Arte in Strada Girovagando 2012. "Mutazioni Urbane", Kamchatka, 22 September 2012

Photo: Naima Miriam Savioli

2.95 The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo



3 Interviews

During my research years, the last three years devoted to my PhD research as well as the previous ones when, during my professional work with artists and performers, I was still elaborating my research project, I had many conversations with artists, directors, actors, people from theatre groups from all over the world, stage directors, festival organizers, cultural policies experts, and so on.

As a conclusion to my dissertation, which I conceive as a starting point of a work still to be developed, I selected some extract from the extensive interviews of five of those people whom I consider especially important for the refinements of my “conceptual tools” and for the general organisation of my work.

Those people are Theatre en Vol’s founders Puccio Savioli and Michèle H. Kramers, with whom I worked for about six years learning to understand the basic principles of performing in urban, open, and unconventional spaces; choreographer Willi Dorner, who using almost only human bodies as elements of ephemeral urban installations, invented a sort of performative critique of architecture and urban design, adding another layer of depth to the expressive possibilities of urban theatre and dance; theatre director Vida Cerkvénik Bren, of Slovenian group Kud Ljud, one of the few I have known who can combine the great simplicity and popularity of an urban performance with a deep reflection on the meaning and methods of its inner workings.

Finally, I interviewed Serbian director and actress Dijana Milosevic, from DAH Teatar. As I have already mentioned in the introduction to my work, the Balkans, Serbia particularly, have been my constant reference framework. For various reasons, sometimes inexplicably, I have often found myself dealing with works or authors from that area, and I have also sought an explanation for this.

DAH Teatar is a company born during the years of the civil war in former Yugoslavia and has thus found itself facing very important issues and having to take its artistic role very seriously. The result of this suffered practice and reflection is all in the great intensity this company’s performances convey, but it is also worth following the stories of the human paths which have led to this result. In fact, in the case of DAH Teatar, the distance between performance and “reality” often loses importance, and this is the reason behind my desire to come into contact with them. And this is also the reason which generated the first idea, and almost the necessity, of including these interviews in my work. In fact, the critique of works or the theoretical reflection on them is no longer sufficient when this boundary between art and life is crossed, or when one remains in this liminal zone.

An interview which is missing (which I would have liked to insert, but which in the end I had to omit) is that to the founder of the PaPs - Public Art & Public Space program of the University of Belgrade, which, also for the mere fact it exists, led me to the conviction that it was possible to undertake this research, and then provided me with many tools to support it, including six months of hospitality during my study period in Belgrade. But Zoran has gone from being a “case study”, to being the co-tutor of my research, for which I will always be infinitely grateful, and I think that there will be a more suitable place to publish my interview, and maybe even a study dedicated exclusively to the activities of the PaPs program.

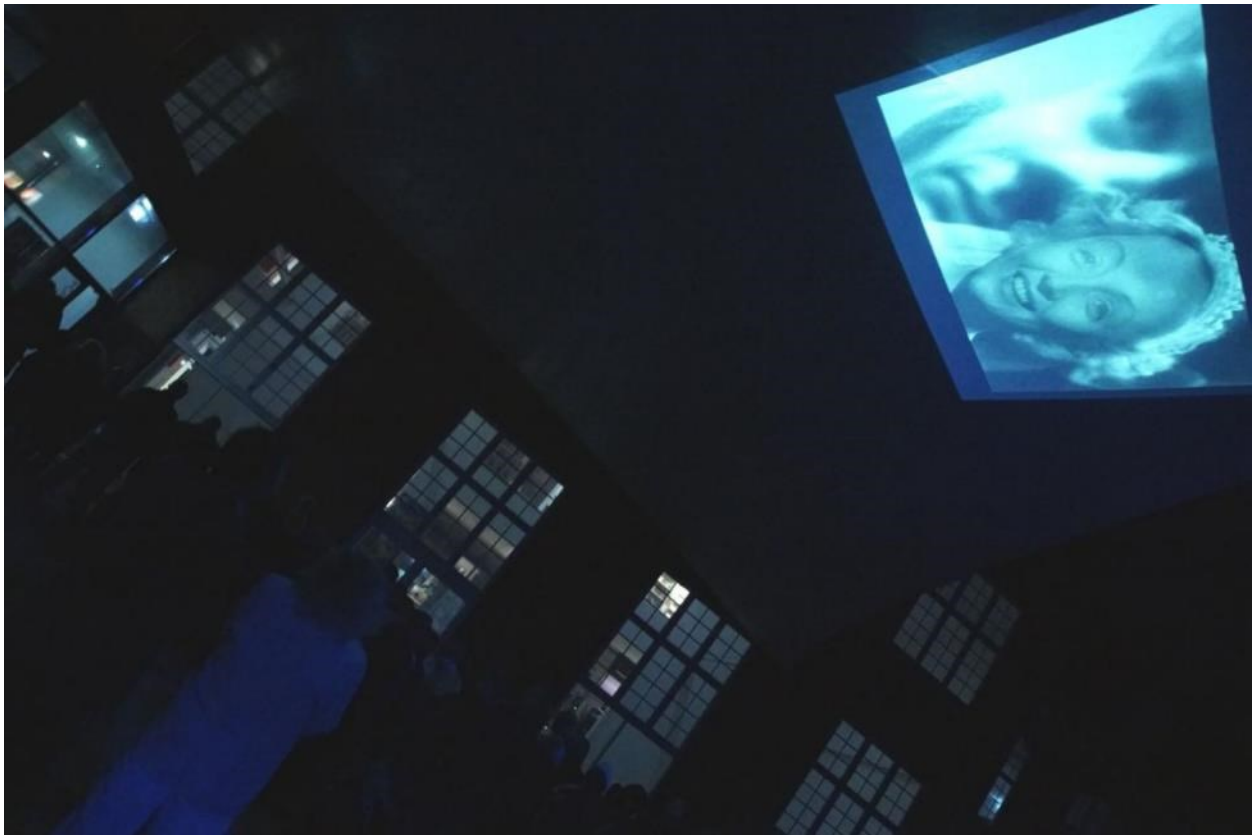
3.1 «A Theatre of Objects, Actors and Traditions»- Interview with Michèle H. Kramers and Puccio Savioli, founders of Theatre en Vol



Img 1. Puccio Savioli and Michèle H. Kramers in Lassù le ali non hanno ruggine, 1989

Puccio and Michèle are a couple in both life and art. I had the good fortune to work with them for about six years, learning the professionalism of the street arts. The first aspect we tend to underestimate is the technical training required. Several difficulties are involved when working in a random space for an unprepared audience: people who maybe haven't come to see you but were just passing by. But behind this, the other undervalued aspect, which is also the motivation for dealing with these difficulties, is the ethical one. The choice is bringing theatre into society and placing ourselves and the theatre at the level of that society. Even the most abstract spectacle on the street no longer turns out to be an escape into abstraction, but rather a possibility of transforming reality. Even the most sophisticated spectacle cannot claim to be respected "as a spectacle," but it must prove through the facts of being able to communicate with the audience, transforming itself from elitist language to the language of intermediation.

Before having the opportunity to work with the Theatre en Vol, I too had prejudices about theatre, and also about theatre people. These prejudices arose from this very elitist conception, whose plastic materialisation I considered the theatrical building - which appeared to me as a secular temple - and its stage, the altar on which the performance and the actor literally placed themselves above reality and audience.



Img 2. Theatre en Vol, performance site-specific in Skagen, Denmark, 2012

Q.: Let's start from the beginning. Tell me about your training, the path that has brought you to art and that led you two to meet and found your own theatre company.

Puccio: I began with an amateur ensemble doing agit-prop, sort of Brechtian stuff, but it was not for long, the group couldn't last. But I felt the strong need to do theatre again. In the mid Seventies, I joined the Argentinian group Comuna Nucleo – it later changed its name into Teatro Nucleo – with which I toured in Europe and Mexico. In the early Eighties I decided to work on my own, so I moved to Denmark, Sweden, Germany, briefly to Paris for a clowning course, and then back to Sardinia. I kept on working abroad temporarily, and, on various occasions, I spent time and worked with Teatr Ósmego Dnia.

I moved again to mainland Italy, and I collaborated with many artists, living and working with them. Then, in Ferrara, I met sculptor and scenographer Antonio Utili who changed my idea of spectacle: it was no longer a theatre of actors, it became a theatre of objects. Machines to interact with.

Michèle: What really impacted me was seeing the Living Theater in Zurich. In the late Sixties I was deeply involved in the anti-authoritarian movement in Zurich; even if I had attended theatre courses – Decroux corporeal mime method and improvisation –, my political engagement made me put theatre aside. I worked in a factory to do political activity – we wanted to organize factory workers, mostly immigrant, to make the revolution – and in 1972 I was fired from a public library because I had sold Marxist-Leninist papers.

It was in the early Eighties that I started doing theatre again, and I studied with one of Grotowski's actors, Stanisław Szczerski. In Paris, attended Lecoq mime method courses held by Philippe Gaullier, and Decroux mime courses influenced by Yves Lebreton, who has long worked in Italy. Me and a friend of mine went to Jelenia Góra street theatre festival, in south-west Poland. There I got in contact with Teatr Ósmego Dnia, the "Theatre of the Eighth Day": I was so interested in their work and in the fact that they seemed to me to be following Grotowski's lesson. I went back to Zurich to work and earn enough money to be able to go back to study with them. But since they were linked to Solidarność, they weren't allowed to work, and they kept working in hiding.

When I went back to Jelenia Góra festival, I met Teatro Nucleo and I asked to study with them, since there were very few chances to work in Poland. They seemed to me more precise in their method than Ósmego Dnia, which was born from a students' theatre group and did not have that Grotowskian discipline I was interested in, even though they drew inspiration from Grotowski. But Teatro Nucleo turned out to be too authoritarian, and my experience with them was brief.

Q.: Why were you so attracted by Grotowski's message/method?

Michèle: Following Grotowski's lesson means trying to overcome physical limitation to reach a further intensity of transmission of content. This means looking for content which is deeply your own, internal. So Grotowski's corporeal discipline was important; I was never interested in theatre as the performance of a text, probably this comes from the early influence the Living Theater and the Open Theater have had on me, from their focus on physical expression, on voice expression, on group dynamics. However, Grotowski's "Theatre of Sources" seemed to me too elitist and almost initiatic.

Q.: Teatro Nucleo's work somehow was related to the "invisible theatre" and to the Theatre of the Oppressed. Did that kind of approach affected your work and, in a way, your decision to do your theatre on the streets and not in theatre houses?

Michèle: Augusto Boal's work was aimed at taking theatre to people who didn't attend theatres. Having the audience interacting with the actors to make the story, the situation, or the issue progress was a very interesting challenge. As for my theatre path, this way of bringing theatre to people, to interact with an audience not made of theatre-goers in a non "artificial" situation, is very important: you have to relate to the audience, but also to the space, you need to be aware of the space around you and of what is happening in it.



Img 3. Theatre en Vol, Phoenix. Photo Michela Leo



Img 4. Thetare en Vol, BAU - Brigata di Armonizzazione Urbana

Puccio: This of course means demolishing the fourth wall, having, as Michel Crespin said, a 360-degree theatre, where what happens around you, even at your back, impacts your work. The city becomes the perfect setting for such an experience: with no boundaries you and your work address people who just happen to pass by and, thus, have no preconditioned expectations.

Michèle: Let me say that my view of a theatre outside the theatre houses and its potential was initially influenced by Ósmego Dnia. We went to Jelenia Góra with a piece based on a Polish poet Zbigniew Herbert's work titled *Report from a Besieged City* which represented the situation in Poland at that time. It was an outdoor performance and it involved many western actors – including me and my friend – who wanted to support Ósmego Dnia. It was an amazing experience, partly due to the direct concern about what was happening to the company facing regime censorship and about the opportunity of making all that visible through theatre.

There is no doubt that Grotowski and Barba have contributed to revolutionising the conception of theatrical space, with their choice of not having a definite audience space in front of the stage. This idea of the theatre space as shapeable has surely affected the choice of outdoor theatre: a wanderable theatre space, where all theatre elements can be moved and made follow a path, can easily lead outside the theatre house. Once you've exited the theatre building, theatre on the street is the natural following step.

Q.: So what currently affects your choice of performing on the streets?

Michèle: One of our goals is making a kind of theatre which addresses people who has little or no theatre experience. Our theatre is not looking for an elitist audience, but spectators who are unfamiliar with theatre. One way of finding such an audience is going on the streets to offer a different vision of the city space, a kind of a shifting from a daily situation to a kind of imaginative, dreamlike dimension. There is a political aspect in this choice, I'm aware of it. Theatre in my view is a way to communicate urgencies, and these urgencies can't be addressed to any sort of inner circle.

Working outdoors – both urban and natural spaces – gives us an opportunity of stimulating the spectator into a different vision, a potentially different interpretation of that space. I think there's a strong need to question the space's everyday life: things aren't always as they look and, in any case, there has been a process that got the things the way they are now. Historical events, as well as social and esthetical perspectives, have layered on those places.

Q.: How do you choose the spaces for performances? I'm sure you have developed a sort of sensitivity about the most suitable spaces for what you have in mind to create, I mean both spaces as spaces and spaces as places...

Michèle: It's never an abstract selection. The idea of space is related to what you want to do *inside* that space. You choose it depending on where you want your audience to be and on what you are going to do there. You choose it so that your spectacle is somehow "protected," or, in case you're working on an wandering performance, so that the path best fits your idea. Then there's a case when you're working on a "site-specific" performance, as we did in *Habitat Imaginari*: then you mould your idea to the space in which it will be performed.

The space we perform in conveys meaning to our work, so we can choose some place because it is suitable to the ideas we want to communicate or, on the other hand, we may choose another to work as a contrast with what we are communicating, to cause a sense of estrangement in the spectator. So our choice is influenced by what we want to emphasise in our work.

Q.: What is the most difficult issue of taking theatre in the urban space?

Michèle: Of course, that depends on the place we're going to perform in. Since our goal is to interact with people living those spaces, the biggest challenge sometimes is just getting people out of their houses, convincing them to look out of their windows. Sometimes you have a feeling that you should get into their homes in order to interact with them... Some of the places we've chosen seemed ghost towns, even if they were working-class neighbourhoods and many people lived there. But our goal is to create an exchange with local people: if you just go there, perform, and then leave, your work is useless, vain. And when that happens, it's very frustrating.

At first, we chose areas of the city which were unattended or somewhat neglected: it was a way to get people to know them. Our main goal was transforming the space, attracting attention to spots which were usually unnoticed. We tried to create a community in those places, even if for a short time, and we succeeded every time we left the local people with shared memories of the event and of their space transformed – although temporarily. This is the reason why we used to choose abandoned places, it made it easier to work with no pressure from that place's daily routine.

Gentrification is the risk, it grabs public space from the city and its life.

Q.: How do you judge the outcomes of a performance? Are there any definite parameters to assess results? And do you think your work can have any long-term outcomes?

Michèle: When you set up a spectacle, you start intruding the space from the very beginning of the mounting operations. You disturb, you get interest, you get contact. If your performance has had a strong impact and people remembers it years later, you've succeeded. If they want to live that moment again, if they are longing for that magic moment, if they connect their personal experience to it, you've succeeded.

Sharing feelings with other people, doing something unusual that gets you out of your boring routine, finding out you have unexpected energy: this is what impacts the spectators and marks our success. It's somehow like carnival, turning the daily life upside down and releasing folly.

3.2 «A support for perception»- Interview with Willi Dorner, choreographer and founder and director of Cie. Willi Dorner.

«Elfriede Jelinek, Elias Canetti used to come to these places. Even in this café where we are sitting right now. At the time, you could not see any tourists coming for lunch at the market. These cafes still had what you would call an *aura*. Now – he says lowering his voice, trying not to be heard by the waiters – now everything has been *renovated*. »

Well before I start the recorder and my interview to the world-famous choreographer Willi Dorner, he begins to speak recalling memories of a Vienna that is no longer there, but that he can still feel in the neighbourhood where he decided to hold our meeting. We met at *Kettenbrückengasse* station of the Vienna U-Bahn U4 line, a 1899 metro station looking like a miniature Secession Building. The Secession Building architect, Joseph Maria Olbrich, at that time used to work for Otto Wagner, the designer of the Vienna metropolitan railway system, thus it is quite possible that he directly defined the design details of that building as well. Nevertheless, the *Belle Epoque*, *Art Nouveau*, the *Jugendstil*, the *Secession* itself, are everywhere here. They still represent the most fashionable dress of the city, the pride of an environment which is totally man-made. Here we feel the quintessentially technical, sophisticated comfort of Vienna. It is clearly not a coincidence that Mr. Dorner has picked up this place for our meeting.



Img 5. Willi Dorner. Photo Lisa Rastl

«But all this neighbourhood – he continues – has lost its old character. It has become just expensive, it has become fancy. You know well how they call that: gentrification. Even the “creative class” has some responsibility for that.»

It took me some time to arrange the interview, because of his busy schedule and, I suppose, because of his general scepticism about the spoken and the written word. When he finally decided to accept, I drove my little car on the about 600 kilometres from Belgrade to Vienna through a route that really gave me another perspective on Europe, preparing me for this encounter in a special way.

Willi Dorner’s work is indeed something of a class on its own. It is dance, installation, theatre, and it is featured in festivals and publications related to street theatre, contemporary dance, and visual arts. Something very unusual. The work that has given him celebrity worldwide is *Body in Urban Spaces*, which is conceived as a sort of moving installation made of human bodies. In *Body in Urban Spaces* the performers’ soft, flexible, adaptable body is juxtaposed to the rigid and inhospitable spots of the urban environment, in a way resulting in a spontaneous, *performative critique* of architecture and urban design.

Coming to Vienna from an eastern route, I began to understand how this idea has come to happen, and how it could possibly only happen here.

Q.: Let's talk about the beginning of *Cie. Willi Dorner*. When did you start your own group and what kind of idea was there behind it? Was the idea of working in the open space there from the beginning?

A.: I have to say that when I started to work, I did not work outdoors. I worked as a dancer for different companies, and I did conventional stage work. I started to do outdoor work around 2000, it's been 17 years now. But at the beginning, the only funding that I could get was just meant for stage productions. So, I depended on invitations to get outdoor works commissioned.

I became interested in this kind of work while studying the *Alexander Technique*. Through this education, I got into philosophy and discovered phenomenology. My first focus was on *perception*: how does perception works in human beings? After 3 or 4 years working on this topic, I started researching around the concept of spatiality, which is also a very important for phenomenologists. And then I realised very quickly that I had to leave the stage. I realised that the stage itself was a very technical space, and that it was very empty. The stage is a space that does not tell us anything. When you turn off the lights, you see only a technical space. Stage design means that you try to create the context, but when you get outside of it, you are already in a different context, and that is the *city*.



Img 6. Cie. Willi Dorner, Bodies in Urban Spaces

Q.: So, is it like “conventional” theatre, the theatre inside a specific building, and the “stage,” as you called it, are hiding the urban nature of theatre? But when and how did you begin to transfer your theories into practice?

A.: I had got a commission by the *Vienna Festival*, which is a big city festival. I was still doing my research on perception, but I was planning to show the resulting work as an exhibition. I did not prepare a stage work as expected. Instead, I chose a place where people could walk around and see dance duets and solos, video and sound installations. I was interested, for example, in seeing dance solos in different times, from different perspectives. When you go to see a dance piece, you see maybe a solo, and that's it. That's about the dramaturgy... but the dramaturgy of an exhibition is that, if it is open for 4 hours, whenever you want you can go back and see the solo, or the installation, again. And I could choose a different place to seat and to be very close to or far from the dancer, and discover different things. This project was for me the bridge to outdoor space.

Q.: From a phenomenological standpoint, when you see something for the second time, you are actually seeing a different *thing*.

A.: Exactly! But that performance, or exhibition, was important also for another reason. On that occasion I also developed a particular solo piece. The original name was the *Stick Solo*, but after that the name was changed into *Homo*



Img 7. Cie Willi Dorner, *Bodies in Urban Spaces*. Photo Lisa Rastl

ad Quadratum. It is a performance that now I am reworking and presenting again. On that solo the performer holds a very long stick, which has double size of the dancer. It is about the relationship between the organic form and the abstraction of a *measure*. Human beings used to be the *measure* for temples, for houses, but then later on, in the 19th century, we came to the measure the Earth. Then the meter was defined as a fraction of the meridian, and we had two kinds of measures: the measurement of the ground and the “anthropomorphic” measure. It was the beginning of my reflection in that sense.

Q.: It is very interesting to know that philosophy is so important for your work. What kind of relation do you think there is between what you call the abstract measurement and the body? Do you see that as a complementary relation or as an antagonism?

A.: I think there is a conflict, just because the meter is a construction. With the meter we choose an abstract form for measuring the world. Out of the measure then comes the grid, that is also the grid superimposed on the Earth: the grid of parallels and meridians. After that, we tried to transform that abstract grid into something real. You can see the regular shape of the State borders in the USA, or those of many African countries. You see also a superimposed grid on cities, which means that the builders were not differentiating anymore between the *sites*, that are unique, and the *process*, that is abstract. The grid makes everything the same. In that time a special grid system was introduced in the European cities, and those are the years of Haussmann, of Cerdà. This is the writing of the city. This is also the time of the *commodification* of the ground. In India, on the contrary, you can still find sites in cities that are considered *Holy Districts*. It means that they still feel a special relationship with that place.

Q.: So that is the background of the development of *Bodies in urban spaces*. What happened next?

A.: After that, I was requested to do another work, on the occasion of the inauguration of a big residential building in Vienna. There is a sort of tradition here to involve artists for those kinds of openings. The architect asked me if I could conceive a performance where people were invited to actually get into the houses, and see the project from the inside. So, my first very big urban work involved empty flats. That was also the beginning of the exploration of another concept that became part of *Bodies in Urban Spaces*: that of the *spaces in between*. The performance was called *Hanging Gardens*, as a reference to a famous Le Corbusier's project. We included all the vantage points of the building and in the end the architect was very happy. I involved composers to create sound installations based on very simple ideas, such as presenting the same audio frequencies in differently sized rooms. In another installation, people never get to see the performer. He was just opening a door, and then disappearing in the next room.

After that I experimented filling up empty spaces with the performers' bodies. The resulting photo series were shown in an exhibition, but only two years later I received an invitation to further develop the project from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. I spent two weeks there, giving talks to architects and working on

the development of the idea. I kept looking for random spaces, forgotten spaces, marginal spaces, spaces you never look at: like a gap between two houses, the irregularities in the urban fabric. The result of that work was to be shown at a local festival. It was one of these typical outdoor festivals that use the city as a scenography, but basically host performances that can be realised as well on a theatre stage. The city works just as a background... When the public came to see our work, they were confronted by just a line formed by the bodies of the performers standing in a gap on the road. The audience was composed mostly by people very used to urban performances, so they believe they know what would happen and expected for the dancers to get up, for the music to start. But instead, nothing happened. Other dancers came running in silence and composed something else, another human installation, in another place nearby. In that moment people began to leave. We lost half of the audience in the first five minutes. At the end just 50 people were still with us, but they really appreciated the work. And *Bodies in Urban Spaces* was born.

Q.: Tell me more about the structure of the performance.

A.: The work is very simple. The performance is composed of two parts: one is very quiet, the "sculpture," that is not moving: absolute stillness. Then you see the performers running, mimicking the frenzy of the city. But all happens in absolute silence, especially when we perform during the night, as we often do.

For me it was clear from the beginning that it had to happen in absolute silence, and not announced. I thought I had to go somewhere with the dancers and just begin to assemble the installations, I had to break into daily life, to irritate, to be a bit subversive. Just placing the *bodies* and confront occasional passers-by with that strange situation. Unfortunately, more and more organizers did not appreciate that approach, especially the fact to host a performance that is not announced. I can understand, since they are investing money on it... As a result, sometimes we decide to do both. A performance is announced and published in the official programs, others are more object of improvisation.



Img 8. Cie Willi Dorner, The Stick Solo



Img 9. Cie Willi Dorner, Bodies in Urban Spaces

What is important for me is offering to the public an occasion to reflect on architecture. Therefore, the human bodies are here to help you to understand what is your environment, how is made up.

Q: How do you get the public from one installation to the next?

A.: It is also very simple, there is an assembly point, people getting a welcome there. Then we explain that they always have to follow the performers. We need to talk at the beginning, because there is nothing else that illustrates what is going to happen. When the dancers run by, the public must follow them, often running as well.

Q.: Earlier you mentioned the difference between human proportions and measurement systems. But then, is it the human body your way to measure architecture?

A.: During my research I also reconsidered the *Modulor* by Le Corbusier. I think he was honestly trying to reintroduce the anthropomorphic measure in an already technological world. On the other hand, a critical position would be to affirm that he just wanted to add some little human touch to his own modernistic architectural view. Nevertheless, I believe in his good faith. But in my case, the body is not related to measure. Rather, to *support the appearance* of a location or a situation. A support for perception. What we normally experience in everyday life is a sort of tunnel view. We don't look up, we don't look 360°.

There is a question about measure and it is: how much space do we give ourselves? For example, when you are looking at an empty flat, let us say you are potentially buying or renting a space where you may spend quite a long time of your life. We can say that the architects decide how much space we get, but this is related to how much you can afford to pay. After that, you begin to fill up that space with furniture, leaving less and less space for yourself. But how can you move when I have all those things standing everywhere? Then you would end up thinking that you need more space. This is also about commodification. **Q: How important is it for the action to be physically demanding? In theatre, when you look for intensity it is possible to rely on virtuosity, to make the stress of performance perceivable.**

A.: For me that is not important, I try to hide that what you see is very demanding, in terms of muscle power. But definitely, it is. This should be covered up. But then people can discover that by themselves, they get closer and they

see how the dancers shake sometimes and they can hardly hold anymore the position after 1 or 2 minutes. This should be not noticeable from a distance.

Q: Do you consider the architecture that you exploit and explore as a part of your work?

A.: I am not very interested in building as a form. It is more about the act of building, the process of building. I did a trilogy of works, starting with *Bodies in Urban Spaces*. Then the second piece is named *Set in Motion* and it deals with the interaction between furniture and human beings. In the street version, the performers take furniture out of the house and into the streets. They begin with a garage sale, that end up in a chain reaction, that is a little reference to the notorious work *The Way Things Go* by Fischli and Weiss. The last piece, *Fitting*, is precisely about the building process. We take the people to an urban gap, where a house has been torn down, and we build there a structure with wooden planks. This trilogy in its complex aims to represent the interplay between human beings and architecture.

Q.: The role of the individual is a tricky concept in your performance. As a choreographer you seem to conceive the bodies as instruments...

A.: Indeed, the material I use is the body, but when I use this expression some people get upset. They argue that it's a human being, rather than just a body. But in English, *body*, means rather a dead body. The name "Bodies" in Urban Space is on purpose, because I *place* them, although they are alive. It's bodies, but it could be seen like an installation. When you work with bodies, you treat them as a material.

Q.: Are the dancers of *Bodies in Urban Spaces* your "victims" then?

A.: (Laughs) I would not agree. They are human beings that live in the city, not my victims. They can choose their action, they can give a different quality to space. You may see some similarities with Vanessa Beecroft's work, but my conception is very different. There is a different political stance in my work.

Connected to this, I remember an improvised performance we did in a big shopping mall planned as an infrastructure of a big residential complex. We went into the mall and there were for example a few dancers walking very slowly or, on the contrary, running. Well, we were kicked out almost immediately. After just two minutes, the guards came and said we were not allowed to run in there, or to sit down. In England we did an installation with a little carpet, a table and two chairs carried through the city, as it was our own living room. So, we discovered that in a shopping mall you are not allowed to bring your own chair or table. It is really crazy what you are not allowed to do in cities.

Q.: So, in your opinion, the shopping mall is not a public space? Art cannot give it a more public character?

A.: No. It is very private space. Different laws apply there, there are guards... I cannot make it public just because my work is open to the public. It is not just about not charging a ticket for the entrance. Private space is still private space, I cannot change its nature.

Q.: If you bring public art into a private space, is it more likely that the art becomes private as well, rather than the space becoming more "public"?

A.: Actually, this is a very problematic moment, because when you do something for a private enterprise, their purpose is to get a good feedback, appealing images, you contribute to the commodification effect. I often receive commission proposals by investors and developers that want to do nice openings for their projects, but I refuse to do the work if I feel that is about commodification.

Q: Is there anything left of the performance after the performance? Have you noticed some outcomes in the long term?

A.: Yes, I know there is. As an example, I get e-mails from people who saw the performances long ago. They tell me that they *still* see it, in the same street or in the same spot. It's really touching to get all those feedbacks! Three minutes of performance can give a chance to really *look* at something. Unfortunately, many people instead are very

busy taking pictures of it... I realize that the people that are writing to me are not the people that were taking photos, instead, they still keep a picture in their mind.

Q.: It is also a fact that people talks to other people about what they saw... this is actually how I came to know about your work.

A.: This is the social aspect, which I previously underestimated. I was surprised by the results in that sense. People need to talk about their own city, yes, and that was also one of the goals that I had in mind: to get the people to discuss about how things have changed in their city, and how maybe things will (or should) change in the future. The fact that I did not considered was how much people like to talk *about* the performance. In fact, that is part of its success. The way that performance spreads out of the number of the direct spectators.

Q.: Don't you think that art can help in the so-called "participatory processes," or, more simply, in processes of re-appropriation of the spaces by the inhabitants? What is your experience in that sense?

A.: I try to trigger processes, to raise awareness. The danger as I said is that when something is very successful, like *Bodies in Urban Spaces*, you need to defend yourself against commodification. They want to use photos of my work for advertising. You are in a constant process of defending your work. These processes that I try to trigger are as well under the danger of commodification. Artists go to disadvantaged places, build up something there and then a few years later all the enterprises are there, because they can invest money on it. It is the danger of commodification.

Q.: Can we state that participation is also a top-down process? After all, it is a process that has to be guided...

A.: It has to be guided, for example if you offer a new space to a community. The discussion has to be guided up to a certain moment, when people find their structure and can organize their space. They don't need to be totally aware of this process, but they get to know how complicate is to find an agreement. And through this process they recognize their wishes.

Q.: But my real question is how we can trigger that kind of process without forcing it, is it even possible?

A.: I think it's worth trying to offer this. Here in Vienna people should really learn about bottom-up processes. The mentality is like: *they do it for us, they design for us*.

Q.: Let's talk about that. I feel like your work is really international, it doesn't seem grounded in this particular cultural context...

A.: Sometimes in the interviews, I got asked "Do you feel Austrian?" and I put the question back saying "Do you think that my work is Austrian?" (Laughs). Recently a magazine featured my work in a special issue about Austria. It seems that in the eyes of someone I represent Austrian contemporary fresh art. This is very surprising.

Q.: Nevertheless, it is easy to see how deep is the relationship between Vienna and the performing arts. Here, possibly more than in any other city of Europe, you can feel how music, theatre - how, for example, Opera - is still an integral part of the city life.

A.: Vienna under many aspects is a *theatre city*: people are in very dramatic, very passionate. Theatre is still very important here also as a cultural phenomenon. People in the street discusses a new premiere, which can be a scandal, and even if they did not see it, they are already all protesting, it is the same on the media! Yes, this is a *theatre city*.

3.3 «The form is the bridge»- Interview with Vida Cerkvėnik Bren, founder and director of Kud Ljud.

Kud Ljud is a successful street theatre group based in Ljubljana, Slovenia. They define themselves as «a collective of idealists from very different backgrounds who have gathered to change the world through the medium of art.»

They «believe in theatre as a “living” phenomenon that must be in direct contact with the present times.» And that «Playing with the “fourth wall” between the actor and the audience is vital for the group in order to establish theatre performance as a game, a ritual and a social event. »

All these statements – extracted from their “mission,” reported on their website and other informative material – could sound both very pretentious, or clearly ironic. Nevertheless, they can give an idea of Ljud’s total commitment to the theatre act and of their total involvement in the performance, something that surely plays a major part in their efficacy on the streets, confronting every kind of audience.

They don’t feel compelled to work on the street and in public spaces, since their mission is more general: «you can also find us making music, films, writing, DJ-ing, gardening, playing chess and practicing levitation,» yet they believe that the street is still “the place to be” to make something useful out of theatre. As a matter of fact, they’ve developed a number of brilliant performances – such as *The Invasion*, or *Streetwalkers Gallery* – and techniques exploiting the street and urban environment in very effective ways. Ljud are one of those rare acts which can make you look at things in a different way and let you keep that different vision. They know how to give the audience something to remember after the performance is over, something that stays in the eye and the mind possibly for the rest of life.

I met Vida, the group’s director and founder, in my hometown Sassari, during a series of performances at the international street theatre festival “Girovagando,” in September 2017. I had already had the opportunity to see them performing many times, and to spend some time with the performers both in Italy and in Slovenia. In Sassari, they performed both the *Streetwalkers Gallery* and their most famous act *The Invasion*, the very simple story of the contact with a weird strain of aliens. Coloured of a bright pink, the aliens-actors explore the new city where they have landed, and try to establish a connection with the place and the audience. The detailed yet distinctive characterisation of the “alien” personas, the dynamic, surprising approach to the urban space, combined with the ability of the performance to spread beyond the circle of its immediate spectators through the local media and *word of mouth*, made it a very successful piece of urban theatre.

The Invasion is also the quintessential performance of this group, continuously incorporating the results of their new experiments. In fact, it is the result of a very sophisticated approach, deriving by their high ideals and aware of the lessons of the great masters of the theatre craft, manages to stay simple in the results, and to cross cultural barriers, while remaining innovative. Ljud’s enduring success shows how much care for detail and dedication pay off in the long run.



Img 10. Vida Cerkvėnik Bren



Img 11. Kud Ljud, *The Invasion*. Photo Naima Miriam Savioli

But the most interesting feature of Kud Ljud's theatre, as said, is their ability to remain in their audience's memory. The images and characters as they develop them, and their use of timing are actually built around this: the change of perception of the place through the event, which is achieved by means of the conscious exploitation of the mechanisms of human memory.

The ability to create such an emotional bond, resetting earlier individual experiences of a specific place, is bound with the ability of the artists to keep an *ingenuous* look at the surrounding world. Giving value to his kind of *virginity* is also a conscious choice of ethical nature, as it is immediately apparent in the following interview.

Q.: I've had occasion to see you performing many times. What I have always noticed is the extreme *clearness* of your performances. Even if there is a lot of improvisation, the formal structure is evident in different ways. The scenic elements, the characters, the rhythm. It seems almost surprising that something so well formally constructed can still function on the streets and *have life*.

A.: I would not call our performances "clear" but "clean." We care about the formal aspects as well as obviously of the psychological, "healing" aspects of the performance, but more than this we care about the *social* aspects of the performance. What we want to do is creating and to showing *alternatives*.

The form is the bridge to reach the audience. We just try to bring some logic in the messy content that normally comes out in our creative process, through a lot of discussions. The discussion, the fact of being forced to translate the ideas into words, is what brings in the "form." The idea takes the form of the language, of a discourse. It is more about *formulation* than *formalism*.

Q.: There is a performance of yours called *Agencija za osvobajanje duha*, that is *The Agency for the Liberation of the Spirit*, where you basically ask the audience, or some people from the audience, to perform some basic exercise clearly grounded on the training practice of physical theatre. Looking also at the ironic way you treat that material, you seem to be very familiar with it. How much is this part of your training?



Img 12. Kud Ljud, Streetwalker Gallery. Photo Giovanni Campus

A.: Indeed, I did classical theatre studies at Ljubljana Theatre Academy. The course for directors I attended was very selective, they only pick three students per year, and I was one of them. We worked closely with our mentors; in my case, with the well-known Slovenian director Mile Korun, who at that time was the main director of the Slovenian National Theatre. I was his first female student ever, I guess. From the beginning, I had the opportunity to work with the country's best actors, and in the biggest theatres. In fact, I had the opportunity to debut as a director on the main stage of the National Theatre when I was only 22. Maybe too early! I was considered a kind of *promise*.

Q.: So when did you come in contact with the possibilities of physical theatre? And when did you realise you had to work on the streets?

Meanwhile and in parallel, I was following classes of contemporary and physical theatre disciplines, like contact improvisation or Butoh dance, but outside the academia. These disciplines were very popular all around Europe, back then. Some of these courses were held by the same professors of the academia, but outside of it.

When I started directing, I suddenly tried to subvert as much as I could inside the theatre building. Like: putting the audience on stage and the actors on the parterre. Like: removing the chairs from the parterre to create a new performance space. In the end, as a final scenic trick, I asked to re-open a window in the theatre main hall, which had been kept closed for about 15 years. So I asked one of the actors to just jump out of that window, and out of the theatre, as a part of the performance. I remember that the window was very high on the ground, so we had to place a net underneath, on the outside.

Q.: Well, you were satiating your need to move outside of the theatre in a very undisputable way... So from that point on the obvious consequence was the work in the streets?

A.: (Laughs) Yes, you are right. But in the beginning, it was a nightmare. I tried to work on the streets with actors from the National Theatre. They were great, professional actors, but it didn't work. The performance was already a first version of *The Invasion*, that is still our most popular work, and a big international success, but at the time it



Img 13. Kud Ljud logo

simply did not work. Then I tried to leave the professional actors out and to rework it with my flatmates, who were *not* professional actors at all. Someone was an anthropologist, someone into sports, but mostly students. And then, it did work!

Q.: Have you figured out the reason why? It is because the characters are modelled exploiting traits of the real person behind the mask?

A.: Regarding *The Invasion*, a lot of its success depends, more than on the single characters, on the coherence of the group of characters. For this reason, it is also important to work with the same actors for enough time, to have a stable group, and that is what we now have. On this stable basis we establish the relationship with the public, the audience. And then that audience can be as diverse as possible.

Q.: You also work a lot on changing space relationships:

near vs far, up vs down, etc. Many performances of yours are built with a sort of dramaturgy of space. What is the kind of space that works better for you?

A.: You see, the aliens, for example, can work in very different spaces, and the reason for that is, to come to your question, that “space” does not exist, only “place” exists. Once we performed *The Invasion* in the cages of a zoo! I have to say that the chimpanzees got very angry (animals are an audience too). In that case, the background story was like this: two aliens were captured during the *invasion* and placed in a cage at the local zoo for people to see them. It was the Ljubljana zoo. There was also a sign outside of the cage describing the species as they had for any other animal.

The issue is that space is a geometric abstraction. We can discuss space as an abstraction, but we do not encounter it in the reality, in the practice of theatre. The place, instead, is lived and full of meaning from the beginning.

More precisely, to talk about space instead of places is like to talk about form instead of content. There is no way to separate the two, if not as an abstraction, and we are not interested in that. It is true that we developed different performances less dependent on characters and the group of performers, also to overcome practical problems, but it is always the “character of the place” that matters the most.

For this reason, we need to know something about the place where we are going to perform. All of our performances rely on those elements, even if we may deliberately decide to ignore or to subvert them.

This is also true for *The Invasion*. I can remember when we presented the performance in Belarus, in a big square with a huge Lenin statue. When we interacted with the statue, the audience reacted very positively. We could feel that we were contributing to freeing the people from an oppressive memory. They were in absolute need to reconsider that particular place.

On the contrary, in France we happened to find ourselves working in a situation that was totally lacking in cultural references, or rather, where the only cultural references were commercial ones. Our performance was perceived as a “product,” it was just entertainment, so it ended up losing every sense. The images of the aliens, which should be *alienating*, became rather “decorative.” Finally we have been asked if we could «make them green and a little more evil.»

Q.: Your work does not only question the idea of memory, but also the idea of subject. You don't seem to rely on the idea of the "individual," or of the "subject" very much...

A.: You know that from the name of the group itself. Ljud is a non-existing word. It is in a kind of a children's language. The language of someone who still has not got the functioning of language, and the ideology behind it. Ljude – with the "e", means "people" in Slovenian. Ljud is the non-existing singular of "people." So saying Ljud is like saying "one people," but with a single, impossible word. We give too much importance to the individual, but the individual is also an illusion, another abstraction.

In the theatre, the very idea of character is based on the idea of the subject, and on the idea of the ego. Apart from that, there is always the performer's ego, but everyone agrees that we should try to put that under control to have a good performance...

Q.: Now I realise that this is evident also in the group's logo (I am wearing a t-shirt with the Ljud logo for the interview), which is a kind of animal, a dog maybe, or a sheep, with a human head with a brain in evidence. Is that your idea of humans?

A.: Yes, we're animals, basically, we're animals with an herd behaviour. But I must add then that the very first ego in the theatre world is the director's. From this point of view, I consider myself an "healed director." If the power of art is that of healing, artists should care more about healing themselves. In my case, I learned to give little importance to my ego. As I said, we focus more on the character of the group, but finally, it is the character of the place that really counts.

Q.: This is what happens, for example, in the other performance you presented here, *Streetwalker Gallery*, where we are accompanied to visit a piece of the city as if it were the rooms of a rather pretentious and cobbled museum.

A.: *Streetwalker Gallery* was actually born from a workshop we did with visual artists. It should not have lasted for more than 5 days and did not require any special theatrical skills.

What we do in this show is to exhibit pieces of city, objects, images, but also sounds, as completely decontextualized, presenting them with the somewhat empty magniloquence with which critics introduce the works of contemporary art. What happens instead is that we give people the opportunity to discuss the condition of their city or neighbourhood. We often also choose images of degradation or abandonment for this, presenting them as works of art. The state of estrangement provides a kind of protection which allows to speak even about taboo topics.

A special case was a version of *Streetwalker Gallery* in Poland. It was in the old Jewish quarter of a city, whose Jewish cemetery had been completely deleted by new and anonymous buildings. In this case our role has not been considered to be that of liberators from an oppressive memory, but of liberators of a hidden memory. In this case the objects actually recreated what was happening in the neighbourhood, that is, this process of deletion. The character of the place had totally taken over.

3.4 «Can Theatre Stop the War?»- Interview with Dijana Milosevic, director of DAH Teatar, Serbia

DAH Teatar was the first professional independent theatre group founded in Serbia. Or in what was then still Yugoslavia. It was 1991 and the Yugoslav Wars were about to begin. This event impacted the history of the group and almost naturally projected its work into political theatre, as well as into the public space. This proved to be an unavoidable necessity for a group experimenting with an all-encompassing theatrical experience, at a time when an even more encompassing event turned their community, and their lives, upside down. The drama of their nation involved them in the deep.



Img 14. Dijana Milosevic in front of Tito Mausoleum.
Photo Giovanni Campus

We can find in DAH Teatar's experience a transition from the existential condition to its theatrical "version" which is typical of urban theatre groups. Certainly, brought to an extreme level by the extreme conditions imposed by a *theatre of war*.

The relationship with the urban fabric of *their* Belgrade is strong, and there they have developed techniques and performances which, however, have proved to adapt well to almost any urban context. For example, they have set shows which question the urban toponymy, so significant in a city that is continually rewritten with every change of regime; shows designed to be performed on public transport vehicles, transformed into tourist buses for tours through the lost cities, the invisible cities, which existed or still exist in the places crossed by the lines.

I met Dijana Milosevic several times during my stay in Belgrade. This interview took place in three parts. The first at her home, in the old district of Stari Grad (which means precisely "the old city"), a stone's throw from Skadralija market, which has not (totally) become a tourist place yet. We talked about the group's origins in the turmoil of the Yugoslav War, which marked their mission so deeply and refined their vision. The second part was held near Marshal Tito tomb and memorial, on the day of the Marshal's "official" birthday, which was a national holiday in former Yugoslavia. It was also an occasion to discuss about politics and culture. But more on this later. The third part was held at their new office and workplace. Despite many years of experience and international recognition DAH continues to struggle with financial difficulties, but also to preserve its autonomy of which they are rightly proud. The new space has in fact been renovated and opened thanks to a crowdfunding campaign activating the international network of friends and admirers which DAH Teatar has been building for 25 years. This was the occasion to talk about the actor's *craft* and about some of DAH's most remarkable achievements in the field of urban theatre.

Q.: Let's start with your personal profile. Your education, training, how you came from theatre and decided to start DAH Teatar.

A.: I graduated in University of Belgrade at the faculty of "special pedagogy." Learning to work with people with disabilities, or how you prefer to call them. I don't know if it exists in other countries, or how it is called. You study rehabilitation and how to teach people with so-called special needs. That is where I began to be interested in theatre. When I was about to finish my course, I decided to enter the faculty of drama, to study direction. You have to choose very early if you want to be an actor or a director, but I was really sure about what I wanted to do.

It was not easy to get admission, and I was lucky enough to be admitted, because the exam was very tough and selective. There I had my initial training, but I think the two experiences are very linked, not only because your work is with and about people. I think that theatre was for me, from the very beginning, about healing.

Q.: Tell me something about your first teachers at the Drama School.

A.: The system works this way: you have one main professor who works with you and follows you for four years. My first professor was excellent for the first two years. He was excellent in craft: he taught us how to compose performances, what the elements, the dramaturgy...

Q.: Also about playwriting?

A.: No, playwriting was a different department, but we worked with and learned dramaturgy. The problem with these studies was that after that we did not learned about the work with actors. The problem for me was that these studies were kind of the old fashion system, where the director has all the answers. I never liked it. Because then where is the adventure, the investigation, the exploration, the research. The idea was: you tell the actors what to do. So, I missed completely all the part about how to work with bodies, voices, how to really work together and be co-authors of the performance, and not just “traffic directors” or police officers of the performance.

Everything changed, and I found the answers for all my questions the first time I visited the Odin Teatret. In fact, I consider Eugenio Barba, together with Torgeir Wethal, the historical actor of the Odin and Barba’s collaborator, as my real masters.

When I saw them performing for the first time I said to myself, OK, I don’t have a clue about how they do what they do, and that is the reason why I have to stay here and learn.

Q.: How many times did you go to work and study with them?

A.: The first time was with Odin in 1985, I was still in the middle of my studies, just finishing my first year at the Drama School. Later I went back there so many times, they have become not only masters, but colleagues, and friends. They also came to Belgrade many times, and we went back there to perform with our group. It is an ongoing relationship until today.

Q.: I guess that was also the moment when you began to develop your own idea of theatre and of what you wanted to do with theatre.

A.: The education system was like that: you graduate and then you start directing institutional theatres. I was fortunate to direct my very first play at the end of the second year. It was sort of a scandal because I was invited to direct – it was Sam Shepard’s *Fool for Love* – by the actors of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre. Definitely the biggest theatre institution of the country. It was a kind of a scandal, that such a young person was called for such a position. The play opened the season. After that, the doors of all the nation theatres were open for me.

Then I started straightaway to direct in institutional theatres. But then something wonderful happened. The director of a small theatre outside of Belgrade called me and my colleague Jadranka Andjelic to codirect the piece. They were interested in the fact that we were students, and in what kind of language we would develop.



Img 15. DAH Teatar, In Search of the City

Q.: Was it a contemporary or a classical play?

A.: It was a wonderful text by Momčilo Nastasijević, who worked between the two world wars, but its language is incredibly modern and beautiful. In a way, he's like our own Shakespeare! It is such an important playwright, but he was put aside for years due to political reasons because he never accepted the Communist regime. All this was in back 1989. A critical year... But the important fact for me was to discover that with that person I could codirect so well. I don't think I can do that with many other people.

We developed an incredible way to work together and it was the seed for the foundation of DAH Teatar.

We had a simple rule: if something did not work out for one of us, then we would work it out again and again until both of us were happy. We were never competitive. I have to say I miss her enormously, she is still one of my best friends, but she lives in Rio de Janeiro now...

I consider it a very feminine way to work. Not because we are women, because Eugenio Barba's way of directing is also very feminine. It is because you prefer to see things being born than to fabricate them.

Actually, I went to Odin Teatret for the first time with her, so we shared the experience of that different way of working.

Q.: Was it your initiative to go to Denmark to meet the Odin Teatret or was it an initiative from the school?

A.: My friend and I decided to go for some month around Europe to know more about the European theatre. We were in Sweden meeting some friends when a professor of our school advised us to go to Hostelbro to check the work of the Odin. Then we wrote an old-fashioned letter and were invited to stay there for some days, sleeping in the attic and having the opportunity to see the group working. It all went very easy. We were fortunate to be there when the group premiered *Oxyrinchus Evangeliet*, that I think is one of the most brilliant pieces of theatre of the 20th century. It was mind-blowing. That was our destiny. On the first day there we saw that performance, and then I was like: that's it. That's about what I want to do with theatre.

Q.: Barba's importance for the open-air theatre cannot be underestimated. When I started my research, perhaps the first text which moved me in that direction was by Eugenio Barba's; it is a 2003 short text written as a speech for his "Honoris Causa" at the University of Warsaw. It is entitled *La casa delle origini e del ritorno* (The House of the Origins and of the Return) (Barba 2003). He and Brecht are at the centre of the discourse, and yours as well, since your first performance as DAH Teatar was based on Brecht...

A.: It is all about language. I remember that when I first saw that Odin performance, I could not understand what it was about, I was mesmerized, and I did not know why. The performance was in Coptic language. Who speaks Coptic? But theatre is about that mystery. And about language.

Q. You also use the spoken word. You tell stories. Not in Coptic, but in a language that your public can understand. You also have some of your performances translated into other languages. You've learned a lot of Brecht's lesson in that sense. For example, the separation of the text from the body as a way to underline a presence. I remember that in a lecture you once talked about your necessity to do theatre to elaborate your sense of guilt. I mean, as Serbian, for the Yugoslav Wars, even if it was not your fault. But I never thought Brecht as being a German. It is quite possible that he had the same problem as you.

A. I can't imagine that he did not to have it. Being in the shoes of someone who committed crimes is tough. And you know, my surname is Milosevic, so I can feel that pretty well. People ask me if he was my father very often, because he has a daughter about my age...

Q.: But maybe we can go back to this later, because we are still in 1985 and the Yugoslav Wars started in 1991. What happened in the meantime?

A.: In 1989 I went to assist Barba in preparing a performance. He asked me to come to assist him in the last phase of the work. When you talk about the last phase in his work is not a couple of weeks, but a couple of months. So I spent a summer there and I was totally involved in the realisation of that piece. But when I was about to leave, he asked me: what are you going to do from now on? I replied that I would have love to start my own group, and to try to develop my vision, but unfortunately it was impossible to do that in Yugoslavia. But he replied: if you think it is impossible, you are just feeding that impossibility. And he said that in a very simple way, but it really echoed in me. It really ringed a bell. That is when you meet your masters, even with a simple phrase you realise how true it is. All my life I had used that excuse, and I went back to direct institutional theatres saying that doing something different was impossible. So, I asked my colleague Jadranka if she would start a new group and codirect it with me, and she said yes. And that was it. We stopped to accept commissions from institutional theatres and we began to experiment.

Because one of the problem with institutional theatre is that the production time is very compressed. So, you just use what you know.

We did one month of auditions. We were looking for professional, already trained actors. In the end we selected ten people to start our first workshop. We posed very hard conditions. Even if at the moment we had no money we asked all the actors who wanted to work with us not to do accept jobs with other theatre companies.

Because of this, only four people remained. I don't regret that we did that choice, because that way we have built a strong foundation.

Q.: But then came the war.

A.: The war started in the very moment when we were starting our workshop. That was very strange.

Q.: How did you come to know about the war?

A.: It was very strange. Like if the country was in complete denial. At first, we heard about the war very randomly and sporadically. The media were not broadcasting about it. It was presented like sporadic border conflicts, but it was a war which was prepared underground, and started underground. I have written a new performance for the 25th anniversary of DAH, called *25 glasses of wine*. Here I recall the stories about the foundation of the group. Those are also very personal stories, but deeply connected with the general political situation.

Writing the text, I realized how much my life has been shaped by politics from the beginning.



Img 16. DAH Teatar, Crossing the Line. Performance based on the book "The Women's Side of War" edited by Women in Black organization, Belgrade

In the summer when we started our workshop, in May, we went to one island in Croatia, where a friend had a house. We went to work there, just before our call for actors. On the day we arrived, the Yugoslavian police killed some Croatians in Borovo Selo.⁴⁷

When we were coming back to our friends' house from the centre of the village where we had had dinner, we saw candles lit on the windows of the houses. So, we asked what that was about. Serbs killed Croats, and that was the first time I heard that expression, because before that I knew I was Yugoslav. And shortly after that, a group of people begin to throw stones at us, because they *also* discovered that we were Serbs. And that is the moment I myself I discovered that I was a Serb. Before this we thought of ourselves as Yugoslavs. We fortunately found a lady who hid us for the night, because it was dangerous for us to come back to the country house that was so isolated, then we had to run away, to leave the village. Even if at the moment we still did not realised that our group was born, that is why we say that we were baptised with stones.

Our determination to do theatre was born on that day.

In the next days, we began to talk with our Croatian and Bosnian friends, because the information that we could get in Belgrade was very biased, and we started to realise what was happening really, and that we were already at war. And that our government basically initiated it. And that our government was imposing censorship. So we began to question ourselves about what was the correct thing to do. If we had the right to start a theatre laboratory that was completely isolated from what was out around, just to explore techniques, and skills. Can we be happy to be there when there is a war outside? Can theatre stop the war? What is our responsibility? All these questions came, and we realised that we should address all of our work in that direction.

A friend of us – a dramaturg – invited us to look at the Brecht's poems in the *War Primer*, an incredible and powerful book where images of war and propaganda are criticized by means of poetry.

It was as if one of us had written it. Then we started to work on Brecht, just thinking "we must stop that nonsense." But we got a commission from Belgrade Cultural centre, and we proposed to do Brecht, using both the interior and the external part of a building. In April 1992, we did the first public presentation. We invited all the professionals in Belgrade to show them the technical part of what we were doing. We thought that was a clever move, just showing all the kind of work that was totally new to the other theatre people, and that we were aware and very proud of what we were doing.

And again, on that very day we heard that the combats in Sarajevo had begun. We were in total shock and didn't know what to do. Kind of frozen.

Q.: So, again, history pushed you back from the technical part of theatre work to the ethical part of it...

A.: Yes, we thought we would do a presentation that was about the craft, but we thought that what was happening outside was absurd, more than what we were doing. And so, from the stage – the theatre was full of people, the level of attention for our work was very high –, we claimed that we were aware of what was happening in Sarajevo, and we dedicated the first presentation to all our friends in Sarajevo. But, in that moment, we also realised that as soon as our Brecht piece was ready, we should have taken it on the street.

Q.: So here is the crucial question: why on the street? You still say you don't want to do political theatre...

A.: Yes, but we want to reach the people. There is not a proper tradition of street performances here, the political meaning was sort of an unconscious thing.

Q.: I strongly believe it – you were talking a lot about the craft – and of course, of the choice of Brecht. That second aspect is apparently about content. But you speak about poetry, and Brecht also worked with songs. The question

⁴⁷ This happened on 2 May 1991. The official chronicles state that 12 Croatian policemen and one Serb paramilitary were killed in an ambush by a Serbian irregular militia.



Img 17. DAH Teatar, In/Visible City, performance on the public transport in Sassari, Italy. Photo Gianluca Leonardi and Naima Miriam Savioli

here, for me, is about the use of the voice and the use of the body, the body in relation to space, which is related to the craft. I ask myself, and I ask you, if that is not also something immediately political. You cannot put that kind of craft at the service of any content, of any idea. In the end, is not it that kind of craft, which you considered “non-political,” what pushed you to perform on the street?

A.: Yes, I must add an important thing. We decided to go on the street when we also felt that our craft was giving us enough support. Support to the bodies and the voices of actors, to express what they needed to. We felt the need to go on the streets before, but the actors would not have the power, and they would not have the shield. We work on that for about one year.

They were aware that their voice would reach the audience. They were aware of the fact that the movements would be confident and precise. In the end, we realised that the choice to go performing in the open space was political, but at that time we were simply not aware. We just did not want to reach people

who normally went to theatre, because that would be preaching for the saved. We wanted to reach common people, and nationalists, people in uniform, and express publicly our opinion.

The fact that we were already collaborating with some institution made things a little easier, but I think we would go outside in a way or another. When we made the first rehearsal, the police came to watch. And we were scared that they would stop the performance or worse. But they didn't. And I guess it was so because we were doing theatre, art, it was not propaganda. We did a complex piece, speaking our feelings. We were scared but we did what we had to do. Art protected us.

After that, we also got personal threats. Strange phone calls. But by that time, we were already there.

Part II

The second part of the interview took place on 25 May 2017, at the “House of Flowers,” the mausoleum and memorial of Josip Broz Tito and of his wife Jovanka Broz. 25 May was the day of the official celebration of “Tito’s birthday” or the “Youth Day” in former Yugoslavia, where famous mass performative events called *Slets* were held.

Many nostalgic admirers of the Marshal, not only from ex-Yugoslavia, still came to Belgrade to pay homage to the partisan and the leader. Here a “Museum of the History of Yugoslavia” is also supposed to exist, but it has been under renovation form a long time, and it only hosts temporary events. At the time I went there, there was a simple but gracefully curated exhibition about Serbian *Gastarbeiter* (guest workers), immigrants who had gone to Germany to work and spent most part of their lives abroad, then had come back to Serbia and were somehow reinserted in a very different society from the one they had left.

Curiously enough, part of the vast collection of memorabilia belonging to Tito and to the history of his now-disappeared country was only visible in what was presented as the museum warehouse, where a sign on the entrance advised that we were about to see an *experimental presentation* of a small part of the collection.

That can be considered as a huge metaphor of a country which is experimenting with the rewriting of its own past. During the impossible attempt to preserve the “good parts” of this self-narrative, and to cancel the bad ones, the past remains a blurred space. Unfortunately for this purpose, the country does not have such a unitary vision, and even the most fanatic nationalists are scared of the consequences of a too divisive position. The wounds are still too fresh, and Serbia still pretends to hold its path towards European integration, which also means a lot of money for its weak economy.

What is happening is that a system of power, which is also an ideological system, has grown now in this unwritten area, up on this unwritten memory, with an ambiguous agenda which turns out in keeping the power for the power’s sake, trying to fool both the east and the west, in a tradition inaugurated by Tito after all, into being the leaders of non-aligned countries.

This was the kind of topics we discussed when we restarted our conversation in an English-fashioned restaurant, near to Tito’s grave.

A.: All the culture here is in danger. Not only because of the lack of money, of the lack of funding for culture. Too many museums, I think all of the important museums have been closed for, I think, about 15 years. Something which leaves a whole generation growing up without museums. I think it is a crime. Growing up in a big capital city without a museum. It is a disaster.

I am still trying to resist to the idea that there is a sort of conspiracy. By now it seems more logical to accept the fact that there is one. A deliberate attempt to cancel our history.

Q.: And to rewrite it... The problem about all the closed museums is something that you can fully understand only when you live here for a while. It is not possible to understand it from abroad. Everybody talks as if all the cultural institutions were still fully operative here, but only when you get there in person you realise they are not.

A.: The fact is that Serbia is on sale. They probably want to transform Serbia in a reserve of cheap labour to be sold abroad. All the intellectuals are leaving the country. Artists too. That seems perfectly fine for the current government. They say that this is an economical problem, and that the international institutions are asking for cuts on culture – and that we are becoming a colony because of that. But artist are the ones who are supposed to come back to their countries after the end of wars and dictatorships, and help reconstruction. They are supposed to bring creativity back

to the community. Instead it is like if we are still under an autocratic system – as if we came back to it. The difference is the level of randomness in the agenda of the regime...

So what we have here now is a new mix of nationalism and ignorance. You can see young people eating, and working at McDonald's, and screaming "Serbia First."

All the cultural policies are politically driven. You see cultural organizations which just exist for five minutes, declare that they are in favour of the ruling party, and then get funding for supposed cultural projects.

The only question you got asked to work in Belgrade is if you are supporting the ruling party.

We have developed a solo performance on that topic: should I live the country or not. We presented that to people as a critical question, we do not give any straight answer. But in one section of the performance the actress is reading a section of a book⁴⁸ about the rapes of Bosnian women. Because of that scene, we were not been invited to a festival of solo performances here in Zemun⁴⁹; the festival organiser informed us that he could not invite us, because if he did he would not get any money from the municipality of Belgrade. We were invited to other festivals nearby, but we were asked to present some "less problematic" performance. And I could not believe it. I thought that those times were over...



Img 18. DAH Teatar, In/Visible City, performance on the public transport in Sassari, Italy. Photo Gianluca Leonardi and Naima Miriam Savioli

Q.: In some way I am reassured that you are still not used to this situation. I was afraid that here, with all the continuous tensions, all the warmongering, you would end finding such a situation normal. But what about young people? Those who are growing on this almost blank canvas with spots of ideological information?

A.: Question is: what is left for the new generation? What can they expect from the future? All that they see is people living poorly, leaving, surrendering, or selling themselves.

We are losing links between generations. Young people are supposed to be critical, but students are not learning to be critical. The level of education has dropped so low. Even good professors are now very rare, and many of the good ones are in fear.

Q.: We are coming back to the role of art and of the artists.

A.: That is the dominant idea: you should not bother people with additional information. Since everybody is in fear, even professors try not to speak too much.

Q.: A worker of the Youth Cultural Centre whom I interviewed called it a constant "intellectual pressure." Needless to say, he is thinking about leaving the country.

⁴⁸ I believe the cited book is Zainab Salbi's *The Other Side of War: Women's Stories of Survival and Hope* (Salbi 2006), but the interview audio is not clear.

⁴⁹ Zemun is one of the urban municipalities of the city of Belgrade.

A.: Autonomous thinking is condemned again. But in this regard, I still have trust in the power of resistance. I believe in pockets of resistance and rebellion. Our commitment is to make people aware that we are not living in a free society but under an autocracy. Even if it presents itself as a democracy.

Q.: I propose to call these “pockets of democracy” then, because it is you who are practicing democracy under a system that is only formally democratic. We have seen something happen with the street protests after the election of Vučić as President. The government was not happy at all, but they had to let the young protesters march for days and even get to the Parliament. The government even praised the protesters in some way. They were playing the part of a democratic government, and in that moment the world was the stage. From the protesters’ point of view, they too were exploiting the democratic system in a way. That is what I would call a tactical approach. It is also possible that democracy is all about that. Play by the rules, and with the rules.

A.: Yes, this is also what is happening with the Women in Black movement, here. We work a lot with them and have developed performances with them. They are social activists, feminist, pacifist, defending women’s rights. The government hates them but desperately needs them because there are very few women’s right movements here, and this is somewhat suspicious. They are a symbol of free thinking and of freedom of speech. So when we do our actions they let us stand in the city centre and openly take position against the government. As paradoxical as it could sound, the government then sends the police to guard us, to defend us because we could get attacked for what we do. And this is also true. But the real paradox is that Women in Black are using the hypocrisy of the government as a weapon against the government itself.

Q.: Well that is what I call “taking advantage of the opponent’s contradictions...”

Part III

Q.: What is training about? What is the craft?

A.: The purpose of craft is to develop *presence*. The purpose – or the meaning – of presence is to *radiate energy*. To exhibit or to present an extra-ordinary behaviour. An extra-daily⁵⁰ position or meaning. Presence is being visible, using more energy. Radiating more energy.

This *vocabulary*, learned through craft, is useful to connect with people coming from diverse cultures.

Q.: What do you mean by “energy?” Is there no contradiction between energy and technique?

A.: Energy is a very concrete thing, but also a concept often mystified and moved outside of rational perception. The Grotowski’s work, and Thomas Richards’s after him, went in that direction. You react physically. Your body is engaged. What is transmitted from performance to the spectator is what we call energy. Something that we repeatedly experience and that we study and learn to know and to manage.

Q.: Daily life is also perceived as something non-rational - so what is the difference? Through craft you are just bringing the everyday practices to conscience?

A.: That is a crucial point. There is no real difference. Art is just condensed reality. Theatre is condensed life, not parallel reality. More fully and more intensely real. Theatre, we can say, is life at its fullest.

You get there through a sort of synaesthesia. But one which is not attained only through the activation of different senses - but through the activation of different levels of perception and abilities.

⁵⁰ The term extra-daily can be considered as a technical one, as the principles exposed here are substantially the same as the *Theatre Anthropology* described by Eugenio Barba.

Q.: How did you develop these abilities?

A.: Physical training is crucial for that. The training routine that we learned from Odin Teatret was very demanding. There, we woke up at 8, and went running in the cold Danish morning. After 45 minutes of running you did every kind of exercise for warming up, from yoga to gym. Training techniques for the performers could come from any tradition. An important part of physical training is vocal training. Directors also had a special training, they were trained to observe.

The afternoon and evening were devoted to different improvisation sessions, which then developed into a dramaturgy, via the construction of scenes and montage. Montage itself was conceived in a way very similar to that of cinema.

Q.: What about the voice? What about the text?

A.: I stopped being fascinated by the distortion of the voice. This began to sound artificial to me.

The separation of voice from text coincides with the separation of everyday practice from theatre. I understand that, and it can be and was often useful. Without knowing the meaning of the sound of a voice, that voice becomes a separate object in space. But to work with text means also working with dramaturgy. Barba for example was an exceptional dramaturg. Nevertheless, that does not mean that the purpose of the voice is to illustrate the text.

Q.: So, we are coming back to Brecht... that was also at the origin of your dramaturgy. The *estrangement effect* works well in the public space?

A.: The meaning of the text is crucial for Brecht. He was also a poet and he cared about the music. His theatre never hides the meaning of the words and manages to stay popular and accessible. Nevertheless, it was very useful for us to have a different kind of vocal training as well, for developing the power of the voice, and also the colouring.

Q.: One of your most iconic works, and one of the most interesting in respect to the topics of my research, is *In/Visible Cities*, the performance you made on public transport, even using other performers from the cities that you were visiting.

A.: In/Visible City is a performance we developed in 2005. The main goal was to make visible the multi-ethnic structure of the cities in Serbia and the richness of different ethnic cultures, and to rediscover what has become hidden even though it has been part of our culture for centuries.

The histories of – or the alternative history by – the different communities inhabiting the city are presented in performances on the public transport. A part of the passengers are aware of the fact that a performance is going on, but the vast majority is not. Here in Belgrade public transport is heavily used and as you have seen the buses are often overloaded. As I said before, that performance is also a test for tolerance. You have to operate in small spaces, and you necessarily interact with the public. You are exposed to some risk.

We also use local performers because in order to make that performance work you have to be perceived as a part of the community. You need to be in complete synchronicity with the *polis*. Since the group of people you meet is a random group and so diverse, you can be very different and tell distant and unheard stories, but you need to be perceived not as alien but as a member of the group. This has something to do not only with language but also with rhythm.

Other explorations of that kind are the 2006 *Guide Through an Alternative History of Belgrade* and 2007 *In Search of The City*. The hidden history of our city also manifests itself through the lack of clear information about what happened in certain places, or what was the original purpose of certain buildings. There are invisible neighbourhoods. Places that emerge from the urban fabric only if you evoke them.

In a performance we even proposed some sort of quizzes to the passers-by, asking the name of the streets or squares where we were. It is not uncommon here to have three or four plates with different names on the same street. When

you speak with people of older generations you find normal to call the same street with different names. That is the sign of the continuous rewriting and layering of the city.⁵¹

The monuments have also been moved and repositioned. We also worked on those “walking monuments.” We have discovered so many layers. All interwoven.

We live in a very unstable society. Always changing through time, but also depending on who we are.

I have to add that when we presented our *Invisible Cities* I was still not aware of the existence of a book by Calvino with the same name. After that “revelation,” we also used Calvino’s texts, for example in our work in the national library bombed building.

Q.: How do you choose the space, and a particular spot in that space?

A.: The space is chosen *for* the topic. Ethics comes first. Public transport, for example, is also for testing tolerance. When we work, for example, in the centre of a square, we are looking for a very open but vulnerable situation. Or when we work on the public transport, this is also a test for the tolerance in a random group of people.

It is important to understand the quality of the space. Even an obstacle can give you some unexpected possibility, if you try to understand the space as it is.

We did a performance amidst the ruins of the old National Library of Serbia, it was here in Belgrade. The building was destroyed in 1941 in a retaliation bombing by Nazi Germany aviation. Germany wanted to punish Serbians for the coup d’état which overthrew the previous government and the king, which were actually their allies. After the coup Serbia changed side, but then it was suddenly invaded.

The bombed library is such a powerful symbol. It is significant of all the history of Serbia, also because all books were burned. So, again, the memory was cancelled. Many people think that the target was not accidental, but that cancellation of the history was a part of the “punishment” for betraying the Nazis.

The performance was very simple. Again, it had to be popular. All the symbols were already there. The actress interacted with burned books.

We decided to use the fence that divided the audience from the performers. That fence established the scenic space but was also meaningful in itself. It gave the space a different energy.

The fence around the library ruins marks the impossible contact with that memory, which is equally present. That hole left in the city in 1941 still marks an unsolved point.

⁵¹ As an example, *Bulevar kralja Alexandra* (King Alexander Avenue), the city longest urban street was *Bulevar Revolucije* (Revolution Avenue) until 1997, and it is still marked with that name on many maps. *Kralja Alexandra*, was named that in 1896 after king Aleksandar Obrenović and then, after the World War II, it was first renamed *Bulevar Crvene Armije* (Red Army Avenue) and then *Bulevar Revolucije*, before getting back to its previous name in the middle of the turmoil of Yugoslavia breakup. The ideological character of this back-and-forth naming is evident.

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