

A woman with short brown hair is lying in bed, covered by a white sheet, looking towards a large, dark, high-contrast portrait of a man's face on the wall. The portrait is partially obscured by a black shape in the top left corner. The scene is lit by natural light from a window on the right, where some books are visible on a shelf.

Transformations of Prague Quadrennial from 1999 to 2015

Edited by Sodja Lotker

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Sodja Lotker

1

Introduction

Sodja Lotker

PQ Artistic Director
2008—2015

This publication includes papers and presentations by the contributors to the *Transformations of the Prague Quadrennial* symposium, which was organized by the PQ and took place on March 17—18, 2016, at the Archa Theatre in Prague.

When I was planning the symposium, I wanted it to summarize and examine the last approximately 15 years of recent PQ history and for this reason I have titled it *Transformations of the Prague Quadrennial since 1999*. The PQ in 1999 was the first Quadrennial to include extensive live events curated by the organizations Four Days in Motion and mamapapa, as well as student projects co-organized by OISTAT. And since this event, the live aspect of the exhibition has become more important and inspiring; it has provoked new ways to curate expositions and proposed new forms of events. The year 1999 marked an important turning point for the Quadrennial, which was in a 'post-1989 revolution crisis'. The world surrounding the Quadrennial was completely different. The 1990s brought not only capitalism and democracy to Eastern Europe with the fall of the Iron Curtain, but also completely new ways of communication — the Internet and email — as well as more frequent and easier traveling, and all of this has influenced the further development of this international

scenography event. The Prague Quadrennial 2015 was in many ways the peak of this tendency, dispersed in many buildings throughout the city center, with many accompanying curated exhibitions (*Objects, Maker* and *Tribes*), many events in public spaces, a large education project for students in the form of *SpaceLab*, and many possibilities for professionals to meet and discuss.

But both the symposium and this publication ended up being about these long term changes. With only some exceptions (Kate Burnett and Tali Itzhaki for instance), most contributors do not refer to past Quadrennials and focus on evaluating the Prague Quadrennial 2015. Most of the participants in the symposium were "national curators" or other team members as well as other professional visitors to the PQ reflecting on different aspects of the Quadrennial: the professional section, the student section, accompanying events, workshops, production, the role of the designer, etc. And this publication reflects not only this multiplicity of aspects but also different approaches, methods, priorities, aims, passions, and obsessions. The articles also reflect the diversity of terminologies, histories, approaches, and problems within individual countries.

For the most part, the articles are non-academic, reflections mainly about

the making and experiencing of the Quadrennial. Many of the texts in this publication were written to be read as presentations and you should take note of the accompanying photo presentations.

The ideas in these articles do not always reflect the ideas of the PQ organizers. But I think it is necessary to have all these voices published specifically because this diversity IS the Prague Quadrennial, and I hope that these multiple voices may be interesting for the future organizers of the Prague Quadrennial. I also hope that this publication will, more than anything, be a document about the diversity of voices: the problems and points of views surrounding the PQ.

Many of the things written about in this book are the result of the group effort of hundreds of national curators and team members from all around the globe. I do want to especially thank Daniela Pařízková, the PQ Executive Director 2008–2015, and Jarmila Gabrielová (a leading organizing figure of the PQ since its beginning), as well as other core PQ team members from the past years — Arnold Aronson, Pavla Petrová, Tomáš Žižka, Ondřej Černý, Petr Oukropec, Jaroslav Malina, Dorita Hannah, Petr Prokop, Lukáš Matásek, Simona Rybáková, Marie Zdeňková, and Marie Jirásková.

BIO

SODJA ZUPANC LOTKER

Sodja Zupanc Lotker was artistic director of the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2008–2015, within which she has also curated Intersection: Intimacy and Spectacle project and the Tribes exhibition. Previously she has acted as Programming Director of live events in 2007 and in 2003 Programming Director of the Heart of the PQ section. Prague Quadrennial has won EFFE Award 2015–16. She works as a dramaturg for independent theatre, dance and site specific projects (with Cristina Maldonado, Farm in the Cave, Lotte van den Berg). She has also served as coordinating curator for a number of international research projects such as: Global City Local City, Space — Performing Arts in Public Space and Urban Heat. She has giving lectures at Columbia University, Yale School of Drama, Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and teaches devised dramaturgy in the international program of DAMU Prague. Since 2016 she is the Course Leader of MA in Directing Devised and Object Theatre at DAMU Prague.

Tal Itzhaki

2

Notes Concerning the PQ Changes

Tal Itzhaki

My first encounter with the PQ was in 1987 in the role of an observer. At that time, my country, Israel, had not yet been invited to take part in the exhibition. Since that initial visit, starting with the following PQ in 1991 (which took place after the renewal of diplomatic relations between Israel and Czechoslovakia) I have curated or co-curated six Israeli exhibitions at the Prague Quadrennial, the latest being at PQ 2011. It was not until last year that I returned once again as a spectator, when I attended PQ 2015 with no overwhelming responsibilities, just to enjoy it. And it turned out to be an utterly different experience, involving some fresh insights.

Everything has changed over that span of years: the world; the system of world politics; the very map of the world; Czechoslovakia, Prague and the PQ; theatre; scenography; technology; the media — all have undergone significant transformations, and, in fact, sometimes more than once during this period. Prague has always been a dream city for me, but in Communist Czechoslovakia its features seemed grim and depressed, far from reminding one of the stimulating shrine of culture and the center celebrated by tourists today.

It should be said, of course, that I myself have changed over those years. In 1987, I was a very young designer and the PQ was run by a formidable group of elderly

people. Now I am an elderly woman myself, watching with great admiration the young women who inspiringly run the PQ. At this point, I would like to thank Sodja Lotker, Pavla Petrová and Daniela Pařízková for yet again creating the current platform as well as providing a remarkable opportunity for the discussions that accompany and follow the actual events of the PQ.

The subject I would like to raise and focus on in my brief notes here is the community of PQ creators, organizers and attendees, and how it interacts with the changes occurring at the PQ. I also wish to put forward and dwell on two corresponding keywords that are constantly present in the background. The first is “theme”, which is losing in importance and might soon belong to the past. The second, which will no doubt remain central in any foreseeable future, is “money”.

It has previously been repeatedly said during this symposium that the official aim of the PQ’s founders was to create a showcase for the best of scenography, and, at the same time, to build bridges connecting East and West, which in the political terminology of those days meant the two sides of what was called the Iron Curtain. It is almost unimaginable today to conceive that the world could ever be as thoroughly separated as it

was in those days, before the era of global communication and the Internet. International exhibitions and meetings served as a unique opportunity for face-to-face encounters. I definitely felt very lucky to be able to attend the event, and I gathered that most participants were similarly enthusiastic.

Just as scenography exists in the subliminal realm between the world of performing arts and that of the fine visual arts, the PQ resides in the space between exhibitions and performing arts festivals. It is crucial to note in this context that there are two types of international exhibitions: professional exhibitions, such as air shows, food exhibitions, tech shows, and the like on the one hand, and, on the other, international art fairs, like the Kassel Documenta, and the oft-mentioned various art biennales held in Venice, Istanbul, Sydney, and other cities. The difference between these two kinds of exhibition lies in the composition of their audience. The first caters to professional communities, who want to stay up-to-date regarding progress in their industry; the second is aimed mainly at the general public and at the professional art audience, which consists mostly of critics and theorists and not so much of the artists themselves.

As a result, the establishment of PQ in the late sixties was rather unique,

namely in that it created a professional exhibition for art practitioners. Not much later, with the founding of OISTAT¹, a unique community of scenography artists was truly established. I believe it was possible only thanks to the unusual status, both political and economic, that Josef Svoboda and other artists, as well as the Theatre Institute, enjoyed in Czechoslovakia at the time. Within the context of the PQ showcase, the home team had a great advantage, and it was the perfect stage to show the world the phenomenal achievements of Czechoslovak scenography. As we know all too well, theatre designers rarely have access to the number of resources that are required to create international events on this scale, not even those designers who permanently work in the wealthy old-fashioned theatres and opera houses or in the more commercial branches of the industry. The PQ exerted a huge influence in the field of international scenography, initiating the establishment of organizations, the design of exhibitions, and the definition of scenography as an artistic profession that was to become widely known and recognized. Unlike the fashionable talk of “imagined communities” one hears in the field of sociology, a very real community

¹ International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects, and Technicians - editor's note.

came into existence. Following my almost traumatic experience of co-curating and producing the first Israeli PQ exhibition (in 1991), I continued to meet with many of my fellow “scenography activists”, both at home as well as abroad, and many of them became close friends in spite of the geographic distances separating us. As a young designer — and as an even younger and totally inexperienced curator — I have come to know this amazing community, which willingly shares an enormous treasure of knowledge and experience, ranging from theory to the most practical issues of the PQ. I was — and still am thankful — for the large volume of advice I have received from dear and precious people, such as Peter de Kimpe² and Pamela Howard³, to mention but two of many. Discussions, not unlike this current one regarding the PQ, took place at professional meetings all over the world. Unlike the maddening experience each one of us undergoes in our own countries, this community shares its generosity and solidarity. It is clear to me that the PQ has gradually become the core, the inspiration, and the *raison d'être* of the international scenography community.

The appeal of the Quadrennial lay in the fact that just about the only way

² Editor's note: Dutch designer and educator.

³ Editor's note: British designer and educator.

one could see the state of the art of scenography, as well as the achievements made in this field, was to go to Prague every four years and attend the PQ — and this held true for a very long time throughout the world before the arrival of the Internet. In fact, theatre has undergone major changes over the last few decades — it has transformed and diversified, scenography has expanded. However, truth be told, the big and significant changes, namely the “out of theatre buildings” movement, had already started back in the 1960s and has been developing ever since. The same applies to performance art, environmental art, and installation art. The focus of the PQ has indeed changed, but I believe the reason it has become somewhat less interesting is not because traditional scenography has lost its former appeal. The national exhibitions underwent — and are still undergoing — a quest for “the best way to present scenography”, varying between gallery exhibitions of models, different renderings, costumes and production photos, displays of scenography artifacts and documentation on one hand, and all-embracing expressive installations on the other. Yet whatever the setting of the exhibition, no one could escape being acutely aware that scenography, when placed next to the context of the production itself, was never to be entirely complete. Some would maintain it was doomed to end up dead, like a

fish out of water. For me, however, the best exhibits were those which managed to incorporate both layers, namely a strong overall design that created a meaningful environment on the one hand, combined with artifacts included from specific productions on the other. The various countries kept presenting works of scenography according to the strengths and tendencies inherent in their specific culture and conditions. Gradually, however, one could notice waning interest in presenting mere models and pictures. This was not, I believe, because there was a growing dislike of traditional theatre or scenography, as a significant part of scenographic innovation still relies on the resources and possibilities usually found and enabled in the big, often maligned, institutions. The reason for this change is that, nowadays, it is possible to see and appreciate work from all over the world on one's laptop: live cameras transmit a full view of the Bregenz opera stage accessible to viewers abroad; the National Theatre Piazzetta in Prague sends streamed performances from various big theatres to all corners of the world; and our friends on Facebook and Instagram share with us their work through constantly innovating and creating overwhelming possibilities to follow scenography. It is true that watching works of theatre design and performances on video or via the Internet is not the same as seeing

physical artifacts and experiencing the actual spaces, but we should keep in mind that no presentation, as immediate as it may attempt to be, can capture the atmosphere of a live performance. In fact, of all aspects of the performing arts, the design of sets, spaces and lighting is the least suitable for adjustment to exhibitions and festivals.

For the Israeli exhibition at PQ 2007, I designed an artistic version of the separation wall between Israel and Palestine. In my mind the installed models corresponded and followed the same visual theme. After that solid representation, I started to feel strongly that we did not necessarily need to present models any more. Various screens, small or large, serving as replacement for models are even worse — these are exhibits that make one feel that they could be watched just as well at home rather than in the exhibition venue. The Internet, on the other hand, is a new dramatic space; imaging technology is developing very fast in various media types. One direction in which scenography is expanding is to museums and exhibitions. During recent decades the scenography, or overall design, of exhibition spaces, as well as the way in which curatorship has developed as a creative field, have grown tremendously both in concept in regard to technology. Since time-based media and

technology have become more accessible and effective, visiting museums and exhibitions has introduced a new sense of spectatorship. The Quadrennial, like all other exhibitions, involves a variety of modes of presentation, from concept, to live performance, to all types of screening.

For the following PQ, I thus proposed a project that would use the Internet to host performance events taking place simultaneously in two locations, or even two countries. I discussed this idea with Sodja Lotker and Chris Baugh during a scenography meeting I arranged in Tel Aviv, following which I published a call for participants. I received several intriguing suggestions, yet none of them came from my colleagues, other Israeli stage designers.

Juliano Mer-Chamis and Smadar Yaaron, two of the best and most political performers I have ever met, were both enthusiastic about the project. Unfortunately, even before bureaucracy and money problems managed to kill the idea, Juliano was assassinated at his pioneering Freedom Theatre at the Jenin refugee camp. Although it is years later, I was so very pleased when, earlier this week, I received the news that the beautiful and extremely talented Palestinian actress Maisa Abd-el-Hadi, a former student of mine, is about to participate in a London theatre play

via Skype without leaving her home in Nazareth. And I still hope Smadar Yaaron will carry out her brilliant idea to lead her planned performance through Prague's Jewish Quarter.

These ideas, however, illustrate the problem of expanding scenography — and an expanding PQ, as it is opening up to new types of performance artists, while the main structure and the financial resources of the PQ are maintained through the national organizations of theatre designers. With the fall of the Soviet Empire, the influence of the sole remaining Empire of the USA has increased. One aspect of that is reflected in the shift from practitioners' unions to academic organizations. The latter did indeed include practitioners, but, as we can see here, most of us are teachers, professors, researchers, and students, whereas independent practitioners, devoid of any affiliation to an academic institution, can hardly afford to be part of this discourse. The PQ team is right to look for new forms that will appeal to new audiences, but it seems that the community is slower to adapt, and some creative thoughts should be aimed in this direction. When the PQ started, scenography was barely recognized as a profession or a field of study. Most designers were trained in the fine arts or in architecture, and any emerging scenography research came mainly from scholars of theatre or art history. Today, many of us practitioners work

in theatre departments, scenography and design programs, and new fields are arising, such as visual culture and communication, performance studies, cultural studies, and a few more, all of which are presenting new challenges and may perhaps become a part of the new expanding PQ community. The old mission of bringing together people from East and West is no longer a challenge, yet the actual live coming together of an international community is priceless. Thus we should look into new ways and new contents, to include many more countries and regions like those which the PQ has successfully managed to attract, as well as other theatre communities, including theatre creators, performers, and scholars.

I would like to conclude these brief and scanty notes by hinting at one further train of thought. My visit to PQ 2015 was too brief, but still, free of my past slavery to the exhibition, I could enjoy some of the vast choices enough to be inspired by the experience. I found myself thinking mostly about performance, forced to try and redefine it for myself. Many of the things I saw did not work for me as performance pieces; I therefore suggest calling them performed designs rather than design for performance. This, however, is a whole new subject, the detailed implications of which remains to be further elaborated and developed in another place, and at another time.

BIO TAL ITZHAKI

Tal Itzhaki is the director of the Academy of Performing Arts, Tel Aviv. Graduated from the College of Art Teachers and Tel Aviv University, where she completes her PhD. Taught at Tel Aviv University and Sapir Academic College; created University of Haifa Theatre Design program and headed it for nine years. Was Visiting Professor of Theatre at Columbia University, New York, where she co-authored and designed dramatic collages such as Neighbors and Xandra.

Itzhaki designed sets, costumes and puppets for over 180 shows in major theatres and dance companies. Among others, she designed productions of Shakespeare, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Ibsen, Lorca, Brecht, O'Casey, Miller, Williams, Pinter, Simon, Sondheim, Sheppard, Kroetz, Churchill, Fornes, Daniels, Levin and Kanafani, and won prizes and awards.

Itzhaki also translated numerous plays, was general secretary of the Israeli Association of Stage Designers, designed and curated exhibitions, among them the Israeli exhibitions at the Prague Quadriennale since 1991; refereed international competitions, lectured and conducted workshops worldwide.

Radivoje Dinulović

3

PRAGUE QUADRENNIAL AS EDUCATION: How to become visible, How to build a new space for theatre and How to understand a continuously changing World

A short play in prologue
and three acts,
with no epilogue

Radivoje Dinulović

PROLOGUE

I first encountered the Prague Quadrennial in 1991. We — a group of architects, artists and theatre people in general — were in the process of finishing the reconstruction of our “home” — the Atelje 212 theatre building in Belgrade.¹ With that design we participated in the national competition organised by the Serbian Association of Applied Artists and Designers (ULUPUDS), where, fortunately, we were selected to exhibit in Prague, in the *Palác kultury* (Culture Palace). Our lack of experience in working with national professional organisations during the 1990s meant that we were surprised to find we were responsible for realising our own exhibition, without any previous idea that it would be even possible. So we came without a plan or design, but also without any tools or accessories, and everybody who experienced Prague in 1991 knows what that means. Nevertheless, we managed to produce a display, not unnaturally far from anyone’s focus or interest, though this did not prevent us from having great expectations and being sad for not getting a prize. I can hardly remember anything about PQ 1991,

¹ Bojan Stupica, a famous Yugoslav theatre director, architect and scenographer, originally designed the Atelje 212 theatre in Belgrade. The building was erected from 1961 to 1964. The reconstruction and extension of the theatre took place from 1988 to 1992, based on designs by Ranko Radović and Radivoje Dinulović. The interior design was created by Dušan Tešić.

besides exaltation with the *Spirála Divadlo* (Spirála Theatre)² and disappointment at experiencing Svoboda’s *Odysseus* in *Laterna Magica*.

But, I remember so well how we, looking for the OISTAT Headquarters, came to the *Divadelní Ústav* (Theatre Institute) where we met Jarmila Gabrielová. This encounter marked one of the most important moments of my life in theatre.

I have never visited the Theatre Institute again. In 2007 and 2011, when I participated at the PQ again, I had neither the time nor the will to try to remember where Celetná Street was. Even during my visit in 2014, when I spent almost every single moment in Prague’s Old Town, I was not aware of the fact that I was regularly passing through the street I had thought about so many times. Nevertheless, on the evening of June 29, after I finished my duties at PQ 2015 and the Serbian team had left Prague, I made a farewell tour through the city center, walking without any specific route, and trying to see again all the places that had become important to me. I was alone, happy and sad at the same time, slowly starting to feel and act melodramatically. Then I found myself in a courtyard. I

² The Spirála Theatre in Prague was completed in 1991 based on a design by Jindřich Smetana, Jan Louda, Tomáš Kulík and Zbyšek Stýblo.

was really tired, so I sat on a bench. And I looked up to see where I was. Then I realised that I was in front of the Theatre Institute — and in front of the window of Jarmila Gabrielová's office.

ACT 1

LEARNING FOR THE PQ: BIENNIAL OF SCENE DESIGN, OR, HOW TO BECOME VISIBLE

*"And about audience I've had several observations.
But, those I forgot."*

Franz Kafka¹

Twenty years ago, in 1995, YUSTAT² became the National Centre of OISTAT for Yugoslavia³ and started to take responsibility for representing Serbia at the Prague Quadrennial. We began to think about the potential approaches to exhibiting scene design at the PQ, a manifestation widely known as the most important place for the gathering, confrontation, dialogue and competition of scenographers, architects and theatre makers — or, more precisely, their countries.

¹ Franz Kafka: Dreams, as per Félix Guattari, *Soixante-Cinq rêves de Franz Kafka*, Nouvelles Éditions Lignes, Fécamp, 2007, p. 6.

² YUSTAT (Yugoslav Society for Theatre Art & Technology) was founded by a group of professionals — set, costume, sound and graphic designers, architects, engineers, actors, directors, playwrights and technicians — gathered around Atelje 212 in 1991; from 1994 to 2008 it was led by Radivoje Dinulović, Milosav Marinović and Irena Šentevska.

³ At that time, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia consisted of Serbia and Montenegro.

War in our former homeland was just over (or so we thought), and its legacy — a changed or crushed system of values, ideology, social and cultural life — was not something to be easily proud of. Professional theatre (generally state-owned) played its role in Serbia, participating in mass spectacles of creating Potemkin's villages of the 1990s in almost every aspect of everyday life. But, the essential power of theatre moved out of theatre buildings to the streets and squares of major Serbian cities — Belgrade especially. We were participants (some of us willingly, and some not) in other forms of spectacles realised in open public spaces during the continuous protests against the regime, starting on March 9, 1991 and finishing on October 5, 2000.

That complex, dialectical framework was the platform for creating the Biennial of Scene Design,⁴ the first national exhibition demarking an area, which was "directly developed from the practice of presenting scenography."⁵ Within the same sphere as YUSTAT had been created five years earlier, the

⁴ The Biennial of Scene Design was organized by YUSTAT as the OISTAT Centre for Yugoslavia (later for Serbia) and the Museum of Applied Arts in Belgrade.

⁵ Tatjana Dadić Dinulović: Scene Design as Artistic & Curatorial Practice, *Scene Design Between Profession, Art & Ideology*, Scen — Department of Architecture & Urbanism, Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, 2012, pg. 32 <http://www.scen.uns.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/Scene-Design-%E2%80%93-Between-Profession-Art-and-Ideology.pdf>.

Biennial was established with the idea of exposing and improving "creative and professional work in all areas connected to design, technique and technology, production, realisation and promotion of theatre projects and performing events in general."⁶ After we had already organised a number of small-scale formats — exhibitions, workshops, seminars, discussions etc. — expecting to exert some influence on the professional environment, we thought that a changed format and wider framework could be more powerful or more effective in establishing a platform for re-thinking stage, scene and event — in theatre, and in contemporary society as well. Considering the Biennial as a selective exhibition for our national appearance at the PQ, we followed the PQ categories, but changed them almost immediately: Stage & Costume Design became Performance Design, and Theatre Architecture turned into Performing Space. Furthermore, the Biennial offered space not only to designers and architects, but also to scenic artists, technicians and craftsmen, as well as media artists and professionals oriented toward communication in and about theatre. So, three completely new categories were introduced making a

⁶ From the founding documents of YUSTAT, as per the 5th Biennial of Scene Design catalogue, YUSTAT and Museum of Applied Arts, Belgrade, 2004, p. 5.

unified territory for thinking, acting and participating: Applied Scenic Art, Craftsmen Skill and Promotion of Performing Events.

The opening of the first Biennial of Scene Design, planned for the end of 1996, was cancelled by the organisers in order to support the mass student and civic demonstrations which lasted for eighty-eight days during the winter of 1996-1997, in spite of the fact that the Museum of Applied Arts was (and still is) a nationally significant cultural institution, fully dependent on the authorities. The first Biennial was finally opened in a changed local political environment on February 28, 1997. The Grand Prix was awarded by the highly respected National Jury not to any of the stars in the area of stage or costume design, nor for architecture, but to Živorad Savić, a sculptor and scenic artist from the Yugoslav Drama Theatre in Belgrade. It was a decision that shocked the theatre and cultural environment in Serbia, but it helped a lot in establishing the authenticity and dignity of the manifestation, as well as in constructing foundations for “the high production standards (which will be) developed throughout the nineties, observed and promoted by the Biennial.”¹

The Biennial in its ten-year life strongly and widely developed the idea of mutual co-operation and understanding among artists, engineers and technicians, craftsmen and practitioners from different fields, who stood by the conception of theatre performance and theatre as an institution. They were each considered and valued as equal but unique — in line with the ideas promoted by Bojan Stupica in the 1960s through his architectural design and, more than that, through his orchestration of all the ensembles (artistic, technical and operative) of the Atelje 212 theatre. Following that orientation, the Biennial established a platform for different lines of understanding, creating and experiencing theatre, performing and visual arts, architecture and spatial design, communication and media, and at the end, formulating Scene Design as a professional area — in practice, in theory, and in the legislation.

ACT 2

LEARNING FROM THE PQ: NEW THEATRICAL TRENDS, OR, HOW TO BUILD A NEW SPACE FOR THEATRE

“Thus, one could identify the history of BITEF as a history of contemporary theatre.”²

In 1967, at the same time as the Quadrennial was established in Prague, BITEF — the Belgrade International Theatre Festival — was founded in Belgrade. Those two important manifestations, created by different people and in different frameworks, shared a mutual context — a bipolar world divided by the Iron Curtain, and a similar mission — to make a hole, or a passage through that almost unbreakable wall. Prague, as well as Belgrade, became precious and rare meeting places for artists, professionals, students and audiences coming from all over the world, bearing with them manifold differences in culture, habits, languages, aesthetical, creative and formal orientations, but sharing the reasons for being together, communicating and learning from each

other. Furthermore, the three words from BITEF’s subtitle — *New Theatrical Trends* — could easily have been applied to the PQ — naturally, from a completely different perspective.

I was born (almost literally) and brought up in the theatre environment strongly influenced by BITEF. Of course, I did not belong to the audience of BITEF in its early years — I was too young to be privileged to experience the performances of Grotowski, Scheckner, Kantor or the Living Theatre. Still, I had an opportunity to be a silent witness of loud and passionate discussions about physical or non-verbal theatre, breaking the performing space, nudity on stage, the exploitation of different exotic cultural traditions unfamiliar to us, or using abandoned or forgotten non-theatrical places for theatre. Later on, I was old enough to be directly influenced by the works of Peter Brook, the *Bread & Puppet Theatre*, Ellen Stewart (*La MaMa*), Pina Bausch, and La Fura dels Baus, and, finally, to participate in the actual production of the festival. All of that led me to the point when, educated as an architect and working at the Atelje 212 as a technical manager, I decided to try and find out what was the essence of the “new theatrical trends,” and why it was so important to me. There was no doubt that this essence was important, and exciting, and enlightening — not only for me. One

¹ Tanja Petrović, in: *4th Biennial of Scene Design*, YUSTAT & Museum of Applied Arts, Belgrade, 2002, p. 10.

² *In memory of Jovan Ćirilov*, The Catalogue of the 49th BITEF, Belgrade, 2015, p. 5.



Branko Pavić, The Magic Cube, National exposition of Serbia, PQ 2007
Photo: Sonja Žugić

of the major outcomes of BITEF was the establishment of over fifty different sites (buildings, environments, and public city areas) as more or less regular festival stages. Some of those places started to be popular and frequently used as spaces for commercial spectacles — one became the home of the Bitef Theatre, an offshoot from the festival and, probably the most important for Belgrade — a few were marked by BITEF as specific places of theatre and urban memory.¹

Unfortunately, new trends in theatre related to performing space bypassed the main stream of theatre architecture — the central field of my professional interest — leaving that branch of design to the more or less conservative theatre consultants, not so enlightened investors and users of theatre buildings, and companies specialising in stage technique, eager to apply (and sell) as much complex, expensive and massive equipment as each individual new or reconstructed theatre space would allow. That shaped the theatre architecture of the second half of 20th century in general, the architecture that was exhibited at the PQ.

In 2007, I came to Prague as the national curator of Serbia, participating for the first time at the PQ as an independent country. This time I was focused on scene design as a component of theatre performance. In spite of some splendid particular scenographies exhibited at the Biennial of Scene Design, we were extremely unhappy with the general situation in professional theatre production in Serbia, and I wondered how to match that feeling with the ambition to present our country with dignity.

On the other hand, all of us in the Serbian team had great expectations and hoped that we could learn a lot at the PQ — about theatre, about scenography, and, above all, about the potential ways of exhibiting scenography outside the framework of theatre performance. In other words, having in mind our experiences from the Biennial, we asked ourselves how to exhibit just a single component of theatre performance complexity — was it possible, was it effective, and ultimately — was it at all appropriate?

Great Britain's national exhibition, curated by Kate Burnett, assured us that it was possible and effective. The British approach was based on superb theatre production, on the work of great artists, on the brilliant use of the exhibiting space designed by Mike Elliott and, finally, on aesthetical, formal and technical

perfection. But, at the same time, it was not exciting — at least, not for me — because of the distance I constantly felt between theatre and gallery, performance and exhibition, participation and observation.

On the other hand, Jorge Ballina's work exhibited in Mexico's national pavilion was profoundly exciting. Again we could feel the power and importance of the theatre costume, even outside theatre, the power so specific for the artificial "second skin" of actors, usually too distant from us as members of the audience. That confirmed my strong belief in the idea of Serbian scenographer Todor Lalicki,² stating that nothing from real life can be transferred into the theatre without intervention, and, vice versa, nothing from the theatre can be translated into real life without a specific change — in this case, change of meaning and change of function. Mexican costumes — rich, vivid and fascinating — acted independently in Prague, creating a different type of performance and new, authentic drama. The theatre context in which costumes were created, however, was neither visible nor important.

Russia, on the other hand, presented the work entitled *Our Chekhov, Twenty Years*

Later,³ based on a completely different approach to representing national scenographic production. The exhibition of set designs was transformed into an independent, complex and powerful art work, completed in Prague with the help of the audience — not only through inhabiting the space, but also through creating scenes with their bodies, postures, movements, sounds, shapes and images. There was no doubt that the Russian interactive installation (if we need to classify this work formally) was one of the most impressive and most exciting works I have ever seen at the PQ. At the same time, I had doubts about the usage of scale models representing specific set designs for various Chekhov's plays being incorporated in the installation. For me, the treatment of those models was not clear enough. Rationally, I understood that models must have been important, and should have been in the focus of the audience, but my sense of space told me differently. Still, Krymov's work "took me by the hand, involved me in the play and made me richer than I was before."⁴

Although it did not attract much attention from the audience or the jury, the exhibition prepared by the students

¹ See more about the environmental stages of BITEF and the Festival itself in the book edited by Radivoje Dinulović and Aleksandar Brkić: *Theatre — Politics — City*, Yustat, Belgrade, 2007; as well as at the web-site: www.scen.uns.ac.rs

² Todor Lalicki (born in 1946 in Šabac, Yugoslavia, now Serbia) is a scenographer, designer, technical manager, model maker and highly influential educator.

³ The exhibition, awarded the Golden Triga, was curated by Inna Mirzoyan and designed by Dmitry Krymov.

⁴ This is how Krymov explained to me the way contemporary art should "work" with the audience.

from Chile¹ was the most touching and the most important for me at the entire PQ 2007. They showed how the power and the finest poetics of theatre could be regenerated at the same time in a more than modest exhibition space, without complex technology, a high budget or formal purity. A similar low-tech approach was demonstrated by a number of countries, especially in the Student Section, with various degrees of success.

Surprisingly, the extreme low-tech exhibiting concept was proposed and realised by the famous Slovenian scenographer, theatre director and playwright Meta Hočevar.² Left without any financial support, she decided to exhibit herself, sitting at the table in front of her portfolio, day after day, during the entire opening hours of the Exhibition Ground (Výstaviště),³ and explaining her work, sharing ideas and discussing with the audience. A few years later, a similar approach by today's mega-popular

¹ Curated by Sergio Zapata Brunet; the design was a collective creation by the students.

² Meta Hočevar (born in 1942 in Ljubljana, Yugoslavia, now Slovenia) also wrote an extremely important book about scenography and the theory of space, entitled *Play Spaces*, Independent Edition, Ljubljana, 2007, which is also available at: <https://prostorigre.wordpress.com/2011/03/30/book-play-spaces> (with the author's permission).

³ *Výstaviště Praha Holešovice* — Prague Exhibition Grounds Holešovice.

conceptual artist Marina Abramović⁴ generated a mass craze and global recognition.

As Marina Abramović advocated presence, the Serbian artistic team at PQ 2011, led by Dorijan Kolundžija,⁵ decided to focus on absence, or, at least, on distant presence. He and his work questioned almost all suppositions of the theatre, focusing on the apocryphal physical presence of performers, as well as artistic and technical participants, and, of course, the audience. The concept of sharing space-time (in the sense of Hawking's idea of four-dimensional space⁶) in virtual reality, emphasised discussions opened earlier about an understanding of the real and the constructed as it was deliberated in the cult feature film *Matrix*. Through their work, Kolundžija and his team touched one of many liminal lines of theatre provoking different reactions and the re-thinking of various ideas. Besides the technical and aesthetical perfection — it was enough for me to consider

⁴ Marina Abramović (born in 1946 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, now Serbia), *The Artist is Present*, MoMA, New York, 2010.

⁵ Dorijan Kolundžija (born in 1976 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, now Serbia) was the curator for Serbia's national exhibition entitled *Displacements*. He co-curated the National Section exhibition with Ana Adamović and Milica Pekić, the Section of Theatre Architecture and Space with Mia David, and the Student Section with Igor Oršolić. Radivoje Dinulović was the Commissioner of the National Exposition.

⁶ See more in Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*, Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, New York, 1998.

Displacements as one of the peaks of the PQ exhibitions in general.

In a completely different manner, the artistic and curatorial team from Brazil⁷ offered an enormously complex and luxurious spatial installation — in terms of its theatricality, multimedia structure, poetical and aesthetical richness and diversity. The Brazilian team exposed and explained the entire disparity of understanding theatre in contemporary society (not only in their country), as well as a variety of theatre making forms and methods, placing within the same framework performances produced in baroque theatre and those created in a matchbox.

True learning, surprisingly or as expected, did not come from the National Gallery (*Národní galerie*)⁸ and competing expositions but from the Piazzetta in-between the National Theatre buildings — the stage for the *Intersection* project. The lecture was given to all of us by the leading team of the Prague Quadrennial itself,⁹ opening crucial questions of how to interpret, understand, think about, articulate, receive and perceive theatre today — i.e. issues about public and private, social and intimate, physical

⁷ Curator: Antonio Grass; Designer: Aby Cohen.

⁸ *Národní galerie* — The National Gallery in Prague.

⁹ Curator: Sodja Lotker Zupanc; Designer: Oren Sagiv.

and psychological, inner and outer communication, theatre and theatricality; also questions about experience and about emotions.

Based on the ideas from the *Intersection* project and the most exciting works from 2011, we expected PQ 2015 to be a new challenge for all of us, sharing all the doubts and uncertainties about exhibiting theatre within the context of contemporary artistic and curatorial practices. Having that in mind, I started to create a discourse reflecting Serbia's specific cultural and educational environment. But, after I had been invited to be part of the PQ Jury, my role completely changed and I had to build a new position and establish a potential for understanding many different ideological concepts, textual and formal approaches, poetical and aesthetical expressions, as well as various uses of media, technical means and solutions.

- From that position, I learned:
- What power theatre has in the contemporary world (from Estonia¹⁰);
 - What else can be seen as theatre architecture (from Slovakia¹¹);

¹⁰ Curator: Eero Epner, Institution: Theatre NO99.

¹¹ Curator and designer: Boris Kudlička.

- Who the performer is, who the spectator is, what the essence of performing space is, and how space interacts between them (from Finland, in the Student Section¹);
- Why we can (still) use non-theatrical places for performances (from Croatia²);
- How and why to provoke and maintain a dialog about theatre, our inner beings, and life in general (from Serbia³);
- How it is possible to represent the essence of theatre performance using new technologies, new media, and new ways of spatial perception (from the Czech Republic — *Golem Cube*,⁴ and the United Kingdom, in the Section of Countries and Regions⁵); and, finally,
- How it is possible to represent the essence of theatre performance

with nothing but bodies, objects and space (from Latvia, in the Section of Countries and Regions⁶).

From the general perspective, there was no doubt that the students' exhibitions at the PQ 2015, compared to those from the Section of Countries and Regions, were more provocative, more innovative, more meaningful and, finally, more important.

That fact surprised me but, at the same time, made me profoundly happy. The schools had become better than the professional environment.

BIO
RADIOVOJE DINULović

Dr Radivoje Dinulović, architect, is Head of the Scene Design Department, doctorate programme at the University of Arts in Belgrade. He also teaches architecture at the universities in Novi Sad and Banja Luka, as well as Architecture of Performing Space at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade.

He is author of over one hundred architectural and urban designs, out of which 16 for theatres in Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Russia. He worked on nearly 60 theatre scenographies and created nine of his own. He is a co-founder of the Yugoslav Performing Arts Association and Biennial of Scene Design, a unique performing arts exhibition in the region of South East Europe.

His students exhibited their work at the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2004, then in Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. They also received international awards for their architectural work and were offered scholarships in Germany, USA and UK.

¹ Collective work of students from different countries at the Aalto University and University of Arts in Helsinki.

² Curator: Nikola Radeljković, Designer: Mauricio Ferlin.

³ Curator and designer: Mia David (Section of Countries & Regions); Curatorial team for the Student Section (co-ordinated by Tatjana Dadić Dinulović), work designed by students and mentors.

⁴ Curator: Ivo Kristián Kubák; Designer: Ivana Kanhäuserová.

⁵ Curator: Kate Burnett; Designer: Patricia Grasham.

⁶ Curator: Gundega Laivina; Designer: Vladislav Nastavshev.

Claudia Suárez

4

From "Stage Design and Theatre Architecture" to "Performance Design and Space": How has the change in the Quadrennial's name affected the perception of the scenographer's role?

Claudia Suárez

This paper focuses on the questions that arose during my interviews with scenographers from Europe and Latin America at PQ 2011,¹ in an attempt to define their role in relation to the new name.

Indeed, in 2011, after more than forty years the Quadrennial decided to change its name – from the "Prague Quadrennial International Exhibit of Scenography and Theatre Architecture"² to the "Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space".

This focus on *performance design* resulted from the realization that new forms of theatre have been emerging (site-specific theatre, immersive theatre, found space theatre, performative installations, etc.), and the term "stage design" has become too static and restrictive in defining the territory of the scenographer.

As Sodja Lotker explained in the PQ 2011 Catalogue: "Performance design is used here instead of set design (that rings too close to setting and decoration), instead of stage design (that limits scenography

to the space of the stage), and instead of theatre design (that does not include a variety of performative genres)" (Zupanc Lotker, 2011, p.19). I believe that this new terminology is far from fortuitous, but rather symptomatic of a process occurring in the practice of scenography, and PQ 2011 revealed this process.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF THIS PROCESS?

As a result of growing technological complexity throughout the 20th century, the field of scenography is now occupied by a great number of professionals, each having a high degree of expertise in their own, narrower territory: lighting designers, sound designers, A.V. and video designers, costume and prop designers, etc. The field of scenography has become fragmented, partitioned even, and the professionals are not only more and more specialised, but also more and more dependent on the technicians who are able to master the new tools and keep abreast of new technical developments.

On the other hand, recent new forms of performance have confirmed a process that started in the sixties and seventies, when theatre broke out of its confining walls, out of the black box, and scenographers started to create their art in non-conventional spaces, or even take ownership of found spaces.

¹ João Brites (Portugal), Eloise Kazan (Mexico), Geanny García Delgado (Cuba), Doris Rollemberg (Brazil), Daniela Klimešová (CZ), Ricardo Romero Perez (Chile), Joaquim Roy (Spain), Carlos Julio López D'Abate (Argentina).

² Editor's note: A different English translation of the title in Czech has been used at different editions since 1967.



Space inside Space, Latvia, Sections of Contruies and Regions, PQ 2011.
Author of theme — Designer — Architect of exhibition: Reinis SUHANOVS. Photo: Claudia Suárez.

This process has had an impact on the everyday practice of the professionals in the field and the way they perceive themselves and their field of practice.

Several conclusions can be drawn regarding the new technologies. All of the interviewed scenographers use them and consider them as new tools for their practice. We should not be surprised, as scenographers have had a close relationship with technology ever

since the birth of theatre in Greece. Most acknowledge that the new technologies do speed up their working processes. Interestingly, however, a minority them a hindrance to their creative process, because, not having mastered the tools, they feel dependent on other people to do something that originally felt natural to them.

Others indicate how the new technologies have improved their ability to detail the



Time and the Water in the House of Memories, Iceland, Sections of Contruies and Regions, PQ 2011.
Designer — Architect of exhibition: Rebekka A.INGIMUNDARDÓTTIR. Photo: Martina Novvozámská.

time sequences when designing for a performance. They are able to produce 3D images with a time frame.

What PQ 2011 pointed out was what Sodja Lotker described in detail, when she said that "Scenography, or performance design, today can be defined as a complex environment including space, light, sound, and body, an environment for creation of performative relations" (Zupanc Lotker, 2011, p.19). And it

is fascinating to observe that two years later, at World Stage Design 2013 in Cardiff, OISTAT expanded their commissions with a new inclusive Performance Design Commission: "The mission of the Performance Design (formerly known as Scenography), is to exchange thoughts, ideas and visions among young and experienced professionals worldwide. This includes all aspects of the performance design and live art: space, set, costumes, lighting,

and sound and music composition” (International Organisation of Scenographers, Theatre Architects, and Technicians).

Questioning the limits of the scenographer’s role and responsibilities has become an inherent act for scenographers, in the sense that it is something they do every day when practicing their art, and confusing new sets of questions continue to arise: Where is my place in this apparently new territory? What are the fields of my practice? Theatre, opera, ballet, cinema, or television? Installations, performances, exhibitions, museums, or fashion shows? How do I position myself in relation to the rapidly changing limits of my role? What is my specificity as opposed to other creative artists wishing to occupy my territory? What is this territory I have to defend? How do I call myself? A set designer? Scenographer? Performance designer? Do I need to keep up with all these changes or should I limit myself to maintaining our traditional craft?

HOW CAN THIS CONFUSED STATE OF QUESTIONING BE CLARIFIED?

As mentioned earlier, scenographers have recently had to adapt to a variety of changes, mostly of a technological nature. Although this has been a permanent feature of their work throughout the centuries, the last few decades have been



particularly specific due to the speed at which these changes are taking place. Nowadays, scenographers must constantly keep abreast of the latest technological trends and acquire some of the new related skills. As a result, they become insecure because of the feelings of inadequacy they have regarding their possession of the appropriate skills to practice their art.

Conversely, yet another form of insecurity has emerged as a result of the widening of the field of practice. Scenography has exploded beyond its limits. It is not strictly reserved to the field of performance anymore.

In 2011, when PQ changed its name and the whole earth trembled, it revealed

*On the Other Side, Portugal,
Sections of Contruies and Regions, PQ 2011.
Authors of theme: João Brites, Rui Francisco.
Photo: Claudia Suárez.*



On the Other Side, Portugal, Sections of Contruies and Regions, PQ 2011. Authors of theme: João Brites, Rui Francisco. Photo: Ricardo Romero.



On the Other Side, Portugal,
Sections of Contruies and Regions, PQ 2011.
Authors of theme: João Brites, Rui Francisco.
Photo: Ricardo Romero.

what was at stake – all of the borders had fractured and the scenographer had to absorb the shock.

The PQ new team also reformulated the concept of what was expected from the various countries: “The 12th edition of the Prague Quadrennial (...) invites the Curators to help us shape a stimulating event full of challenging ideas and installations (...), creating a complex view into today’s performance, performance design and spaces for performance...” (Zupanc Lotker, in 2011:19).

The majority of the participants were not up to the challenge, and presented works similar to those that had been seen

over the past forty years. However, there were a few who did show the way: Latvia created the environment for a sensory experience and invited the audience to immerse themselves in it.

Iceland presented an all-day installation where a performer, within a specific environment, could be watched at any time by the visitors.

And Portugal created a dual space: in the first, a scene would be played out between two performers in a section of the cafeteria, while visitors in the second, an apparently fairly traditional stand, would go on a short journey, ultimately putting on headphones and witnessing the scene happening in the cafeteria from five metres above, thus becoming an audience for the performance.

In these three examples, the exhibition space effectively became a performance space and required performance design.

The term “scenography” originally detailed a field of practice in Ancient Greek theatre. It implied the presence of actors — human beings involved in a complex set of relationships with each other, with the audience, and with the time-space environment created for the occasion. This is no longer true today, and the presence of a performer is not a prerequisite for the creation of scenography. It is thus necessary to

find another term to describe the field of practice related to the design and construction of an environment suitable for a performance.

Ever since its creation, the PQ has provided a platform for meetings and exchanges between scenographers from around the world, facilitating the confrontation of aesthetic trends, of new forms of understanding, and of designing of performance spaces. The PQ has shown that it has been in tune with the questions emerging among practitioners. This new term of “performance design” may prove itself difficult to translate into Romance languages; however, it is beginning to be adopted by many English speakers, as it answers the need for a reality in our field of practice.

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BIO**CLAUDIA ANDREA
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Set designer trained at the University of Chile and is currently a doctoral student in Theatre Studies Research at the Doctoral School ED-267 Arts & Media Paris 3. For over 10 years has worked in the fields of theatre, film and television for Chilean National Theaters and National TV Networks. Film and Theatre lecturer at the Universidad Católica de Chile in Santiago de Chile and the Universidad de Valparaíso and Universidad Playa Ancha in Valparaíso.

Has devoted herself in recent years to research on the creative process of Latin American and European scenographers and the possible redefinition of their role, she has taken part in Festivals, Exhibitions and International Congresses around scenography such as the last three editions 2007, 2011 and 2015 of the Prague Quadriennial of Performance Design and Space (Czech Republic), the World Stage Design WSD2013 organized by OISTAT in Cardiff (England) and the Symposium Qu'est-ce que la Scénographie ? organized by ENSAD in Paris in 2011.



*On the Other Side, Portugal,
Sections of Contruies and Regions, PQ 2011.
Authors of theme: João Brites, Rui Francisco.
Photo: Claudia Suárez.*

Lucy Thornett

5

Australia at the PQ: Scenographic Spaces Between the National and International

Lucy Thornett

The Prague Quadrennial, as the pre-eminent international exhibition of scenography, provides a useful context to examine both international trends in scenography, as well as the unique national perspectives and practices of individual countries and regions. This paper will use the Australian exhibit as a case study through which to discuss the transformation of the Prague Quadrennial since 2007. It will discuss the Australian exhibits from 2007 to 2015, with a particular focus on the 2015 exhibit. This covers the period immediately before and after the change of the name of the event to the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space.

Like many of the national exhibits at PQ 2007, the Australian section took a more conventional approach to exhibiting scenography, consisting of a retrospective of the work of the Australian theatre designer Brian Thomson, represented through production photographs, and costume and set renderings. PQ 2011 marked a significant shift in the event, epitomised by the name change reflecting expanded understandings of scenography. Under the artistic directorship of Sodja Lotker, it also marked a shift in the discourse around how best to exhibit scenography, given that it is a practice that is transient and spatial in nature. The 2011 Australian exhibit, curated by Lawrence Wallen, epitomised this shift



Australian exhibit, PQ 2015. Photo: Anna Tregloan.

in the event, with a move away from displaying artefacts from the production process and photographs of performances to creating a standalone installation. This installation, titled *Spatial Narratives*, consisted of an imposing, impenetrable black box, perhaps a reference to the ubiquitous theatre building itself. Printed on the outside of the box and inscribed on a rotating disc in the centre was a selection of extracts from Australian plays describing spaces, and in particular, landscapes. Landscape remains a looming spectre in Australian theatre — its vastness, emptiness and isolation are recurring themes in many Australian works. Whilst the decision to move away from a traditional exhibition of theatre

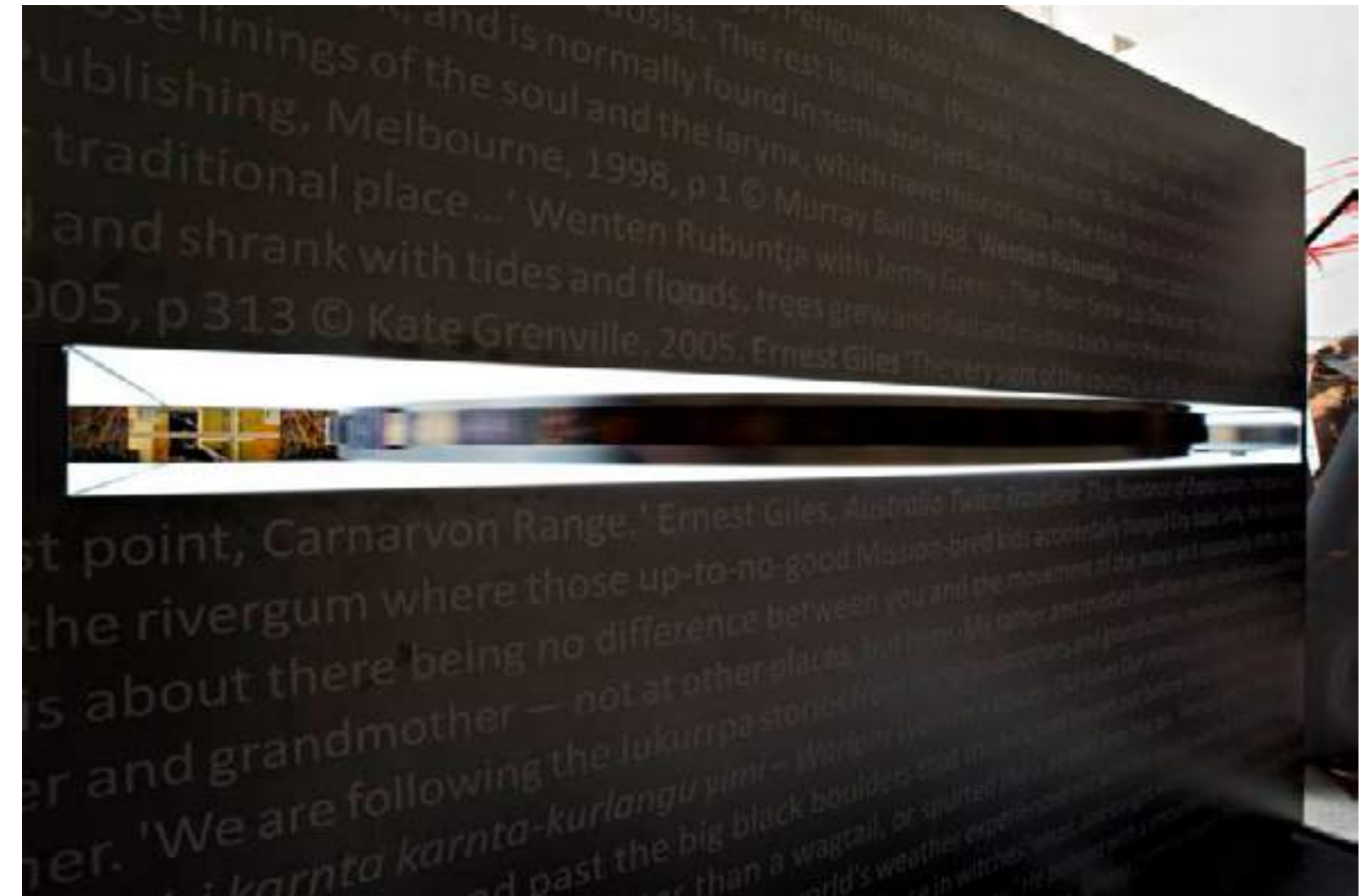


Australian exhibit, PQ 2007. Photo: Martina Novozámská.

design was a long overdue rejection of the entrenched conservatism in Australian theatre culture, it arguably embraced the spatial aspect of scenography at the expense of the performative, with the focus on the relationship between space and text in performance. The installation, with its closed sides, created a conspicuous absence of performer or performance, given the impossibility of inhabiting the space of the installation. There was also an absence of engagement with trends in

practice in Australian scenography at the time. Perhaps this is the challenge of the national exhibit in this context — finding a balance between, on the one hand, a traditional national survey, and, on the other, creating an exposition that engages with notions of performativity, temporality and spatiality, but not with current practice in the exhibiting country.

The 2015 Australian exhibit instead embraced interdisciplinary performative



Australian exhibit, PQ 2011. Photo: Martina Novozámská.

and scenographic practices and in particular, non-hierarchical processes of performance-making. Curated by Anna Tregloan (and full declaration here — I was an assistant curator), the exhibit understood the “Weather” of the PQ 2015’s theme as the product of amassing forces, and linked it to mass human action, thus also referencing the theme of ‘Politics’. This pairing of weather and politics foregrounded the power of collaboration and of human

action en-masse in the context of an Australian politics that refuses action on climate change. The exhibit focussed on collaborative and participatory performance-making practices — *democratically* created works where the audience is co-author and traditional theatre-making hierarchies are no longer relevant. These works transcend the disciplinary categorisation of *theatre*, falling into a genre often described as *contemporary performance* in Australia.



Australian exhibit, PQ 2015.
Photo: David Kumermann.



Australian exhibit, PQ 2015.
Photo: Anna Tregloan.

This catch-all term is used to describe performance work that falls outside of dominant dramatic traditions, particularly those which sit across both fine arts and theatre contexts.

The room for the exhibit was a tiny space within the Colloredo-Mansfeld Palace. Floating along the ceiling of the room were large, white weather balloons — a literal reference to the theme, and a shifting mass in the room that changed shape each day of the event as some of the balloons slowly sank. Short videos of performance documentation were projected onto a screen and onto the balloons above. The exposition functioned as both installation or performative space in its own right, and a curated survey of Australian performance practice.

Here I would like to briefly summarize the selected exhibited works. Perhaps the most iconic image of the exhibit, and used in much of the PQ's own promotional material — comes from *The Democratic Set* by Back to Back Theatre. It is a recurring project that the company describe as "an experimental residency model.". The premise and starting point is an empty box set with doors on both sides. Different communities are invited to create micro performances for the set, with the only constraints being the short timeframe, and the confined

stage space. These performances are filmed and then edited together to create the impression of a continuous series of rooms. The work is based on a fundamental belief in the equality of all people, made tangible by the provocation the space offers to participants.

PVI Collective's *Resist* is another ongoing project that has been performed with a number of different communities. PVI describes the work as a "conflict resolution service.". In the form of a literal tug-of-war, it aims to resolve issues of conflict for the audience members. In Prague, visitors to the Australian exhibit were asked to contribute dilemmas to be resolved through a tug-of-war via a live feed from Perth, in a kind of democratic catharsis, or not, in the case of the person tugging on your behalf losing the battle.

Supercritical Mass is again an ongoing project performed in a range of sites. Part flash mob, large groups of musicians of all ages, backgrounds and skill levels descend on everyday spaces such as car parks, libraries and shopfronts to create sounds that respond to the unique acoustic, spatial and functional qualities of the site. A video of *Supercritical Mass's* work *Moving Collected Ambience* was screened at the PQ, consisting of a group of people performing a low hum in the Art Gallery of NSW.



Australian exhibit, PQ 2015.
Photo: David Kumermann.



Democratic Set, Back to Back Theatre. Photo: Jeff Busby.

These works have in common the adaptability to different sites and participants, and a fundamental belief in democracy and equality, both thematically and in the processes of creating the works. Interspersed with these works was one made specifically for the exhibition — *The Colour of the Sky Today*. A crowd-sourced work, people were encouraged to take photographs of the sky around Australia and instagram them with the hashtag #thecolouroftheskytoday. These were then collated into a slowly morphing animation, projected onto the balloons overhead. While these daytime skies

were illuminating a darkened room, due to the time difference, the skies at that very moment in Australia were dark. As Tregloan said, the work brought, quote “day to night and night to day by filling the space with Australian made light.”

The Czech architecture infiltrated by this Australian light was older than the history of European settlement in Australia. Yet discussions of Australia as a young country ignores the rich history of Aboriginal Australians, and by extension the injustices that have been and continue to be perpetrated against them. In a sense, this work created a

multiplicity of time and place, through the meshing of ancient landscapes and cultures, newly formed national identities, and incongruent European architecture.

The final work I’ll discuss today, *The Shadow King* by *Malthouse Theatre Company*, was perhaps the most traditionally theatrical work included in the exhibition. It was an adaptation of *King Lear*, performed in Indigenous languages. The stage space was dominated by a mining truck, an explicit reference to the manner in which the mining industry and its interests looms over not only remote Aboriginal

communities but Australian politics as a whole. The inclusion of this work was an important reminder that Australia is in fact not a young country in reality, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people inhabiting the land for approximately 40,000 years.

The works selected for the exhibit highlight Australia’s unique weather, politics, location and history. The scenographies presented emerge from performance-making practices that largely sit outside of the traditional hierarchies of designer, director, playwright. Whilst this more traditional work still dominates on the mainstage in Australia, there is a growing alternative. These interdisciplinary practices create horizontal hierarchies and may include audiences as co-creators.

Thus the exhibit aligned itself with the discourse surrounding the PQ and its transformations in relation to expanded notions of scenography. In discussing the rationale for the PQ’s change of name in 2011, Thea Brejzek pointed to the “increasing merging in practice between the visual and the performing arts,” and described scenography as an interdisciplinary practice that can no longer be assigned to a singular author (Brejzek, 2011, p. 8). This expanded definition was at the heart of the 2015 Australian section.



Resist, PVI Collective. (Perth Cultural Centre, Australia, Perth).
Photo: Bohdan Warchomij.

Whilst there remains a question about whether National Countries exhibits are the best way to present scenography, or whether these national borders are increasingly irrelevant, I think there is some value in not only illuminating the politics and points of departure in practice for each participating nation, but in revealing international trends in scenography in the aggregate. The Prague Quadrennial provides a unique opportunity to understand national critical discourse and practices in scenography within an international context. It is my contention that the Australian exhibit can also be understood as a case study for the transformation of the PQ itself since 2007, in its shift from an exhibition of artefacts associated with theatre design to an encompassing engagement with scenography as an interdisciplinary practice. Furthermore, examining the link between Australian scenography and the PQ demonstrates that the relationship between PQ and national scenographies is in fact symbiotic, with the PQ having an active influence on practices of scenography around the world.



Resist, PVI Collective. (Perth Cultural Centre, Australia, Perth).
Photo: Bohdan Warchomij.

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BIO LUCY THORNETT

Lucy Thornett is a scenographer and lecturer in Spatial Design at University of the Arts, London. Her practice and research focuses on design-led performance making, immersive audience experiences and the intersection with broader spatial design practice. She has designed sets and costumes for numerous productions and has also exhibited her own immersive installations and performances. Lucy was assistant curator for the Australian section of the Prague Quadrennial in 2015. She has been awarded grants from the Australia Council for the Arts for her work in theatre. She is currently co-convenor of the TaPRA (Theatre and Performance Research Association) Scenography working group.



Moving Collected Ambience, Super Critical Mass (Julian Dar and Luke Jaaniste). Photo: Hospital Hill.



Australian exhibit, PQ 2015. Photo: Anna Tregloan.



The Shadow King, Produced by Malthouse Theatre and presented at the Barbican, 2016. Photo: Jeff Busby.

Australian exhibit, PQ 2015. Photo: Anna Tregloan.

Ştefania Cenean



The Last Two PQ Themes: Tools for Overcoming Inertia

Ștefania Cenean

The Prague Quadrennial already occupies a very honorable place in the palette of award-winning European cultural events, such as the EFFE prize, a result predictable since PQ 2011. The tremendous efforts of the staff, the section curators, the country curators, and the students for the last editions have proved that scenography has its own artistic language of great force, not only during live performances, but also during theatrical exhibitions. This language has been used in a way to change the PQ from being a passive exhibition to one that actively highlights the creative process.

In contemporary theatre the phenomenon of interdisciplinarity, the combination of visual arts with theatrical meanings, occurs naturally to capture the interest of audiences of today. Beyond its extensive cultural tradition, the PQ has the admirable quality of, once every four years, bringing together tens of thousands of visitors from all over the world, who come specifically to experience the pulse of this synthetic art called scenography.

If, during the 1999, 2003 and 2007 editions, the artistic approaches were still characterized by a certain inertia, involving mainly projects realized by the participants in the past, both PQ 2011

and PQ 2015 were new and atypical, surprisingly dynamic, unpredictable, and innovative. Although sometimes we may get nostalgic for the Výstaviště,¹ where the PQ developed most of its traditional aspects, I must admit that the new proposed spaces have attracted more members of the public. The overwhelming number of students coming from everywhere reflects the new real target of the PQ, and is perhaps the most important goal that has been achieved. The crowd has become young and thus able to create a symbiosis between the aesthetics of what is felt to be traditional scenography and their own feelings of what is new which they introduced within it, which seems to me as the most significant aspect.

Students in Romania think of the PQ as something of a summer college program. For this reason, we have made great efforts to bring more students to the PQ — at least fifty students per edition since 2007 — so that they understand the opportunities to be found in the scenographer's profession as offered by the PQ.

¹ Editor's note: the Industrial Palace of the Exhibition Grounds in Prague, where the PQ was held several times.

Chris Burlacu, a former student at UNATC¹ in Bucharest, talks about the PQ as a place where: “We all adapted very easily to Kafka’s fortress. Just on its own as a city experience, Prague would have been enough to make us want to come back again at least once more. But the real catharsis of this journey was the PQ, which seemed to awaken the concept of the Tower

¹ The roots of UNATC date back to 1834, when the first drama school was opened as a part of the Philharmonic School in Bucharest. The Drama Directing Faculty at the Art Institute was established in 1948 and, for two years (until 1950), it united all of Bucharest’s art education schools.

Ion Luca Caragiale was a Romanian playwright of. The particular language that he used makes his plays somehow untranslatable. Though he is considered to be one of the most important Romanian authors of all times, not everyone in our performing sphere has the courage to deal with his works. In 1954, the Institute of Theatre and Cinematography “I. L. Caragiale” brought together the Drama and Film Faculties. In 1999, even prior to the time the Institute became a University in 2001, the scenography department was created, based on the principles of student collaboration between scenographers, actors, directors, puppeteers, and choreographers. After the wave of massive emigration from Romania due to the Communist regime, the few designers who stayed proved that the country had not been left without its creative potential and made their presence known at the world’s theatre festivals. Some of these dreamers applied all their artistic heritage to establish this new scenography department, reviving Ciulei’s idea that a scenographer should be half director and the director should be half scenographer. It continues to be at this department that students have the opportunity to be initiated into the ability to introduce aspects of “the shared space of arts” to theatre and film set design, costumes, and stage architecture, as well as the possibility to create and play in UNATC’s theatre halls in front of invited renowned jury panels.

Not only a few times have students been asked by professional theatres and film studios to share their knowledge and enthusiasm. It can be said that the current scenography department has become a real springboard for future scenographers. Including them in this grand “landmark of shared space” that is called the PQ is the equivalent of them attending classes at a second faculty. Our policy for the last three editions of the Prague Quadrennial was to bring almost 90 percent of UNATC’s students despite the harsh financial “however.” This is why the PQ provides the opportunity to extend the national scenography education process.



The Romanian PQ'11 Countries and Regions stand:
Art As Sacrifice. Curator: Stefania Cenean.
Photo: Martina Novozámská, pq.cz.

of Babel — although we felt as illiterate as its original builders, the universal language of scenography saved us and placed us in a common tribe, like a visual theatrical foundation. The atmosphere in Prague allowed me to align my thoughts along a straight path and clarify the contents of my project folders.”

What particularly set PQ 2015 apart was a greater openness to all general aspects of contemporary scenography, or, more specifically, to a wider range of opportunities for a favorable reception. Generated by an original concept (a canopy under which the old sections appear along with the new), followed by the preparation of a manual and following a precise schedule and deadline, the 2015 edition made the creators respond to the constraints that have generated diversity.



The way that the Romanian exhibition tried to answer the PQ’s themes was seen more as an occasion to introduce a national approach within the PQ, rather than simply an opportunity to present Romanian scenographers. At PQ 2015, the Romanian exhibition in St. Anne’s Church, included wooden silhouettes of saints protecting images (portraits of priests (confessors) who were tortured in the Communist prisons). The theme was ROOTS.² A few

² ROOTS — Author of theme: Stefania CENEAN,

When we look at an old tree we admire his rich, imposing crown, its leaves blowing in the wind. Inevitably, we see the sky, because we are called to look up to the light, and be intoxicated by the sad music of the loneliness that enshrouds the tree. ... We imagine the twisted roots of the tree, hundreds of years in the making, like the innards of the earth. If the roots were not as wide as the crown, the tree could hardly stand against the weather. Weak roots would make the tree collapse from the slightest gust of wind. Well-fed by the sap gathered in his hidden roots, the old tree will stand straight and strong against bad weather. Well-anchored in time and space, an old tree teaches us lessons about life and invites us to meditate.



The mysterious vibration of timber (known as a living element), the rustle or soft music, are elements that often are not perceived as a genuine natural show.

The tree is an ideal component of set design due to its power to send overwhelming, theatrical messages, almost becoming a symbol of the lost paradise.

One could compare the rings seen in the cross-section of old tree trunks to the generations of an old family through which the sap flows, feeding all of them. In the center, the smallest ring is like a sketch of the youngest in the family. The bark, with all its wrinkles, represents the oldest.

The roots of the tree, its unseen force, inspired the theme for the exhibition and became for us a leitmotif. We will present a series of tree-stars, using each one’s historical identity, archived, shot and filmed by a team of artists (designer, light designer, photographer) and using theatricals methods over a period of two years and at different times, day and night. In this way, we intend to respond to the challenge of *PQ 2015 Shared Space: Music Weather Politics*, with a project of living elements — trees — exposed for centuries in Romanian space, as witnesses of historic, social and artistic events.

The images are accompanied by stories, legends and documented facts connecting trees. The performativity of these images is obtained both through the surprising theatricality of the reality that surrounds them, the proposed theme for this edition of the PQ, and the possibility of triggering all possible personal stories in the viewer’s imagination. In time, the network, in which trees are captured both visually and in audio, will include people’s portraits too — trees, as steadfast and well-anchored in our space with enduring roots that will help them stand the test of time.



The Romanian PQ'15 Countries and Regions stand: Roots. Curator: Ștefania Cenean

of the silhouettes were concealing a photo of an old tree by Florin Ghenade. The wood used for carving these shapes had been saved from an old garden fence in the Romanian countryside. A daylight video projection by Cristian Stănoiu showed old trees that had grown during different political times and varying climatic conditions. The roots of a common land, the theatricality of the

real, and the power of imagination ... The old trees of Romania have legendary identities due to their long-term relationships with the surrounding rural and urban communities and because they have witnessed centuries of political events and weather changes. It is said that trees are able to record information within their living wooden substance. Their uninterrupted presence over the centuries stands as proof of truth and as a shared landmark. The fact that these trees continue to exist allows legends to go on. The trees themselves become documents of continuous stories that they cannot tell. The idea of showing historical trees was to raise questions about the power of representation in transmitting information, and the performative nature of images.

From the questions raised by the theme of PQ 2015 — Shared Space: Music Weather Politics, the Romanian Student Section chose *Freedom*¹ as its key word. It is said

¹ Theme: FREEDOM: Author of theme: Ștefania CENEAN, PhD
Freedom is what the youngsters of today are looking for — today as ever. Complete freedom. But what is freedom? Being yourself? Being a part of a group with which you identify? Or being different? In the maze that characterizes the search for freedom, young people often confuse liberty with libertinism. But, over time, they realize that, actually, their responsibilities are multiplying and there is no way to go back to childhood. Freedom does not mean living as you want. Being a rebel is not an expression of freedom.

For the young people who protested on the streets of Romania in 1989, for those who started the Romanian



revolution, freedom was a political and social goal. They did not seek to claim anything of material value (services, wages, food) — they were fighting for freedom. Not only did they chant “we will die and we will be free,” they died, in front of the eyes of the world, live on television. Thanks to them, we are all free. The young people who claimed freedom in 1989 set the tone of a music almost incomprehensible today. Their fight was a further sequel to the ideal of freedom expressed decades ago, in the early 1940s, by other young people when Romania forcibly



The Romanian PQ'15 Countries and Regions stand at the Odeon Theatre in Bucharest, National Theatre Festival, Bucharest, Romania, 2015. Photo: Mihai Draghici.





The Romanian PQ'15 Countries and Regions stand at the Odeon Theatre in Bucharest, National Theatre Festival, Bucharest, Romania, 2015. Photo: Mihai Draghici.

entered the Communist era. Those who boldly opposed Communism were warned: “Understand that you do not go to kill, but to be killed.” But the victory was important as they were fighting for their country, for the truth. These were their goals. The young people who died in 1989, had no idea of the sacrifices made during the Communist years or of the mass graves. All these things came to light much later; as always, the truth emerges from the lies. Some of those who survived the harsh tortures came out of jail in 1989.

One could say that, today, young people have no ideals. They live chaotic lives to the rhythms of music and the flashy images of music videos. Life and liberty are

that young people have no more ideals — that they live their lives listening to chaotic music rhythms under the flashing lights emitted by music videos, that they view life and freedom as fun, pleasure and entertainment, that they wish for an easy life and easy success. In this context, what roles do ‘art’ and ‘culture’ play? Might they offer a way of becoming free? For sure it is a way of arriving at an awareness of personal autonomy and freedom without losing yourself. Creating makes them better while making a difference between culture and pseudo culture. Self-confidence in art is gained after long practice, much as trees grow and become stronger over time, no matter what the

perceived only as pleasure, fun and entertainment. As a result, most of them want success quickly, comfortably and effortlessly. But this is not a sustainable result; life proves it. In the midst of this whirlwind of desires and feelings, culture and art, can represent salvation and freedom, as a safe way to increase your personal autonomy without burning bridges or losing yourself. Art that makes young people better and brighter.

Not all kinds of art do this, however. It is only by discerning between true culture and pseudo-culture that we can achieve long-term safety, and this is achieved only through a lengthy practice. Only true art and real culture can elevate one straight up, like towering trees, impossible to be toppled by bad weather.

Do not forget that, if today we are free to create, it is due to the sacrifices made in 1989!

Young Romanian artists with degrees in stage design have complete freedom to express their inner world. However, this inner world is uninteresting if it has no goal, because without ideals, one cannot dream the different worlds of the stage. We hope that the projects coming to Prague will talk about freedom with different, but melodic voices.



weather. Bianca Vesteman was selected to present her work in the Student Section, where the innovative video mapping of models was used for the first time within the Romanian presentation.

Although in 2007 the level of our country’s participation left much to be desired (although the country’s artistic production design was by no means neglected), some of our work was appreciated and promoted. We considered ourselves to be honored by Arnold Aronson’s mention of the Romanian students in the conclusions published in his *Reflections on the 2007 PQ*,¹ and we were motivated to continue in our approach.

¹ For his publication entitled *Exhibition on the Stage: Reflections on the 2007 Prague Quadrennial* (2008), Arnold Aronson, an esteemed theorist from the Columbia University School of Arts chose to include a model for Chekhov’s Cherry Orchard made by my student Andrei Dinu.



The Romanian PQ'15 Countries and Regions stand at the Odeon Theatre in Bucharest, National Theatre Festival, Bucharest, Romania, 2015. Photo: Mihai Draghici.



The Romanian PQ'11 Countries and Regions stand: Art As Sacrifice. Curator: Stefania Cenean. Photo: Martina Novozámská, pq.cz

As far as Romania is concerned, until 2011 the PQ remained an all-important event only for the country's scenographers, and there were only a very few articles in the press. Then, in 2011, the Romanian exhibition at the PQ presented the myth of sacrifice for creation through the story of the church builder Manole. Using a metaphor of running water, the transformation of body into substance, and of faith into spirit, materialized into light within the national exhibit. A path

of light guided the visitors through the legend, starting from the cross made of light, to an image of the church and the mysterious silhouette of Manole's wife Ana captured within a white wall. Lots of dyed metal buckets were used to display video images of past performances by young Romanian artists. The fountain, the spring, and the buckets suggested that the source of creation is strictly related to sacrifice.



The Romanian PQ'15 Student Section stand: Freedom. Curator: Stefania Cenean. Designer: Bianca Vesteman. Photo: Bianca Vesteman

Reporters, journalists and theatre critics from Romania who visited the PQ 2011 discovered how interesting the pavilions of the participating countries were. As a result, the PQ entered the consciousness of many Romanians who previously knew nothing about this phenomenon, and we were consequentially invited to show our exhibitions from Prague during the Romanian National Theatre Festival. However, time was short and the organizers were not able to find a

proper space for the exhibition. Last year, we responded to the invitation from the FNT¹ and they provided us with theatre space to present our exhibit from the PQ 2011 Architecture Section. We presented both our student section as well as our country's section to the Romanian public who had not been able to travel Prague.

¹ Festivalul National de Teatru / The National Theatre Festival.



The Romanian PQ'15 Student Section stand: Freedom.
Curator: Ștefania Cenean. Designer: Bianca Vesteman.
Photo: Bianca Vesteman

The National Theatre Festival introduced a different spatial and spiritual context for the Romanian exhibit booth originally designed for the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. The main theme of this year's scenography event organized in Prague was SharedSpace: Music Weather Politics and it brought together 78 countries. Romania responded to this artistic challenge with a series of images of legendary trees in our country and their fascinating story. Photographed

at night and filmed during the day with a moving steadycam, the trees were the central focal point of an artistic process spanning two years. Romania's theme — Roots/Rădăcini — proposed by curator Ștefania Cenean, suggests the performative aspects of the real images and relies on the unseen force of the tree roots, silent witnesses of the passage of time. The photographs were taken by visual artist Florin Ghenade, who worked with Cristian Stănoiu to select and film trees that have witnessed important political moments. The exhibit booth, designed by stage designer Ștefania Cenean, was created in the studios of set designer Ștefan Caragiu. The images of the trees were accompanied by silhouettes made of old wood and portraits of priests (confessors) who were tortured in the Communist prisons as a punishment for their moral values.

Romania was represented at the Student Section of the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space by set designer Bianca Vesteman,¹ a Master's student at UNATC — the I. L. Caragiale University of Theatrical Arts and Cinematography. Her works, based on video mapping techniques and integrated

¹ <http://www.fnt.ro/en/Program/Grand-Opening-of-the-Exhibition-Freedom-Performing-space-imagined-and-created-by-Bianca-Vesteman/>.

in three models, represent the performing spaces for imaginary plays by William Shakespeare and Elmer Rice, staged and directed in a modern way. They were in direct contrast with the exhibition booth, also designed by Bianca Vesteman, which was austere and cold. The inspiring topic of *Freedom* (proposed by me, Ștefania Cenean, the curator) fits the main theme of the event, SharedSpace: Music Weather Politics.

I think that the PQ event, as it seems to have been evolving since the last two editions, has, in a certain way, become more and more difficult to accommodate, harder to encompass, even for the participants during their stay in Prague. In addition, the terms and conditions of the competition are becoming rather unequal for the participating countries, as the exhibition spaces vary greatly and thus have very different requirements for the countries in answering the challenges contained in the PQ themes. More attention should also be focused on the fact that models, installations, and other artistic expressions, such as performance recordings, cannot be judged by the same criteria.

I stand by my opinion that the PQ's success depends primarily on the originality of the theme, which will always trigger a new type of energy to influence the curators and the artists, the PQ's

public, and the spaces involved. We do not have any concerns about the future organization of the event and we wish the future PQ organizers their much deserved success in the future.

BIO ȘTEFANIA CENEAN

Ștefania CENEAN is a theatre scenographer and PhD professor at the Scenography Department within the National University of Theatrical Art and Cinematography "I.L. Caragiale" in Bucharest where she is teaching classes for BA, MA and PhD degrees. After an internationally renowned theatrical career, awarded throughout important world festivals, she gained her PhD in 2007. She was Romania's Curator at the main sections for the PQ 11 and PQ 15.

Kate Burnett

7

The UK at PQ: Reflection and Renewal

Kate Burnett

Make/Believe — Design for Performance 2011-15 was the eleventh UK national exhibit to be shown at Prague Quadrennials since our first participation in 1975. These exhibits have, with one exception, been associated with, or selected from “open” national exhibitions assembled by The Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD) in the UK.

Contextualized and to some extent motivated by the corresponding PQs, the UK exhibitions, and more enduringly, their accompanying catalogues have charted the careers of many of the country’s designers with changes in aesthetics, media, technologies, types of performance and audience contexts shaping the journeys.

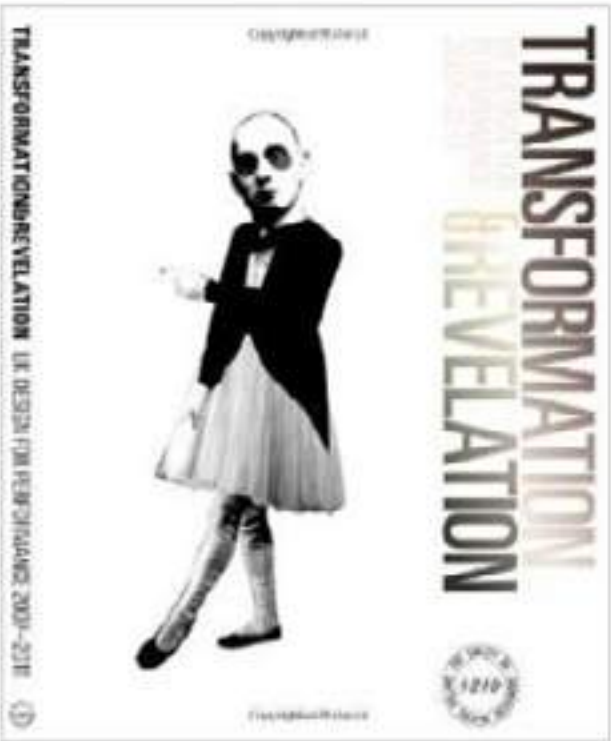
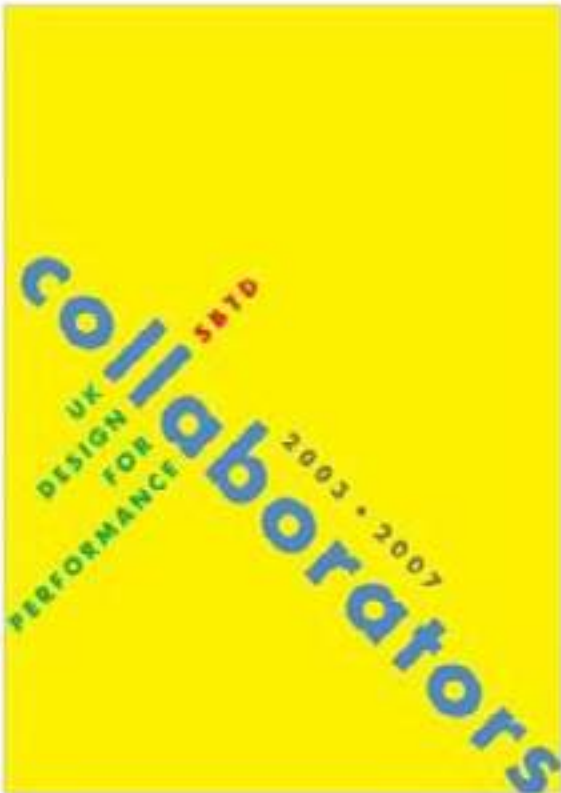
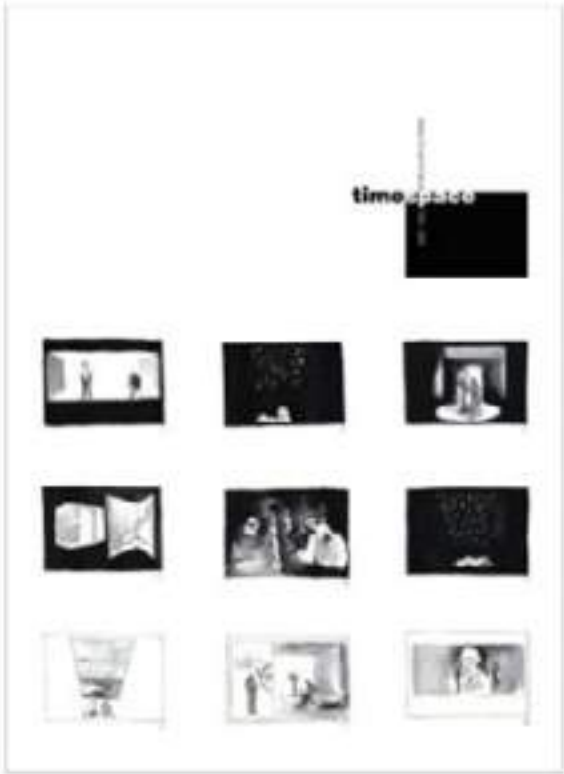
The UK exhibitions encompass the wide range of work that defines both the heart and peripheries of this artform-in-industry — in music festivals, in large scale events such as the Olympics, Paralympics, community opera, found space and promenade performance; in digital, landscape, heritage and media contexts; as well as in the intimate and highly valued work that designers are currently doing in education, health and various community settings. They also acknowledge and promote the development of new performance spaces, the re-envisioning of old and existing buildings, and the increasing

commitment to sustainable design and practices in both production and performance environments.

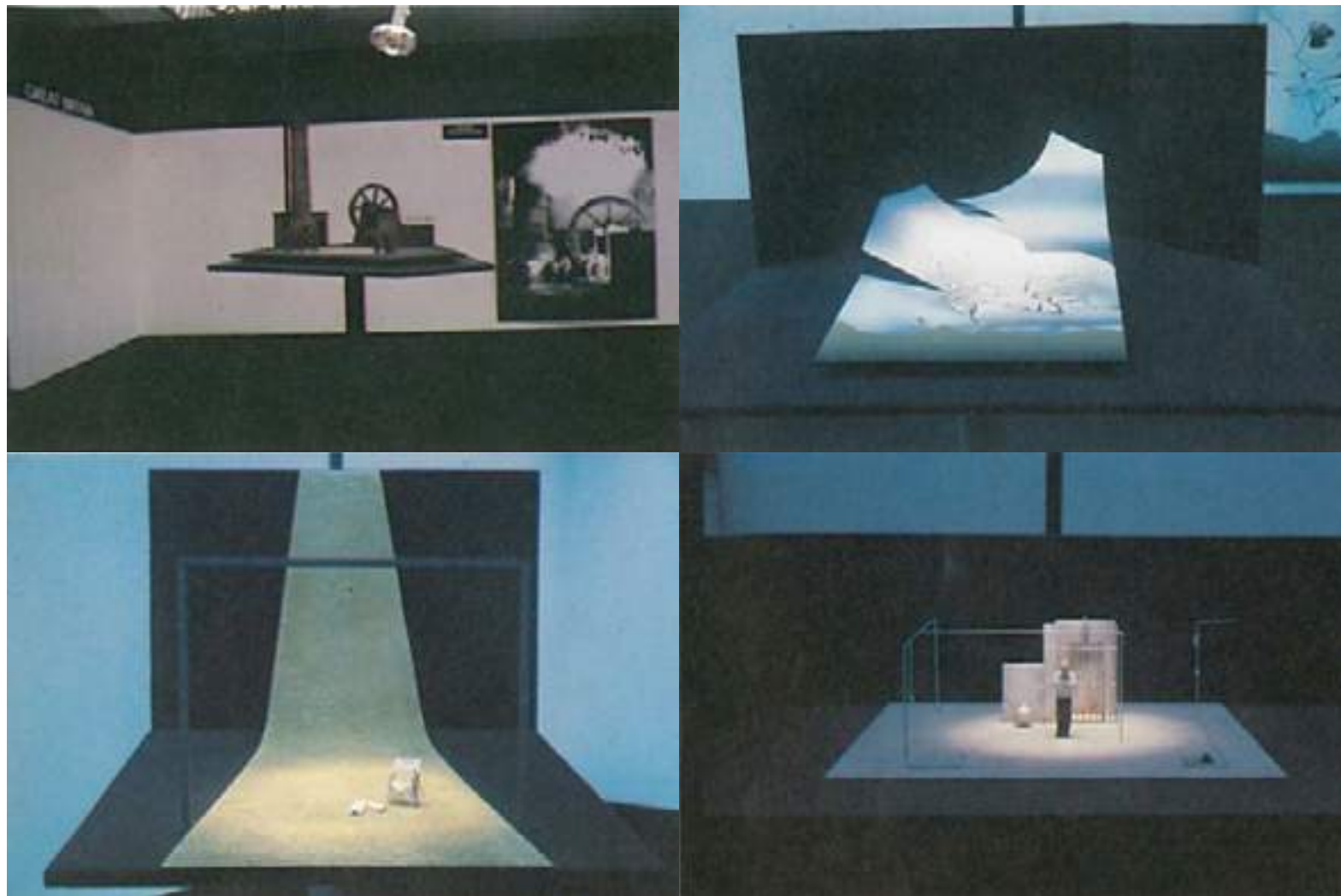
All these contexts, motivations and more can also be found variously in the work of other countries and regions at the ever-growing PQ. Being a part of this worldwide conversation will never cease to be inspiring, affirming — and frequently provoking. In particular, the PQ offers participants regular opportunities for reflection and renewal as evidenced in UK design for performance exhibitions; for “bodies of work” to be assembled, even created, and evaluated. I suggest that these are essential to our shared cultural experience and understanding of our own and each other’s current work and preoccupations, and why it is essential that the PQ continues to demand and recognize searching responses; the need to go beyond the self-reflexive, the “knowing” and the “now” culture.

“...an economy of means of expression”

In January 1976, only forty years ago, four UK designers — John Bury, Head of Design at the National Theatre; Ralph Koltai, Head of Design at Central School of Art & Design; along with the design team of Timothy O’Brien and Tazeena Firth, went to Prague to investigate and take part in the (delayed 1975) Quadrennial for the first time with a small exhibition



UK Exhibition Catalogue covers, 1983–2015.



British designs at the Prague Quadrennial 1979, exhibited without model boxes. *CUE Technical Theatre Review*, Issue 1, 1979. Photos: John Bury.

of their work, as well as entries to the Architecture and Student Sections. In his curatorial statement, John Bury wrote that, as designers, they had, “come to prominence in the theatrical life of their country, holding in common a belief in the immediacy of communication. They had inherited their role from a previous generation, active as decorators, bred in a theatre that served to entertain the moneyed classes”. He continued:

“Today’s designers have benefited from changes in social attitudes and work for

an audience with a less frivolous outlook. ... Today, as in Shakespeare’s time, the theatre of Britain is a writers’ theatre and the concern of British designers is a proper response to the text and the author’s meaning. ... They believe that the best way to put an idea on stage is to put a man on stage possessed by that idea, and this puts the actor and the singer safely at the centre of their work, diminishing for them the interest in stage mechanics for their own sake, and nourishing a belief in an economy of means of expression.” (Bury, J., PQ 1975, Great Britain, p. 5¹)

The UK team were amazed and thrilled to be awarded a Gold Medal for their whole display and went home to London convinced that with this momentum and international recognition an organisation for and of designers should be formed. The membership of the new SBTB very quickly grew to over half of the estimated 450 set, costume and lighting designers working at any one time in the UK (Mair, 1982, p. 16) and has stayed strangely constant, varying between 350 in exhibition years, diminishing to 200–250 in between.

In 1977, a small exhibition was held at the Central School of Art & Design, but

the first national exhibition of design for performance in the UK since the 1920s was held in 1979 at Riverside Studios in London. The Society of British Theatre Designers — SBTB — was initially concerned with improving fees and working conditions for designers. It aimed to promote designers, to connect them with each other, to be broadly educational, to hold exhibitions and to select work for the PQ from across the UK and that being made abroad by UK designers.

For the 1979 PQ catalogue, John Bury, again the curator, wrote:

“The purpose of this selection was not to present an anthology of the various styles and techniques used in the British Theatre, but rather to focus on the most clearly defined tendency of our current work ... towards a clarity of vision, a creative economy and a cutting back of inessentials. Comment is inherent rather than explicit. The actor takes the centre of our stage — his presence is necessary to complete the design. We try to bring you work which is at once serious and beautiful — work from new drama in our country and work from the classics of world theatre.” (Bury, PQ 1979, Great Britain, p. 1²)

¹ PQ Archive online catalogues <http://services.pq.cz/en/archive.html> July 20, 2016.

² PQ Archive online catalogues <http://services.pq.cz/en/archive.html>, July 20, 2016.



The Midsummer Marriage, San Francisco Opera, 1983 and 1987. Designer: Robin Don. In *British Theatre Design '83—'87*. Photos: Ron Scherl.

This exhibit of 18 designers' work was awarded the Golden Triga — and this international affirmation of UK work and choices established the pattern of SBTD national exhibitions and participation in the PQ with selected, but wide-ranging, work. Recognizing the UK designers' aims, Věra Ptáčková, wrote about the PQ '79 exhibition in *A Mirror of World Theatre*:

"If it is possible to characterise the individual exhibitions without falling prey to over-simplification, then the British companies must be labelled as severely symbolic, abstracted to the elementary

heart of communication itself... The function and economy of the British Stage Designers are not merely serving the dramatic work but define the precision of communication with accurate choice of form and image. Sedate conservatism within the exhibition context became a sturdy domain amidst the unquiet world of the PQ. It rehabilitated the design and maquette not only as means by which to exhibit but as artefacts with their own artistic worth..." (Ptáčková, 1995, p. 134).

Again in 1983, there is comment on the meticulous work of award-winning UK



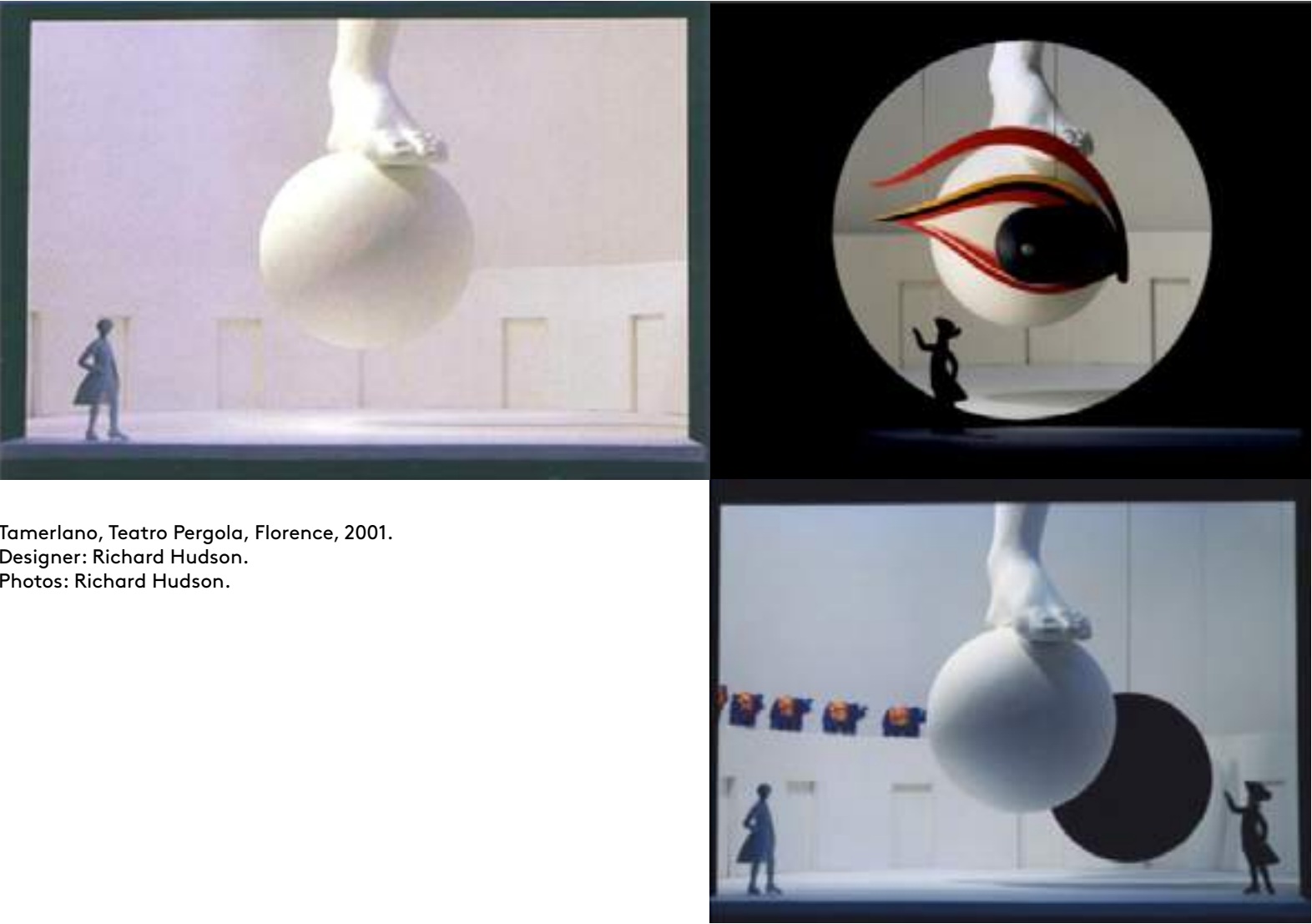
UK national exhibit Prague Quadrennial 1991, Photos: Prague Quadrennial.

designers — Maria Bjornson and David Short — for costume drawings that "suggested the mise en scene ... not art in its abbreviated form, but an illusion of probability ... with great attention on detail" (*Ibid*, p. 170). During the 1980s, the UK aesthetic embraced surreal, fragmented, unstable worlds, still selecting groups of up to thirty designers for PQ '87 from national exhibitions held at Riverside Studios and Roundhouse in London.

In only one four-year period since 1975 was there no national exhibition held in Britain.

In 1991, as the SBTD was in an uneasy period of transitions, seven successful designers undertook the representation to PQ with ten production designs, in, according to *A Mirror on World Theatre* again: "a testimony to the production objective", with "free sculptures guarding the mysteries of creativity".

Artefacts — props, such as a stuffed wolf, a chromed dustbin full of water, a crushed car and stack of tyres — both supported the models and artwork but were also "re-staging them" in the "set" of the exhibition, the "designer(s)



Tamerlano, Teatro Pergola, Florence, 2001.
Designer: Richard Hudson.
Photos: Richard Hudson.



Ralph Koltai's sculptural setting
for the UK national exhibit at the Prague
Quadrennial 2007. Photos: Kate Burnett.



Boxed, Seven Sisters Group, 2006.
Set and Costume Designer: Sophie Jump.
Photo: Kevin Davis.



The Water Banquet,
U-Man Zoo at Tactile
Bosch, Cardiff, 2003.
Director-Designer
Richard Downing.
Photo: Simon Banham.



Mulgrave, a journey. Wilson+Wilson, Mulgrave Woods, Sandsend, Whitby, 2005. Conceived and co-created: Wils Wilson. Conceived, co-created and designed: Louise Ann Wilson. Photo: Dominic Ibbottson.

provocative in the peculiar features of (their) poetic images and expressional means” (*Ibid*, pp. 253–254). They again won a Golden Triga, but provoked a new generation of more regional UK designers to make sure that in 1994 a new national exhibition — *MakeSpace!* — held up north in Manchester, was fully inclusive of a truly diverse range of practice.

One of the effects in the UK of inclusive national exhibitions has been the increasing refinement of model making — even for small or alternative and low budget shows. This has created a parity of aesthetic and craft skills, which during PQ 1995 led to the following comment:

“Precise workmanship was the essence of the British models’ beauty. It seems that after decades during which a model was a mere part of documentation without any artistic aspirations and thus also perceived this way, its renaissance is coming. One even starts to think about possibilities of its artistic appeal.” (Bílková et. al, 2001, p. 9)

This quality of beautiful and poetic precision — my words — has endured in the UK work to the present, with a corresponding modesty of presentation. Only in 2007, commissioning and scaling up Ralph Koltai’s maquette to be the “set” for the UK exhibition, and in Peter Farley’s bronze mesh cages in 2011, did the “theatrical” break out again in framing the work. And not until 2015 did the work itself get edited, re-formed and re-sized, even if only virtually. In his essay *Exhibiting Scenography: The Loss of the Artefact*, Arnold Aronson discusses the “inherently problematic” nature of putting “tangible elements from an ephemeral art” on display. He categorizes:

“... four methods for exhibiting scenographic work: 1) Static documentation such as photographs; 2) kinetic documentation such as video; 3) presentation of artefacts of process such as models, and renderings, or occasionally artefacts of performance such as costumes, props or set pieces; or 4) substitutional displays in which the exhibit itself becomes a form of scenography.” (Aronson, 2007, p. 28)

My feeling is that there is an element missing, which is not retrospective, documentary, representational or performative. It is the possibilities that are inherent in the drawing and model. They are there for interpretation on many levels and will be experienced differently in the imagination of every person that engages with them.

MAKE/BELIEVE AT PQ 2015

As regards the most recent UK exhibition, *Make/Believe*, the entry for PQ 2015, was a collaboration between the selected designers, myself as curator, the exhibition designers Patricia Grasham and Brad Caleb Lee, the Association of Sound Designers, the students and staff of the Backstage Academy, Wakefield, of Nottingham Trent University (NTU), and the Royal Welsh College of Music &



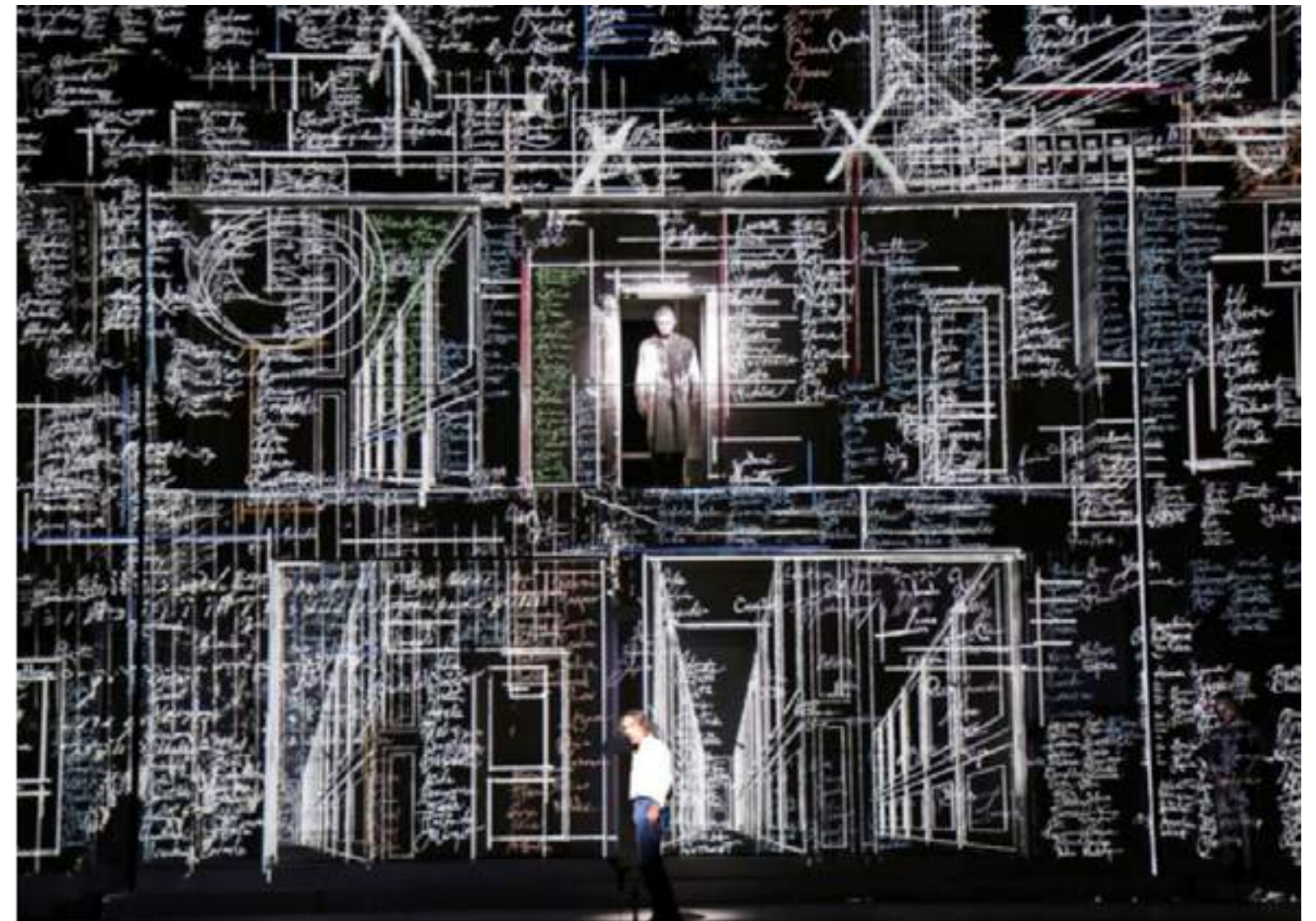
Orestes 2.0, Guildhall School of Music and Drama,
Guildhall Theatre, Barbican 2005.
Costume Design: Becs Andrews.

Drama (RWCMD). Note the combination of professional organisations and higher education institutions with individuals who are strangely driven, putting up with limited income and long hours to work on these projects.

Again a large number of designers — twenty-two visual designers plus eleven sound designers — were selected from the national open exhibition of over 150 designers at NTU in January 2015.

Our exhibition and catalogue title, *Make/Believe*, emphasized the skills, vision and commitment found in the diversity of today's UK performance design and, as exemplified here, within the temporal contexts of music, weather and politics. Our national exhibition titles have tended to be set early with themes that act as umbrellas to be ignored or used depending on the participating designers' need for impetus. The exhibition designs over the years have been a mix of pragmatic economy and respect for the individual production design's rights and abilities to stand on their own and not be submerged into a curator's concept...

To reiterate the range and note the increasing emphasis on work for non-theatre spaces, the UK exhibitions have encompassed designs for found space, digital, landscape, heritage, media and a



Don Giovanni, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, London 2014. Designer: Es Devlin. Video Designer: Luke Halls. Photo: Es Devlin.

range of community contexts. A variety of performance spaces, from opera house to cardboard box, from pebbled beach to helicopters, in rain, waves, car headlights and LED projection, have enabled the re-envisioning of buildings, gardens, characters and their narratives.

The *Make/Believe* break with static exhibitions and adventure into mapped projection was entirely a product of circumstance, of vans, space and

funding being unavailable. It forced us to address one of the most difficult aspects of display — that of time, not only scenographic and performance time, as identified by Aronson (Aronson, 2007, pp. 27-32), but crucially, in the attention and concentration spans of audiences/visitors. With trepidation we made it core to the project:

"All of these designs explore and occupy a passage of time, — story time, time lived,

time lost and the ‘necessary’ time — to make, achieve, overcome and resolve. They variously consider the relationship between audience and performer, between performance and society and grapple with the UK’s identity, our history, politics and our future, including how we relate to the rest of the world.” (Burnett, 2015, p. 288)

We had to ask all of the designers if they would agree to their designs being shown as 50-second compilations/ montages from whatever materials were available — scanned drawings, photographs, video sequences, even drawn animation, with and without sound. And crucially the designs, even the filmed performances, took on new life, scale, and proportions within the context of projections mapped onto our room in the Clam-Gallas Palace:

“For Make/Believe they, the designers, have re-visited their work, in many instances re-conceiving it for a new form of performance — one in which the design is displayed in its own right, not in the measured timeframe of live performance, but in both the contemplative space of the print catalogue and the projected, immersive experience of our gallery installation.” (Ibid, p. 289)

The 50-second distillations were edited into a continuous 25 minutes with designers’ texts and production credits



both projected and provided in full colour print programs. The sound designers’ work was played in 5-minute interludes, “topping and tailing” the 25-minute sequences, accompanied by a fully projected “gallery” of elaborately framed stills from each of the designers’ videos filling the walls and commenting on the ornate eighteenth-century surroundings. The whole program played twice an hour and the only “live” element in the room consisted of two hours at the end of each day when one of our exhibits —

Solotoria — was brought to life by actors with two miniature theatre performances, again surrounded by the projected gallery.

This UK exhibit for PQ 2015 appeared to contradict everything in our previous forty years’ participation in the PQ. It was immersive, time-based, manipulated, performative, virtual, and brings me to the reason for this brief retrospective, which was to reconsider the UK’s belief in “the work” that has driven our participation in PQ since 1975. This is not



The Port Talbot Passion, WILDWORKS & National Theatre of Wales, 2011. Designer Myriddin Wannell. Photos: Ian Kingsnorth.

to say that anything should stand still or be preserved for the sake of it, but to emphasize “particularity”. *Make/Believe* was, again, only made up of “the work”, but, as with many other 2015 exhibits, it was transformed and transforming in its response and adaptation to its “found space”.

John Bury’s 1975 belief in an “economy of means of expression ...” and in 1979 a “creative economy” still resonates. These SBTD exhibits are as frequently arrived at



Ignition, National Theatre of Scotland, Car Parks, Ferry Terminals and Village Halls of the Shetland Isles, 2013. Designer: Becky Minto. Photo: National Theatre of Scotland.

from pragmatism and lack of money as from aesthetics and conceptual framing, but they evidence a fundamental respect for the originating material. They have also been influential in foregrounding work made for “found spaces” and with “community” audience/participants. Back in London after the PQ, *Make/Believe*’s six-month residency at the V&A necessitated a return to artefacts, images and small video screens. It was seen by 138,000 people in that time.

Similarly, Bury’s phrase, “artefacts with their own artistic worth ...” emphasizes that these designs are exceptionally complex pieces of work that would take a dissertation to unravel, yet there they are, capsules of layered response, juxtaposition and cultural context. No wonder visitors to exhibitions of scenography are recorded as spending so long, engaging on so many levels with the stories, characters, technologies harnessed to, and creating, narrative. They bear out John Bury’s desire to be taken seriously, his feeling — and mine too — that here at the PQ was a community of theatre and related artists with whom one could share, who would understand the reaching for the “art” in design for performance that felt missing from any critical consideration of theatre in Britain.

Why have we (the SBTD curators) felt such an obligation to “the work”, to showing it



White Gold, Iron-Oxide, Glasgow 2014 Cultural Programme, The Sugar Sheds, Greenock, 2014. Designer Becky Minto. Photo: Iron-Oxide.

as plainly as possible, — albeit an edited selection, but still, “just” the work? I think it does come back to a faith in narrative, or the many potential narratives carried inherently and multi-layered in images, movement, music/sound, and especially in light, but also in words as content and as accompanying context. These collaborative artworks need no further frames of interpretation, but they do deserve another life and audience beyond the original moment of performance. If a painting, or an unmade bed, along

with preparatory sketches, may be shown again after its premiere why can’t an original, or originating design for performance? Why should it be dismissed as ephemera, or consigned to the archive simply as “evidence”?

However, this is where the difficulty is. We rely on photographs and video to see the design realized and in action. The original design is “vested”, as our copyright statements say, in the model and drawings. Does the production photo,

even arresting as say Es Devlin's are, then become just a record, or is it an artwork in its own right? Perhaps one of the problems that the PQ, the Venice Biennale and all contemporary art contexts have with Design for Performance as an art form is the impossibility of showing the actual work (of designed performance). This may be why, for some curators and countries, the creation/curation of a here-and-now "event" is preferable to a re-presentation or re-creation of a work in another time/place/culture. I don't see that this will be resolved, and nor should it be. Similarly, the constant re-positioning of aesthetics versus conceptual purity will run and run.

What I would perhaps argue for is consideration of how so many diverse aesthetics and cultural approaches can be embraced. I feel that experienced curators and PQ old hands should not underestimate the "wow-factor" of the range, exquisiteness and extraordinary narrative qualities of exhibited work for younger, first-time and non-specialist visitors.

If the PQ becomes (simply) a festival, with performance and performativity — the "now" — as the most valued components, then it enlarges in scope to become (simply) a frenetic dash from one "experience" to another, and time, that most valuable of all commodities, is squandered. The stillness of the artefact

(model, drawing, costume/prop, etc.) and its distillation in exhibition of what it was, in or as a blue-print for performance, creates an aura of possibility around it and allows the next performance — as Simon McBurney indeed knows — to happen in the audience's heads.



Mittwoch Aus Licht. Birmingham Opera Company, Argyle Works, Birmingham, 2012.
Designer: Paul Brown.
Photos: Helen Maybanks.

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BIO

KATE BURNETT

Award-winning theatre designer and Reader in Theatre Design at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), Kate Burnett MA has designed extensively for regional, national and touring theatre companies; also large scale schools and community

performance projects for orchestras, opera companies and galleries in the UK.

Kate was Curator of the *Make/Believe: UK Design for Performance 2011-15* exhibition for the Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD). This national, open exhibition of over 150 designers' work started at NTU in January 2015, with selections curated for PQ 2015 (winning a Special Jury Prize) and the V&A Museum, London. Previous national exhibitions curated for the SBTD include three with Peter Ruthven Hall; *2D>3D* (2002) winning the PQ Golden Triga, *Time+Space* (1999) and *MakeSpace!* (1994) awarded a PQ Gold Medal; also *Collaborators* in 2007, the first SBTD exhibition at the V&A Museum.

For World Stage Design 2013 in Cardiff, Kate was Editor of the WSD 2013 Exhibition Catalogue.



Peter Grimes, Aldeburgh beach, 2013. Designer: Leslie Travers. Projected display, Clam-Gallas Palace, Prague Quadrennial 2015. Photo: Shizuka Hariu.

Anne Karin ten Bosch

8

Does Scenography Still Exist?

“In terms of artworks, for instance, a new materialist perspective would be interested in finding out how the form of content (the material condition of the artwork) and the form of expression (the sensations as they come about) are being produced in one another, how series of statements are actualized, and how pleats of matter are realized in the real.”
(Dolphijn/Van der Tuin cited in Groot Nibbelink, 2016, pp. 26–27).

Anne Karin ten Bosch

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Aronson for decades of writing on scenography despite the fact that, at the time, scenography was neither hip nor acknowledged as equally important as text. I would like to extend my gratitude to Sodja Lotker and the PQ team for opening up an interesting future for scenography and creating a critical heart for the “scenographic body”.

Over the last four years I have been fortunate enough to be able to share my thoughts and doubts and co-develop new insights with my fellow members of Platform-Scenography, both dramaturges and scenographers. Platform-Scenography (P-S) seeks, creates and finds space and time for the discourse on scenography. P-S generates sharing of expertise and accelerates sharpening of thought, speaking and writing on scenography.

The title of my presentation is a question: Does scenography still exist? I will answer the question right away: not only does scenography still exist, I would say we are even witnessing a *scenographic turn*. Scenography seems to be everywhere. My concern is, therefore, whether we can still *recognize* scenography as a specific set of qualities or if scenography has already dissolved in this scenographic turn, like performance once dissolved in the performative turn? Is any act of staging scenographic nowadays?

My answer would be “no” and I would like to share a few thoughts and make a proposition to support this answer. I will start by mentioning that I am a practitioner from the Netherlands, since I am well aware that scenography has all kinds of connotations depending on where you come from. When using the word scenography in my context, people tend to see you as the one who makes a decorating job sound more important than it is. I nevertheless have stuck with the term scenography, literally “writing the scene” or “inscribing the scene”, since I presumed this to be more productive to help understand what I thought I was doing, apart from decorating. Inscripting, like writing, is an act and takes time and, in my view, scenography is precisely happening during the process of the performance.

But let’s go back to the ‘scenographic turn’ and the trend of scenography being everywhere. This wouldn’t be a problem as long as we practitioners could at least clearly describe what our qualities are. Maybe I am preaching to the converted here, but in my context scenographers lack specific language to describe and discuss the broad spectrum of qualities of their own work and, more specifically, to describe the so-called “working” of their work: the effects, affects and experiences the design produces. To discover and understand *how* scenography works

requires a specific approach and a developed awareness of its material qualities. Expanding scenography and crossing disciplinary borders makes these concerns even more urgent. How do we, practitioners, trace and talk about scenographical qualities and the working of scenographic design? It was one of the questions we discussed during the research project *Between Realities*, our Dutch contribution to PQ 2015.

I PROPOSE THE FOLLOWING:

Scenography is happening “in between” and therefore the object-oriented intellectual interpretation of scenography needs to be complemented by a process-oriented perceptual interpretation of scenography. To do so, we have to come closer to the object of our investigation, get involved and, at least temporarily, let go of any objective distance.

Before Florian Came
'Talking in Town' was a guided tour and exchange meeting in one and part of *Between Realities*. In this photo you see the street and garbage before the intervention of Florian de Visser took place.





Florian used cardboard waste to create images of Prague as pictured in souvenirs. Cardboard boxes were used to transport the many souvenirs into Prague.

To briefly illustrate the difference between (a) object-oriented intellectual and (b) process-oriented perceptual interpretation, imagine a chair on the stage. The first method (a) focuses on the visible qualities and the function of the object as known. A chair one can sit on tells us, for example, about social status, the owner's taste, the historical period, etc. The materials and other clues inform us about the use and we can determine if it was mass-produced or hand-crafted. Maybe we can even describe the character of the chair. This, however, is already

inclined towards an experiential quality. When we focus on process and perception (b), we start talking about the spatial and temporal qualities we experience during the performance. These are, for example, the directions generated by this chair, its scale, or the positions and relationships created in connection with other objects, space, light, sound and the performers. They may occur by, for instance, color, familiar materials, construction, the way the performers move around and treat the chair or the positions they take in relation to the chair during the performance. By choosing this particular chair the designer creates possibilities and relationships and, even if some of these "potentialities" do not manifest themselves or are not "used", they are present; we can perceive their affordances. Maybe it even "works" best if no one ever uses it as a seat during the performance.

To support my proposition, I will first start clarifying my understanding of the *working* of the design. Secondly, I will suggest that scenographic qualities are located in scenography's ability to *charge* space with *possibilities* on various levels, creating a multi-layered structure full of potential. Thirdly, I will explain why I prefer to use the term "scenographical" in the search for specificity in times of expanded scenography.



Amidst cardboard icons you see Babushkas, an originally Russian souvenir, popular in Prague nowadays. New histories created by souvenirs.

1. THE WORKING OF THE SCENOGRAPHIC DESIGN.

Scenography is happening: only if in a specific performance the scenographic design comes into being and its potentialities manifest themselves. Scenography is a performative practice. We often use the sentence "It works!" when we, the members of the artistic team, are satisfied by how we experience our work during rehearsals. Seldom do we describe our work and this working more precisely in terms of "what is at work" or "how it works". The sentence "it works" just points at a satisfying process. Apparently, we think the right things are happening. It is more urgent to analyze the working of the design, when



Talking in Town visitors watching garbage men cleaning the space.

it is not working the way we expected or presumed. At such moments, it is important to describe the experienced affects and effects caused by the design, to foreground the *working* of the design.

In a still continuing series of interviews that Platform-Scenography started, we asked designers to describe this “working” more precisely and often they pointed at the in-between: this “working” appears between objects, between objects and space, space and text, objects and light, the use of objects and space by performers, costumes, audience and text, and so on. I therefore

locate the *working* of the scenographic design in performance (whether costume, lights, video, spatial design, sound) in the “in-between” and less in what it looks like. This “working of the design” exists in the specific relations created and possibilities proposed by the design. How to get closer to this in-between?

First of all, I suggest we must observe, perceive and experience the effects and affects of chosen materials and their organization carefully, postponing (intellectual) interpretations and using our (embodied) awareness. The specific



Garbage men cleaning the space become actors watched by PQ visitors.

qualities are chosen by the designer and prevail over other options. We need to take time to zoom in and become part of the process as developed and accelerated by the designed materials. It might be helpful to distinguish the different means by which and the layers in which relations and possibilities are created. We can, for example, focus on specific material qualities and the treatment or transformation of materials, on spatial and temporal organization and transformation, on cross-disciplinary relationships and connections, and on positions and perspectives created

for audiences or participants. Above all, scenography as a practice makes time and space visible as shared time and space. Scenography is a relational practice that produces relationships, connections and encounters. These relationships depend on materiality; scenography happens through matter.

2. SCENOGRAPHERS CHARGE SPACE AND TIME WITH POSSIBILITIES.

These *possibilities* as described previously are an essential scenographic quality compared to a “program-based” functional design. Scenographers develop their ideas in the context of a unique cooperation and framework. In the process of designing, scenographers foresee the different “workings” of the design on stage. They are aware of other disciplines “playing their parts”. During rehearsals, they test ideas and follow developments, adjust, or even change the design. Doing so, designers charge matter and space with *possible* relationships and *possibilities* to play with in different layers and on different levels. The audience’s imagination is triggered by significant relationships between objects, performers, materials, texts and so on. Sometimes, I dare to suggest, it is moved by what is “in the air”, an immaterial potentiality of what might happen. These possibilities aren’t necessarily functional nor are they fully scripting the space. That is why I prefer using the word “charged”, since a charged space can accelerate a process or generate associations and imagination. Scenographers are able to create these possibilities and to foresee or should we say “forefeel” the working of matter and its organization.

3. SCENOGRAPHY IS NO LONGER OWNED BY THE THEATRE.

Our project *Between Realities* started from the idea that we (again) perceive today, both in Western society as well as in culture and the arts, a growing willingness to experience, find and even shape new realities next to, on top of, or even instead of, our everyday reality. We noticed that we want to immerse ourselves — be it temporally or not — into imagined worlds. We want to be touched. Moved. Our desire to be *carried away* pulls us in different directions, opening up reality to become *a field of imagination* where new heterogeneous realities can emerge, between which we live.

We observed an increasing interest of scenographers from the field of theatre in “the real world” outside the traditional theatre; an interest in the city, the landscape and public space as constructed, directed and scripted areas. And we observed an increasing interest in and use of scenographical strategies by non-theatre disciplines, like the visual arts, urban planning and architecture, which set up performative actions in the here and now to search for “new” realities in reaction to everyday life.

Scenography is a practice that constantly engages with the relationship between reality and imagination. It creates space



Garbage men cleaning the site acting as if there were no audience.

for stories, fantasies, and fictions but always in the absolute here and now of the performance. Reality and imagination are always inextricably bound to each other. In this respect *scenography is a theatrical practice*. What distinguishes scenography as a theatrical practice from other design practices is that it designs possibilities for action, perception and experience with the purpose of escaping the functionality of everyday life and design, to create cracks and openings in everyday reality, to offer a new perspective on reality.



Neighborhood people loved the images and wanted to bring them home, they carefully searched for a place to leave their own waste amidst Florians work.

By specifying scenographical qualities, abilities and strategies we can start recognizing them in other areas of art and design and we can distinguish the differences. In terms of the designers' scenographical qualities, I would mention three essential qualities: a highly developed awareness, a sensitive focus on the possibilities of materials and their relational organization, and expertise developed during cross-disciplinary design processes. This entails a way of working and

thinking *through* practice and analyzing *through* materials; it is an embodied practice in which matter is a spatial and temporal means. Forefeeling the many possible relations and possible actions to be produced during the performance, offering new perspectives on reality are aspects I distinguish as essential scenographical qualities. And designing the possible *working of the design* on many levels, intellectual and experiential, distinguishes the scenographer.

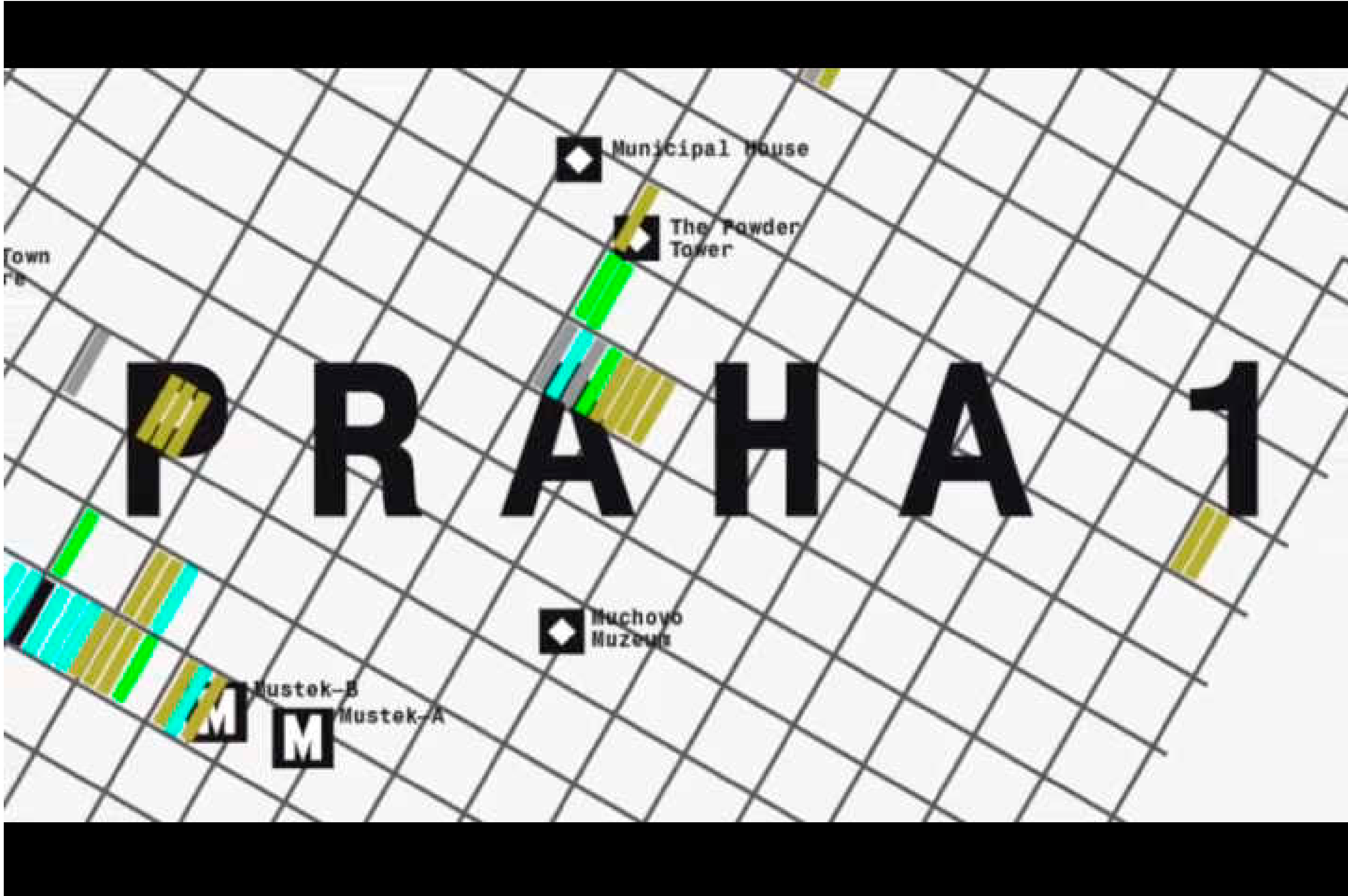


Applause for the garbagemen. The garbage men took a picture afterwards to prove their boss they left the site clean.

IN CONCLUSION:

Scenography is a performative, relational and theatrical practice. Scenographers intensify the awareness of the situation. Experiencing its many aspects and layers in the here and now is a meaningful activity itself. Since scenography is happening in between, we should add to object-oriented intellectual interpretations a process-oriented experiential interpretation. I

think phenomenology can be helpful in finding the language we need. Moreover, we can connect to existing discourses on intermediality, interaction design, new materialism and relational philosophy.



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BIO

ANNE KARIN TEN BOSCH

Anne Karin ten Bosch has worked for twenty years as a practitioner. As scenographer she designed for many companies and independent theatre makers in Holland. As (theatre-)maker she created several performance-installations, crossing the borders of visual arts and theatre. For ten years she was teaching scenography at the University of fine arts in Groningen. Between 2008 and 2010 she was a master student Theatre Studies at the Utrecht University. In 2012 at the University of Fine Arts in Utrecht (HKU) she developed a toolbox to help students analyzing their process and talking more specific on the 'working of their work'.

Since 2001 she organized several roundtables and interviewed colleagues, in an attempt to find better language to describe and reflect on the mechanisms and strategies of scenography. These activities she continued when she co-founded Platform-Scenography in 2012, a cooperation of dramaturges and scenographers. Platform-Scenography (P-S) seeks, creates and finds space and time for the discourse on scenography. P-S generates sharing of expertise and accelerates sharpening of thought, speaking and writing on scenography inside and outside theatre, building bridges between disciplines.

Anne Karin ten Bosch was curator for the Dutch entry on the PQ2015 and formed a cross-disciplinary curating team of designers (architect, public design, scenography) and a dramaturge to develop a project on the theatricalization of the city of Prague. The research project Between Realities was the outcome of a fruitful cooperation between these curators and won the gold medal for its curatorial concept.

Marina Maleni



PQuestions

Marina Maleni

I was in doubt whether to take up our valuable time together with my prepared material, but then I thought that it is such a privilege to communicate with such a great group of people, and so I decided to go ahead and share my thoughts, seeing that different perspectives are valued and dealt with as of equal importance, adding to polyphony.

A couple of words of introduction first, just because I am a firm believer in creating a framework in which to receive information, especially when time is of the essence:

I come from a Theatre, Sociology, Communication and Journalism background. I believe in Communication as a panacea, curing all illnesses, and I believe in Theatre as perhaps the best way of communicating, a means of building good citizens, better societies, creating a better tomorrow and advancing ideas, an excellent way to be political. For some this might sound awfully romantic, dated or silly, but not in my philosophy, far from it. I believe in wonder, in awe, in being moved.

I also must tell you that I come from an island: for some, this means a closed circuit (whether it be of artistic interaction, mobility, of movement or interaction and exchange of ideas) for others, a paradise of opportunities as everything seems within reach!

I strongly believe a world meeting such as PQ is imperative and needs to continue to happen: a haven of communication, interaction, disagreement and enlightenment. And it is our duty to find and create the framework within which:

- new participants and audiences will know what the exhibit is all about and whether it is for them or not; and
- returning participants and audiences will feel fulfilled and inspired to come in order to be challenged and enlightened.

How I have seen the PQ change:

I was appointed Curator for the Cyprus National Exhibit in 2007, when we joined the Industrial Palace exhibition with THETA, presenting the work of nine designers representing the young generation of Cypriot design, with Andy Bargilly's design of the exhibit.

At that point, to us, PQ was primarily a great way to promote the work of designers abroad, and perhaps the only one!

Then, in 2011, with Shifting Spaces, which we co-curated with two lovely designers — Melita Couta and Haris Kafkarides — we travelled in the wonderful world of making a statement within the given PQ theme and expanding our works



THETA, Cyprus National exhibit at the Prague Quadrennial 2007, Photo: THOC Archive.

of scenography into an interactive installation idea of packed ready-to-go stuff, in accordance with shifting spaces.

And last year, with our *Creatures of Imagination*, inspired by two performances that we believe answered exactly to the challenge posed by the theme Music-Weather-Politics: creatures, urging us to go back inside and search within ourselves and our imagination for solutions; creatures using means of discovery, playfulness and creativity to



SHIFTING SPACES, Cyprus National exhibit at the Prague Quadrennial 2011, Photo: THOC Archive.

find out what is there: calling us back to humanity and its basics in order to discover solutions to crises. Our country being in the middle of a major one, with practically no budget and no means to have performers in Prague for the duration of the exhibit, we had to find almost primitive solutions to bring our ideas to life, but this was just in tune with what the scenography for

*Kali-kantzar and Co.*¹ was inspired by and what the creatures themselves suggested: Kalikantzaroi, coming up from the center of the earth to convince people to start using their imagination again, as a matter of utmost importance and existence for them, and *Birds*²

¹ *Kali-Kantzar & Co.* by Lea Maleni, Christina Constantinou, Valentinos Kokkinos, Production of THOC Stage 0–18, directed by Lea Maleni, 2013.

² *Birds* by Aristophanes, Summer Open Air Production of THOC, directed by Varnavas Kyriazis, 2014.



CREATURES, Cyprus National exhibit at the Prague Quadrennial 2015, Photo: George Koukoumas.

by Aristophanes, with their known suggestions to humans. Two great collaborator designers to thank: Elena Katsouri and Georgios Koukoumas.

I saw PQ shifting from something almost static in definition to an ever changing definition or lack of one, thus providing freedom for all!

We theatre people — whether artists or organizers — incessantly search for Reasons and Identities. This helps us grasp the framework within which we better understand things. Travelling through time and space in the PQ, I arbitrarily assumed the identity of a PQ family member, feeling both connected and responsible with its people, the plans, the changes this feast is undergoing, both in size, space and concept.

This led to a search for the Exhibition's path through the lens of defined identity: What are the various needs to be met, what are the challenges we face when organizing a world scenography event such as the PQ?

And who are “we”?

Whom is the PQ primarily organized for? Is it primarily for theatre designers, scenographers, composers, and conceptualists, or is it for contemporary artists in general? Or is it for the general

audience? Is the PQ an installation-mongering festival, with an aim to impress regardless of theatre or performance art work, or is it a shrine for theatre design people and artists who want to be informed and wish to creatively interact with and promote art with their practices? Or is it neither? Or both?

Searching out the identities of audiences, participants, organizers, the exhibit itself, is not an attempt to limit us. It is an attempt to define us, even if this definition is so vast it can fit almost anything, should we decide this is what we want. There has to be a framework, or a conscience as was said yesterday, in order for each of the above elements to decide whether and how it can exist within it.

I DARE TO POSE 10 PQQUESTIONS:

- **Q1.** How do organizers and decision makers receive the perceptions of those groups described above (audience, participants, organizers) in shaping the next PQ? This symposium is an excellent start but are all groups represented? Do we know our target audience? Who do we want to communicate with? What groups are included in this audience that we want to communicate with? And what do we want to



communicate about with them and how?

- **Q2.** What is the main aim of this quadrennial meeting? Is it mainly for performance design and architecture professionals to get to know each other's work, be inspired, interact, be challenged etc.? Is the MAIN aim of the PQ to embrace all sorts of art expression, even if this is at a cost for design itself? Social interventions with unknowing audiences and almost no design involved, may seem extremely interesting to audiences, but are they exhibiting design, or wishing to make impressions? Without saying that is bad, should that be included in our main aim?



- **Q3.** Is the designers' expectation to see what goes on in other countries of the world and be challenged by these as to where one's own country's

scenography wants to go, adequately met by the PQ as it is now organized?

- **Q4.** Can we create a precise framework for the unknown to exist and be exhibited in? Thus creating a purpose for things? Or creating the grounds for wonderment?
- **Q5.** Can we please strengthen the idea of the National Exhibit so as to continue to have countries which otherwise will be lost, unable to secure funds, justify the importance or achieve support for participating at a local level?
- **Q6.** The PQ is as old as I am: It has definitely evolved and changed a great deal from being a conservative presentation of scenographic and architectural works to being a dialogue between performance design and the city itself, the crises and joys of Music, Weather and Politics. But can we keep scenography in the Greek sense of the word scene, and inscription or writing at its central core? Can we keep the notion of a preconceived framework of communicating through art on any kind of stage or space a requirement for exhibits?

- **Q7.** Installations: Can we invite them with "provisions"? i.e. include

them if they are a means of creating similar stimuli and responses to the audience as the specific design of a performance? Otherwise how is the PQ different from biennial and works from such events, regardless of whether they have a scenographic element or not. Similarly, with performances: if they are new pieces, regardless of the four years that have passed, then this becomes a festival of performances, not design-originating. Again, this would be acceptable, should this be what we want. Is it though?

- **Q8.** Creating environments for scenes is not all the same. I have difficulty disconnecting from theatre and disengaging text or word from our work, even if it is not spoken. Secure meaning, secure the message, the drive, the need to communicate IT, through the work.

- **Q9.** On our island, Cyprus, the PQ is a great forum for exporting your work if you are a theatre or performance designer. It is a great honor to be chosen, it has been one of the very few ways, if not the only way, to exhibit and interact internationally. It is considered primarily a feast for theatre designers, as they can see, and be influenced and be exposed to all that is happening. Can we create

a framework within which even the little players will be able to continue to play, without being swallowed by the big ones? Can we keep the PQ a huge party for all, where all can find their voice, and not a party for the few who will dive into a sea of everything, but with functioning life jackets only for the few?

- **Q10.** In closing, just a short remark on theme: I believe PQ 2019 cannot ignore the Wave. I propose that it can be a central theme. And I am of course not only talking of the wave of refugees, the wave that by then might be forgotten, or still growing. The people of each wave, whether it be one of refugees or one of extremists will still be part of Europe. And for artists with political conscience and social souls, this cannot go unnoticed. Or can it?

BIO**MARINA MALENI**

Born in Nicosia, Cyprus, holds degrees in Theatre Studies, Acting and Sociology from the University of Texas at Austin and in Communication and Journalism from the Open University Cyprus. Has worked as an actress, TV host and radio music producer for several years. Working since 2001 as Theatre Development Officer for Cyprus Theatre Organisation, in charge of State theatre subsidies and policy forming, European collaborations, playwriting development, non-professional theatre, theatre education programs, organizing festivals, etc. PQ National Curator since 2007. Has worked extensively in the Committee for Theatre in Schools (THOC - Ministry of Education and Culture), the Study Committee for the creation of A Cultural Authority in Cyprus, the National Committee for Delphic Games, has actively represented THOC as member of The European Theatre Convention. As an actress she performed roles in the past for THOC such as Masha in Chekhov's Three Sisters, Olivia in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night by Shakespeare, Shelby in Harling's Steel Magnolias. She is a proud mother of three.

Kabyl Khalykov

10

The Human World: How Do We Create Art and How It Change Us?

Kabyl Khalykov

The art of the modern world and the situation of human existence has changed. The cultural space for all of humankind has blended together — everything is interconnected and the world is changing according to the political, business, economic, ethnic, religious and ethical principles arising and brimming over our multifaceted life experiences.

In the twentieth century — there was a crisis in the arts, a conflict between the traditional and the innovative, and it consequently emerged as a basis for developing the arts.

Each work of art is obviously formed by the personality of its creator, by the characters, reflect in the images, and by the recipient — who views the work. The types of relationships existing between the internal and external environment are manifested. Because of the influence of all of these effects, out of the wide range of cultural phenomena a work of art is the hardest to decipher. The difficulty lies in such aspects as the creative content and how it relates to the author's identity; who it is that receives (views) the work at a particular time; — the contemporary truth contained, in the content according to the time it is created and the truth of the era itself; as well as — the messages that are meant to be transmitted, those which truly passed

on — and those that have appeared between the lines in a figurative sense. The Social nature of the work consists of the unlimited scope of relationships between author and recipient. The art work, remaining alone, by itself changes historically under the influence of the life and artistic experience, and starts to take on new significant and valuable characteristic features. With each new generation, it is read as something new, with new eyes. The interpretation of the literal content maintained in the form of communication, which is based on accepted conditions agreed between the author and the recipient — the reader, the viewer, the listener.

The relationship between works of art and philosophy is rooted in the works of the ancient philosophers (Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, Plotinus, to name but a few). The role of philosophy in art and creative processes has also been examined by various representatives of the philosophical schools of the twentieth century. It was linked with the theoretical materialistic or idealistic traditions. Philosophy is a single scientific study depicting the world and man, and art is the metaphoric and emotional semblance of scientific and philosophical truth. Such methods are referred to as — *“applicative or even second-class”* — philosophy in terms of outlook. According to Plato's view, *“the authors write as the clairvoyant*



PQ'11: SACRIFICE. The Static
Drama by Giorgi Janiashvili & David
Janiashvili Installation.
Photo: Giorgi Janiashvili.

in the unconscious form,” that is, — to say they are clearly outside the sphere of the highest of real wisdom. The author’s understanding of the meaning of his own written text, — is comparable to understanding magnetism and how it causes iron to be pulled by a magnet. Using this method, images of art are appraised simply as —“the shadow of shadows” (Schelling, 1966: p.11).

They “do not depict ideas, but the things that surround us in the world of sense,

they are by themselves represented in the form of vague and unclear ideas.’ An explanation and analysis offered by Hegel about art at the relevant level. Plato in comparison by Hegel highly evaluated the role of art perception, but he viewed arts as a certain stage of human history, and explained it in absolute values, because sensuality and rationality have been linked together since ancient times.

According to Hegel’s point of view, art creativity in the Middle Ages was not able to fully reflect the “*free spirit origin*” and thus gives way to religion. In this approach, art is a special kind of philosophical or scientific truth.

In other words, a work of art is “a particular way of understanding the world.” As has been said by many artists an outlook cannot be presented in its full form as a science, and therefore it is necessary to disclose it using artistic methods. Thus, as defined by Goethe, an art work helps to identify those invisible parts that cannot be comprehended only rationally and which are not visible in simple everyday life. It is known that Boccaccio considered a number of prominent poets to belong amongst the ranks of philosophers, and Schilling accepted Shakespeare, Dante and Milton as philosophers of the highest level. A clear example of this concept of a transdisciplinary sage can be found in

the person of Leonardo da Vinci — an artist on one side and a scientist on the other — who demonstrated the prominent difference between artistic and scientific methods in the “*segments*” as a “*pure philosophy of nature*.” Exactly the same views reflected in the art works of Schilling, and at a later date, in those of Schopenhauer. For example, Schilling says that the philosophy of art is a form of all things, or the study of the potential of art (Schelling, 1966, p.25.).

He went on to say: “*The Philosophy and God are alike: they share the common ideas of humanism and the beauty of truth.*” He clarified the following that the “*philosophy does not consider the truth, morality or beauty separately, but studies it, finding something common to all of them art*” (Schelling, 1966, 72 p.).

Schopenhauer pointed out that “Art is the highest form of human knowledge.” According to him, “this is not a somnambular state, which gives no idea about things’ and he also revealed the inner essence of the composer’s world, transmitting the wisdom of the unfathomable mind. Here Schopenhauer described music as the blind practice of metaphysics” (Zobov, Mostapenko, 1978, p.12). Schopenhauer’s opinion on the perception of art is not unlike Platon’s, but his concept of that in the world is based on an irrational world freedom ” is



Acustic Lab Slukh in a Heart of PQ'03.
Photo: Prague Quadriennale.



PQ'99. Bolgaria. Elitsa
GEORGIEVA. Miograd Bulatovich:
Godo game, 1998.
Photo: Viktor Kroubauer.

PQ'03 Construction for the sense
of touch in the Heart of the PQ.
Photo: Prague Quadriennale.



Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture Department of Media, Finland.
'The Other Side — PQ 2015 by Dowsett, Pöllönen, Erkamo & al'. Photo: Dowsett, Pöllönen.



Canada PQ'15 — Shared
[Private] Space Sections of
Countries and Regions.
Photo: Tim Mattheson.

considered to be distinctive. The creativity of the artist and the philosopher are expanded from a common endeavor, because both of them draw from the reality of the environment. Their final goals are, however, different. The main task of the philosopher is to systematize the material and spiritual life of people. A first glance, the world seems to be a grouping of characteristic, endless phenomena, and the philosopher explains the importance and legitimacy of these phenomena. Recognition of the vital importance of the phenomena is the duty of the artist, but he does so in a different way. It is not necessary for the artist to pass on his first thoughts and the complex



Performance 'Geodistance in
Charyn Canyon's.' Kazakhstan,
2015. Photo: Kabyl Khalykov.

branching of the logical characteristics of intuition, he just offers his understanding and perception of the sense of world to his recipient. In order to illustrate this it is enough to compare the philosophical conception Hieronymus Bosch's Inferno, of Dante's Divine Comedy, of the works of Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas (Zobov, Mostapenko, 1978., p. 17).

The image of man, beauty and quality exist at the heart of every painting. Literature is understood on the basis of the word, a painting is perceived by the eye. The content is at the heart of both things. The view of modern human art is associated with an understanding of the

separate contents. Here the content is represented by a changing and developing vector. The human being through the reading of the content becomes the image, the idea, the plot, the content of philosophical thought, reflecting an understanding of the relationship between transitory nature and eternity, embodied in a certain way in works of modern art.

In contemporary art, creative man discontented with his life (dissatisfied with required features and the disappearance of their limits, the fading away of utopian confidence and the transition to transcendent reality), has introduced new experiences, defined in a language we can use to communicate in the new spectrum of perception.

Many philosophers, artists and cultural investigators are painstakingly carrying out theoretical study of modern Kazakh art created by the middle and younger generations of artists. Issues, whether found directly or indirectly, are reflected in the scientific research. However, we are interested in the topic of an individual who, in addition to studying artistic phenomena, becomes the basis for works, and we wish to learn to what extent he has contributed towards creating knowledge of the subject or the general issue associated with the question at hand. One of the rational issues



Giorgio Morandi 1890–1964. Still Life. Date 1946.
Medium Oil paint on canvas
Collection Tate. Acquisition Presented
by Studio d'Arte Palma, Rome 1947
Reference. N05782.

currently being addressed looks at how an artist includes personality as found in worldwide creative and cultural trends, identifying it through comparing the cultural philosophical sciences and their theoretical analyses and studying how it is reflected in modern Kazakh art. The study will be effective if the interrelation between a work of art and science is defined and if the author of a creative work, his characteristics, his recipient are all defined at the appropriate level within the knowledge mentioned above. The study of human beings involves not only philosophy and anthropological science, but science branched out into



Jovana GOSPAVIC / Maska Erinye.
Photos: Jana Zborilova.

many spheres, indicating a long pursuit of human knowledge. The subject of anthropology is currently being expanded and updated. The purpose of the aforementioned study is to identify various trends and to review them according to different aspects of modern anthropology. The original creative art works have been grouped into categories and the basic premises of this science have started to be applied. There is a rule that all of the creative spheres must be covered including any advanced ideas and attempts made during each period. For example, if anthropological philosophy, as a special branch of science considers the





Photogallery PQ'15. Croatia — Sections of Countries and Regions. Intangible. Photo: Dubrovnik Summer Festival archive.

nature of man to be a part of the world of being, then so does the philosophy of life, as it is contained in personalism, existentialism, psychoanalysis and neo-Freudism, phenomenology, hermeneutics and structuralism, and each is reflected in a particular way. Different branches of anthropology cover all areas, starting with human biology, and include the constitutional, evolutionary, demographical, ethnical, physical and medical aspects of human life.



Makers at PQ'15: Recipe for the Heart of a Dog, Photo: David Kumermann.

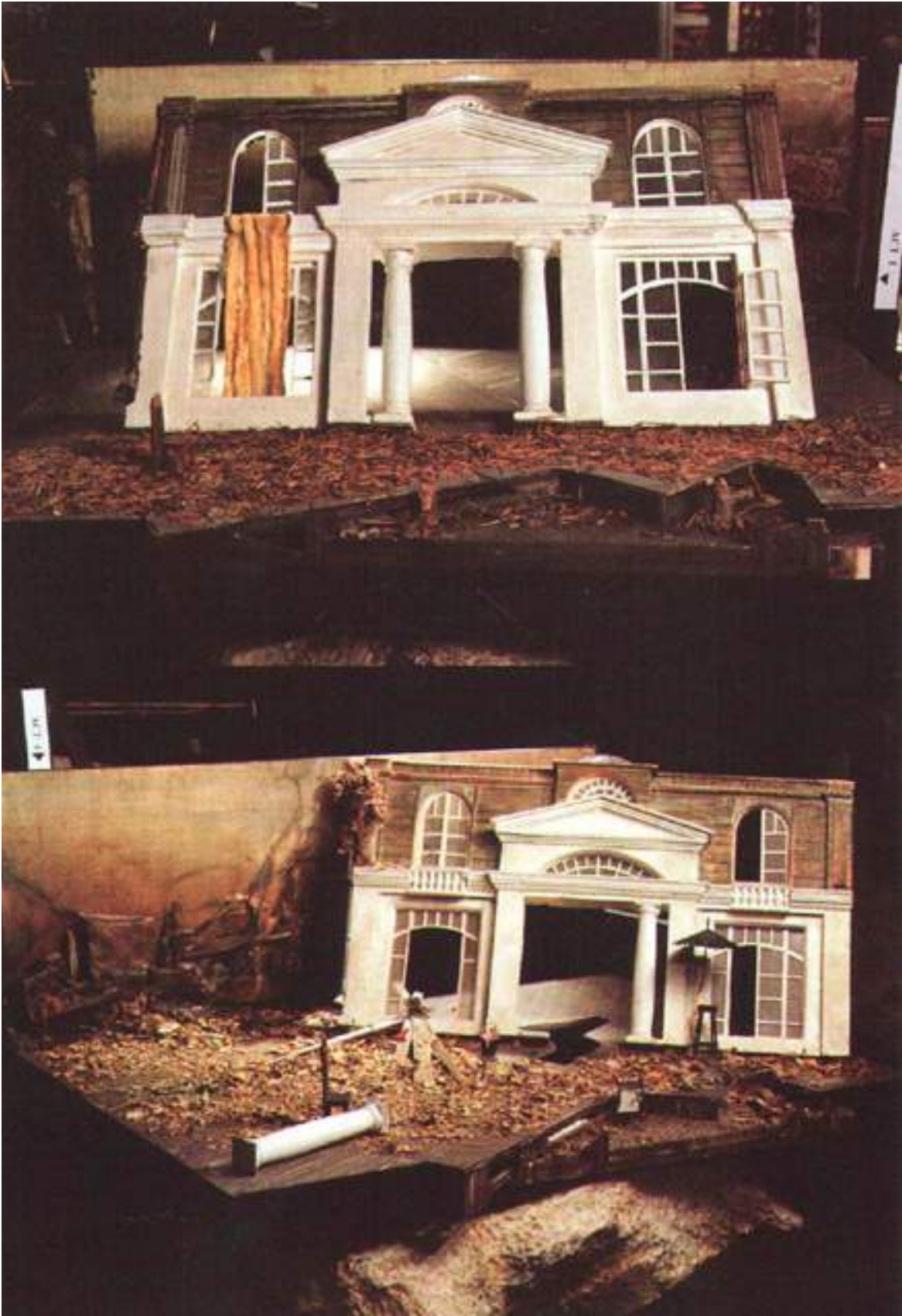
In modern art, anthropological knowledge and research are becoming more important for artist.

Additionally, a huge interest has arisen regarding the biological nature of man in relation to his particular ancestral history and characteristic personal features. In general, modern art has embraced a broader artistic scope and art works have started to incorporate information from different areas of the anthropological sciences. In these situations individual perceiving and creating an object becomes the subject and is categorized and, perceived, as literal context surrounding man.



The PQ'03 Golden Triga was awarded to the exposition from Great Britain. Photo: PQ Signature 2003 — 00215.

In the works of our time the being of the individual is compared to works from other periods, they are placed head-to-head and differences are identified. In contemporary art, a creator, just on the basis of being, may feel some dissatisfaction and a crisis arise. For example, he finds the characteristics of his being to be inadequate. He replaces the language he uses and his method of art with a new experience, having recognized the offensive anthropological crisis to have resulted separation and a loss of utopian faith and an attempt to achieve transcendence. Within this field of struggles, one can find all the characters and recipients of the works by



Alexander LISIANSKI. Anton P. Chekhov: The Three Sisters, 1997. Photo: Viktor Kroubauer.



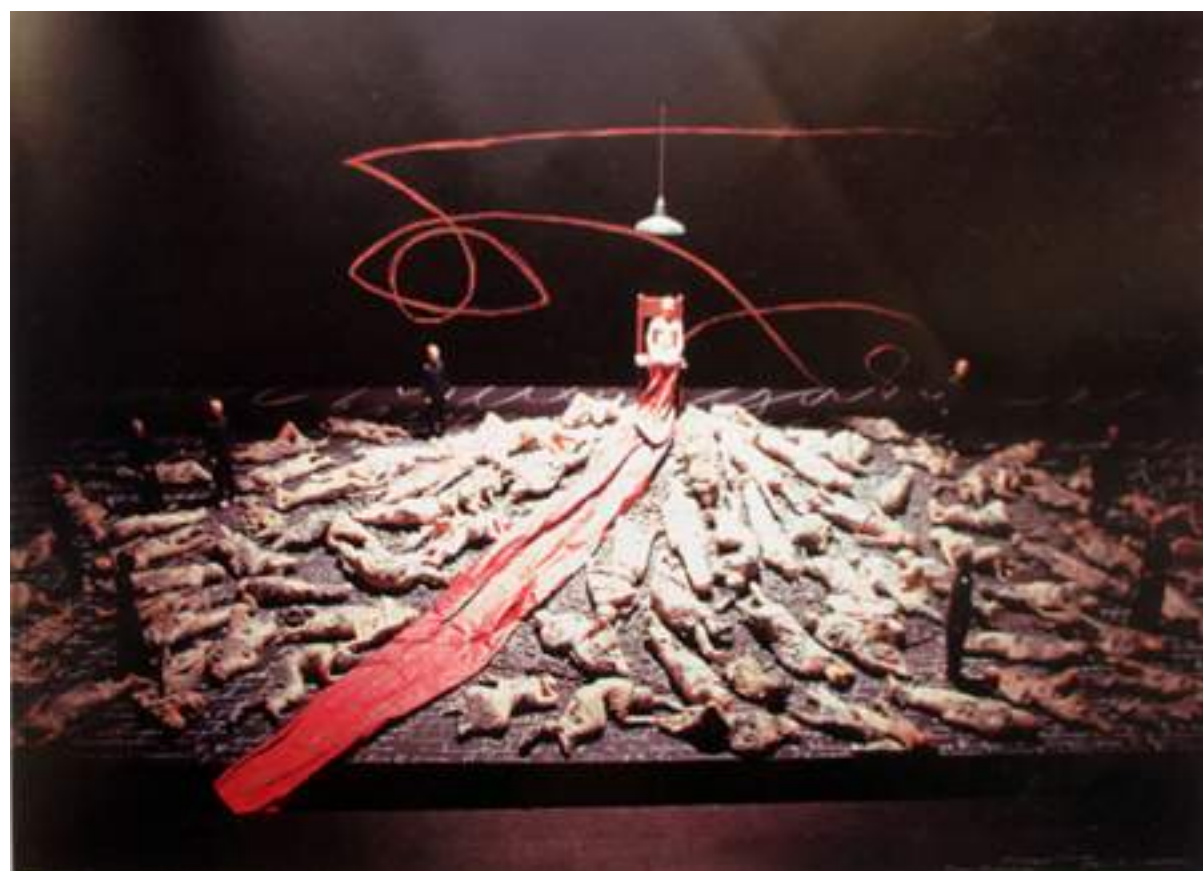
PQ'07. Russia — Our Chekhov: twenty Years later, ational Exhibition. Photo: Martina Novozamska.



PQ 2015 Objects. Lorne Reitzenstein, saurus. 2015. Photo: Lorne Reitzenstein.



Meyerhold's Dream. PQ 2015.
International Exhibition
of Countries and Regions.
Russia.
Photo: Yan Kalnberzin,
Polina Bakhita.



PQ'99. Canada. Michail
LEVINE. Sergei Prokofiev
Oedipus Rex, 1997.
Photo: Viktor Kroubauer.

the newest generation of Kazakh artists such as K. Ibragimov, S. Maslov, R. Halfin, M. Narymbetov, V. Dergachev, etc.

The Human World has been interesting throughout all of the PQ editions between 1999 and 2015, where art was created and where it has changed? This is a philosophical question...

We may ask this question only from the sidelines, in order to understand ourselves in the professional world and to weigh our intentions. *One or another meaning of the scenography creation as art for all this time shows human to consider to be on the other side of the “truth” or to evaluate the “reality” as what we actually are.*

We can say: ‘Our colleagues have created and continue to create art, and it changes us’, but this will not be a complete answer as long as we do not also take into account the audience and all of humanity.

However, time and experience have shown that the discourse following each PQ from 1967 to 2015 changes opinions and the perception of the Human World and the Human World itself. The world and its people have changed over the last half century. The cognition of the society and yourself, and the creative abilities of the human further and further sink into the abyss. The *flexible* and imaginative

assimilation of the World through scenography, the media, and theatrical technology continues to amaze everyone.

Here are some of the important points from previous editions of the PQ:

- *“A new concept for the PQ as a festival of live art and meeting space with installations, workshops and seminars”* has shown the possibility of the interpretation of drama as an effective phenomenon (for instance Elitsa Georgieva’s design for Miodrag Bulatović’s *Godot Arrived*, 1998; and Michael Levine’s design for Sergei Prokofiev’s *Oedipus Rex*, 1997). Manifest destiny: a combination of styles in a set design, from sketch to reality (Alexander Lisianski’s design for Anton Chekhov’s *The Three Sisters*, 1997; and Adomas Jakovskis’ design for Sophocles’ *Oedipus*, 1995). The bloody scene, *Medea* — as a symbol of violence and revenge (Miriam Goretzki’s design for Euripides’ *Medea*, 1998).
- *“PQ 2003 hopes to penetrate the district cultures, their history as well as their current condition today, leading us into a labyrinth of imagination and spiritual context”* (Jaroslav Malina, General Commissioner PQ 03; Ondřej Černý, Director PQ 03).

- “The ‘Heart of the Prague Quadrennial’ will be a place for performances, presentations, and experiments where various theatre artists can meet each other and encounter the audience” (Jaroslav Malina, General Commissioner PQ 03, Ondřej Černý, Director PQ 03).
- At PQ 2007, the Golden Triga was awarded to the Russian exposition *Our Chekhov: Twenty Years Later*. Chekhov’s plays still occupy a special place on the Russian stage, comparable with that of Shakespeare in Britain. Present-day productions of Chekhov’s plays are dramatically different from those staged two decades ago, as time itself, as well as the situation in which theatres exist, have been profoundly altered. (The following students participated in the design project: E. Dzutseva, E. Ioshpa, V. Martynova, A. Osipova, A. Perezhogina, L. Shulyakov, K. Terentiev, M. Tregubova, M. Volskaya.)
- The PQ 2011 motto was: “at the still point of the turning world”. For instance, the that year’s exposition from Colombia showed the cry of the soul of Colombian artists, expressing the tired state of a creative person fighting difficulties and obstacles along the way; and the Brazilian

artists were able to show their national culture, art full of life at all levels of life. Lust for life and sincerity of expression of national life has become a part of the people and folk art.

- The PQ 2015 theme was *Music — Weather — Politics*, reflecting the state of nature, art and human activity in a politicized society. If, in 2011, we were taking the first steps and finding a way of stepping away from *the turning point*, the PQ 2015 has already found the way out and expressed it through music, weather, and politics. This means, scenographers are aware of their actions and are sure of how and why they create themselves through art.
- Despite the abundance of materials and the topics covered, the PQ’s goal is to connect all professional scenographers in the field of theatre design and contemporary art. The Russian exposition at PQ 2015 — *Meyerhold’s Dream* — was more than surreal, mastering efficient space, design and drama. The world of Meyerhold and his understanding of creativity and how it is allegorically applied in theatrical discourse are still relevant, and we see an image of mystery and understatement, of detachment from society.



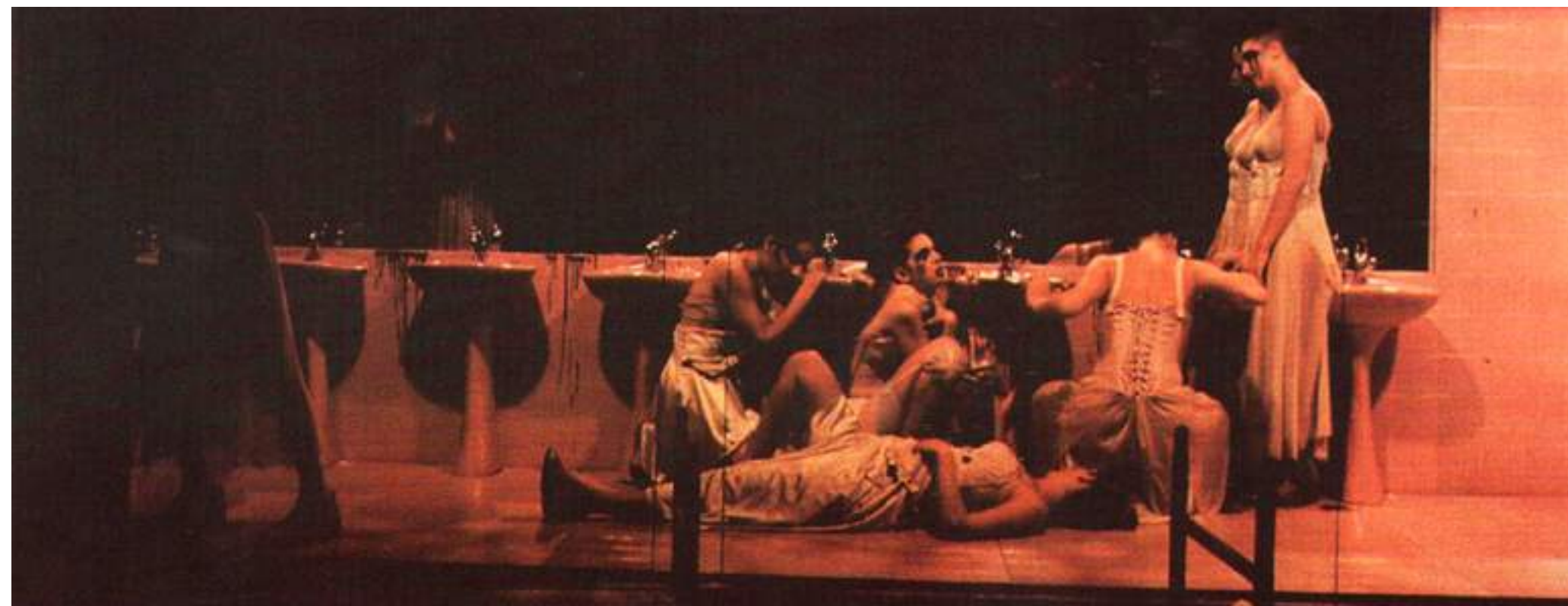
PQ'03. The Heart of PQ Kyzyl Traktor — performance group from Kazakhstan. The group Transavangard Structural School (Chimkent city). Photo: S. Bayaliev.

- Human creativeness: aesthetic categories of the deformed, the surreal, the schizophrenic are personified in the characters of the heroes (Jovana Gospavić — *Maska Erinye*; Makers at PQ '15: *Recipe for the Heart of a Dog*, Photo: David Kumermann).

Contemporary art does not seek ideals at all. Why does it show more ugliness than beauty? The ideal of a particular human life plays a role not as an *a priori* given, objectified in practice and mind, but is instead meant as a kind of image of *perfection* and *completeness*, which, in



PQ'99. Adomas JAKOVSKIS.
Sophocles Oedipus, 1995.
Photo: Viktor Kroubauer.



PQ'99. Miriam GORETZKI.
Euripides Medea, 1998.
Photo: Viktor Kroubauer.

specific cases, manifests its creative action in art as a stimulant to begin life. Therefore, looking at architectonic art, while it models the world and designs forms of human existence as spiritual and individual, it defines the world of man and his existence as the main measure and value.

Ontopsychologist Antonio Meneghetti said: *“The only winning point, the only thing that matters today — human being”* (Antonio Meneghetti, 2007, p. 1), and the PQ is trying to show its mysterious verges — *“Human being is included in the great design of genesis which desires to see human being in its eternity, life within life.”* (Antonio Meneghetti, 2007, p. 54).

The Prague Quadrennial Exhibition promotes the solidarity of professional scenographers from around the world. It covers all fields of human life, its problems from the socio-political to those of an individual nature. Even with the broad range of topics covered by our members, there is always something more to research. This is the responsibility people have towards art: how we create art and how that art transforms us. This simple formula shows our reality — past, present and future. It should be noted that during the PQ editions between 1999 and 2015 a lot has changed for scenographers with regard to the range of activities of theatre artists, and has

even brought them to their extreme boundaries. A concern has arisen as to whether *“the PQ is becoming theatre garbage”*, of which theatre wants to be remain free. Fortunately, the answer is no. While scenographers and designers continue to work and look for the “arcane” and the “useful,” it is still relevant. As for whether there has been a change in the way scenographers think, and in their approach to space exploration, design and performance over the years — the answer is both yes and no.

The PQ 2015 exhibition revealed several incidences of creative creation and the destruction of artefacts relating to the

world of man. Some examples include: *Muérete* (Spain), *Autodafé — Burning — Traces* (Quebec), *Please Please Me!* (Norway), *The Other Side* (by Dowsett, Pöllönen, Erkamo & al), *Shared [Private] Space* (Canada), *Intangible* (Croatia), *Meyerhold’s Dream* (Russia), and many more.

Maintaining theatrical inheritance and all of its traces is a priceless heritage in the culture of any country. Moreover, theater performances that are temporary, that is, they are alive, have a complete existence within the whole collective body. In particular, there are many examples stored in theatres

and museums, offering a permanent visual show and presenting a particular experience of the creative process, when the conversation is about saving layouts, scenery sketches, costumes, etc.

For example, the Bakhrushin Museum in Moscow is a living heritage of an era and culture that has become a part of the world's cultural heritage. We, however, saw *Autodafé — Burning — Traces* (Quebec) at PQ 2015, which used a non-traditional approach to preserve these artifacts. Despite the fact that the *layout* of the play served the mission of the construction, it has certain features of both documentation as well as destruction. It is very interesting to note the fact that during his visit to the city of Almaty (the Kazakh State Academic Drama Theatre named after M. Auezov) Gralf-Edzard Habben, set designer and the director of the Theater an der Ruhr, said that after the premiere he usually breaks and throws away the layouts. It seems a pity that the author destroys the work he made with his own hands. However, we can also remember from the history of Western European art that Michelangelo destroyed all of his sketches (preparatory drawings) for the Sistine Chapel and “the whole of his work” by burning them in the space of one day. The fact that Raymond Marius Boucher, the author of *Autodafé — Burning — Traces*, does the same “publicly and



PQ'11. International Exhibition of Countries and Regions. Exposition of Brasilia. Photo: Martina Novozámská.

ceremonially” is very impressive. Many viewers were affected by the story and the concept after watching the film in Quebec's pavilion at PQ 2015.

Raymond Marius Boucher said: “*The public incineration will be a highly mediatized event, theatrically and viscerally demonstrating the ephemeral elements of the creative process. At the same time, the event will stimulate an*

awareness in the theatre community that may lead stage designers to question themselves about the value of their work. This theatrical action encourages them to re-evaluate their artistic process and the value of the contribution they make to the construction of Quebec's cultural heritage. Collaterally, the incineration project could shock the general public about the limited available means to access the work of cultural producers and researchers”

(Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, 2015, p. 223).

The process of burning a product created by one's own hands is like the incineration of the human body, which requires no storage. When compared with the painter Giorgio Morandi, who buried each of his brushes in his garden with gratitude, the attitude portrayed in *Autodafé — Burning — Traces* is completely different. It is a phenomenon born out of the era of globalization, when this approach befits the elimination of the heat and work of human hands.

In their creative quests, the artists of PQ 2015 also took on the philosophical, religious, and spiritual aspects of understanding the human world within the context of Music — Weather — Politics. For instance, Spain's *Muérete* installation works with metaphorical death as a means of purification and resurrection; and Georgia's installation — *Static Drama* by Giorgi Janiashvili and David Janiashvili — looked at the theme of sacrifice.

It is possible to note that there are two opposite creative approaches: the way to heaven and the apocalypse. Norway's *Please Please Me!* by Signe Becker is shaping an apocalyptic future vision at a time when Norway is experiencing its economic heyday. “Creating the future,



Sections of Countries and Regions. PQ 2015. Norway. Please, Please Me (installation). Photo: Signe Becker.



Muerte, Spain. Section of Countries and Regions, Prague Quadrennial 2015. Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

how we represent it through art ... The apotheosis, human suffering ... The aesthetic category of “ugly” at the same time helps us to perceive sharply this “horror”. But, this is just a reminder... which does not exclude the responsibility for our future.

The description for the ___saurus exhibit (a part of the *Object* exposition, curated by Tomáš Svoboda, which presented theatrical props within the context of their stories) states: “*This post-apocalyptic children’s toy and haphazard*



self-portrait was manifested through mechanical intervention, crazy luck and the power of karma” (Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, 2015, p. 307). The “creative miracle of the 21st century’s humanity” at last begins to be reflected in this *posthuman* self-portrait. In this installation, a real jawbone is combined with “a skull of metal remains in the rear wheels of powerful archaic,” describing all of humankind’s ingenuity, which has not able to come into harmony with the nature of civilization.

When we create a work of art, we recreate the human world in a way that is understandable for us, one that is allowed to exists in the mind as a cultural text. The intentions of performative action lines of thought on the subject contextually entail the other side of the reality.

The human world requires a careful attitude regarding both its creation as well as its preservation. What we have seen during all the most recent editions of the PQ has led us to feel the quivering attitude of the artists contained in their

works, an attempt to preserve this world in all of its manifestations.

Thus they would like to show their concept of a new world, one that does not depict “being” in the anthropological sense, but transfers it to a new level using the “other science” model, which describes a way of the world based on the postmodernist direction of interaction. However, within today’s education system it is known that it is impossible to build a world based on old concepts. The emergence of a new view of the world and the emergence of a new culture, as well as new specifics of the labor force are aspects people should think over. Here, the desire to present the features of human existence is placed in a primary position.

CONCLUSION

Art perception in the historical and cultural context can be examined in connection with the culture and art of a certain period. We have accepted this process as a process of artistic perception between recipient and image, and in art it is described as the result of the creative art of communication.

Relationships and discussions are important aspects of the art work presented at the PQ, representing the priorities of art with regard to mankind and transforming the universe. Thanks to humankind’s creative abilities, an individual can embellish, innovate, and spiritually develop a piece of art according to their desires. This can be observed in the system of artist — work of art — recipient, and used to predetermine communication about creation and identity formation. Creativity introduces novelty through free thought, rational interpretation and conclusions. The main feature of art consists not just of describing only beautiful images and forming aesthetic taste, but also of learning about the true image, creating a special means of social control within the context of an individual’s culture. Art is not a monologue but a dialogue. People familiar with the “philosophy interview” concept are able to come into contact with their inner being and with the world.

In other words, it is a dialogue in addition to an interview, relating a little bit to the history of the origination of philosophy of science; it may be explained as a quest for achievement through debate.

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BIO

KABYL KHALYKOV

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In 2005, GRANDPRIX at Saken-Seri Theatrical Festival (Kokshetau, Kazakhstan). In 2007, 2nd International Theatrical Festival of Central Asian countries — Best production award for play Artist and Beauty by T. Ahmetzhan, and award for play Lightning in Paradise by U. Saroyan, nomination for best artistic interpretation of a classical production. In 2011, “The Best Teacher” in the national competition of the Kazakh Ministry of Education. In 2014, M. Auezov State Kazakh Drama Theatre festival nominated for the best scenography for artistic design of the play Tansylu.

2015 — Deputy Editor ‘Central Asian Journal of Art Studies’.

Jessica Bowles

11

The Map is Not the Territory

Jessica Bowles

I’m going to frame this piece with three love letters, two at the start and one at the end. This is a love letter to the audience who attend the PQ: Thank you for your presence and passion, and for being contradictory ... Please don’t go.

This is a love letter to Sodja Lotker, Daniela Pařízková and Anna Hořejší,¹ all brave directors, producers and curators who make us think:

I’ve been involved with the Prague Quadrennial (PQ) for twenty years and in 2011 led Scenofest, the educational component of the PQ, and then in 2015 directed SpaceLab and, with my university, was one of the partners in SharedSpace — the European Union funded project that underpinned PQ financially and also supported its scope across the last four years.

In a world where the politics of identity increasingly insists that we define ourselves *against* others, the PQ in 2015 was a shared space which provoked us to think instead about the politics of possibility.

“The Map is not the territory” as Alfred Korzybski’s dictum states, yet we start

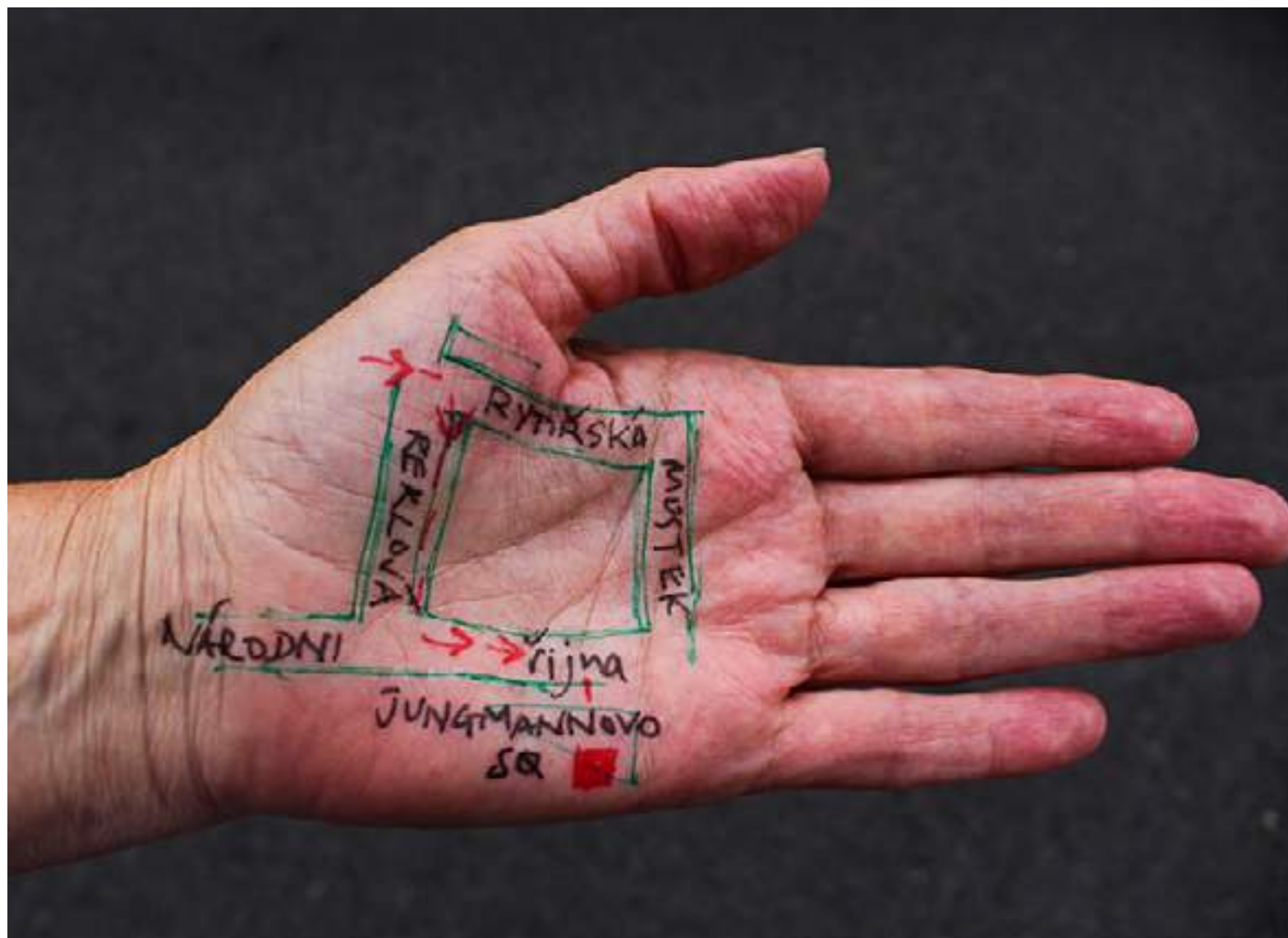
these massive projects with a “map”, with emails, with an EU contract which is signed, sealed, and delivered to all partners, but the “map is not the territory”, the contract is *not* the lived experience. We plan, we prepare all of this paperwork, but the real matter, the real material that is being built is the social fabric. We are a team of curators, shaping on paper experiences for people we haven’t yet met.

The outcomes were remarkable: 6,000 students took part, over 5,000 people came to see the student shows in theatres and on the street, and 62 international artists offered over 900 workshop places. All this was made possible by a dynamic international team of students led by experienced staff² and underlined for me the fundamental role that academia plays in the ecology of the PQ; there is no way that the ambitious schedule we created could have been delivered without them.

Whilst what we achieved was impressive, the process to get there was equally rewarding and possibly will have a longer term impact on my practice. The SharedSpace project brought together a group of universities, arts organisations,

¹ Sodja Lotker, the PQ 2015 Artistic Director; Daniela Pařízková, the PQ 2015 Executive Director, and Anna Hořejší, the PQ 2015 SpaceLab Chief Coordinator.

² The Production Team was made up of students from York University (Canada), De Paul University (USA), DAMU (CZ), and the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (UK).



SpaceLab workshops,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Eve Turnpenny.

and museums,¹ and we planned in regular “Gatherings”, providing time and space to assemble around a tangible event or “thing”. The etymology of the word “thing”

¹ SpaceLab within SharedSpace: Music Weather Politics 2013–16: a project created by the Royal Central School of Speech and Drama (UK), the HKU Faculty of Theatre Utrecht, DAMU Prague (CZ), the Norwegian Theatre Academy (NOR), and the Jerusalem Visual Theatre School (IS).

is a fascinating one, its archaic meaning both a matter of concern and also a place, an assembly of people to discuss that matter of concern. Even today the word is embedded into the names for the Icelandic and Norwegian parliaments. As Bruno Latour writes: “the Ding or Thing has for many centuries meant the issue that brings people together because it divides them ... we don’t assemble because we agree, look alike, feel good, are socially compatible or wish to fuse together, but because we are brought by divisive matters of concern into some neutral, isolated place in order to come to some sort of provisional makeshift (dis) agreement” (Latour, 2007, p. 13).

So each partner was charged with curating an event around a tangible “matter of concern”, a visceral experience for their guests, one that would engage everyone present to piece together a more global perspective. Rhizome-like, these gatherings meant our conversations around performance-making flowered into tangible shared experiences. Students and staff met and made work in a lighthouse in Norway during a storm, on a London bus, in an Italian market square, in the Arctic Circle (a brilliant project led by Serge von Arx and from which the picture above was taken), under a Dutch motorway bridge. Through these encounters, these assemblies, we not only assembled what you saw in Prague last

year, but we also changed the way we talk about it, the way we teach it, the way that we receive it.

Universities are perceived as guardians of cultural knowledge, and they are, but they are also vital connectors of people, electricity in the circuit. Without the robust engagement with academia, the PQ would return to being an exhibition, a trade show. SharedSpace recognised that potency, that students and academics are catalysts; they are interlocutors that through their questioning of professional certainties change and deepen the form.

But the way in which we participate has fundamentally changed. As Arnold Aronson noted back in 2007, the digital has changed the way that we see, and through social media we are all in a constant mode of “self-curation”. As Guy Debord suggested back in the 1960s, it is not enough “to be” or even to have, it is now vital to “appear to have” (Debord paraphrased in Bourriard, 2002), and in our rush to not only be consumers but also producers, we have become, as Nicolas Bourriard puts it, “a society of extras” (Bourriard, 2002). We have the illusion of participating and shaping our world, but in reality we are only genuinely creating a fragment of that space, only adding the detail. There is a danger then that visitors to the festival are more like stamp collectors than adventurers; we go around collecting the



SpaceLab Gathering Norway 2015, Varso.
Photo: Maret Tamme, Jan Hustak.



SpaceLab Gathering London 2014, Jubilee Gardens, London.
Photo: Stuart Window.

experiences in a disembodied way. Through our devices, we are all curators now, and how we address this will be a key issue for us all in any future gathering of the PQ.

I would suggest that festivals are a powerful site for learning for two reasons: they are places of dislocation and encounter. Since 1999, the PQ artistic team has been unafraid to disrupt expectations and have moved encounter

to the centre of the experience of being at the Quadrennial. So, I’d like to explore this impact a little further and how this effects what we take away from an event like the PQ.

The word *dislocation* points to disturbance, a move away from something’s original or habitual place, space or state. Booking for the festival is a deliberately dislocating act, a



SpaceLab workshops, Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Kelsey Jacobson.

commitment to a place and time, an act that takes us off our tracks. In her research on festivals, Alice O’Grady uses the term “radical openness” to describe the invitation offered by music festivals, of an ethos “that circulates around principles of radical conviviality, inclusivity and open paradigms of play” offering “bordered spaces of play that revel in the joy of the here and now” (O’Grady, 2013, p. 133). Festivals are chaotic,

unpredictable places and if an algorithm were to be invented that removed that, so too would be the sense of “eventness” that forces the individual to negotiate their own journey.

And secondly I suggest that we learn more profoundly through “encounter”. The festival site is a social crossroads or meeting place for people with broadly similar interests; deliberately



SpaceLab workshops,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Chae-Eun Park.

or accidentally, we start to inhabit very different perspectives on the world. We become “*Spectators aware of our process of viewing, complicit in the work*” (Bourriard, 2002), and “*Inter-subjectivities and encounter form the very basis of the art event*” (O’Grady, 2014, p. 134). The happenstance becomes part of our personal mythologies of the event, the moments we stumble upon are arguably the ones that have the most profound effect. Through encounter, we can move beyond the aesthetics of our practice to a discourse which prompts consideration of more profound ethical driving forces. Feedback from workshop participants made it clear that they crave engagement with work that is both visceral and meaningful, and that this serves as an antidote to online virtual exchanges.

Festivals are also *durational*, we are in a state of suspended animation — curators and participants alike. We give time to thinking differently. In his book *Relational Aesthetics*, Bourriard discusses that “*The role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real,*” and for me 2015 was one of the most significant transformations from the PQ as an exhibition to its becoming a life force within the city. Inspired by this, I’d like to propose the term “relational learning” to emphasise that much of what catalyses

our thinking and practice is not from outside of ourselves, but is about a return to “being” and taking the paradigm of play to explore the gaps between things. Put simply — to learn playfully, to connect meaningfully.

So festivals are potent spaces. I would suggest that as educators, we have the opportunity to be architects of experiences.

Genuine co-creation is something of a holy grail for me. As an educator I seek to create spaces where students are truly owning their own learning. We had hoped that the whole of SpaceLab would be curated by a dynamic student team, facilitated by a group of equally dynamic staff, in practice this was much more challenging than we thought, sustaining collaborations between students over three years was simply not possible and opportunities for nuanced collaboration were lost. The students were consulted but it couldn’t be real co-creators; the time and sheer scale of the operation meant that the risks of failure felt too great and as staff we took over to ensure that the “architecture” could be created. So whilst I think all students felt part of a big collaborative group in the final delivery, they weren’t the driving force of ideas that I’d hoped, but great networks were created and we continue to connect and work together long after.

So the map is not the territory, we need this reminder that no one has direct access to reality, we are social beings and our experiences are mediated through our bodies, a palimpsest, a paper written on, erased and re-written. Festivals are fabulously human and imperfect, they are dynamic and disruptive sites for encounter, and the learning for everyone happens there in a very powerful way. If we are a society of extras, then it is imperative that we as educators make spaces for embodied encounters that assemble around matter that matters, listen, prototype and be responsible for our agency.

I’ll end with a love letter to my daughter: You were born in 1999, so much has changed. I’m sorry that I was away a lot in the last year but I was working on a project that meant a lot to me, working with powerful women who change things by doing. It was really worth it.

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Jessica Bowles is a Principal Lecturer at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama in the UK, where she leads an MA in Creative Producing as well as a number of partnership projects for the School. Her educational and research practice explores the collaborative and interdisciplinary nature of performance-making. She is currently working with colleagues at the Amsterdam Theaterschool (NL) on IETM’s Live Arts in Digital Times, examining the role of Creative Producers in a distributed cultural landscape. Since 2008, she has been collaborating with Prof. Bob Shiel of the Bartlett School of Architecture UCL and this has developed into new strand of collaborative research between making, performance and 3D scanning, in collaboration with SHUNT, and ScanLAB projects. She has contributed to the Prague Quadrennial since 1999 and for the last two iterations has been the Artistic Leader of the educational component of the Prague Quadrennial, entitled Scenofest in 2011 and SpaceLab in 2015.

Tatjana Dadić Dinulović

12

(Do Not) Look Back in Anger

Tatjana Dadić Dinulović

1. INTRODUCTION:

From exhibiting *theatre* to (re)creating *the idea of theatre* and back

The diversity of approaches to understanding, exploring and exhibiting scenography, scene design and performing space as distinctly interdisciplinary phenomena has been strongly influenced by the practices developed throughout the existence of the Prague Quadrennial. The fact is that Vladimir Jindra introduced this idea back in 1967, when he stated in the first exhibition catalogue that the Quadrennial should be guided “by an attempt to capture the specific nature of stage art, that stage design cannot be separated from the direction and all the other components of dramatic art and their synthetic character should be underlined” (Jindra in Ptáčková, 1995, p. 6). However, for many years, the Quadrennial represented a place for exhibiting set and costume design drawings, scale models, architectural designs and photographs, and primarily served as a key meeting point for theatre professionals coming from various geographical, cultural and political environments. At the beginning of the 21st century, especially with the new artistic management of the Prague Quadrennial led by dramaturg Sodja Lotker, a vivid discussion was instigated about scenography as a complex

interdisciplinary field, transforming the Quadrennial into a broad platform for exploring various aspects of theatre and the performing arts. This included major developments in artistic and curatorial practices initiated by the intersection and overlapping of theatre, architecture, visual arts, and site-specific and urban space projects. In the meantime, the idea of performativity became one of the main requirements of the artwork created for the Quadrennial, leaving, as a result, an open space for the audience to participate, influence, and even change the exhibited/performed pieces. Terms like “performative installation” and “performative exhibition” became a part of our common vocabulary.

Of course, as we already know, the main dilemma relates to the question of whether elements of theatre performance can or should be presented and exhibited outside the context of theatre production, and how the changed context influences the interpretation of original artistic ideas and messages. The range of artwork showcased at the 2015 edition of the Prague Quadrennial demonstrated that the *idea of theatre* can be (re)presented and (re)created in gallery spaces, using a variety of media and approaches with very different results. Simultaneously, it is important to note that many works within the Student Section showed more creative energy, courage and openness to new

concepts than those displayed by artists working in professional theatres. But the question of how we can exhibit *theatre* still remains wide open.

2. CHANGES TO THE PQ:

New vocabulary and expanded territories

The 2015 Prague Quadrennial elaborated on the ideas discussed back in 2011 and, to some extent, in 2007. In the Preface to the *UK PQ 2007 Exhibition Catalogue*, Sophie Jump wrote about labeling as one of the main struggles faced by professionals working in the theatre: “Do we call ourselves theatre designers or scenographers? Is it craft or art? Can I call myself a theatre designer if I don’t design performances that take place in a theatre? Am I a designer if I organise the performance space and its use but don’t design anything that is physically placed in that space? Am I a scenographer if I design only one aspect of the performance?” (Jump in Craeley, Farley & Jump (eds), 2011, p. 7).

The need to name things and establish relationships between actual terms and their meanings led to a formal outcome in 2011 when, after more than 40 years, the Prague Quadrennial changed its name, transforming from an “Exhibition



Section of Countries and Regions, Latvia: *The Submission*, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: PQ web site.

of Scenography and Theatre Architecture” to a manifestation dedicated to “Performance Design and Space”. That was a significant development, addressing and acknowledging all of the relevant changes that had happened not just in the theatre and performing arts world, but also in the arts, culture and society in general, in the last decades of the 20th century. The terms “performance design” and “scene design” were used to mark a complex interdisciplinary field,

including not only set, stage and theatre design, but also many other artistic disciplines and genres. At the same time, the meanings behind the new name were examined through the *Intersection*¹ project — a spatial, dramaturgical and curatorial experiment, exploring various types of relationships between theatre, the visual arts and architecture; physical and virtual space; installation and performance; audience, author and artwork; display and event; the personal and the social; the intimate and the spectacular. The project became a crossroads, or a meeting place, for various artistic disciplines and approaches, and confronted art with real urban life. It also demonstrated that scenography and scene design are a complex environment, “not a silent passer-by, an immobile witness, but an active agent of movement — an activity that has both poetical and ethical consequences” (Lotker in Čepcová, Svoboda & Pařízková (eds), 2011, p. 19). Although an experiment, the *Intersection* was a true confrontation and alternative to the main PQ exhibition.

In 2015, deliberation about the contemporary understanding of performing space and scene design



Section of Countries and Regions, Latvia: *The Submission*, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: PQ web site.

¹ Editor’s note: *Intersection: Intimacy and Spectacle*, an interactive live exhibition at the Piazzetta of the National Theatre that took place during Prague Quadrennial 2011.



Section of Countries and Regions, UK: *Make/Belive: UK Design for Performance 2011–15*, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: PQ web site.

was directly carried out within a unique thematic framework for all exhibition categories entitled *Shared Space: Music Weather Politics*. The first part of the concept, “shared space”, still dealt with one of the key aims of the Prague Quadrennial — a gathering of theatre professionals and students from all parts of the world, not only to present their work but also, and above all, to meet, communicate directly, and exchange

ideas and practices. The second part of the concept — the thematic triad “music-weather-politics”, paraphrased as “ethics-aesthetics-nature” — focused on the relationship between theatre and society, examining the potential of theatre and the performing arts to influence social change. Therefore, the most relevant issue — conceptual and ideological — became the question: Why do we work in theatre? If we consider theatre to be



Section of Countries and Regions, UK: *Make/Belive: UK Design for Performance 2011–15*, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: PQ web site.

an important part of society, as a place where real people meet and create new relationships, then its enormous potential to change should be considered very seriously.

The second conceptual change related to the spatial framework of the Quadrennial, as artists and curators were offered a variety of heterogeneous exhibition spaces. In this way, the actual choice

of the space and the decision whether to respond to it or to ignore it, initiated different curatorial strategies, making the Quadrennial “a complex structure of events which considered theatre and theatre production as a platform for thinking and deliberating about performing arts and performing space” (Dadić Dinulović 2016, pp. 56–57).

3. SCENE DESIGN PRACTICES AT THE PQ2015:

Various approaches to exhibiting

3.1 Latvia: Presence

A true gallery (re)presentation of the essence of theatre performance was demonstrated by the Latvian theatre director Vladislav Nastavshev with his piece *The Submission*, curated by Gundega Laivina. The exhibit referred back to Nastavshev’s set design for the performance of *Miss Julie*, based on the play by August Strindberg, which was performed at the Valmiera Theatre in Riga in 2012. In a small room in Kafka’s house in Prague, we saw an interactive installation using a simple artefact from the actual theatre performance — a horizontal wooden plank, fixed to the floor on a vertical metal rod. The work included various kitchen utensils, similar to those used by the actors during the theatre production, which the performers placed on top of the wooden plank in order to counterbalance each other. The plank served as “a symbol of the kitchen as a balancing act, a space defined by the elementary laws of physics, where Christine and Jean desperately try[tried] to hold the equilibrium and to preserve the order which they obey.” (Čepcová et. al. (eds), 2015, p. 171). The installation, integrating “scenography, soundscape



Section of Countries and Regions, Serbia: *Power(lessness) — Respons(ibility); Performing the archive* by Vladimir Miladinović, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: Nemanja Knežević.



Student Section, Serbia: *Process or What DOES Matter to Me*, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015.
Photo: Nemanja Knežević.

and live performance where interaction between the object and the performer is essential” (*Ibid*: 171), advocated the presence of two people — performers “trapped” in a specific relationship, living their lives in front of the audience. Even when the room was not inhabited by the performers it remained active — the audience entered the space, moved around, felt the tension of the previous events, expected a new one to arise. This was an inspiring, exciting and fascinating

piece, but not a typical example of PQ practice — it should be considered an exception but, at the same time, seen as a possible model of theatre (re) presentation.

3.2 UK: Perfection and Technology

Conversely, *Make/Believe: UK Design for Performance 2011-15* showcased the diversity, richness and perfection of actual theatre productions. The piece “encompass[es] designs for found space, digital, landscape, heritage, media and a range of community contexts. A variety of performance spaces, from opera house to cardboard box, from pebbled beach to helicopter, in rain, waves, car headlights and LED projection, enable[s] the re-envisioning of buildings, gardens, characters and their narratives” (*Ibid*, p. 288). Curated by Kate Burnett and designed by Patricia Grasham, this work served as an excellent example of an innovative but still conventional approach to exhibiting theatre, to precision in the use of contemporary technology and experienced curatorial practice. Selected pieces were re-examined and re-contextualised to suit the requirements of the new exhibition context — there were no models, artefacts or costumes on exhibit, but rather the 3D mapping of representative works created by 22 designers, building an entirely virtual presentation. The installation was a

collection of works from “across the spectrum of contemporary performance design — in a variety of venues, and embracing space, light, media and costume. The complexity of the selection shows scenographers working in many different ways and, importantly, a confidence in the way scenography can shape productions and engage audiences in multiple ways” (*PQ International Jury Report*, PQ Awards 2015). The visual narrative was created through the collaboration of the selected artists, exhibition designers, and students of the Backstage Academy.

3.3 Serbia: Performative Installation

Serbia showcased the work *Process*, which was thematically, methodologically and spatially unified for two selection categories — the Section of Countries and Regions and the Student Section.¹ Based on the theme of “process” contextualised within the frame of “politics”, the Serbian

¹ For a complete insight into Serbia’s participation at PQ 2015, please see the exhibition catalogue by Mia David and Tatjana Dadić Dinulović (eds), 2015: *Proces: Srbija na Praškom kvadrjenu scenskog dizajna i scenskog prostora 2015 / Process: Serbia at the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space*, Belgrade and Novi Sad: Museum of Applied Arts and Faculty of Technical Sciences, available from http://issuu.com/scen.ns/docs/process_-_pq_serbia.

Also, please see the paper by Tatjana Dadić Dinulović (2016) *What we wanted, where it led us and what happened afterwards: Serbia at the PQ 2015*, Theatre and Performance Design, 2:1–2, 54–65, available from <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/23322551.2016.1171605>.



Section of Countries and Regions, Estonia: *Unified Estonia*, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: PQ web site.

team of curators, mentors, artists and students created an “anti-exhibition”, using the “notion of ‘performativity’, in relation to other terms such as ‘theatre’, ‘performing arts’, ‘performing space’, ‘performance’ and ‘exhibition’. [They] decided to ask artists and students to examine these terms in their broadest sense, with the final aim to create a performative exhibition or installation... The *Process* occupied two identical spaces in Kafka’s house, one above the other, on

the second and third floors. Both spaces were treated in a similar way — larger rooms were used as exhibition and/or performance space, while smaller ones served as ‘archives’ (for collecting and displaying artists’ recorded video material), or as ‘fundus’ (for keeping and storing students’ personal items — artefacts).” (Dadić Dinulović, T., 2016, p. 57). The work *Power(lessness) — Respons(ibility)*, curated by Mia David, consisted of a 10-day long performance



Section of Countries and Regions, Estonia: *Unified Estonia*, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space, Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: PQ web site.

during which professional artists and artistic groups — a different one each day — exhibited/performed their response to the selected theme. The student work — *Process or What DOES Matter to Me* — curated by an international team, consisted of a series of 80 performances executed each day, 8-10 hours per day, during the entire 11 days of the manifestation. The *Catalogue* was the third, integral part of the work, helping to fully understand all of the applied

narratives and processes. The piece was a site-specific format that “rather than showcasing the best achievements in professional theatre production and student work [...] look[ed] for ways to create and present the idea of theatre, and not the theatre itself” (*Ibid*, p. 57).

3.4 Estonia: The Power of Theatre

Exploring the boundaries between theatre and real life and, more importantly, the

true potential of theatre in contemporary society, Theatre NO99 from Tallinn, led by Tiit Ojasoo and Ene-Liis Semper, created *Unified Estonia*. Curated by Eero Epner, the project used various political techniques to explore ways in which a fictitious political movement could influence real life. “Theatre was no longer in its ‘usual space’, but captured completely new spaces — streets, newspaper headlines, TV studios and the lobby of Parliament. Theatre was no longer merely performing. It was real now.” (Čepcová et. al. (eds), 2015, p. 90). For 44 days of the political campaign, this movement became a real political force which, if it had actually decided to participate in the elections, would have gained 25% of the votes. The theatre performance, designed as the convention of the *Unified Estonia* political movement, was attended by more than 7,000 people. “It was one of the largest theatre events in contemporary Europe” (*Ibid*, p. 90), demonstrating the reality of theatre potential.

3.5 The PQ Legacy

In theatre practice, scene design has preserved its original nature and character, at the same time expanding the scope of action by adopting new disciplines, expressions, and media. Simultaneously, artistic practices of scene design have established their own

logic and become independent from the original applicative nature, although holding onto the use of scenic means as their main tool. Of course, the relationship between the two fields of creative work has remained complex — theatre has strongly influenced articulation and the development of artistic and curatorial practices of scene design, while, at the same time, scene design as art has brought back to theatre new ideas, materials and technologies.

The last two editions of the Prague Quadrennial provided a platform for re-thinking and re-examining many different ways of understanding theatre and the performing arts, proving that scenography and scene design should be treated as a very complex creative and ideological environment. The above four case studies, although very different in terms of selection criteria, curating and designing strategies, their relationship to the exhibition space, etc., have something in common — they look for an interactive audience; they require time, demand activity of the mind and ask for participation. “Here it is understood that you cannot expect to receive without giving in return” (Lotker & Černá (eds), 2011, p. 93).

4. POST SCRIPTUM:

We are NOT the ones we have been waiting for

“Q: Are you aware of which society we live in today? We need to address those issues in order to change the system. We need to talk about the present, not about the past. You are constantly dealing with your issues. It is time to deal with ours.

A: Let’s go back to the question — What does matter to me? How can I talk about what matters to you? I can address my own concerns; and I do through my work. You should deal with your own issues; you should fight for the space to do that; and you should talk about what concerns you.”¹

In an attempt to formulate the conclusion to this text, I remembered that Zlatko Paković,² a Serbian theatre director, wrote: “The hellish work that we are out to do — we are the ones we have been waiting

for” (Tasić, cited in Ibrajter (ed), 2015, p. 52). His words made me realise that I have no conclusion. It was already formulated by my (our) participation at the Prague Quadrennial 2015. Clearly, it is now up to other, new people, those who are yet to come, to have their say. They are the ones we should be waiting for.

In one of his interviews in 1974, Yugoslav actor Pavle Bogatinčević, in his old age at the time, said that “it is better for an actor to die on time”. It is better for everybody to leave on time.

¹ The quoted conversation was held between Lara Bunčić, a second year BSc student of Scene Architecture, Technique and Design, and Mia David, Lecturer at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad, and the curator of the Serbian national exhibition at PQ 2015, during a discussion entitled *Scene Design as Theatre Reality*. This discussion was held on May 30, 2016, as part of the Sterijino pozorje festival.

² Ibsen’s “An Enemy of the People” as Brecht’s *Teaching Play* (*Ibzenov neprijatelj naroda kao Brehtov poučni komad*) is a theatre performance by Zlatko Paković who, apart from being director of the piece, acted as writer, costume and set designer, and performer.

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BIO TATJANA DADIĆ DINULović

Tatjana Dadić Dinulović (born in Belgrade, Serbia, in 1963) is a theorist and an artist in the field of scene design. She explores the phenomenology of performing events and the relationships between the artist, the media and space. She has a degree in English Language and Literature from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade and master's degrees in Scene Design and Art and Media Theory from the University of Arts in Belgrade. She received her DA in Scene Design from the University of Arts in Belgrade and an interdisciplinary PhD in Scene Design from the University of Novi Sad. She has published one book entitled *Serbia: My Case — A New European Generation* (Clio/British Council, London/Belgrade, 2008), while her book *Scene Design as Art* (Clio/SCEN, Belgrade/Novi Sad) has been announced for publication in 2016. Additionally, she is the author of numerous texts published in various scientific and professional journals. Her artwork in the area of scene design has been exhibited in Serbia, Montenegro, Italy, Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina,

and China, including at the Venice Biennial (2004) and the Prague Quadrennial (2007). She led the Serbian Student Section curatorial team at PQ 2015 and, together with all the participating students, artists and curators, received the PQ 2015 Gold Medal for provoking dialogue. She was a jury member for the international Ranko Radović Award for Architecture (2013—2014), as well as at the regional Yugoslav Theatre Festival (2015). She has worked with the British Council in Belgrade. She is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad, where she teaches artistic practices of scene design and scene design theory, and is also the Head of the Scene Design PhD Program.

Michael Spencer

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PQ: The Student Agenda

Michael Spencer

“Since it became conscious of the artistic expressive potential slumbering within it, independent of the text to be realised, theatre, like other art forms, has been hurled into the difficult and risky freedom of perpetual experimentation.”¹

Since 1967, the Prague Quadrennial (PQ) has established itself as one of the most important international exhibitions in the theatre/performance industry. It has become a champion for the practice, loosening the reins of what was once defined as stage design, and releasing it into contexts that were hitherto unimaginable. In *Postdramatic Theatre* (2006) Hans-Ties Lehmann describes a similar unleashing from a theatre where the written text alone was the catalyst — the consequence of which he defines as *postdramatic practice*. There has been a parallel shift in the transformation of the PQ. No longer content simply representing stage design as the interpretation of words, music or choreography, the PQ also promotes scenographic practice as an art form *“independent of the text to be realized.”* In this way it embraces the agenda of the next generation of practitioners: the students, many of whom are entering the field with the aim of creating performance where the visual

components provide both catalyst and meaning.

When I first attended in 1995, the PQ was essentially an exhibition of scale models and drawings. The form of presentation was very varied and amongst the more classical exhibits I saw immersive environments encouraging interaction with examples of provocative and brilliantly conceived stage design. However, the emphasis was almost exclusively on the artefacts which represented unseen performances. There was one exhibit in 1995, however, which did almost the opposite. The Swedish professional exhibit that year contained some models but the distinctive feature was the environment of a children’s “ball-pit” — thousands of coloured soft plastic balls contained in a Perspex tank, facilitating safe boisterous play — an idea popularised by IKEA (referenced?). Participants were invited to play, overlooked by photographs of the three professional stage designers who had created the exhibit. At the time I was amused but totally confused: could this possibly be appropriate as an exhibit, and represent everything Sweden wanted to say about the art of stage design in their country between 1991 and 1995? In retrospect, I believe it was just ahead of its time. Had it been presented at the recent PQ 2015 I doubt many would have been confused about its relevance and

¹ Lehmann, Hans-Ties, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. by Karen Jurs-Munby (London; New York: Routledge, 2006).

I suspect that the actual participation would have been on a larger scale. In 1995 the physical engagement was limited, but twenty years later I suspect queues of students would have been waiting for the opportunity to dive into the blue and yellow plastic balls, such is the changing profile of those attending PQ and the transition from passive viewing to active engagement.

The dilemma for countries exhibiting at the PQ — whether to exhibit artefacts or a live experience — was also at the core of much discussion within the Associated Courses in Theatre Design (ACTD) in relation to the content of the UK Schools Exhibit for PQ between 2003 and 2015. ACTD was established in the 1980s to provide a forum for academics at UK education institutions involved in the training of theatre designers/scenographers as well as to co-ordinate the UK Schools Exhibit at successive PQs. Since that time the number of institutions has increased — currently 25 institutions representing more than 1,000 graduating students each year. The challenge for ACTD has been to find a common framework for promoting the students’ work across a broad range of courses. As a representative of one of the major performance design courses in the UK I was involved in discussions concerning the potential exhibition formats throughout this time. For PQ 2003 I recommended a

student exhibit which provided a space for both live performance and for design artefacts in the form of models and drawings. This was the first time the UK student contribution had proposed a substantial live element as part of their exhibit and acknowledged the approach of the Swedish exhibit eight years earlier. On this occasion, however, the demand to display artefacts meant there was simply not enough space for performance activity. However, some academics within the ACTD at the time, many of whom were also practising designers, clearly felt that the move away from presenting artefacts and towards some kind of live event would provide a more accurate representation of their students’ work. So for PQ 2007 the approach was re-visited. A white, flexible performance space was created and groups of UK students collaborated across courses to create a series of performance events, viewed by an audience of exhibition attendees who were occasionally expected to participate. We felt we were dipping our toe into a new form of presentation which embraced the idea of designers/scenographers as initiators of performance.

On reflection, ACTD members felt that there had simply not been enough activity to engage the exhibition attendee when the workshops were either not happening or in the *process* rather than the *presentation* phase. Because it is a time-



Student workshop — part of the UK Schools exhibit, The PQ'07.
Photo: Michael Spencer.

based medium, exhibiting performance is always problematic, in comparison with exhibiting artefacts, which can constantly engage. We discussed the potential performativity of artefacts, which had been absent in the PQ 2007 exhibit. At this point a tension seemed to emerge within the association, between those of us who felt we should continue



Intersections installation, The PQ'11.
Photo: Michael Spencer.

to promote the students' work through the presentation of student-initiated performance, and those who felt the display of student artefacts continued to be more appropriate. For PQ 2011, ACTD created an exhibit consisting of a metal frame delineating the allocated footprint, within which were a series of monitors showing student groups from different

UK educational institutions engaged in common exercise, which resulted in a devised performance. The starting point for the performance was a collection of materials — “the basic ingredients.” Over the ten days of PQ 2011, different groups of students completed the same exercise in real time, so audiences would always see it in some form, either happening in front of them or by watching recorded evidence of previous collaborations on screen. This was an attempt to illustrate the breadth of the student approach to the discipline within the UK educational sector.

There was a growing realisation amongst members of the ACTD that the student agenda within the PQ was now so visible and empowered, that the association's traditional approach of dictating the format for the student exhibit was now inappropriate. When ACTD was formed (in the pre-digital age), the difficulty of communicating across a number of courses made a gathering of students logistically problematic. There had also been a rather isolationist approach from each course, which was partly why ACTD was formed. By 2015 these barriers were no longer in place and so, for PQ 2015, it was decided to let the students propose the form of their own exhibit. In retrospect, we could have done this eight or even twelve years earlier, but this democratisation was aligned with some

of the changes that have happened over the same period at the PQ, some aspects of which I briefly outline below.

The political agenda to widening audience participation has prompted new performance forms, often more visually biased. The digital revolution has also prompted a democratisation in those who can initiate creative work: large numbers of people can now put their film on *YouTube* or construct their own reality on *Facebook*. In 1967, the PQ served as a showcase for professional practitioners and academics in what was then a defined industry, (the reason for my own first attendance in 1995 was to oversee the contribution from my own college within the UK Schools Exhibit) while the student agenda was almost invisible in comparison to 2015. In the intervening years this agenda had been fuelled by initiatives such as *Scenofest* for PQ 2007. *Scenofest* was created by a group of academic practitioners led by Pamela Howard (supported by OISTAT) and consisted of a series of events aimed specifically at students. These included talks by established designers, practice-based workshops and shared projects enabling students from across the world to communicate through a common thematic. *Scenofest* events were as significant as the national exhibits in terms of what was changing within the discipline and who was interested.

The emphasis shifted from a display of the recent past, to an exploration of contemporary practice in order to foster and provoke the next generation of visual performance makers. There were signs of this transition in PQ 2003 in the interactive installation-performance *The Heart of PQ*, described as a “performance landscape for the senses”¹ by its Czech and New Zealand co-creators.² This architectural intervention blurred lines between the everyday and the theatrical, exhibition and performance, audience, and performer, and this blurring aligned with the agenda of many students who wished to challenge traditional boundaries of the practice. Other boundaries were being challenged that year as the Dutch opted to present both student and professional exhibits side by side, with a common starting point.

The convergence of accident and expediency could also be said to be a factor. From 1983 to 2007 the event had been located in the Industrial Palace to the north of the city centre. In 2008 a large section of the building was damaged by fire and PQ 2011 had to be relocated. Built in the Art Nouveau style in 1891, the Palace had a grandiose, rather

formal civic elegance. It was not an intimate space and, like the neo-classical entrances of so many European theatres, the building itself was hardly welcoming to the casual passer-by, which of course was not an issue when the audience consisted of specialist practitioners and academics. This audience demographic has now changed however, partly in response to the increasing student numbers and partly initiated by PQ projects such as *Intersection*³ at PQ 2011. *Intersection* was located in a semi-public square in Prague 1, a move which implied that the event was not simply aimed at a specialist audience. It consisted of a maze of 30 small white boxes/rooms — effectively mini-stages, and presented a response to the notion of scenography from selected international practitioners. Some contained static performative objects suggesting narratives, actions, emotions, or hidden agendas, whilst others contained a live performance, repeating at intervals or running continuously without an apparent start or end point. Often the attendees became the performers: learning to tango, dressing up or hugging one another. The students I went with that year loved the exhibit. It proposed alternatives for locating their own practice. It felt liberating. It was playful, non-hierarchical



Blue Tired Heroes, on Bethlehem Square, Prague 1 — part of the ‘Tribes’ exhibit, The PQ’15. Photo: Michael Spencer.

and accessible. There is no doubt that its influence on their personal practice, which I tracked for two years following that event, was significant. Equally significant, in terms of the PQ’s widening remit, was the exhibit’s visibility within the public sphere. Its geographical “centre” was dissolving and in 2015 the diaspora continued, fuelled by the emerging

¹ <http://services.pq.cz/en/historicke-materialy-2003.html> (accessed September 13, 2015).

² Artistic directors Tomáš Žižka and architect Dorita Hannah.

³ Curated by Sodja Lotker, architectural design Oren Sagiv.

desire for practice that was in some way “socially engaged.” For our discipline the term signifies performance which deals directly with societal issues and engages a broader cross-section of the public than the average theatre audience. It reflects a developing remit for both students and younger practitioners within the discipline and for arts organisations generally. What would have happened had a fire not engulfed a large section of the Industrial Palace in 2008? Would the PQ still be located in those lofty halls, or would part of it at least have escaped into the melting pot of Prague 1? The PQ is no longer exclusive, both in terms of the kind of practice it embraces and the kind of audience it wants to attract, and the increased student participation has been pivotal in this.

For the PQ 2015 UK Schools Exhibit, ACTD gathered a large student group representing the various courses across the UK. The group quickly opted for an exhibit that they described variously as being “immersive”, “experiential” and “participatory.” They wanted the exhibition attendees to experience some kind of journey, over time, within an environment they had created, and further, for this audience to contribute to the creation of that environment in some way. They were driven by a political agenda to highlight what they felt to be draconian laws preventing access to

the UK. In response to the immigration crisis sweeping Europe they created a UK border control *installation* (their description) where each participant was subjected to interrogation before entering a hidden space (the UK). On gaining entry, a personal possession was catalogued and displayed before they were allowed to exit. Although the exhibit culminated in an accumulating display of objects, there was no presentation of the students’ own stage design artefacts in the form of scale models and drawings. The student approach was a logical progression from that which their mentors had been exploring since 2003, only the students found the question of form easier to resolve. In observing my own students, there was never any doubt that the exhibit would be based on an *experience* for the participant, although paradoxically, that participant did end up looking at a *display* of objects. Having noted that, it would still suggest that the next generation of scenographers may no longer want to present artefacts which represent performances they have designed/created. Questions arise from such a shift. How are the *experiences* created by scenographers different from those created by say, directors, writers and actors? Can the traditional skills of scenography — drawing and modelling to interpret text, manipulate space, create *mise-en-scène*, be utilised in such practice?

The increasing recognition of the importance of a student presence within the PQ calls into question many of the traditional skills and hierarchies within the field, indeed in the very idea of the artist (or scenographer) as expert. From being an exclusive showcase for world leaders in a narrowly defined discipline, it has become a testing ground for those who are still attempting to locate their own practice within a discipline that is expanding and increasingly difficult to delimit. From being an event for audiences “in the know” it has become one for those wanting to know more. The transformation in how the PQ is presented is a consequence of (or perhaps a reaction to), scepticism towards the idea of expertise within the discipline. Having said that the professional PQ jury has acknowledged the quality of the student exhibits on several occasions and, of course, students are often not working under the constraints of professional practice. Initiatives such as *Tribes*¹ at PQ 2015 celebrate this fact. *Tribes* saw groups of students and professionals performing in their costumes on the streets of Prague 1 — often they simply “promenaded” whilst at other times they performed simple actions. Their judges as such were not experts — their tutors or the experienced practitioners who could

be their role-models — but members of the public; in effect, the audience. The criteria for evaluating scenography are no longer necessarily linked to the skills of representing a live event via well-crafted scale models and drawings. Experienced practitioners would claim that you don’t have to be an expert to appreciate a brilliant design when looking into a model box. I am sceptical about whether it is simply the artefact itself which is being appreciated, or the event it imagines and describes. This also depends on who is viewing the model. One might view events like *Tribes* as having little or nothing to do with the art of scenography, and more to do with performing (or even just showing off) or you could see it as an informative and engaging manifestation of the practice, more relevant than any artefact. Again, it depends on who is watching the event, or — perhaps more to the point — for whom the event is intended? As ever, when change occurs, some things are gained in the transition, whilst others are lost. Lehmann identifies the dilemma for the emancipated stage designer — the newfound freedom is ‘*difficult and risky*’. Having said that, the genie of the rising student agenda within the PQ, or even, debatably, of their increasing ownership of the event, cannot now be easily placed back into the bottle.

¹ Curated by Sodja Lotker.

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BIO

MICHAEL SPENCER

For over a decade, Michael was responsible for leading what was the BA Theatre Design course at Central Saint Martins in London into an expanded field embracing the idea of the designer as auteur. He currently runs the MA Performance Design & Practice course. In 1991 he became the first person in the UK to receive an MA in Theatre Design, which became the catalyst for a teaching career alongside continuing professional practice. This practice, like his teaching, reflects the shift in the role of designer. Recent work includes: a site specific 'Attempts On Her Life' (Martin Crimp) featuring the simultaneous presentation of the 17 scenes in a disused gas facilities building in Colorado Springs, a devised solo performance triptych, Variation, Verification & Vindication and a performance within his own design for 'The Anatomy of Integers & Permutations' (Andrew and Jennifer Granville), a text based on a mathematical theory, performed at Princeton and Berkeley universities and most recently at a Math conference in Montreal, Canada. His practice provokes questions surrounding the definition of performance in works such as *perform 241115*, where people passing through a public space were given the option to perform through the intervention of 500 chairs suggesting a

silent audience. He is currently working on Transformation Exchange, a residency in Granary Square, London N1 (July 2016) attempting to connect those regularly inhabiting a newly created public space to the rapid changes taking place around them. Michael has presented at USITT conferences, represented the UK at the OISTAT symposiums in Moscow and Riga, written various articles for the Society of British Theatre Designers journal, 'Blue Pages' and attended the last five Prague Quadrennials, co-curating the UK schools exhibit on three occasions and creating student workshops.

Sônia Paiva

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Stage Design Transdisciplinary Laboratory (LTC): redesigning Brazil's Student Exhibit at PQ 2015

Sônia Paiva



Brazilian Students Exhibition, BRAZIL: SHARED LABYRINTHS at Prague Quadrennial 2015, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

The *Stage Design Transdisciplinary Laboratory* (LTC) was conceived and founded at the University of Brasilia in 2010, specifically to take part in PQ 2011. The LTC is a laboratory based on four pillars: transdisciplinarity; diversity; collaboration; and creative and cooperative economy. The concept was inspired by a comprehension of the need to interconnect thinkers, technicians, scientists, and artists for projects that will trigger cultural, social, political, and

human transformation. The result is a shared environment for the design of performance and its space.

At the LTC, the process of re-connecting with various areas of knowledge is driven by individual desires to research and to create, to perceive the group's collective intelligence, and to develop a unique multicultural language.



Logo of Transdisciplinary Laboratory of Scenography (LTC), Brazil, Brasília, 2013.

Brasil LABirintos Compartilhados, Quadrienal de Praga, República Tcheca, 2015. Foto de divulgação oficial da Quadrienal de Praga 2015.

The curatorship of the Brazilian Student Exhibition at PQ15 marked the LTC's procedural methodology. The exhibition in Prague condensed the thinking process and scene development, explained how each teaching center operates. It constituted the ground to show Brazil's cultural diversity, one that could have occurred anywhere, in a mutable state, inviting us to experience the space, and leading visitors to dream along with other territories in a more variable and participative approach.

The *Stage Design Transdisciplinary Laboratory (LTC)*:

→ *Você só pode se encontrar se estiver perdido. Essa é a primeira regra do labirinto. Se você pensa que está perdido... é porque você está*

*procurando por algo. E se você está procurando por algo... é porque você sabe o que quer! Se você sabe o que quer... você está à frente e sendo seguido por um bando de loucos. (Excerpt from the dialogue established between LTC members).*¹



LTC members receiving projects from other Scenography Teaching Centers at the Production Park, Brazil, Brasília, 2014. Photo: LTC.

The *Stage Design Transdisciplinary Laboratory (LTC in Portuguese)* is an *Extension Program in Continuing Action (PEAC)*, which I organized and coordinate,

¹ You can only find yourself if lost. This is the first rule of the labyrinth. If you think you are lost... it's because you are searching for something. If you are searching for something... it's because you know what you want! If you know what you want... you are ahead and being followed by a bunch of mad people. (loose translation).

at the Art Institute of the University of Brasília. The LTC was created in 2010, triggered by the invitation to be a part of the Brazilian Scenography School's exhibition at the Prague Quadrennial in 2011. It is formed by students and former alumni groups from the Communication, Design, Visual Arts, Architecture, and Science and Technology Departments. They were brought together by Performing Arts students to meet the multiple needs of their projects.

A NATURAL REACTION

This laboratory is a natural reaction to the education system established in the performing arts schools of Brazilian universities, usually oriented towards granting a Bachelor's Degree in Theatre and towards the development of creative performers. Scenography is seen and understood as a vast and multifaceted field in the arts. The difficulties on the learning process in this area are directly related to the teaching. There is a lack of specific knowledge about the artistic, technical and technological principles in the academic courses. This fact weakens the potential of theatrical creation. In addition, the Brazilian education system is still compartmentalized into courses and disciplines in a way that impoverishes the knowledge of the theatre as a complex "Machine".



Pre-production of exhibition at Production Park to adjust the last details before PQ15, Brazil, Brasília, 2014. Photo: LTC.

A NEW APPROACH

The LTC is a place where we experiment with a different approach towards teaching scene design within the framework of academic education. My aim is to spread the hypothesis that the teaching of scene design at the university level should be based on projects that trigger the interaction of knowledge



Sonia Paiva interacting with the public, embroidering in the project Reflections, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: Caio Sato.

produced by a multidisciplinary team through transdisciplinary action. It is a way to experience the academic world holistically, through accomplishing cultural projects that might empower social and political mobilization.

Ubiratan D’Ambrósio explains:

→ *O essencial na transdisciplinaridade reside numa postura de reconhecimento do outro, na qual não há espaço e tempos culturais privilegiados que julguem e/ou hierarquizem. Trata-se de um conceito que repousa sobre uma atitude aberta, de respeito mútuo e humildade em relação a mitos, religiões, sistemas de explicações e conhecimento, rejeitando qualquer tipo de arrogância ou preconceito. Na sua essência, a transdisciplinaridade é transcultural.*’ (D’Ambrósio, 1997, p. 79).¹

Like many contemporary thinkers, I work on the task of contributing towards the construction of a fair society and an educational system that takes into consideration the development of the

¹ “The essential in transdisciplinarity resides in the attitude of recognizing the other, in a way where there is no privileged space or cultural time to judge or hierarchize. It is a concept with an open attitude, of mutual respect and humility about myths, religion, explanation systems and knowledge, rejecting any kind of arrogance or prejudice. In its essence, transdisciplinary is transcultural.” (loose translation)

individual and their relations, amongst groups, and between nations.

OBJECT OF FOR MY DOCTORAL THESIS

Between 2012 and 2016, the LTC was object of observation for my doctoral thesis, reflecting my personal vision that became collective. Currently, this vision is being further developed. After 2012, the objective was to foster a methodology interlinking the various means of expression needed for Stage Design. The LTC’s activities and concepts were founded on four pillars: transdisciplinarity; diversity; collaboration; and creative and cooperative economy.

ECOSYSTEM OF MULTICULTURAL KNOWLEDGE

This program was created to form an ecosystem of multicultural knowledge through the arts, sciences, education, ecology, and humanities. It embraces diversity as a fertile ground for the creation a variety of projects, taking advantage of the human resources available at the university in collaborative and inclusive actions, using various technologies — manual, mechanical and digital, and combining old craftsmanship with new channels of global communication. By working with the most ancient traditions merged with



Sonia Paiva interacting with the public, embroidering in the project Reflections, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: Caio Sato.

current issues, the aim is to fulfill the objective of creating a core of sustainable and long-lasting cultural development at the *University of Brasilia* for the arts and Brazilian society.

We primarily seek an interactive process between different subjects, focusing on building a common ground through the connections between the individuals. It



Panoramic picture of Brazilian Students Exhibition, Brazil: SHARED LABYRINTHS. Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.

is at the intersection of art and reality, creation and realization, which enhances the demand for participation from other areas within the production structure.

CURATOR OF THE BRAZILIAN STUDENT EXHIBITION FOR PQ 2015

In 2014 I was nominated to be the curator for the Brazilian Student Exhibition at the Prague Quadrennial 2015, and took part in the Brazilian representation led by Ronald Teixeira.

BRAZIL: Shared LABYRINTHS is the title and concept that intended to encourage reflection about the multifaceted nature of scenic design work, and to provide the sharing of experiences, findings and understandings of its origin within the context of teaching laboratories. This is suggested by one of the etymologies of the word labyrinth, which specifies that it derives from “labor” (work) and “intus” (interior or closed space). Brazilian researchers in the field were invited to

focus their different approaches and regional peculiarities towards a singular national unit.



Various promotional graphic material for the national call exhibition, at the Latin American Cultural Center (CAL), Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.



This perspective, adopted by the Student Exhibition, was aligned with the proposal of the Commissioners for the Prague Quadrennial 2015, as presented in the title of this PQ edition — *Shared Space: Music Weather Politics* — from which the Curatorial Commission indicated that the theme of *Politics* should be used as the conceptual guidelines by the Brazilian representation.

Based on these guidelines, the projects for the national call were organized as notebooks, photos, and videos — cartographic albums — in which scenography work from the different schools was inserted, prioritizing the process’s registration and routes of the actions that created the design and the space of the scene. It was suggested to the schools to search for territorial references arising from multiple expressive modes: tales, poems, dramaturgical texts, images, as well as factual events in the territory, in order to investigate and interpret the theme *Politics* in an unconstrained way. The process started in March 2014 and twenty educational units from four different regions were involved.

For this PQ edition, in order to increase the number of participating schools and the contribution of the Brazilian geopolitical regions to the Prague Quadrennial, we built a project consisting of the dialog from communicational actions. For this



Project MINHOCÃO, AP72. Scenographic Space, Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.



Project, OPERA DO MALANDRO 1. Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.



Project CARAÍBA. University of Brasília, Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.

purpose, we created an email address (mepq15@gmail.com) and a site (www.brasillabirintoscompartilhados.com) in order to map the teaching centers, guide them through the steps for submission and producing the projects developed by Brazilian professors and students, and stimulate the exchange of contents among educators through texts and discussions, thus enabling intense communication among the teaching centers during the pedagogical process.



The National Exhibition opened to the public at the CAL, Brazil, Brasilia, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.

it was converted into a national event. The transformation of this stage into a national event was only possible thanks to the voluntary work of the LTC, which divided the event into an exhibition of all the works sent to the jury, as well as roundtable discussions, workshops with the invited professors, the sale of books related to scene design and published by professors in this field, and a theatre play. In addition to the support received



Bookstore at the national exhibition for scenography professor's books sale, Brazil, Brasilia, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.

For the first time ever, the exhibition at which the projects by Brazilian scene design students were selected for presenting at the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space was hosted in Brasilia, at the *Casa da Cultura da América Latina (CAL)*, and



Round table discussions with professors at the National Exhibition at the CAL, Brazil, Brasilia, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.

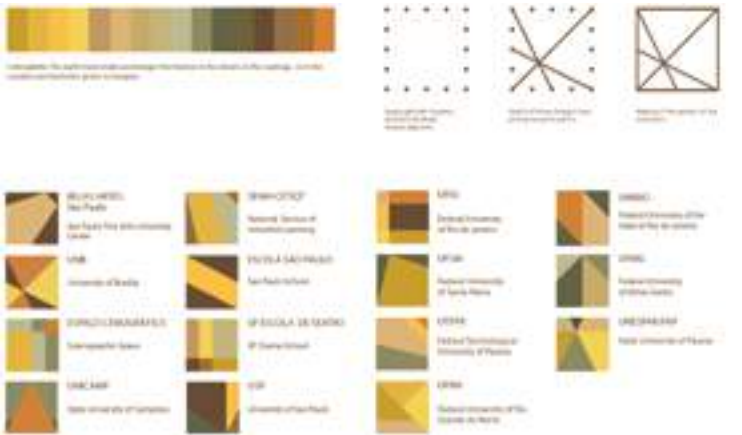
from the *University of Brasilia*, the LTC used crowdfunding and public subsidies to finance the exhibition in Brasilia.

The visual design for *BRAZIL: Shared LAByrinths* was made using a digital game available onsite in order to create a modular basis for the construction of



Picture for CZEZH PARTY produced by the LTC to promote the crowdfunding, Ponto Gallery, Brazil, Brasilia, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.

the collective visual identity, representing a national unity formed from the relationships between distinct symbols.



Color palette and symbols created by each institution based on game created on digital platform to create the exhibition's visual identity, Brazil, Brasilia, 2015. Photo: LTC.



Fridge magnets to promote the symbols created by each institution, Brazil, Brasilia, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.

Each teaching center created a symbol for its school, composed of three lines traced on a square grid representing an empty stage, a plan delimited by sixteen



Jury selecting projects that will represents the Brazilian students at PQ15, João Irênio Maia and Lu Bueno, Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.



Jury selecting projects that will represents the Brazilian students at PQ15, Ronald Teixeira, Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.



Brazilian students exhibition open to the public. Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: PQ15.

points. These symbols were created by each school, and used to identify each institution and its projects during the Selection Exhibition at Brasília — DF in February 2015.

The exhibition in Brasilia was elaborated to receive as many projects as possible to be analyzed by the jury invited by the curators. It presented high-level projects coming from different teaching groups and proved to be a positive result of the mapping and the communication between the groups, as well as the work developed in class and taken to the digital platform.

At the *Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space 2015*, the symbols created by each school were pieces of a jigsaw brought together in the exhibition room. It allowed each part to be recognized as a fundamental piece of the unique collective outcome in the overall process

The exhibit shown in Prague condensed the thinking process and scene construction, and explained how each teaching center operates.

It constituted a territory that sheltered the cultural diversity in Brazil “*in a random place, in a mutable status that invites the visitor to experiment [...] a complex labyrinth: the horizon of internal landscapes in Brazil*”. (Paiva, 2015, p. 89).



Project O GOL NÃO VALEU (The Goal Was Illegal), Federal University of Minas Gerais, Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.



Project CROSSING, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Brasília, 2015. Photo: Helano Stuckert.



The LTC members at PQ15, (from top left to bottom right) Helano Stuckert, Eric Costa, Guto Viscardi, Patricia Meschick, Rafael Botelho, Marina Mestrinho, Caio Sato, Anna Carolina, Raquel Rosildete, Lucas Sertifa, Sonia Paiva, Matheus MacGinity. Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: LTC.

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BIO

SONIA PAIVA

Sonia Paiva is a multiartist with considerable experience in various areas and expresses herself in multiple ways, from handicraft to technology, having worked as a national and international professional artist for three decades. As a researcher, she holds a Ph.D. in Scene Composing Processes from the University of Brasilia (UnB), an MA in Art and Technology from the University of Brasilia (2006), a post-graduate degree in Art from Byam Shaw School of Art (London, 1994), a Graduation in Art Education from the University of Brasilia (UnB).

As an educator, she has been teaching Stage Design, Lighting Design and Costume Design for 15 years at the Performing Arts Department, and coordinating the Extension Program in Continuing Action (PEAC) since 2010. She was the curator of the Students’ Exhibit called Brazil: Shared LAByrinths that represented Brazil at the Prague Quadrennial 2015.

Bibiana Puigdefàbregas

15

The Digital Age — The Stage in the 21st Century

Bibiana Puigdefàbregas

The Renaissance changed the paradigm of our concept placing humankind in the center of the world. That meant a new way of understanding the world, and a new way of acting in and upon it. Therefore, during that period new scenic devices appeared, which pointed to new forms of the relationship between the stage and the audience, new ways to act.

The 20th century became a period that generated changes on the same big scale, changes at least as important as those during the Renaissance. The position of humankind in the world is changing radically — humankind is no longer the center of the world. It is just a very tiny cluster, a piece of an infinite network that is continually growing and pushing us into an unexpected universe. The 21st century stage is thus reinventing formats, tools, scenic trades, and relationships. The very definition of scenic arts as a live performance is in question.

In this changing context we ask ourselves:

- Does it make sense to talk about scenographers in the 21st century?
- How should the education for stage designers be focused?
- What should — or would — a festival that has performing arts as its main objective be like?

- The challenge is to explore new ways of acting and performing, not just being fascinated with new games, but also remembering our commitment as artists in the world.

SCENOGRAPHERS? IN THE 21ST CENTURY?

We are living in a context of reality that is rapidly changing. Digital technology is requiring an increasing variety of specialized trades, asking us to understand and apply the tools in an expressive way. But, at the same time, this great degree of specialization often makes us forget the main objectives of art language and its commitment to the social context.

Because of our environmental commitment, we have to remember to always use some kind of tool that can help us to establish strong communication with the audience, without forgetting the main artistic objectives, and, at the same time, discovering the expressive potential related not only to formats but also to content, therefore rethinking the bases of the performing arts. And that's the main challenge for training in art schools, because we are growing not into a solid foundation, but into an interesting magmatic landscape, which is constantly boiling over and removing the fundamental bases of the scenic arts.

ARTISTIC TRAINING AND LEARNING MODELS

If we look at the context in Catalonia we find the *Institut del Teatre* (Theatre Institute) in Barcelona. This institution was founded 105 years ago with the aim of creating a school that takes into account the stage activities and the professional profiles of the moment. And today all of the creative fields are coming closer together and the borders are getting blurred.

The professional activity of the stage designer is always present in the events that connect the audience and the stage. And it is communication, promoted by digital tools, which represents the greatest revolution of the last century. Scenic art cannot remain outside of that revolution, and we need to take into account that these changes are not just affecting tools, formats and trades, but even more so, they are also rethinking dramaturgies, relationships with the audience, objectives and contents.

PROFESSIONAL FIELD

In the professional field, unlike in the educational area, these changes are easier to absorb, because the artist or the researcher is independent, thus always faster than schools to use their imagination and introduce innovations.



Ceci n'est pas un scénographe. Photo: Cristina Viñas.

However, much of the professional sector is coming from conventional models of creation, and is using digital tools that only affect new support, without thinking about the possibility of real changes related to contents, new expressive possibilities, or new formats or dramaturgies.

The Catalan stage of the 21st century (creators and audience) seems dangerously divided between those who want to “invent” and those who want to “preserve”, when it is evident that from the traditional forms we can invent, and through inventing we can create tradition.

ACADEMIC FIELD

It seems that, by definition, art school should be like the engine of a train of the cultural vanguards, however it is not like that. The complexity of the academic structure is placing us in the last carriage of that train. At the *Institut del Teatre* we follow a model of a school that was created a hundred years ago. Obviously we are constantly changing and modernizing depending on the context of each moment. However, the process has been “to adapt to the changes” and not “to cause the changes”. We do not question the leadership in the vanguard scene, because we sincerely believe that it must be in the hands of independent artists, offering the freest possible context

and allowing them to reinvent constantly. But we have to provide training tools so that our students can be a part of this collective of free artists that is in fact the engine of the train.

Because of this particular context, we have started working on a project that will become a Master of Arts in the Digital Stage, and we would like to see it become an international project. I would like to explain some of the main ideas of this master’s degree, not to advertise, but rather to share the fundamental basis of this project, because in many ways it has begun to be thought of in the PQ context.

THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE MASTER OF ARTS IN THE DIGITAL STAGE

The main objective of this project, *Master of Arts in the Digital Stage*, is to reach a level of professional competence for developing scenic or performance projects, making expressive use of digital technology, exploring new perceptions of the audience, creating the meaning of a performance, and having a critical point of view regarding the entire process.

Therefore, the main objective is not to have a deep knowledge of the technological tools, but rather a deep knowledge of the process for exploring the expressive ways in which these tools can be used.

I think it is not enough anymore to just play with new tools, because it is not the game itself that is important, it is the landscape that can be expanded using the game.

STRUCTURE

We are considering a very clear academic structure, but one that is also very flexible in order to absorb the possible changes that might be necessary with each successive year. To reach the main objective of the master’s degree as described above, we will focus on working with four basic competencies defining different areas of interest:

- Audio-visual media;
- Robotics and programming;
- Sensors and interaction with the audience; and
- A cross-disciplinary focus, preparing artistic mediators who will provide a link between dramaturgy and technicians.

We are thinking about a Master’s requiring 120 ECTS, i.e., two years of study. The students will spend the first year and a half working on each focus of interest. Each focus will have:

- A Media Lab as their central point, therefore immersing the students in a very practical learning process; and
- Parallel lessons to that Media Lab, providing a basic knowledge of the tool that is being explored.

The last half-year, the students will concentrate on their final project, which can be completed either independently or collectively.

JOB OPPORTUNITIES AFTER COMPLETING THE MASTER’S DEGREE

- Dramaturg or Stage Designer with a solid link to all kinds of performances, where creators and audience meet at the same moment, and probably (but not always) in the same place;
- Artistic Director for any kind of performance, live or not, that includes new technologies in their language;
- Artistic Mediator between the conceptual and the technical, who acts with the aim of reaching a common artistic objective;
- Advisor for any kind of enterprise that place communication and meeting with the audience as the central



Ya no basta con solo jugar. Photo: Cristina Viñas.

point of their work (the performing arts, communication enterprises, exhibitions, auditoriums, ...).

**THEATRICAL INSTALLATION OR
INSTALLATION-PERFORMANCE?
AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE A GENRE.
AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE A TRADE.**

If we look at previous editions going back to 1999, the artistic line of the PQ has seen many changes. Especially in 2015 we had a feeling, as the audience and as participants, that another arena for the PQ had been discovered. The Baroque palaces that were occupied by installations and exhibitions and the PQ's artistic team have brought us to a field of artistic expression much more linked to the language of installation. In my opinion, the great success of this formula is how it invites us to use expositive language, leaving behind the concept of showing something that is no longer living. It is true that this twist has the added value of promoting a spirit of innovation and research, but it is also true that it moves us away from the theatrical and performing arts, and particularly away from scenographic activity.

I believe that there are four basic concepts that we should take into account in order to continue focusing on the main objective of the PQ in the

theatrical and performing arts. Those four concepts are firmly connected to the language of installation, but also give us threads that link us to the theatrical and performing arts:

Absence: The possibility of working with the idea of absence (the absence of actors), as the main concept for establishing new dramatic tension for new artistic post-performance installations.

The *audience* as the center of the action: Considering the audience as the indispensable center of the action of the exhibition; it is the audience itself that experiences the installation context at the same time they visiting it — and that experience should be taken as the main action of the exhibition.

Roaming or touring: Using roaming, and also touring, as the main tools using the language of installations to build the narrative of the exhibition.

The narrative: The importance of having a narrative structure, whether classical or post-dramatic narrative, which gives the audience the tools to construct for themselves the global sense of the installation.

In conclusion, I think we are attempting to define a genre, which moves in that

ambiguous boundary between artistic installation and the performing arts.

What a great success if at least we can do it without forgetting the most powerful of the scenic arts!

CONCLUSIONS AT THE END OF THE SYMPOSIUM TRANSFORMATIONS OF THE PRAGUE QUADRENNIAL

I think that scenographers much too often *work for* and do not *work with*.

Probably the previous century was the century of the stage director. That figure was the main one in any kind of *mise en scène*, and modified the roles and activities of other artistic trades involved in any project as a scenographer.

Regardless of who is the leader of any creative process, if there is even leader, we have to remember that, through our scenographic activity, we are always also the writers and dramaturgs of the final project. Our professional activity as scenographers also affects the whole sense of the performance. Thus, because of that, we are also writers and dramaturgs through our work.

The black box and dramatic plays have brought to scenographers an incredible, enormous field to work with. But even though it is an enormous field, we have to

remember that that it is just a tiny part of our work. As scenographers we have other infinite fields to explore even outside of the magical black box.

It seems that we have forgotten our great potential as scenographers by delimiting the borders of our field of activity too much.

During this Symposium we have been discussing many things:

Is it better to return to street installations and performances, or to go back to spaces inside?

Do we have to follow a path that promotes artistic installations, or the traditional exhibitions of models and drawings?

I wonder why we persist in transforming these questions into issues of exclusion?

For me, the main objective should be that the PQ has scenographic activity as its central focal point. After that, it should not be important whether someone wants to show their work through an artistic installation, or through a classical exhibition of models, lighting, sounds and costumes.

In particular, during the last PQ, I was pleasantly surprised by some exhibitions

that were great artistic installations, but was also very impressed by the traditional exhibitions, which showed powerful models that can suggest many things and can invite you to imagine past and future through empty space.

The important question is to SHARE ATMOSPHERES that make it possible to SUGGEST, to PROVOKE, to TALK, or to GENERATE EXPECTATIONS amongst the public.

The tools that we chose to use, or the language that we speak are not so important; the important thing is to remember that scenographic activity, in the most open sense, must be the central point of the PQ.

BIO**BIBIANA PUIGDEFABREGAS
I SARGRISTA**

Sant Pol de Mar (Barcelona), 1972.

Graduate in dramatic art and specialised in scenography by the Institut del Teatre de la Diputació de Barcelona. She also studied architecture at the Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya.

She is working as a scenographer since 1998, combining it with academic activity since 2005 in places such as Institut del teatre, Universidad del País Vasco o el Teatro San Martín de Buenos Aires.

Between 1998 and 2007 she was the stage designer of Àlex Rigola. Some of their works were, Juli Cèsar (Llire 2002), Glengarri Glen Roos (Lliure 2003, nominated for the Butaca award), European House (Lliure 2005, Butaca award 2007), or Der fliegende Holländer (Liceu 2007).

She designed scenographies such as Calígula (TNC 2004), or Arcàdia (TNC 2007), for the director Ramón Simó.

For Carol López, author and directress, she made scenographies such as Germanes (La Villarroel 2008, nominated for the Max Awards 2009) or Cosi fan tutte (Liceu 2012).

She has also worked with stage directors such as Magda Puyo, Mario Gas or Sven Eric Bechtolf.

Actually she is also working with the Catalan company La pell, with whom she presented Troianes 15 (2015) and is working for new projects with them.

Since 2007 she is teaching in Institut del Teatre to scenographers, choreographers, drama and directing students. In 2013 she becomes the Head of the Scenography Speciality where she can develop academic projects such as a new Digital scene program, or international projects as PQ Catalan participation 2015.

Ivana Bakal

16

Costume as Performance Space Design

Ivana Bakal

Parallel to the demise of textual domination in 20th century theatre, numerous visual artists became total authors of performance productions. The basis for this type of theatre approach can be found in Oskar Schlemmer's Bauhaus¹ Stage Workshops, which were grounded in his belief in the complementary nature of painting and theatre, and the influences of these workshops can be traced from the Russian avant-garde to today.

The first set and costume designers in theatre history were painters, sculptors or graphic designers, so the histories of these professions are deeply intertwined. "Visual theatre" is perhaps best described in both theory and practice by Peter Weitzner in *The Theatre of Object (Objekttheater: Zur Dramaturgie der Bilder und Figuren*, 1993), as composed of object, figures and performance (P. Weitzner, 2011). It is a type of theatre expression in which the creation process originates in the visual segment of the production, while the dramatic segment is created during the performance. Its authors are primarily painters by vocation, and they are stage directors only secondarily. The most prominent representatives include Oskar

Schlemmer, Robert Wilson and Achim Freyer, but there are also numerous less known theatre artists who do not declare themselves to be visual artists. However, every author who designs performance space and costumes, including how they are explored over the course of the performance, makes an integral stage picture (composed of the stage, the actor in motion, and the clothes the actor wears).

These great artists never questioned the importance of costume designers as an essential segment of all forms of theatre (and also less theatrical) productions, and always treated them as artistic associates. Why is this not the case at the PQ?

The radical turn taken by the PQ artistic leadership for the past two editions has led not only to modifications in the artistic concept of the PQ and giving priority to performativity — and even *improvisation* — over set design, theatre architecture and (mostly) costume design as visual expression, but has also almost declaratively reduced the possibility of interpreting costume design as poetics, messages, or space design to a minimum.

Even though the costume element was less present as a separate segment in PQ 2015, it was still a component part (visible or not) of all the performances selected

¹ The Bauhaus School was established a hundred years ago, and it still represents one of the best educational systems based on creativity, craftsmanship and the complementarity of the various artistic segments.



The Tribes, Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

for PQ 2015 and it was represented in the process of actor's/performer's dressing in specific stage clothes for the majority of productions. But it seems as if it has been forgotten that the costumed body of the performer is a medium used to *transfer* space, dramatic and political design, action and thinking — perfectly in tune with the modern ideas of the PQ 2015.

Moreover, in the PQ Catalogue the authors of costume designs are often



Student Section, Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

left out, even when the individual original materials for the productions/performances listed costume designers. In addition, the credits of certain awarded projects and production teams leave out costume designers, even though the exhibition itself included reproductions of performance footage with the listed authors of the costume design.

There is always the possibility of an "innocent" mistake being made by the

national curators during the application process, but the avoidance of costume design as a part of production is undoubtedly a result of the fact that the current PQ leadership finds costume design less and less interesting and is therefore taking it less and less into consideration as a medium of artistic expression in the various PQ subprograms and selections.

Is this really where we are heading, with an underlying thought of a dying artistic

profession? Or is it only due to a lack of understanding and passion for this form of visual and theatrical expression among the PQ leadership?

Therefore, some of the questions that need to be answered are:

What is by the PQ's definition a *contemporary* theatre costume? The actor's *second skin*¹ or something that is not there? Clothes that cover the body, but have no meaning? The message sent through an artistic installation or object in space with its own dramaturgy, or something invisible and intangible? Contemporary art? Something that makes us uneasy? Or simply the work of art in extinction?

It is my belief that these are some of the issues that the future leadership of the PQ should pay due attention to, because costume design still exists as a very living and productive means of artistic expression, and costume (or installation or object) is still an essential part of shaping the performance space, with clear messages and dramaturgies.

Looking at the last exhibition as a whole, I believe that the *political message* in the PQ's concept of prioritizing large

and abundantly financed projects in comparison to more modest and less expensive ones resulted in artistic projects of quite different qualities and sometimes even indiscernible poetics. The (too) large number of exhibition venues led to difficulties, not only in viewing but also in comparing and appraising. The differences in quality and expression were so huge that they were sometimes difficult to follow. Like the cardboard boxes next to highly aestheticized and thoughtful rich productions.

I believe that this was also reflected in the decisions of the jury who chose



Student Section, Prague Quadrennial 2015. Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



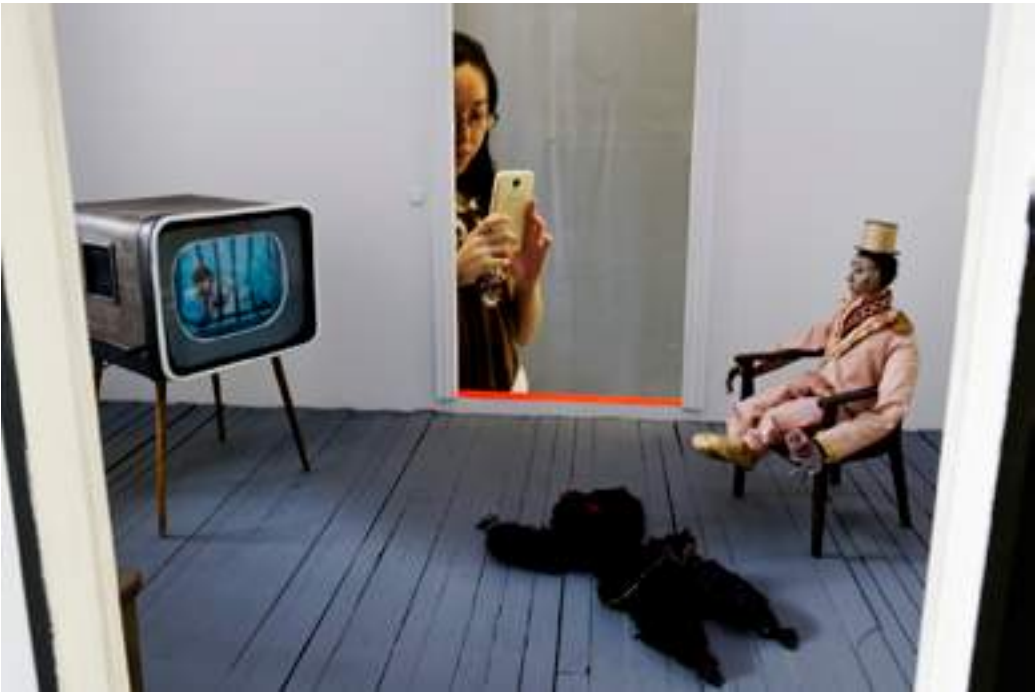
The Tribes, Prague Quadrennial 2015. Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

¹ The paraphrase of Tairov's idea of an actor's second skin.



Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Student Section, Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



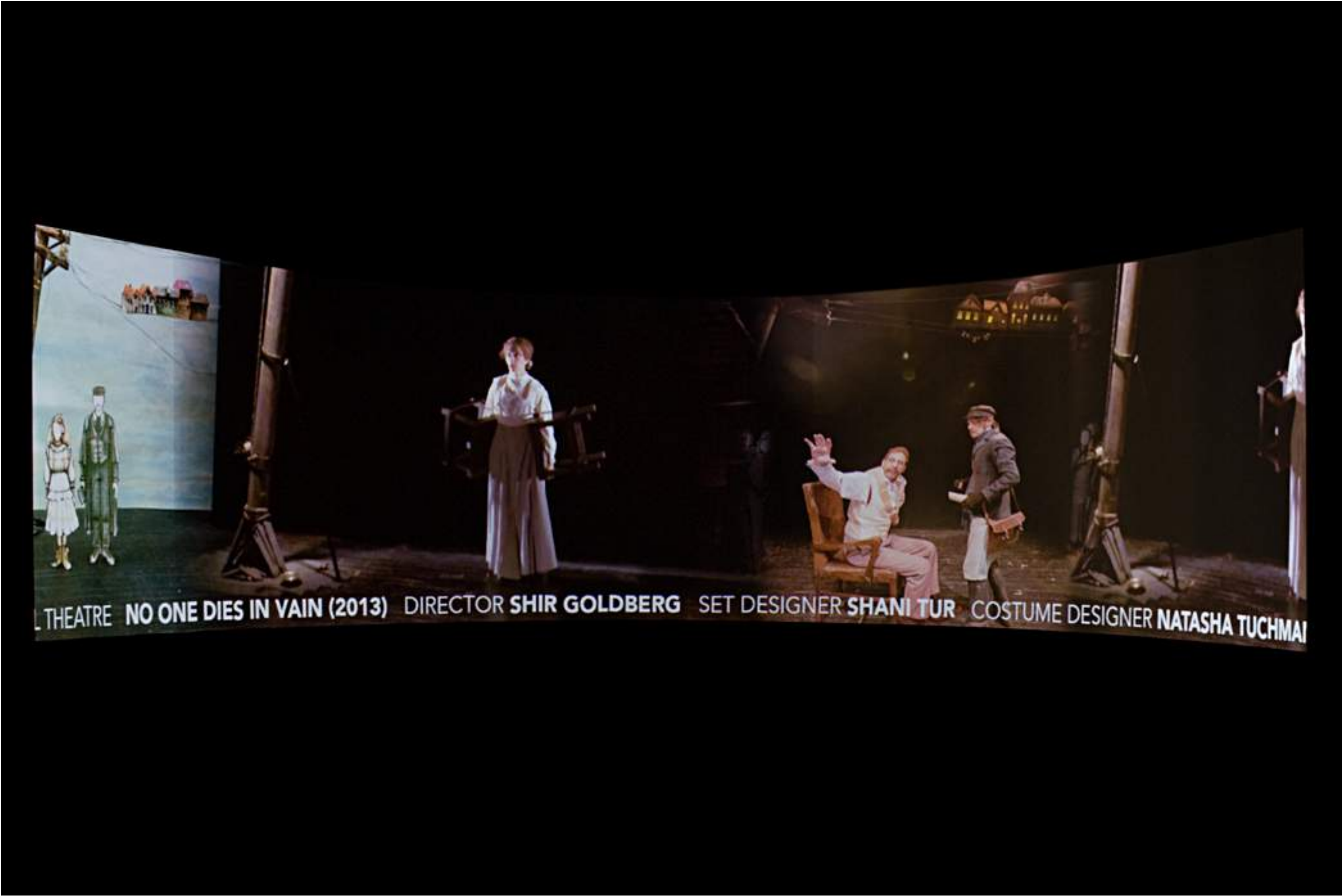
the awarded projects on the basis of separate individual viewings by each jury member and individual suggestions for each artistic segment. The result is that some of the awards were given to truly outstanding projects, but some of the award decisions are more difficult to explain.

It is therefore necessary to rethink the future of the PQ and its guidelines, which should include equally each and every form of visual theatre: by means of interactive stage and performance workshops, not only modern and new approaches, but also top quality classic productions. The value of theatre architecture should be more pronounced, including light design, sound design and video. Costume design should be appraised on equal terms as set design! Or do we want to go back in history and fight for space on the playbill or in the production team?



Student Section, Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

Student Section, Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



The Tribes,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Section of Nations and Regions, Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



The Tribes,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
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Section of Nations and Regions,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
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Student Section,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



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Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Student Section,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.



Student Section,
Prague Quadrennial 2015.
Photo: Prague Quadrennial.

BIO**IVANA BAKAL**

Ivana Bakal is the head of the Croatian Association of Artists of Applied Arts (ULUPUH) and its Film and Theatre Section. She has been professionally involved in costume design since 1986. She studied at the Faculty of Textile Technology where she graduated from the School of Higher Education obtaining a degree in clothes design in 1987. In 2010 she received a master's degree in costume design from the same school. In 2015 she received doctoral degree in the Postgraduate doctoral programme in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts with the doctoral dissertation entitled Theatre costume between performance, installation and object — visual theatre.

Bakal designed numerous costumes, a number of sets, conducted large professional projects, and held individual and group exhibitions at home and abroad. She is the author and editor of monographs of Croatian set and costume design. She is co-author of: 100 years of set and costume design (1909-2009). She is editor of: 100 years of set and costume design (1909—2009), Drago Turina — set designer, Recognisably different — costume designer Ika Škomrlj, and From costume to costume design — Croatian theatre costume design. She is a docent — associate professor in the Graduate programme of costume design at the Faculty of Textile Technology in Zagreb. She has been a member of the Croatian Freelance Artists' Association since 1990. She has received numerous awards.

Hadi E. Damien

17

The PQ in Shape, in Core, in Means

Hadi E. Damien

Since its inception in 1967, the Prague Quadrennial has been reinventing itself to be aligned with its purpose: presenting, every four years, the latest trends in theatre design. From my introduction to the concept of the PQ in the early months of 2011, to my PQ2011 (one word PQ2011) visit and then my curation of the first participation of Lebanon during PQ2015 (one word PQ2015), the PQ seemed to be shifting from an exhibition of model and photography displays to a pronounced, buzzing happening with emphasis on social interactions through live performances, presentations, workshops and discussions. As the notion of exchange was accentuated, organizers, in 2015, invested islets throughout the Old Town of Prague and called on the curators to think their venues as experiences rather than displays. Most came up with installations for the visitors to interact with(in), others proposed performances to attend, and others suggested itineraries to follow whilst exploring exhibited works. The PQ pushes the world out into the streets, thus back to the early theatre expression in the public space, under the sun, in the open-air, and dubs it "expanded scenography", a stretched concept of performance environments that comprises not only scenography for stage with its costumes, lighting, sound and multimedia, but also site-specific, urban, embodied, immersive, interventionist and inter-medial performances.

At the end of PQ2015, the organizers called for an auction sale that was mainly addressed for those who wanted to dispose of their materials and reduce the fees of shipping back the exhibits to their place of origin. The auction sale is an efficient, eco-friendly, responsible system that limits waste and encourages recycling. However, it was restricted to the Schengen countries (as non-Schengen residents need to comply with customs regulations and duties) with the exception of a handful of international exhibitors who shipped their exhibitions in their personal luggage (which is what Lebanon did) and could thus participate in the sale. However, the disposal of these materials raises a question about the longevity of the exhibition. Why should the exhibitions end there and then?

The exhibition is initially conceived and realized to serve in the PQ, with some aspirations of additional display. Organizers and curators spend many months preparing the PQ and working on new editions. The PQ is the culmination of a four-year work in progress, not only a social event for theatre-lovers and people interested in visiting Prague and gawking at exhibited works. Locking the exhibit in a basement, or demolishing it like a scenic set we dismantle the day after closing night limits the longevity of the work and muffles the PQ bubble. Even though the exhibit is executed to serve in the PQ,

shouldn't it exist beyond the ten days of the PQ?

Capitalizing on the main PQ exhibitions is a marketing asset and of visibility value, which the organizers and curators should use and benefit from. Curators believe that they bring to Prague, every four years, the "best of" recent scenography and performance (design) from their country/region of origin. Their display/exhibition/assemblage of works is, per se, a pure exploration and promotion of both scenography as well as their country. Planning a touring exhibition in the post-PQ years is, for instance, a perfect way of extending the PQ edition beyond its ten days. It also serves as a mobile advertisement for the PQ and a marketing incentive that increases awareness and actively contributes to growth of the PQ and its public expansion. There is no doubt that financial limitations represent great challenges for executing this tour; however, the magnitude of the touring exhibition (whether it is the full exhibition or only parts of the PQ) could be tailored depending on available finances. The PQ media visibility starts with published announcements a few weeks before the PQ, then takes off on around the third day (of the total ten), and then culminates with feature reports during the month following the end of the PQ. A touring exhibition introduces added value



"UNDO_LATIONS", the national exhibition of Lebanon, curated by Hadi E. Damien and designed by Cornelia Krafft. Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: Ad Achkar.



"100 Bags of Milk", the student exhibition of Lebanon, curated by Hadi E. Damien and designed by Cornelia Krafft. Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: Ad Achkar.



In the same vein, the PQ has everything to gain by defining a proper marketing position. Firstly, when is each PQ name variation used? When is it the “Prague Quadrennial” and when is it the “Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space”? In the case of the social media outlets, what is the defined identity: PQ2015 or PQ15 or PQ’15? As these acronyms logically revert to the same event, the use of multiple identities backfires on the online strategy and affects the general tracking, exploration and listing of the event. Secondly, the consistency within the description/nature of the PQ is another crucial point to highlight. Is the PQ a festival or not? The website states that the PQ is not a festival (<http://www.pq.cz/en/practical-information/faq/how-can-i-exhibit-perform-pq>). However, the e-press release of July 8, 2015 describes the PQ as a festival. Moreover, and with the EFFE award of September 2015, the PQ is now recognized in the festivals circuit. In this dimension, how does the PQ position itself in the spectrum of festivals and festival practices?

* * * *

to the spectrum of communication as it builds on from the PQ ten-day media impact and will therefore benefit from the PQ exposure, which will be translated into greater visibility and more efficient communication. The PQ post-event, stretched over the four years, extends

the life of the PQ, brings the various PQ editions closer together, and positions the Quadrennial as an open platform for exploration. It will also greatly serve future funding initiatives, as it breaks the idea of the PQ as an exhibition limited to a ten-day time frame.

In its social mutation that moves the PQ from a display nested in an exhibition hall to a live, vibrant event of general public interest spread throughout the city, many orientations in favor of the immersive aspect of scenography were



"Merry-go-round", the national exhibition of Bulgaria.
Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space.
Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: David Kumermann.

implemented. The most prominent one is about the nature of the exhibit within the main section of the PQ. But what are we presenting? This is a question to both the organizers and the curators.

Is the genre of the exhibit a potpourri of the best scenography works from the place of origin? Is it a thematic display of scenography works? Is it a work commissioned for the PQ? Is it an installation by an individual or by a group of designers (therefore one exhibited work)? A display model of a theatre building from somewhere? A performance space? So what is put on display? Is it a selection of multiple works or is it one work (a statement)?

Also, how did the curator proceed with the selection of the work/designer per se? Why did the curator choose this person (or group of designers) in particular and not somebody else? Why was this range of works selected and not other ones?

What are we inviting visitors to focus on? Is the highlighted focus of the exhibition on the exhibited theatre works themselves, those that were staged in the country of origin and presented during the PQ (through sound, drawings, models and photographs), or is the highlighted focus on the general display (the shell that comprises the exhibited theatre works)?

Still moving in the same direction: How do curators think their exhibition for the PQ? How does an exhibited work in the PQ differ from some other work exhibited in the Biennial of Venice or in the São Paulo Biennial exhibition? Do we tackle a performance design exhibition in the same way that we address a fine art exhibition?

What defines the borderline between a fine art exhibition and an exhibition for scenic or performance design? Is an exhibition of performance design supposed to be performative? And what makes an exhibition performative (or a performance)? Is it performative because it is kinetic, like a carousel that turns (the carousel that was exhibited in PQ2015 was turning by itself. People did not need to turn it themselves.)? Melting ice planks sandwiched between books carry a dimension of motion: the motion of the dripping water. In this sense, a video is also motion, but is it performative? Is it performative because it is a defined route that the visitor explores and moves with? (The visitor is "performing", tilting his head, walking from one point to another without touching the displayed items, touching an exhibited piece, etc.) Otherwise, is it performative when it moves the audience, produces a reaction (for the visitor to have a counter-reaction)? In the other case, is the exhibit less suitable for an



"Merry-go-round", the national exhibition of Bulgaria. Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space. Czech Republic, Prague, 2015. Photo: David Kumermann.

exhibition of performance design when the visitor walks with his arms crossed, with no visible physical interaction?

Outlining these issues is not in opposition with the multidisciplinary approach of the PQ. On the contrary, it builds up to a sharp presence that would have a greater impact on the PQ and contribute to its general synergy/narrative. The overall PQ visit itinerary often does not tell a story, as most of the exhibitions are independent

extremely large for interpretation and socially divergent. Therefore, a harmony was not met in most exhibits that still seemed like islets spread into the venues that were hosting the PQ.

And venues were paramount in this thirteenth edition. From a technical and practical point of view, the organizers took a great risk in spreading the PQ throughout Old Town, even though they should have capitalized on this spread to gain in visibility and therefore achieve greater marketing exposure. The venues, despite their natural limitations and specifications, offered, through their beautiful and thrilling cachet, a bespoke shell to host the exhibits. However, despite the multiple calls of the organizers to think the exhibitions in site-specificity and uniqueness of the place, most exhibitions shut themselves away in boxes (or in darkness) and blocked off any communication with the venue. Most of the exhibitions could have been placed anywhere else, with no changes in their layout, energy and feel. Conceiving an exhibit to be specific to the venue where it is displayed is a challenge in itself, given the floor load (kg/m^2), the access to the space, and the rules and regulations in place for the classified and protected places. The layout and the display of the exhibit are affected by the site-specificity, and the organizers asked the curators to think the general display of the exhibit

platforms with no specific alignment. For this, one could directly blame the organizers for not setting up a storytelling route for the exhibition. However, often the curators do not submit their proposals in due time, and often the final display is not in accordance with the originally submitted models/plans/pictures. Placing the PQ2015 under the SharedSpace: Music, Weather, Politics provided a general theme, an overall literature for the PQ. However, the three themes were

as much as the exhibited works (if there were exhibited works).

Incomplete communication stretched beyond the issue of the venues hosting the exhibition and the exhibits themselves. The Space exhibition, for example, one of the main components of PQ2015, had to reinvent itself because of submitted derailed entries. Despite clear, long and detailed descriptions, as well as scheduled Skype sessions with the aim of securing consistent submissions in accordance with the project, the Space exhibition did not receive efficient entries, and, as a result, the artistic team had to shift and reinvent the exhibition. The multiple amendments to the project in response to the submitted entries highlighted a major drawback in the general process. When asked to think outside the box and present new ways of architecture display for performative space and architecture, almost none of the Space entries were suitable for the exhibition. Is it because the curators did not proceed properly? Is it because they did not invest enough time in it? Could they not find the proper people to work on it? Did the artists understand the project? Was there a proper curator-artist follow-up? Here, the role of the curator is again paramount, as the curator is a talent scout who commissions artists and designers. The curator is also part of the design development, as he/she accompanies the

designers through their creative/thinking process; a guidance that always carries some subjectivity. The case of the Space exhibition must be thought about.

* * * *

Securing funds and financial sustainability are two of the core challenges faced by both the organizers and the curators. The latter are often heard complaining about the lack of government and public support. A potential reason can be traced back to the “Call for Applications for Countries and Regions”. The organizers, back in January 2014, did not request the individuals who were confirming the participation of their country (or region) to submit an official endorsement from the government or the relevant ministries. By excluding the involvement of the officials right from the start, we find ourselves facing non-responsiveness when we reach out to them for funding.

One of the particularities of a government lies in the rotation in positions. Working with government organs, one starts from scratch with every event (a new minister, a new secretary, a new director). Therefore, a general presentation of the PQ is crucial in order to answer questions such as: How many people attend the event? What is their age bracket? What is their background? What is their spending ratio? etc. Basic statistics as well as lists

from the accreditation center of previous PQ editions can secure these answers that would enhance the interest of sponsors in the PQ. As governments and public funds plan their budget and contributions ahead of time, it is important to approach them twelve months before the upcoming PQ edition.

The PQ traditionally takes place in June; therefore, the active funding quest within the national delegations should start a year before. This means that, by June of the year that precedes the PQ, curators should be able to submit a sponsorship proposal (or a funding request) that includes final drawings and model pictures of the exhibitions, a list of all other activities, and full biographies of the members of the delegation. The submitted document is conceived according to the visual identity guidelines for the upcoming PQ edition, which ensures a consistent image for the project. Within the limits of availability, the organizers are assisting the curators with their needs and provide them (free of charge) with postcards and printed material for the upcoming PQ, as well as merchandising materials, leaflets and promotional prints from previous PQ editions.

In the case of the next PQ (to be held in June 2019), it is advised that the curatorial work start around October 2017, with the very effective Curators’ Symposium, in

order to secure enough time to develop the materials for the sponsorship proposals (such as the exhibitions and the happenings within PQ2019). In this context, the issue of funds and salaries is raised, especially since most curators are not paid for their PQ work and usually both the organizers and the curators hold other positions in theatre productions and the academic sphere.

Here is a suggested simplified timeframe for the preparation of PQ2019:

April 2017	PQ2019 Call for Participation
October 2017	Start of the curatorial work (Curators’ Symposium)
April 2018	Curators send to the PQ their entries for the National and Student Sections for technical approval (floor load, access to the space, rules and regulations of the places)
May 2018	PQ finalizes and communicates the PQ2019 visual identity and its guidelines
June 2018	PQ replies in regards to the received proposals and entries
June — September 2018	Quest for sponsors
January 2019	Confirmation of sponsors and start of the exhibition production
May 2019	Shipment of exhibits
June 2019	PQ2019 (NOTE TO EDITOR: PQ2019 one word)

* * * *

Curators represent the country or the region they come from. They conceive the exhibitions and plan the logistics of their participation. However, as the PQ opens calls for both countries and individuals, the organizers are invited to inform the curator (or national coordinator) about other accredited participants or visitors from the same country. This is useful, as visitors ask exhibitors about performances and happenings done by fellow citizens of which the curators are often unaware. Also, putting the curators and the visitors/performers in contact with each other contributes to a more precise publication/booklet and could positively affect the general logistics of the participation of the country.

In a similar sense, within the framework for PQ2015, the organizers issued a list of all of the accredited people in the PQ, featuring their occupation, date of arrival, date of departure and contact details — a useful document that stimulates networking and communication.

PQ is a culmination of continuous creative work and practice in scenography and performance design. It is a buzzy and feisty, overwhelming program that should also include silent pauses and moments to reflect and freely think, without intellectualization or the fear of missing out on something.

PQ is also invited to take into consideration mobility and access of physically challenged people (wheelchairs, crutches, etc.).

* * * *

In conclusion, scenographers and scenography are both the reason and the driving force of the PQ. Scenographers are those who train under practice and work within the director's notion of space and time. They are able to follow the path/dynamics that transform a text into drama and bring to it their understanding of performance, direction and fine arts. A scenographer is someone who has acquired the actor's flair through practice and movement, who can evolve and move forward with a group instead of locking himself in a workshop. A scenographer is a dialoguer who engineers a dialogue and then silently withdraws to the backstage.

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THE VIDEO LINK

A 13-minute video recording of this text is available on YouTube through the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rVEi632LowQ>

Masoomeh (Raha) Alinejad

18

A Futures Study of Visual Perception and Visual Technology in the Prague Quadrennial

Masoomeh (Raha) Alinejad

It seems that visual perception of performance design and space has increasingly been influenced by other arts and even the sciences. The course of this process may provide us with a pattern that we can use to make guesses about the development of these arts. Professor Arnold Aronson's predictions about digital developments as a replacement for real action on the stage, which he made in his article *The Future of Scenography* (Theatre Design and Technology, Winter 2010), and his description of the history of scenography as "*a pendulum swinging between space and image*" indicate that scenography and shifts in the development of human perception and understanding occur concurrently. This, on the one hand, reveals the necessity of studying the future of modern sciences for the creation of new works in scenography in an event like the Prague Quadrennial, which is the most important source of support and leadership in this branch of art. On the other hand, the study of humans as recipients and spectators, whose visual perception is changeable over time, can be a topic for more serious research in the future. Fundamental changes in space and scenography occur based on the evolution of human perception. As the Gestalt school based its experiments on the visual perception of human beings, the sciences, such as psychology, can scrutinize the process of this perception and its variables in

stage and space. The Prague Quadrennial has the potential to hold futures studies workshops based on the variables of visual perception and the changes in the new sciences. It is likely that these sciences will allow us to have a different perception of the invisible (visual) aspect of space. Therefore, the foundations of visual perception are undergoing changes that can be studied from two aspects: firstly, the visible world, and secondly, the invisible world. Are visible or invisible aspects of space the same for audiences? Might this undergo fundamental changes in the future? If there is such a possibility, then the position and mental experiences of the humans of the future and their understanding of the aesthetics of their time will undergo changes. Yet another question is: In what form will technology allow these experiences? Both these predictions allow for a possibility that can be further discussed by the Prague Quadrennial. Worthy of note is that the Prague Quadrennial may itself be the pioneer and creator of this possibility. Following this issue, an attempt is made in this paper, firstly, to study the process of the audience's visual perception in different dimensions of space and performance design, tracing it from the past to the possible future; and, secondly, to analyze the course of changes that visual technology and science have undergone and will probably further undergo. These can be pursued in the

form of two research workshops at the Prague Quadrennial.

INTRODUCTION

The experience of presence in different times has undergone several changes. In the performing arts, both the creator and the audience experience presence at the same time. A comprehensive perception occurs in space, and its parameters of quality change according to the audience's perception. In the history of scenic design and, in particular, scenography, this perception has been created based on two aspects: the creator's visual understanding and the audience's visual understanding. As stated in Gestalt's theory: *"a requirement to have a look at the universe is a mutual interaction between the presented features of a thing and the natural feature of the viewer's mind"* (Arnheim, 2014, p. 02). This theory investigates things as perceivable images and audiences as perceivers. Yet the creator's aim and method of representation can serve as a force that directs the audience's perception. Throughout history, from the magical feature of images and the audience's perception of supernatural forces invited to rituals, including the forms which humans use to visually express social criticisms that are made possible through the perception of those creating these rituals and forms, the arts

have always represented the evolution of visual perception, which, in turn, has been affecting the visual aspects of scenography. It seems that studying this evolution may establish a pattern for predicting the future of scenography, and the PQ event, which is taking place in the present, is considered to be a milestone for predicting and directing the future. As seen in the past decades, and particularly in 1967, the scenography exhibitions in Prague, with the attendance of avant-garde artists like Svoboda, Koltia, Kantor, Dali and others, show that theatre design and its mutual boundaries with other branches of art may have an independent identity; moreover, the audience may have a role in the performance. Further, following the expansion of the Prague Quadrennial to include different experience-oriented events, experimentation with the audience's visual perception has been carried out using various methods. When these experiences, artists, and experiencers are brought together, the PQ can be considered as a way for scenographers to have in-advance, open opportunities for experiencing even before designing anything. The PQ can be a workshop for the future. It seems that in the times yet to come, artists will be able to evaluate two experiences in the experimental laboratories of this event: firstly, through conducting visual perception workshops, which can be applied and developed

based on Gestalt's method; and, secondly, workshops to create visual technologies. The PQ offers the ability to progress in the evaluation of visual perception to a point beyond contemporary scenography, and this can be obtained in workshops before going on stage. Additionally, the visual technology creation workshops teach skills that lead to distinctive achievements never experienced before on stage.

CONDUCTING VISUAL PERCEPTION WORKSHOPS DURING THE PQ

Humans live in an environment in which they define the world primarily based on what they can observe. In fact, when this visible environment changes, the visual perception of humans also changes. This is a world of which several parts, from the depths of the oceans and space, to anywhere on the Earth, can be observed at the same time; a world that makes ultrasonography of the body and observation of its energy auras possible. Everything, from viewing place to view range and visual signs, has changed on stage, from the form of mere audience participation to including previous experiences and the audience's psychological complexities. This is because we are always under the influence of those aspects of the environment in which we live, aspects that provide a logical justification for our visual perception. On the other hand, those parameters

affecting the investigation of visual perception make it necessary to conduct experimental workshops. Investigating visual perception of the stage and its different characteristics may influence scenography and its methods. *"Much of the existing knowledge and understanding about scenography is bound up with its practice and with the tacit knowledge of scenographers, and for this reason practice-led research is now being widely adopted and developed specifically for scenographic research."* (Kershaw, 2011, p. 119)

The visual experiences of theatrical artists act as pre-defined sights, but should the invisible "space parameter", as Schlemmer names it, become visible, how will we encounter the visible world? Is what we know today as "negative space" not visible? Imagine that the so-called negative space of the scene becomes visible as wavy auras or other objects that can be drawn by light or some other specific device. If this were to happen, how would the creator's visual perception and that of their audience change?

As another example, imagine that there is a way to make all opaque solid objects transparent, making it possible to see through consecutive images. Investigations of phenomena such as this, along with thousands of other features, are possible in experimental workshops at the PQ. Additionally, the psychological

aspects of the audience, ranging from their conscious and subconscious minds to personal experiences, can be assessed and experienced. With the large number of images that continue to surround the audiences of performing arts and other branches of art, people's visual experiences are rapidly increasing, which may cause both their subconscious minds as well as their visual perception to undergo changes at the same pace. Experiences that a creator could have as a viewer at such a workshop would include advancements in viewing experience, which might have an effect on their creativity. A visual perception workshop can be planned in such a way that both the capabilities of the script and its sentences as well as their relationship with visual space are preserved, and the participants can experience going beyond the visual space by focusing on a specific script. The experiences one might have at a workshop of this type involve the psychological effects that any script has on the subconscious mind, as well as its opposite effect on the recognition of the script itself and the creation of the visual space of a particular scene under its influence. Since it is possible to experience visual perception, but psychological knowledge of it can only be obtained practically and creatively, it is possible to predict that, in the workshop experiences, the mutual influences

of the creator and the audience on visual perception will be variable and progressive. With this type of experience, the pace of changes does not depend merely on those experiences that are applied; rather, it can be interdependent and constantly undergo great change. The PQ event potentially makes it possible to understand being present in both the visible as well as the invisible worlds.

THE VISUAL TECHNOLOGY CREATION WORKSHOP

The name Visual Technology Creation might seem related to the technical sciences, but creating technology can in fact consist of a new method of using current technology, leading to new technical achievements. Getting to know the surrounding technical world and its everyday developments makes it possible to predict occurrences, such as the replacement of stage elements, as referred to by Professor Aronson, with holographic images, and this is a significant ability. If we were able to choose multiple futures and technological advancements with the press of a key, what would that key be and which future would we choose? The most important feature of such a workshop consists of collecting and allowing ideas that use current technologies in order to create something new. In this respect, we can

benefit from ideas to introduce new visual technologies. The second feature of the practical and experimental process of this type of workshop is that it is in accord with methods of utilizing technology. In the history of modern art, the term "scenography", or "scenic design", has been correlated with other non-theatrical visual experiences, which makes it possible for a play to be performed outside of the performance space assigned to a play that is dependent on a script, a director, and an actor.

"In the contemporary performance with the use of new technologies, within the blurring of boundaries of various art forms, and in the cross- fertilization of developing new art stage platform (theatre, installation and performance technology), is an exploration and experimentation with trying to find the margins and limits of new forms, the interaction of scenography and performance. The use of technology in this performance is located in the opening relationship of performer, screen and the operation of the first projected image." (Oddy, 2006, p. 41)

"Modern performances are, in turn, looking for new experiences and new utilizations of visual technologies. Using these technologies, however, is limited to the performance place and facilities. With the prediction of the technology

creation workshops, it can go beyond the performance place, enabling participants to study and exchange thoughts. Furthermore, the use of new materials and facilities can be challenging for designers. ' Svoboda believed that adaptation of new technologies and new material was inevitable and necessary if theatre was to reflect its own time. At the same time, he was keen to point out that it was not technology itself which was important but the way that it was intended to work and the dramaturgical impact it was calculated to effect. Svoboda's interest in and willingness to experiment with the way in which technology could be harnessed for dramatic purposes drove him to believe that it was a knowledge of the technical which made for creativity." (McKinney, 2009, p. 134)

The innovative technology laboratory would provide a considerable number of participants with the opportunity to learn from technicians and to perform new artistic experiments . Remarkable results cannot be expected in the beginning stages of the experience; however, the participants' intensive practice, repetition, and thought exchange, without any imposed limits, would be effective. At this time, experiencing such a process would only be possible through the PQ, and only if all the countries taking part in the event actively exchange culture and trends.

CONCLUSION

Although the modern world has achieved technical improvements, matters that may seem rudimentary are still being investigated. Empiricism is one of the approaches resulting in new solutions and views. Regarding performing arts, and scenography in particular, the Prague event is the most important fundament making it possible to experience, observe, think, and interact altogether. The PQ is like a great art movement of its time, and it seems that it has influenced the modern scenography movement, other visual arts, and architecture, and has made audiences and creators designers for themselves. Different parts of this artistic event are pioneers in empiricism, and the outcome can turn into a scenographic method or style. Studying the expansion process of the PQ and visualizing its main directions as a productive collection can create more research opportunities. In addition to seminars, discussions, exhibitions, and the traditional parts of conferences and festivals, it provides a basis for new experiences, which too have visual and conceptual effects on the conscious and subconscious minds of the designers and audience. Shared space is where the designer and the audience are at unity in their logic and sentiment. This unity is shared with the community, and this is what can be expected from the performance of a powerful play. Walking

alongside the old and new buildings of a city, observing them and recreating and sharing opinions about the story of how they were built is like the methods that actors apply, and it occurs because of the interactive view between architecture and theatre. Various stories are retold with new styles and it is the form and content of things that are narrative. It is as if the human soul has left stories in the objects. The presence of images is like a celebration of objects which are the narrators of visible and hidden stories by themselves. In another light, designers are like dramatic cooks. Their ingredients are the world and their food is the story of mixing the things in this world, inviting the audience to a new universe. Having said this, two scientific workshops with their focus on experimental visual perception and technology creation can improve modern scenography, and serve as a way to educate sophisticated designers. The PQ is like a factory which reviews its product every day; therefore, it will review artistic events in the future. Fundamental developments and modern approaches are predicted to be the result of this great artistic event in 2016. In the future, it is believed that the PQ will affect the visual perception of the world through scenography and will be a leading movement in these fields.

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BIO

MASOOMEH (RAHA) ALINEJAD

Masoomeh(Raha) Alinejad began teaching scenic design at Tehran University Art from 2010. She has worked as a faculty member of this University. She has written many articles in Iranian art journals about space in Bauhaus Theatre, Dramaturgy of the Iranian classic text, creativity and training .She Has designed for many professional theatre in Tehran theatre and she was a participant in Scenofest 2013. Additionally she has taught Drafting for the theatre, puppet scenery, Drawing, 3Ds Max and Visual art in University for the past six years. Raha holds an MA in Directing from the Tehran University of Art, and B.A in Stage design from Tehran University . Also she is a trainer of the Interior Design.

Marcel Freydefont

19

Prague Quadrennial between 1999 and 2015: Leaving The Theatre?

Marcel Freydefont

The history of the Prague Quadrennial is well known. The idea to clearly distinguish scenography from visual arts and single out its eminent role in theatre was born at an Art Biennial in São Paulo in the 50s. The PQ emerged from an art biennial and evolved into a Quadrennial of scenography and theatre architecture in the form of an exhibition.

Between 1999 and 2015 the PQ underwent a transformation. This transformation was also reflected in the terminology used in its title: even though the Czech title retains the term "scenography" (*Pražské Quadriennale scénografie a divadelního prostoru*), in English it is replaced by the expression *Performance Design and Space*. It seems as if today's PQ is aiming at leaving the theatre to become a contemporary art event¹, a "theatre without theatre", to quote the title of an exhibition organized in Barcelona in 2007 and then in Lisbon in 2007–2008.

This transformation must be examined in the context of theatre and art transformations since 1995 and can be characterized by two parallel phenomena:

¹ "In addition to the changes in quantity and size over the past decades, the Prague Quadrennial has undergone some major transformations from international 'exhibition' towards an 'event' that includes many live performances, presentations, workshops and discussions.

the artialization of theatre and the theatricalization of art.

ARTIALIZATION OF THEATRE

Performance Design and Space is not only yet another Anglicism (a questionable one on top of that), but also an indicator of a change of tropism called the *artialization*² of theatre. Art (a generic term used in singular form to designate what in the 19th century was called Fine Arts and in the 20th century Plastic or Visual Arts) becomes a model for theatre mainly for the following reasons: the emergence of performative forms, literature losing its influence (it wouldn't be possible to write a theatre play today), the progressive emancipation of space, image, sound, play, and body taking place in the second half of the 20th century and shattering the conventions of performance, and new technologies.

² This notion was coined in France by Alain Roger to denote art intervention in the transformation of nature and the discovering of landscape: "The idea of 'artialized nature' appears in Montaigne's writings (*Essays*, Book III, Upon some verses of Virgil). Charles Lalo refers to it allusively in his work *Introduction à l'esthétique* (Partis, Armand Colin, 1912). I gave it a nominal and dynamic status — artialisation — in *Nus et paysages* (1978) and most of all it is the backbone of my work *Court traité du paysage* (1997)". Alain Roger — *La Mouvance, cinquante mots pour le paysage*, Ed. de la Villette, collection Passage, 1999. Gilles Lipovetsky and Jean Serroy used this notion to refer to the capitalist integration of artistic procedures into production and consumption (*L'esthétisation du monde*, 2013). In this text the term "artialization of theatre" is used to refer to art intervention seen as a model for the transformation of theatre.

In 1988 Bernard Dort considered the 20th century's rise of the director and the dominance of theatrical performance only the first signs of a more radical change: "Today we can take notice of the progressive emancipation of the elements of the theatrical performance: it implies a change of structure in the performance — the abandonment of an organic unity laid down in advance, and the choice of a meaningful polyphony open to the spectator [...] Text, space, play, ... become emancipated. Thus the question of the text and the scene has shifted. It is not anymore about knowing which one, the text or the scene, prevails. Their relation, as well as the relations between the components of the scene, don't even have to be perceived in terms of unity or subordination. A competition is taking place, a contradiction is developing in front of us, spectators. Therefore theatricality is not merely this *density of signs* that Roland Barthes spoke of. It is also the drifting of these signs, the impossibility of their union, and their confrontation before the spectator of this emancipated performance. The director loses suzerainty in this kind of practice¹."

Dort supports his analysis by quoting Heiner Müller's reflection on his work with Robert Wilson: "All the elements of his

theatre are equal. The text, the lighting, the choreography, everything is of the same importance." This analysis distantly echoes Antonin Artaud's call for a "prodigious flight of forms" and "spatial poetry" based on a specific scene language, or Edward Gordon Craig's theatre of the future. In his work published in 1997² French director, author and philosopher Denis Guénoun took note of this "performance's turn towards pure presentation" which drives the theatre towards a reidentification and makes it abandon "*drama*" in order to return to *praxis*, to "*pragma*", causing a "displacement of the nature of the theatre". *Theatre-pragma* takes over from *theatre-drama*.

This artialization of theatre was facilitated by the propensity of contemporary art to incorporate many different media and to demand a total freedom resulting from its own transdisciplinarity. Even if this tendency is considered valid by many actors and spectators, it is not the only way for theatre to reinvent itself. Stating that the aim of theatre is to unite the text and the scene through play, Dort noted that its history in the West proves that this union "is always based on compromises and partial, unstable balances", temporary

balances between these components. Theatrical unity is contradictory, heterogeneous and often conflicting.

In 1999 this emancipation and shattering of conventions were the subject of Hans-Thies Lehmann's theory of postdramatic theatre³. According to Lehmann, the regeneration of theatre is based on it becoming closer with modern and contemporary art. The postdramatic theatre demands its own reality, but not anymore as a mode, means or intermediary of performance, but as a purpose, as an object, as an aim in an ultimate emancipation of its referent: it has no other referent than itself, it constitutes the signifier without the signified, something called a signifier-signifier, similarly to Adorno's "material, pure and simple being". Henri Meschonnic gives the following possible definition of *signifier-signifier*: "There is no more sound or meaning, there is no more double articulation of language, there are only signifiers. And the signifier changes its meaning because it is no longer set in opposition to the signified⁴." Romeo Castellucci asserts that it's "more about producing the signifier than the signified."

It seems like this model is something a part of the theatre is striving for. The PQ follows this movement. An installation-performance would constitute a self-sufficient scenography. Another tendency that seems to support this transformation is the increasing influence of academia with their focus on theory and the world of professionals and artists losing its influence and visibility. The original aim of the PQ, to showcase the reality of theatre production in a given country over the last four years through scenography and theatre architecture, was undermined and dispersed. The problem does not lie in the larger understanding of scenography (exhibition scenography, scenography and street theatre) but in replacing the reality of theatrical life with a thematic event. What if the festivals in Cannes or Avignon came up with an obligatory topic?

Even though the general emancipation of arts occurring in the 20th century entailed the emancipation of theatre performance and of its components, we still think performance remains the main condition for the existence of theatre as art and practice. Destroying the idea of theatrical performance to the benefit of pure presence means heading down a blind alley: every performance is obviously a theatrical performance too. Therefore performance has no end and cannot exist without a play area. Not everything in a performance makes a

¹ Bernard Dort. *La représentation émancipée*. Actes Sud, 1988.

² Denis Guénoun, *Le Théâtre est-il nécessaire?*, essay, Circé, Belval, 1997

³ Hans-Thies Lehmann. *Postdramatisches Theater*. Verlag der Autoren, Frankfurt am Main 1999. *Le théâtre postdramatique*, Paris, L'Arche éditeur, 2002

⁴ Henri Meschonnic. *Politique du rythme, politique du sujet*. Verdier, Paris, 1995

text and not everything is a text, even though we can make theatre out of everything. There will always be some kind of text, action, and dramaturgy. The action, the active movement, and the speech are the object of the text while dramaturgy weaves the action, whatever the form given to the plot, narrative or not, random or not. Scenographic and directorial work do not get mixed up with dramaturgy, even though they contribute to the scenic composition. Scenography is not dramaturgy nor direction. The exaggerated promise of non-theatrical, of a theatre without theatre, of a theatre that wants to replace theatricality with life, and the artialization of theatre are a theoretical fantasy.

THEATRICALIZATION OF ART

The artialization of theatre is a symmetrical phenomenon to the *theatricalization of art*, seemingly erasing old genres. The surge of forms related to time and event starting in 1950 — event, happening, performance, installation, body art — questions traditional media such as painting and sculpture by preferring conceptual, situational, contextual, and physical forms which dematerialize and theatricalize art. From the beginning of the 20th century, and from 1950 in an even speedier manner, various factors that contribute to the phenomenon of the theatricalization of

art have been progressively taken into account: the exhibition as a medium, the presence of someone who is watching and in some cases of the artist himself or herself, the activation of art by transitioning from work to action, the site of the artistic performance. The emancipation of art is three-fold: from other crafts by stressing the peculiarity of art, from reality and all esthetics subordinated to the exact figuration of reality such as naturalism, and from the prescribed meaning by claiming to be a message-carrying medium where the realization of meaning is open and up to the recipient. American art critic Michael Fried denounced this theatricalization of art in the following manner: "Theater is now the negation of art¹."

The theatricalization of art was confirmed by the exhibition *A Theatre without Theatre* prepared by Bernard Blistène and Yann Chateignié for MACBA in Barcelona in 2007 and then displayed in Lisbon at the Berardo Collection Museum. This exhibition was a

¹ Michael Fried. *Art and Objecthood. Essays and Reviews*, Chicago & Londres: The University of Chicago Press, 1998. What Fried calls literalist art (Minimalism) privileges the objecthood of the artistic act over its form and according to him gives rise to a "new genre of theatre" by addressing temporality: "The experience of literalist art is of an object in a situation — one that, virtually by definition, includes the beholder." (*Art and Objecthood*, 1967). This objecthood will soon be replaced by evenementiality and object will be replaced by act. Nevertheless, Fried admits to the „utter pervasiveness — the virtual universality — of the sensibility or mode of being" that he characterizes in his essay as "corrupted and perverted by theatre".

reminder of the fact that historical Western predecessors, from constructivism through Dada to Fluxus, defined themselves theatrically in order to free themselves from the practices of their time. Building on its underlying theme of the place of the subject within art, the exhibition strived to show that the boundaries between actors and spectators, between art and reality, and between art and life are vanishing, in both theatre and museums. The approaches of the selected artists constitute a coherent series of "works that can be assimilated to a performance, an event or a happening. So it's not about object production anymore but about the situation of the body in a given moment". Approach, behavior, action, environment — the theatricalization of art uses this "desire for the body", an obsessive figure replacing the subject, to seize the notion of the scene while establishing itself outside of the theatre and even against the theatre to found a new theatre, which explains the title of this exhibition-manifesto. Marina Abramović believes that "to be a performance artist, you have to hate theatre²".

Between 1999 and 2015, and especially from 2011, the PQ had joined this movement.

² Marina Abramović in an interview with Robert Ayers <http://www.askyfilledwithshootingstars.com/wordpress/?p=1197>

To sum it up: between 1999 and 2015 the PQ moved away from its original aim (to give an account of the contribution of scenography to theatre) to become an autonomous event favoring performative forms.

HOW CAN WE INTERPRET THIS HISTORICAL SITUATION?

This double phenomenon can be interpreted in two ways. The way that seems to have been adopted in Prague from 1999, and especially from 2011, is the following: a departure from theatre, a disappearance of boundaries between art forms within a total *performance art* that includes all categories (in line with the dynamics of *performance studies*), and a complete autonomy granted to scenography to make it the principal material of contemporary dramaturgy. All that beyond words and language, in an environment of escalated sensations and immersive practices and within a refusal of the notion of theatrical performance for the benefit of experience. The wish to generate buzz has even intensified these efforts.

We suggest a different interpretation which is based mainly on the criticism of: the artialization of theatre, the notion of postdramatic theatre, the hypothesis of scenography theatre, and also the use of the notions of installation and

performance. A scenography alone does not constitute an installation-performance: it is not its own purpose. An installation or a performance are not a scenography. A scenography alone does not make a show. There is no scenography without dramaturgy and direction, without performance, without theatre (dramatic, lyrical, choreographic, street theatre, etc.). By using up the notion of contemporaneity and by switching to a different model (art instead and in the position of literature), the artialization of theatre expresses its wish to leave theatre to establish a confusion of its constitutive domains (dramaturgy, direction, scenography). This disintegration of theatre is parallel to the disappearing effort to look for meaning, to the disappearance of ideologies, which is a hidden ideology in itself, not without a connection to consumerism and marketing. The PQ is not its own purpose — its vocation is not to showcase itself but to showcase world theatre via scenography and theatre architecture.

This state of affairs arises from the *fog paradigm* (the rule of confusion), a paradigm which has considerably gained in importance since 1991. It is also worth noting that the leitmotiv of the last PQ was *Shared space Music Weather Politics*. This topic might seem like an elimination of politics, while politics is one of the foundations of the art of the theatre and

it was also the reason for creating the PQ. Between 1999 and 2015 the Prague Quadrennial lost sight of its object, if not of its soul.

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BIO

MARCEL FREYDEFONT

Scenographer, actor, director (1966—1989) at the University theatre in Clermont, then in the Théâtre des Chiens Jaunes that he also led. In 1985 he founded the Department of Scenography at the Ecole nationale supérieure d'architecture in Clermont-Ferrand which was in 1999 transferred to Nantes and of which he was the scientific director until 2015. He taught at the Centre d'études théâtrales at the University in Louvain la Neuve (1992—2013), at the University Paris X Nanterre (1994—2001), at the Ecole nationale supérieure des arts décoratifs in Paris (1994—2005), at the École nationale supérieure des arts de la marionnette in Charleville-Mézières (1992—1995, 2008—2009). Between 1989 and 1999 he worked as a scenography consultant. Between 1994 and 2001 he was the director of Lieux publics, Centre national de création des arts de la rue in Marseille and since 2004 he has been the vice-president of FAIAR, Formation supérieure aux arts de la rue. He is a member of the board of directors of the Grand T, Théâtre de Loire-Atlantique in Nantes.

He founded GERSA (Groupe d'étude et de recherche scénologique en architecture), he is an associated researcher at the research center Ecriture, Création, Représentation: Littérature et Arts de la

Scène in Louvain la Neuve and a member of the editorial committee of the scientific revue *Etudes Théâtrales*. He co-supervised theses and was a member of juries awarding university doctorates in theater studies in Paris, Montpellier, Strasbourg, Amiens, Grenoble, Louvain la Neuve, and Nanterre (2002–2015)

As a curator he worked on the following exhibitions: *Dramaturgie/Scénographie, les mots et la matière*, BPI Centre Pompidou (1992) based on Guy-Claude François's idea and scenography, *L'enseignement de la scénographie en France*, Prague Quadriennale (1999), *Jeunes scénographies* in Maison Jean Vilar in Avignon (2000), and *Construire pour le temps d'un regard*, Guy-Claude François scénographe (2009) prepared with Danièle Pauly for Musée des Beaux-Arts in Nantes, catalogue published by Editions Fage, Lyon.

Most recent publications: *Scénographes en France (1975–2015)*, (collective work, co-edited with Luc Boucris), Actes Sud, 2015. *Place du théâtre, forme de la ville*, magazine *Théâtre/public*, Paris, 2015 (collective work, co-edited with L. Boucris). *World scenography (1990–2005)*, (with J. Chollet), Oïstat, 2014. *Qu'est-ce que la scénographie? Vol. II, Pratiques et enseignements* (collective work, co-edited with L. Boucris, V. Lemaire et R. Sarti), magazine *Etudes*

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Moreover, since 1996 he has been a member of the Union des scénographes, the French unit of OISTAT.

Patrick Du Wors

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**Canadian
Perspectives
on PQ: Impact,
Inspiration?
Representation
and Future
Visions**

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Impact, Inspiration, Representation
and Future Visions**

by Patrick Du Wors

BIO**PATRICK DU WORS**

Patrick Du Wors is an active performance designer and educator, working in the areas of set, costume and lighting design. In 2013, he was appointed to the faculty of the University of Calgary, School of Creative and Performing Arts. Patrick designed and curated the Canadian Exhibition *Shared [private] Space* at the PQ 2015. As a practitioner, his design credits include *The Last Voyage of Donald Crowhurst* (ATP/Ghost River); *#UncleJohn* (Banff Centre/Against The Grain Theatre/Canadian Opera Company); *Figaro's Wedding* (AtG); *God of Carnage* (Theatre Calgary); *Falsettos* (Acting Up Stage Co); *Dead Man's Cell Phone* (Persephone); *True West*, *My Fair Lady*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Fire*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Death of a Salesman* & *As You Like It* (Blue Bridge Rep); *Metamorphoses* (Globe Theatre, Regina); *The Last Five Years* (The Grand, London); *Hush* (Tarragon); *Bird Brain* (YPT, Toronto); *Chasing the Moment* (Arcola Theatre, London UK); *Turn of the Screw* & *A Number* (Belfry).

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