

09:20 **Playing in the City: Practice and Poetics of Reclaiming Urban Space**

Dimitra Kordomenou

Architect, School of Architecture, National Technical University, Athens, Greece

Drawing from Henri Lefebvre's line of thought regarding the search for an *other* form of urbanity, as developed in his text *The Right to the City*, and aspects of Richard Schechner's theory on performativity, the current study aims to process performative field actions as social and artistic practices of renegotiating the relationship with urban space and time. The study approaches key ideas from Henri Lefebvre's explorations concerning the city as a space of claiming a new urbanity, such as the transformative powers of art, playfulness and the imaginary, working on their intersections with Schechner's approaches to the concept of performativity, which identify play and ritual as inherent to every expression of performance. The proposed framework is utilised for the analysis of two case studies of artistic performative practices in public space, *Children's Games* (Francis Alÿs, 1999-2017) and *Revolution Bodies. Walking in the Centre of Athens* (Diana Sabri, Eleni Tzirtzilaki, 2014). The very nature of such practices - oscillating among daily life, art, social practice, and activism - is perceived and explored as a transitional space, necessary for unleashing the imaginary and engaging with other spatialities and expressions of the possible. As a result, they emerge as practices that encapsulate the transformative potential Lefebvre seeks in the context of reclaiming urban life, thus providing a research field rich with material for further elaboration and potential expansion of the discourse around urbanity.

09:30 **Let's Inject Some Randomness into the City: Reflecting on Eliza Soroga's Site-Specific Performances in London and Prague**

Eliza Soroga

Independent Performance Artist and Scholar, Athens, Greece

From 2014 to 2023 I have been creating a sequence of three site-specific performances developed in public spaces. Making art in public spaces is a purposeful choice; the real world, as opposed to the theatre world is subject to randomness, an element which adds unpredictability to the artistic practice as a desired challenge and risk.

The first one was in London Bridge (London) entitled *Breakfast in London Bridge* (2014). The performance experimented with a simple rhythm contradiction: how a slow-pace everyday action of having a breakfast, blends in with the quick-pace of a rush hour on a Monday morning.

The second one, in Oxford Circus (London), entitled *Women in Agony* (2015) intended to make a comment on urban alienation, neurosis, uniformity and consumerism. Sixteen women gathered in the middle of the pavement amongst fashion victims in rush hour and simultaneously screamed.

The third one took place at Prague's historic centre entitled *IN QR WE TRUST* (2023) reflecting on post COVID-19 changes and the rapid digitalisation of our everyday lives. The latter was part of the Prague Quadrennial Performance Design's program.

In this essay I would like to reflect on these works posing some research questions: *What is the dialogue between everyday life and Performance and the urge to create a rare encounter with passers-by? How do we conceive living public experiences revealing the possibilities of re-inventing public spaces? How do we incorporate the reality of the chosen sites reaching out for the poetics of places by using the site-sensitive approach into the making? What does unpredictability and randomness have to offer to the experience of public space?*

These performances witness the possibility of a new public sphere, open to the unpredictable vitality of spontaneous authentic reactions. This is achieved through injecting randomness, spontaneity and risk into a metabolism stunned by repetition and routine.

11th Session

Multimedia Performance

Chair: Dr. Gina Giotaki

10:00 **DESIGNING SPATIAL NARRATIVES: From Memory Palaces to AI-Enhanced XR**

Prof. Dr. David Bassuk

Professor at SUNY Purchase, Conservatory of Theater Arts, State University of New York at Purchase College, Purchase, New York, USA

Objective:

This lecture aims to explore the emerging interdisciplinary frontier of spatial narrative design, examining how narratives evolve from linear, passive storytelling to interactive, multisensory experiences. It seeks to expand participants' storytelling practices by integrating embodied cognition, spatial architecture, gameplay mechanics, and artificial intelligence (AI) into immersive environments.

Research Questions:

How have spatial narrative techniques evolved from historical mnemonic methods (such as Cicero's Memory Palace) to contemporary AI-enhanced extended reality (XR) experiences?

In what ways does embodied and sensory engagement transform audience participation and narrative reception?

How can AI-driven narrative techniques reshape immersive storytelling practices by acting as co-creator, character, and adaptive dramaturg?

Methodology:

The session employs an interdisciplinary approach, synthesizing theoretical frameworks from memory studies, dramaturgy, embodied cognition, game design, and AI technology. The lecture identifies core principles and practical methodologies for spatial storytelling through historical analysis and comparative case studies across various media (physical environments, theatre, virtual reality). Additionally, design frameworks and illustrative case studies demonstrate these methods in action.

Main Findings and Conclusions:

Spatial narratives transform storytelling by shifting from linear, passive experiences into dynamic, participant-driven journeys characterized by active exploration, multisensory immersion, and embodied engagement. Key findings highlight the potential of integrating gameplay and interactive mechanics to heighten audience agency, presence, and emotional resonance. Furthermore, the incorporation of AI into spatial storytelling marks a transformative leap, allowing narratives to become adaptive and personalized, thereby deepening user immersion and narrative impact. The lecture concludes by advocating for spatial narrative design as a powerful approach for storytellers seeking to expand their creative horizons, engage diverse sensory perceptions, and catalyze transformative experiences.

10:10 **A moment in Digital Time: Pause During Performative Gameplay**

PhD(C) Eleana Pandia

PhD Student, Department of Communication, Media and Culture, Panteion University, Athens, Greece

Performative gameplay in video games refers to the ways in which players engage with games not only as participants but also as performers. The players' actions are deemed as performances that may be directed to an in-game audience (such as other players in multiplayer environments) or an external audience (such as stream viewers or online followers). Performative gameplay extends to incorporating self-expression, audience feedback, and social dynamics into the gaming experience (Bishop, 2019), blending elements of performance theory, with interactive media (Boellstorff, 2015).

In this paper, we aim to examine the significance of pausing within digital spaces. For instance, a study by Nguyen et al. (2021) found that breaks between rounds in competitive online games allow players to reset their cognitive resources. Without these pauses, players can experience cognitive fatigue, which diminishes their ability to think strategically and make optimal decisions (Hernández et al., 2023). Pauses during gameplay provide an opportunity for players to regulate intense emotions, potentially preventing them from making decisions driven by negative affect (Koenig et al., 2022). Another study by Kowert et al. (2020), mentions that players often refer to pauses as moments for "recovery," "reset," and "mental breathing." Pauses allow for the flexibility to transition between gameplay and performance, enabling players to switch between roles as competitors and performers. "Unavoidable" pauses have the dual function of accommodating the player's real-world needs while maintaining a connection to the digital space (Koenig et al., 2021). This paper is an attempt to understand the meaning and functions of pausing in the liminal space of physical presence in a digital environment.

10:20 **Streetstories: Instagram as Drift**

Dr. Katerina El Raheb

Human Computer Interaction Researcher, Dance and Intermedia Artist, and Assistant Professor, Department of Performing and Digital Arts, University of the Peloponnese, Nafplion, Greece

Streetstories is an ongoing artistic practice that emerged from curiosity and chance that shaped unimportant paper traces in public space. During Covid, where walking was the only channel to connect with the unpredictable and breakthrough the lockdown routine, *streetstories* initially sparked, by the discovery of scattered playing cards on the street and the project began as a form of urban divination: a generative fortunetelling practice in which the found object became a message, a symbol, or a fragment of an unseen narrative. These early encounters framed the street as a space of serendipitous meaning, where the residue of everyday life could be read like a shuffled tarot.

Presented exclusively through Instagram Stories, the project intentionally resists the platform's aesthetics of curation and enhancement. No filters are applied, and no visual corrections are made—countering the hyper-aestheticized "Instagram gaze" critiqued by Nathan Jurgenson (2019). Instead, *streetstories* embraces what Lev Manovich (2017) calls *vernacular visibility*: a mode of image-making grounded in immediacy, awkward framing, and the refusal of spectacle. Through this, the project re-appropriates Instagram as a heterotopic digital space—ephemeral, accessible, and attuned to the temporal rhythms of walking and witnessing.

Over time, *streetstories* expanded into a sustained exploration of the mundane and discarded documenting ephemeral textual fragments, packaging, notes, signage, and other overlooked materials encountered while walking. The practice draws on Michel de Certeau's (1984) concept of walking as a spatial tactic, in which the pedestrian's movement inscribes meaning onto the urban landscape. The found objects, captured spontaneously and without intervention, function as what Foucault (1986) termed *heterotopias*: real, yet othered sites that disrupt normative spatial and narrative logic.

Ultimately, *streetstories* operate at the intersection of psychogeography, digital resistance, and the aesthetics of everyday life. It frames the incidental as significant, using the act of walking to generate a slow archive of urban chance encounters—narratives not designed, but found.

10:30 **Portable Dramaturgies: Performing Globalization’s Un/Specific Ground**

Dr. Philip Hager

Assistant Professor of Theatre and Politics, School of Drama, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

In this paper I consider *portable dramaturgies* that are specifically staged within the urban fabric and facilitated through the use of headphones. By portable dramaturgies I indicate performance practices that can be adapted for different cities around the globe without changing their core conceptual bases. Writing of Rimini Protokoll’s *Remote X*, Konstantinos Thomaidis proposes that the voice in the headphones “serves to construct the urban space as the scenography of our theatre” (Thomaidis, 2017, p. 5). Accordingly, each time this dramaturgy is repeated, a new scenography emerges; yet with each repetition the scenography of the global-urban fabric is extended: the city-streets emerge as elements in the globalised scenography of this site-un/specific theatre. Following Laura Levin, I seek to think through portable dramaturgies as practices in which participants “perform ground.” Performing ground, in Levin’s conceptualisation denotes “performance strateg[ies] in which the human body commingles with or is presented as a direct extension of its setting” (2014, p. 13). The argument I wish to pursue here suggests that in the context of portable dramaturgies, as spectators/participants commingle with their urban surroundings they are constructed as performing subjects in the scenography of the global city – performing subjects camouflaged in cityscapes, but also performing subjects that stand apart from the cityscapes. Against the above backdrop, I ask: *what kinds of performances might the global-urban fabric require from its dwellers and how might such dramaturgies both camouflage and emphasise neoliberal globalization’s quotidian scenographies? How might the voices in the headphones and the subjects performing their instructions negotiate the experience(s) of globalization?*

10:40 **Discussion**

12th Session

Social Change through Performance

Chair: Dr Tyrone Grima

10:50 **Roadworks (1985) versus Coalworks (2024)**

Prof. Dr. Klitsa Antoniou

Artist and Professor of Fine Arts, Fine Arts Department, Cyprus University of Technology, Cyprus

Roadworks (1985) versus *Coalworks* (2024) presentation delves into the philosophical and socio-political dimensions of performative walking as a transformative act in Mona Hatoum’s *Roadworks* (1985) and Klitsa Antoniou’s *Coalworks* (2024), exploring the use of the body as a site of resistance within public spaces. Both performances confront and subvert entrenched systems of exploitation, offering profound critiques of historical erasure and marginalized narratives. Hatoum’s *Roadworks*, staged in the politically charged streets of Brixton, engages with the racial and economic disenfranchisement of its time, using the act of dragging boots—symbols of oppression and social

control—as a metaphor for the weight of systemic subjugation. The performance’s deep engagement with the urban environment highlights the intersection between individual and collective struggles, particularly during moments of socio-political unrest.

In contrast, Antoniou’s *Coalworks*, situated in the industrial landscape of Ptolemaida, Greece, offers a poignant meditation on the historical and ecological repercussions of industrial labour. Through the act of dragging coal, Antoniou embodies the dual burden of physical labour and the historical erasure of women workers in the coal industry. By foregrounding the often-overlooked contributions of women to the coal mining sector, *Coalworks* extends Hatoum’s critique, weaving in feminist and ecological perspectives that complicate and deepen the discourse on labour.

Both works transcend the boundaries of the traditional gallery space, positioning themselves in public sites to foster a direct and unmediated relationship with audiences, thereby challenging conventional notions of art and its temporality. These ephemeral, embodied actions insist on the urgency of confronting historical injustices and social inequalities. In their engagement with public space, *Roadworks* and *Coalworks* illuminate the critical role of walking as both an act of solidarity and a powerful critique of the socio-political, ecological, and gendered structures that shape our histories. This presentation will investigate how these performances utilize the act of walking to engage with labour histories, amplify marginalized voices, and underscore the transience of public art as a medium for social critique.

11:00 **Performing Protest: *The Girl of Enghelab Street* and the Spatial Politics of Resistance in Iran**

PhD(C) Sara Gholami¹ & Sara Boroumandi²

¹PhD student in Theatre and Performance Studies, Goldsmiths, University of London, London, UK

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In December 2017, a viral video of Vida Movahed, a young woman waving a white headscarf on a stick during an anti-government protest in Tehran, ignited a significant conversation in Iran’s public sphere. In a country where wearing the hijab is mandatory by law for all women, Movahed’s act of removing and raising her headscarf became a powerful symbol of resistance against state-imposed dress codes and also against broader socio-political repression. This act, now known as *The Girl of Enghelab Street*, marked a pivotal moment in the Iranian women’s movement, intertwining women’s rights with anti-government uprisings.

This paper investigates how public space is transformed into a stage for political resistance through the embodied gesture of protest. It asks: *How does Movahed’s act function as a site-specific performance? In what ways does it challenge the spatial and symbolic authority of the state?* The methodology is grounded in performance theory, drawing on site-specific performance, theories of space and spectatorship, and feminist interpretations of public embodiment.

Analysing this act through the lens of performance theory reveals the interplay of space, spectators, and performer. By positioning herself on a raised platform, Movahed created a physical and symbolic separation from the crowd, transforming the spatial dynamics of the protest. Her act of unveiling, as opposed to the state-mandated concealment, not only challenged the authority over women’s bodies, but made space a tool of dissent, asserting natural rights against imposed laws.

The paper concludes that such performances redefine the meaning of public space under authoritarianism, turning streets into stages of resistance. Drawing parallels to Antigone’s defiance of state law, Movahed’s performance prefigured the carnivalesque nature of the 2022 Woman, Life, Freedom movement, where acts like burning headscarves and cutting hair evolved into collective performances of defiance that reclaimed the street as a space of political reimagination.

11:10 **Redefining the Change of Care in Democracy: A Site-Specific Walking Performance in the Park of Sotiria Hospital**

Dr. Antonia Vasilakou

Specialised Teaching Staff, Department of Theatre Studies, University of the Peloponnese, Nafplio, Greece

The paper reflects on the site-specific, scripted walking performance *Redifining the change in democracy* that took place at the park of Sotiria Hospital, which was created as a part of the “What we owe democracy” event for the Athens Festival 2024.

Through narratives related to issues of health in our democratic society and by situating personal stories within a shared institutional landscape, the work engaged with performance not only as a mode of artistic expression but also as a method of embodied inquiry and critical pedagogy. The hospital park, overlooked as a transitional liminal space (Foucault), became an active site of reflection, resonance, and soft resistance allowing vulnerability, movement and emotional connection

The performance and has emerged as a response to a series of interrelated questions that guided both its creation and critical reflection, such as: *Which questions are we permitted to ask within institutional spaces like hospitals. How do we structure dramaturgy, movement and action to present our stories? How do we present these narrative and physical stories in the public space of a hospital as a political gesture of reflection and soft resistance?*

As far as the art-based research methodology is concerned, the work employed walking as device tactical, embodied way to inhabit, subvert, or personalize space (Michel de Certeau), and site-responsive practices (Pearson, Phil Smith). Also, drawing on cross-curriculum drama pedagogy (J.R. O’Toole), the students engaged not only in a outdoor performance, but in critical reflection on care, democracy, situating the result as a mode of interdisciplinary thinking. Finally, the embodiment of performer’s emotion was explored through Rasaesthetics (R.Schechner) and Alba Emoting, enabling the performers to connect with their emotional states in a physical manner.

The making process of the performance moved between personal narrative and collective expression, between aesthetic form and civic discourse, reframing healthcare narratives through personal stories. It also led to critical reflection and interdisciplinary learning, confirming the effectiveness of cross-curriculum drama pedagogy technics. Last but not least, the performance highlighted the role of space in shaping both personal and collective narratives as an active site of emotional resonance and social reflection.

11:20 **Lipstick Liberation: A Feminist Performance Mapping the Femicides in the Performing Public Space**

Marianna Koukoulekidou¹ & Aggeliki M. Doufa²

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In contemporary performing arts, the performer's body serves as a central means of expression and critique, with a particular focus on performance art in public spaces. The performance *Lipstick Liberation* centers on violence against women and femicides, which dramatically increased during the pandemic. Two performers walk through Athens, marking paths with red lipstick, denouncing violence and society's and institutions' indifference. The lipstick becomes a tool of defiance and self-expression. The in situ and adaptable action across different spaces highlights the inadequacy of public structures to protect femininity, raising questions about the effectiveness of art as intervention. The performance in Glyka Nera explores the relationships between space, gender, and memory, contrasting the densely populated Exarchia area with the empty landscape of Glyka Nera.

Referencing the murder of Caroline Crouch, it underscores the social exclusion of women in public spaces. Writing with lipstick creates an *immaterial* map, revealing subjective experience and collective memory. Through symbolic action at the intersection of the private and public, the performers disrupt social and spatial inequalities, emphasizing art's potential to provoke social change and create spaces of resistance and coexistence within the urban environment. This essay presents the analysis of the performance, for which a sample video is provided, and which took place in areas of Athens a few days before the murder of Kyriaki Griva, just outside the Agioi Anargyroi Police Station.

11:30 **Discussion**

13th Session

Spatial Performativity

Chair: Dr. Alba Balmaseda Domínguez

12:00 **Shaping Actants to Assist Communication: Co-Producing Narrative Spaces with People Living with Dementia**

Dr. Loukia Minetou

PhD Researcher, Department of Social Sciences, University of Stirling, Stirling, UK

The built environment holds significant potential to enhance the quality of life of people living with dementia, particularly in residential care, where isolation is common, and communication often becomes difficult as the condition progresses. There is an urgent need for innovative approaches that facilitate meaningful engagement and connection, especially for those with more progressed dementia.

This interdisciplinary research, grounded in scenographic practice, explores how narrative design can create spaces that both emerge from and invite storytelling. Thus, drawing from scenography, a holistic practice of crafting theatre stage environments including the set design, lighting, sound and costumes, we apply scenographic principles as a mode of expression, memory, and connection.

We have developed a narrative methodology to support people with dementia to express their ideas on their ideal living environments. Through a series of co-design sessions using embodied, performative, and sensory methods, we have collaborated with participants to generate spatial concepts grounded in their lived experiences.

Our findings demonstrate that narrative and performative tools – spanning architecture, sound design, and visual arts - can support people living with dementia to communicate rich multi-sensory design ideas. These narrative environments have the potential to be both functional and joyful, contributing to improved well-being and deeper social connection in care settings.

12:10 **Subversive Submersions: Water's Shapeshifting Force**

Dr. Anna Street

Senior Lecturer in Theatre and Performance Studies, Le Mans Université, Le Mans, France

The spaces and shapes of water are as myriad and complex as our imaginative representations of the relation between surface and depth. The objective: *HydroArts* is an Anglo-French research project devoted to analyzing the aquatic turn in theater and performance art. The research questions: *For this presentation, I propose to trace a brief investigation of water's performative qualities in representing, submerging and subverting gendered forms, from aquatic-life and human hybrids to androgynous shapeshifters.* The methodology: Spanning ancient folklore and Western literature's propensity to submerge female protagonists, up through multiple waves of feminist movements, contemporary performance, and current-day merfolk practices, the analysis will emphasize how the spatial properties of watery expanses transform gender via mediated access to sound, sight, and form. We will see how water's unique properties have been instrumentalized to submerge and silence women as well as to empower them. The main findings and conclusions: Focusing on the proverbially gendered element of water, this talk will reveal how immersive practices intersect with eco-feminism and post-humanist philosophies, exploring how gender and the aquatic depths collide and coincide. In sum, we will examine how the emerging notion of hydrofeminism re-imagines the age-old convergences of women and water in proposing alternative models for thinking gender and our interdependence with the non-human.

12:20 **Changing Spaces, Changing Music Ecosystems: What We've Learned so Far in Greece**

Dr. Vasiliki Sirakouli

Athena Research Center, Greece

Georgina Born has emphasized music is always mediated by space—whether physical, social, or virtual—and understanding music requires attention to these spatial dimensions. She also highlights the relative *underdevelopment* of analytical approaches to the social dimensions of the interweaving of music, sound and space. During the last two decades many changes have taken place in the spaces used for music performance in Athens and other cities, especially through festivals. Even though *space* and *performance* are two quite popular terms that have risen in Greece -after decades the same had happened at the States-, there is surprisingly little research focused on how different music genres engage with and utilize space in the country. While ethnomusicological studies have explored traditional musics within specific regional or ritual contexts, there is a notable gap when it comes to examining how urban jazz and classical music genres interact with physical and social spaces. Issues like spatial politics and genre-specific uses of public, private or alternative spaces remain underexplored, leaving a significant area of cultural practice undocumented and analytically neglected. This paper, by examining different music genres, investigates how music performance and space navigate urban and rural environments, venue infrastructures, and informal or alternative performance spaces. Through personal fieldwork, discussions, spatial analysis and reflexive theoretical approaches, I intend to uncover the ways in which space shapes musical genres and vice versa, filling a critical gap in the understanding of Greece's diverse and evolving musical landscapes.

12:30 **Architectural Performative on the Thresholds of the Domestic and the Extreme**

Dr. Višnja Žugić

Associate Professor, Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Faculty of Technical Sciences, University of Novi Sad, Novi Sad, Serbia

Drawing on Leopold Lambert's classification of architectural realms as the *Extreme* and the *Domestic*, this paper explores the performativity of conventional architecture in our daily lives and how its narratives, qualities, meanings, and functions shift in response to political and/or social extremes. The central question arises from the thesis that the altered circumstances of various emergencies (such as a global pandemic, student protests in Serbia, or the bombing of Gaza) radically transform the spaces themselves (e.g., a flat, a university building, or a beachfront villa), leading to the creation of new spatial typologies.

If all architecture is considered textual and architectural texts are always structured in relation to their context, then the political extreme inevitably induces changes within the semiotic framework of existing architecture. More specifically, some spaces operate in an altered state of their most dominant functions, producing a distinct effect on reality. This concept aligns with J.L. Austin's theories of language, particularly his category of "performatives"—utterances that are neither true nor false but that actively reshape the reality in which they are used.

The Architectural Performative, therefore, functions as a narrative produced by architecture transformed within the context of a social crisis, war, or a pandemic. Existing on the threshold between the Domestic and the Extreme, this type of architecture is marked by intentional misuse. This paper demonstrates that in such circumstances, architecture generates different performative roles, ranging from a weapon to a symbolic catalyst for social change.

12:40 **Discussion**

14th Session

Performative Presentations III

Chair: Dr Christina Zoniou

13:00 **Urban Vampire: A Rite of Passage**

Arianna Chatziganou

Independent researcher and performance artist

The *Urban Vampire* project emerged just before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in Athens and it has since engaged with the fragmented yet persistently 'undead' urban space. This performative presentation focuses specifically on spaces of transition within the urban landscape. The stoae of downtown Athens were chosen as such transitional places, encompassing old print shops, contemporary retail stores, offices, services, the Varvakeios market and a photography darkroom. The main quest of those performative prompts in the Athenian landscape that resulted in a short experimental film was for the revelation of the bridging and connecting aspects of stoae both physically and metaphorically with the latter being the internal initiating processes that emerge while attempting this liminal passage from one point of public space to another through the mystical quality that -although public still framing a certain privacy within the public-a stoa can hold. Passing through a stoa is rendered an initiation process for the body entity and, as such, what it seeks to reveal is the variety of experiences the body goes through during this process, the emotional impact of the ephemeral engulfment in the semi-closed public space within the open public space, the socio-psychological implications of such liminal public spaces and the psychogeographical narrative of this

particular urban element. The presentation draws on psychogeography, flânerie, autoethnography, performance writing and performance practices as its methodological framework. As time is severely compromised in the phenomenological experience of a stoa and space functions as an inflated reality, the body passing through is bound to experience an acute awareness of its fragmentation and loss as a process of leaving its imprint in the transient space.

13:15 **The Shape of Home: A Performative Presentation of Letters that Resist the Border as a Line**

Dr. Carolyn Defrin¹ & Prof. Dr. Elena Marchevska²

¹Marie Curie fellow, Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz, Graz, Austria

²Professor in performance studies, School of Arts, London South Bank University, London, UK

What is the shape of home for people on the move?

How do we write it? Live it? Dream it?

This performative presentation will explore these questions as co-researcher/artists Dr. Elena Marchevska and Dr. Carolyn Defrin share a series of letters to each other and the people, places and things that inform their personal journeys as migrants. Contextualised by their recent *Project Finding Home* – a 3-year inter-continental artistic research study on migrant artists' relationships to the hostile environments of host-countries, the letters will reflect on the migrant artists who collaborated on the project, as well as Marchevska and Defrin's own intergenerational journeys of movement and belonging. Investigating what constitutes home, when we are faced not only with the physical and legal but mental and emotional restrictions imposed by bordering practices, the letters also reflect on the generative nature of 'the border' as a site for creativity and expansive possibilities when one can and must think beyond lines, walls and threats. Employing the epistolary practice of personal letter writing, which feminist refugee scholars Yen Le Espiritu and Lan Duong denote as a space for more interior revelation, we invite discussion for how these ethnographies of relationships often omitted in the narrative landscapes of border control and state 'home' construction, might contribute to new imaginations for subsequent geography. Our presentation will incorporate poetic and academic writing, reflecting finally on responsible co-creation principles.

13:30 **Some Dances Last Longer than Castles: Çiftetelli**

Elli Vassalou

Independent transdisciplinary artist, activist, and researcher

This research investigates the cross-cultural practice of Çiftetelli, a Greco-Turkish dance, as a tool for collective healing, feminist placemaking, and queer joy.

Tsifteteli/Çiftetelli belongs to the traditions of Oriental dances practised in the East Mediterranean basin. It was first recorded in mainland Greece with the arrival of migrants from Anatolia, after the 1923 population exchange. It is not considered a folk dance, and it has been silenced as hyper-feminine, inappropriate and unfitting to the national narratives of Greece and Türkiye.

Çiftetelli carries memories of Ottoman coexistence and can become a tool for emancipating non-eurocentric multicultural subjectivities, putting in question the construction of "the Greek miracle" and investigate the relation of body and politics of the post ottoman peoples.

Can a dance that brings ambiguous connotations, seen by a colonial and orientalist gaze, incorporate the potential for social, cultural and sexual resistance?

Different geographical and cultural contexts, hold different linages of minoritarian and diasporic embodiment, *what can we learn from the commonalities and the differences of each locality's embodied history? Can this knowledge strengthen bonds of transnational solidarities and create new understanding of traditions and forms of community?*

Methodologically, the main research tool is the formation of circles of study and celebration (γλέντια). The circles bring together people from the SWANA and Balkan regions. The research travels to different localities to unfold the regional dance's contemporary form: the city's Çiftetellisi. Circles has been already established in Athens (2025), Brussels (2025) and Nicosia (2024). More circles in Türkiye, the Balkans and Egypt will be conducted in 2026.

The study circles combine material of:

1. ethnographic and decolonial literature and pop culture references (collective study),
2. narrative practices (collective autoethnography and knowledge production)
3. embodied practices (dance), where source dancers and participants from various backgrounds and dance styles are invited to share stories, rhythms, and moves.

The focus on dance allows the work to touch on the trauma of cultural and physical displacement stored in the body of the communities, as well as finding joy, kinaesthetic pleasure, empathy and common histories through a *body topography*, where the body is a topos, including historical layers of sensations and temporality. The research uses movement as social text to produce counter-narratives, new subjectivities and traditions, where the collectively owned embodied culture transcends imposed constructions of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, class, age and ability.

Drawing from the three localities of research: Belgium, Greece and Cyprus, I want to present my findings in the form of a *performative presentation* bringing together stories, dance and pieces of academic texts that can bring to life a different narrative and value to the neglected heritage and joy of dancing Çiftetelli.

13:45 **Discussion**

Monday, 7th July

15th Session

New Performative Spaces

Chair: Dr Athena Stourna

09:00 **An Archipelago of Floating Islands. Memory, Transmission, Transformation**

PhD(C) Daniela Dispoto

PhD student, PDTA Department, Sapienza, Rome, Italy

In October 2023, Eugenio Barba donated his personal library to the Bibliographic and Museum Hub of the Puglia Region, along with his memorabilia, books, and the Odin Teatret archive.

This paper presents the *LAFLIS: Living Archive Floating Islands project*, conceived by Barba and realized at the Bernardini Library in Lecce.

This ambitious initiative, the first phase of which was inaugurated on October 4, 2023, aims to create a living archive based on Barba's poetics, the Odin Teatret, and the Third Theatre movement.

As Barba states:

"How can we bring the knowledge, emotions, and experiences in these documents into the present, translating them into forms that resonate with today's concerns? How can documents build a bridge to cross over? Building this bridge is what makes an archive come alive. In essence, we are speaking of transmission in other forms, expressions, methods, and techniques. A different way of thinking and acting. An active process of intensification and metamorphosis, not merely preservation."

LAFLIS goes beyond the traditional functions of an archive (memory) and transmission, embracing a third crucial role: transformation.

The challenge is to restore a sense of wonder and imagination to historical materials through a *mise-en-scène* bridging the gap between past and present and translating the archive into an artistic, sensory and kinesthetic language.

This transformative experience was co-designed by Eugenio Barba and a team of *fellow travellers* turning the archive into a sensorial and visual journey for visitors. The library's rooms, where the narrative unfolds, become themselves a performative space, animated by installations and immersive environments.

At the heart of the project lies an exploration of memory — not merely as the preservation of archival materials, but as the very life of memory and theatre itself.

09:10 **Methodologies and Immersive Tools in Scenography. The Case of the *Beyond the 4th Wall (B4W)* project**

Anna-Pagona Papidi¹ & Dafni Anastasia Tsintzeli²

¹ *Researcher, School of Architecture, Technical University of Crete, Chania, Greece*

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The project examines the relationship between immersion and narrative in theatrical space. Through an architectural perspective on scenography, the project develops a human-centered approach and a design toolbox for immersive performances. It aims to position scenography as a spatial and technological practice that redefines audience engagement, explores the affective potential of space, and investigates the role of digital media in shaping narrative and experience.

Our point of departure is theatre, as a living art form that has always offered audiences experiences of immersive engagement. Within our project's context, the usual theatrical boundaries are being redefined through the integration of multisensory design and digital tools, which shift the role of the audience from passive receivers to active spectators.

The project developed *B4W*, a dynamically evolving immersion toolbox that integrates narrative, spatial and digital tools. In this framework, scenography becomes not only a method of visual storytelling but also a spatial interface for audience interaction, serving as a tool to enhance the audience's immersion.

The *B4W* toolbox was applied and tested in seven live theatrical performances of a play titled *Lazarus 2.0*. The research was implemented through hands-on experimentation, employing projection mapping as a digital tool to activate the scenographic space and enhance immersion. By bridging theory and practice within the production, the project demonstrated that *B4W* functions as a potent and flexible design framework -one that integrates human experience, spatial storytelling, and digital media within contemporary theatre practices.

09:20 **From Actors to Performative Architecture Designers: Devising Experiments with Responsive Environments**

PhD(C) Pavlos Panagiotidis

PhD Student, School of Computer Science, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, UK

This practice-based study explores how theatre makers can reconceptualise their roles as performative architecture designers by integrating responsive mixed reality technologies into rehearsal processes. Embedding emerging digital systems into devising practices, it investigates how such tools reshape spatial composition, dramaturgical agency, and the relationship between bodies, media, and built environments.

Across six workshops, eight actors engaged with a custom-built system combining computer vision, speech-to-text, and sentiment analysis. The system detected performative behaviours—positions, gestures, speech, emotional tone—and linked them to environmental responses (light, sound adaptation and object movement) via an intuitive visual programming interface. Grounded in collective co-creation and embodied experimentation, participants iteratively critiqued and adapted the system, treating technology as both material and collaborator in shaping real-time dramaturgy.

The study frames architecture as dynamic enactment, emphasising performative adaptation over static form. Here, environments are designed to resemble active participants—technological "co-creators" that co-shape narrative through interaction. While not autonomous, these systems can act as expressive, contingent elements within a live composition process.

Methodologically, the project bridges Viewpoints-based devising, architectural performativity, and somaesthetic interaction, while probing tensions between human intention and technological unpredictability through adversarial collaboration. Participants gradually shifted from seeing technology as a tool to be mastered, toward engaging it as an improvisational partner. System imperfections—latency, misread gestures, ambiguous emotional cues—were reframed as creative provocations. These *glitches* fostered adaptive co-agency, privileging spontaneity and emergent dialogue between human and machine.

This research proposes a shift in performance design pedagogy: positioning technology not as passive infrastructure but as an expressive, contingent force. It offers practical tools and conceptual models—such as metaphor-driven design frameworks—for practitioners working at the intersection of embodiment, computation, and spatial storytelling.

09:30 **A Performative Archive**

Dr. Adonis Volanakis

Visual Artist and Assistant Professor, University of Patras, Patras, Greece

How is an archive research can be designed and executed in a performative trope? How can a museum be transformed in a multi stage to host a 50 years' history of theatre organization? How is the community invited and engaged in-and-with a meaningful context? The exhibition 50 years of Municipal and Regional Theatre of Crete, a living archive at the Municipal Gallery of Chania in Crete, utilized every material or intangible element of the long history of the organisation, managing to create a walking chronology. The threads of the exhibition's vision are the participatory experience of the visitors. At all stages, small stories emerge that do not fit into a monoculture event. The exhibition highlights the organization that is not only entertaining but entangled as a living cultural cell with strong ties to the local community and history. Its rich archive, through costumes, sets, programs and photographs, reveals a path that is not simply historical, but experiential, where artists, spectators and communities co-shape the cultural heritage of Crete. The visitor is invited to see the theatre as a dynamic system, where theatrical art is shaped by its time and at the same time influences it. The exhibition is not a simple display of objects, but a living narrative, inviting the audience to participate in the process of historical reconstruction. Art has the power to heal, to highlight wounds and to cultivate dialogue. Engaging in theatre, whether as a spectator or as a creator, is an act of self-knowledge. From this perspective we can argue that the founding of this specific theatre also had a therapeutic role, as it brought collective concerns to the surface and created new forms of social cohesion through art during the years of the dictatorship and high rise of suicides the first period. The archive becomes an active field and shield of memory, identity and future possibilities. What makes it special is that it does not remain in historical recording, but activates the relationship between audience and the stage involving citizens, artists and researchers in the process of interpreting and reshaping the theatre history of Crete.

09:40 **Discussion**

16th Session

Other Forms of Presence

Chair: Dr Antonia Vasilakou

10:00 **Re-Thinking Site-Specificity via Long Durational Performance Art**

Greig Burgoyne

Artist, Researcher, Writer, and Subject Lead BA Fine Art, University for the Creative Arts, Canterbury, UK

The 21st century proliferates that desire to compose, manage, if not maintain a reality we don't live, whilst concealing or denying the one we do. Performativity has made us invisible, incessantly reiterating the sedimentary role of imposed corporeal language. *Have we become unconscious to consciousness? Are the hegemonies of the seen symptomatic of our estrangement from our experience and our actuality? What form can that emancipation take?*

My-Space (2024) is a site-specific performance that sees Burgoyne concealed inside a hessian sacking. The unconventional shape of which was determined by the mapped accumulation of spaces where he was present (in his studio area). Absurdity and logic collide as he then enacts a 'work out'. He is present but not seen, but what is appearing is not demonstrative of our means to get stronger and fitter, but a working away from those imposed synchronicities and actions that prevent our true emergence. Burgoyne may be concealed, but what appears is an actual and emergent performativity akin to a powerful weakness.

This paper will unpack an elemental corporeality, not the ongoing production of *things* (Levinas), whereby the reception of the body is absorbed in its realisation, as it discloses an ontology beyond exteriority and aesthetic appearance (Heidegger); A co-created intersubjectivity whereupon 'the visible is pregnant with the invisible' (Merleau-Ponty) and in contrast to the sedimentary and enclosed nature of mass performativity (Heidegger), through that reciprocity of two depths; the expressed world and beholder of that worlding, beyond an exhausted representation and adaptation to space (Dufrenne).

A paradox no less. Akin to a surface of inexhaustible depth, Levinas suggests this "non representability is the surplus of the lived body over the representation of it" (James, 2015, p.43) To activate that hidden surplus, *My-Space* is to rupture the optical unconscious, whereby allowing new territorialisation's of a previously hidden corporeality to emerge. In doing so, *My-Space* will reveal not our conformity and adaptation to site and space, but a precarious emancipation that may be at its most profound when we are not seen but instead sensorial appear.

10:10 **Deciphering Mechanisms and Narration Systems in the Natural Landscape: The Case of Keros**

Valassia Barbouti¹ & Myrto Andronidi²

¹*Architect and Scenographer, National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece*

²*Architect and Art Director, National Technical University of Athens, Athens, Greece*

This project explores the design of a site-specific experience in Keros, an uninhabited island in the Cyclades, where access has been forbidden since 1992. Keros carries traces of dense historical layering: from early Cycladic ritual activity (c. 2750 BCE) to a classical acropolis, Byzantine ruins, and more recent structures. The island could be described as an abaton — a site known primarily through excavation reports, oral histories, and distant observation.

The central research questions are: *How can a place be perceived, archived, and interpreted remotely? How can we design a site-specific experience for a place we cannot access?*

To address these, we developed a four-layer documentation system that captures the island's physical, material, narrative, and mythological dimensions. Layers include: the island's physical aspects — geomorphology and human traces (Layer 0); buried stories through ruins and excavations (Layer -A); intangible oral histories and myths (Layer +A); and an attempt to reintegrate this liminal space into a collective geography (Layer +∞).

Following this remote archiving process, a single 8-hour visit — conducted under special permit — allowed us to document a 3.5 km route using GPS, continuous video, photographs, and our embodied experience. We enriched the archive and applied a spatial scripting methodology. We identified 42 spatial transitions, classified into six qualities: path, plateau, staircase, balcony, tiers, and forest, treating each as a scenographic scene — structuring a sequence of moments in which the visitor becomes performer and the site becomes stage. The resulting intervention acted as a guiding mechanism, framing the visual field and choreographing spatial, immersive experiences for the flâneur.

The central element of this project is the system itself: a methodology for remotely interpreting, documenting, and reimagining different landscapes. This system functions as a mirror between site and project, generating tools tied in the landscape's unique characteristics. While the methodology is universal, its content and expression are always site-specific — as the mechanism is fed by the spatial, historical, and narrative traits of the landscape.

10:20 **The Performative Character of Betrayal in Public Space**

Sophia Kyriakou¹ & Areti Petropoulou²

¹*Visual Artist*

²*Performer and Theatre Researcher*

"It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Gospel of John (13:26)

The article for the 4th *Performing Space Conference* explores the issue of treason with the city of Nafplio itself as the site of the betrayal and murder of the first leader of the Greek state, Ioannis Kapodistrias. The article attempts to highlight the spatial and symbolic connection between the site-specific performance and the raw inspirational material of the assassination of the first governor. A political act of betrayal against the Greek people becomes the starting point to identify our personal betrayals, either as perpetrators or as victims.

The set object (a long table) draws its origin from Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, where a story of betrayal was also played out. The performance projects this particular site as a place of betrayal and its resonance in the present. The 12-hour site-specific performance titled *Last supper, Ioannis and other Betrayals* is an in-situ site-specific performance with the participation of the community in Nafplio, explores personal and/or political betrayal, inspired by the assassination of Kapodistrias and intertwined with performative scenography by the performance settings from Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. A long table, set with bread, wine, water, olives and burning frankincense, becomes an altar and a confessional field. For the betrayals we have committed or the betrayals we have suffered. Bread, as a basic element of survival, becomes an act of sharing between performers and spectators in order to create a public platform for confession. Wine, a product used in many rituals from antiquity to the present day, is the *bitter cup* of betrayal as we know it from the story of the Last Supper, but it is also a product that softens human defenses and facilitates articulate expression. Spectators are invited to sit at the big table and decide for themselves if and when to share the bread and wine with the performers. In turn, they decide if and when to confess their own betrayal. To connect their personal narratives with the trauma of the site, aiming toward a forthcoming process of healing through narration.

10:30 **Bacchae: You Who Are Willing to See the Unseen**

Anastasia Giamouzi¹ & Dr. Stella Paschalidou²

¹Postgraduate Student in Music and Sound Technologies, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece

²Assistant Professor, Department of Music Technology and Acoustics, Hellenic Mediterranean University, Greece

This paper shares reflections on performative space construction through embodied interaction with sound—an inquiry situated within an artistic research project based on Euripides' *Bacchae*. At its core is a solo performer whose gestures generate and manipulate sonic events in real time, creating a dynamic interplay of spatial boundaries between performer and audience.

The paper investigates how gestural interaction with sound can function as a compositional tool for space—augmenting dramaturgical meaning and transforming the performer's relationship with the environment. Structured around four cyclical stages of the Bacchic state—as narrated by the messengers—the performance develops a spatial dramaturgy of presence, ecstasy, and aftermath. The interactive system serves a central dramaturgical prompt: “Do you want to see them up close? Do you want to spy on them? Approach in secret. What will happen if they see you?” These questions shape the spatial logic of the performance, highlighting the tension between proximity and exposure of the performer to the audience.

The paper asks: *In what ways can embodied interaction with sound reshape the spatial dynamics of the stage and respond to these dramaturgical prompts? And how might these interactions influence audience perception and agency in technologically mediated performance?*

Methodologically, the project is grounded in improvisation and rehearsal-based exploration. The dancer engages in guided physical tasks, whereby gestures are mapped onto a responsive computational sound system integrating optical motion tracking, e-textiles, and contact microphones, chosen for their ability to capture nuance and resonate with the mythic world of *Bacchae*.

To the best of our knowledge, interactive audio systems have rarely been integrated into performances of ancient Greek drama. This approach challenges preconceptions in reimagining such canonical works, dynamically shifting between (intimate) personal and (extroverted) global space of action in gesture-sound relationships while balancing between technological transparency and opacity.

10:40 **Space and Voice as Substitutes to Character Embodiment in the Expositional Performance “Entre vos mains” by Marc Lainé**

PhD(C) Beatrice Lapadat

PhD student, Department of literature, Theatre and Cinema, Laval University, Québec, Canada

Our research aims at exploring how the physical and diegetic functions of space can, through projection and imagination, render visible several fictional characters whose existence is vehiculated solely through discourse. In the expositional performance *Entre vos mains (In your hands)* by French scenographer and theatre director Marc Lainé, the use of voice and sound disrupts and reverts the perception of space. Presented at Théâtre de Genevilliers in 2025 under the form of an audio guided perambulation along seven immersive pavilions, the performance reveals the fictional persona of Mehdi Lamrani, a young French artist whose filmic, plastic, literary and choreographic creations emerge as acts of pure *mediumship*. To proceed with the analysis of the representational strategies employed in *Entre vos mains*, we begin with following research questions: *How can the use of spectral voices and the undermining of traditional spatial segmentation within a performative framework determine the perception of fictional figures, whether embodied or not? In what ways does immersion in such a space affect spectators' capacity and willingness to engage with concepts generally perceived*

as suspicious, such as mediumship and possession? Furthermore, if we refer to *Entre nos muses* (Among our muses) – a performance by Eric Minh Cuong Castaing and No Anger included in the project as a counterpoint – we pose an additional research question: *To what extent does the encounter with corporeally divergent bodies help expand spectators' perceptual horizons, and what role does performative space play in this potential shift?* Our methodological approach is foregrounded in the hermeneutics of voice deployed by Sandrine Le Pors (2014), whose theories allow us to argue the installation of a genuine “dramaturgy of disappearance” (Le Pors, 2014) in *Entre vos mains*. The final results of our research will highlight the open-ended strategies that the French performance draws in an artistically hybrid network, in which immersion and innovation create space for inclusion and imagination as subversive tools.

10:50 **Discussion**

17th Session

Performance Space

Chair: Prof. Dorita Hannah

11:00 **Scenographic Architectures. Re)Questioning the Relationship between Spectators and Actors**

Dr. Rafaël Magrou

Associate Professor, Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris-Malaquais, Université PSL, Laboratoire ACS, France

The history of performing arts venues is told through various diagrams and generally plans (rarely cross-sections, still less axonometric or other perspective) that summarise the spatial organisation between auditorium and stage according to models reduced to architecture, to the perennial; but this takes not into account the contribution of scenic devices and scenography. *Doesn't the etymological meaning of the word theatre - theatron - refer to the place from which we watch, suggesting that we should think of places adapted to creation rather than creations to be fitted into constrained spaces?* The formula for the place and the action that takes place there invites us to think not only about the stage set, above all about the way in which the audience is organised in relation to the action. We ask these questions within the speculative framework of our academic research work, focusing on the context of the teaching experiments we carry out in architecture schools. Our practice as assiduous spectators and as critical journalists specialising in theatrical venues and scenography is also part of this examination, which crosses the rules of visibility and listening to shows.

In this proposal, we intend to share these experiences of what we've been calling *scenographic architectures*, * the title of the 2024-25 project studio at the École nationale supérieure d'architecture Paris-Malaquais. Based on Paul Claudel's *Le Soulier de Satin*, in partnership with the Comédie Française, this was an opportunity to combine confrontation with reality (professional investigations) and fictional experimentation (educational explorations) to enrich the range of scenic spatial situations, going beyond the morphologies of what the building offers. It's a question of the creative space, of the relationship established or to be developed between actors and spectators,** of the spaces of performance. It sees teaching as a way of researching, practising and questioning the scenic space.

*For the last past six years (2018-24), I have been running a course entitled *Scenographic Universes*, focusing on stage design for live performance, in partnership with the Comédie-Française. The seventh year, 2024-25, has taken a new turn by becoming *Scenographic Architectures*. This is the last year of close cooperation with Eric Ruf: the perfect opportunity to share a more *architectural*

conception with him and to rethink the relationship between spectators and actors more broadly, based on the play *Le Soulier de Satin* by Paul Claudel. Previously (2016-17), in collaboration with Les Amandiers - Théâtre de Nanterre, a similar experiment was carried out by scattering various scenic locations around the city, in anticipation of the theatre's reconfiguration works.

**This is likely to require an occasional reorganisation of the presentation space in situ at the conferences in Nafplio and the active participation of speakers and listeners.

11:10 **A Phenomenological Approach to the A-Social Configuration of Scenography in Single-Spectator Performances**

Prof. Dr. Liviu Dospinescu

Full Professor of Theatre Studies, Department of Literature, Theatre and Cinema, Université Laval, Quebec City, Canada

This presentation proposes a model of the performance space and a description of the spectatorship experience, focusing on the spectator's response to performances employing an *a-social* scenographic configuration. The investigation is inspired by Samuel Beckett's *television plays*, examined within the framework of my research on *Phenomenological Theatre* (Dospinescu, 2007), which explores novel psycho-physical effects generated by dramaturgical strategies that resist semiotic interpretation. Instead, these strategies foster a reception based on lived experience and the feeling of presence. What kind of response emerges when a performance is intended for a single spectator? More specifically, this presentation outlines an original model of performance and performing space that tends to absorb the spectator into the playing area and thus into the fictional world it enacts. It also explores the performative role ascribed to the spectator, who—while becoming a kind of *spect-actor* reminiscent of Augusto Boal's concept—does so in an *a-social* context. Unlike Boal's socially engaged theatre, this model seeks not to activate the social function of theatre, but to suspend or neutralize it. The presentation concludes with a brief discussion of select examples, including Beckett's works that inspired this performative model, as well as experimental projects in which I have applied and developed the concept of *performance for single-spectator*.

11:20 **Exploring the Spectator / Performer Interface: A Case Study of Grecian Garden, Yonkers, New York**

Edward Nilsson

Independent Researcher and Architect: Adaptive Reuse and Theatre Design

The paper explores the archetype of the ancient theatre and whether the contemporary theatre can retain that traditional form and intensify the relationship between spectators and performers. Using Rafael Magrou's paper *Moving Spectators in Performing Spaces: The Auditorium Dislocated Into the Stage, or Vice Versa* as a springboard, the paper explores an alternative approach by means of a case study of a particular site.

The site, Grecian Garden in Yonkers, just north of New York City, was chosen for its classical motif and symbolic representation of the birthplace of the ancient theatre. Adapting a theatre program to a classical garden site overlooking the Hudson River, offers an example of how the spectator/performer boundaries of the theatre space can be blurred to reach the goal of a more interactive performance. For the spectators this can occur by entering and exiting the space across the stage, and for the performers by extending the acting area from stage into the seating area to minimize the traditional fixed line between the two. In addition, the geometry of the concept

provides slightly different floor elevations between adjacent seats, further loosening the uniformity of rigidly flat rows of seating.

Research questions will include: *what scale of performance space is required to allow the geometry to accommodate functional and building code requirements?* This will be tested by applying the concept to additional venues.

11:30 **Storytelling the Theatre Building. On the Tension between the Multiplication of the Theatre Building's Specificities and the Al-Halqa in Radouan Mriziga's 7 (2017)**

PhD(C) Elias D'hollander

PhD Student in Performing Arts and Media (S:PAM), Department of Art History, Musicology and Theatre Studies, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

7 is the third part of choreographer Radouan Mriziga's (MA, BE) first trilogy in which he works on the relation of the moving body and its surroundings. It consists of seven performers that each embody one of the seven ancient wonders of the world, by dancing, through music, by taping a floor plan using the body as a ruler, video projection or even speaking or storying them into existence on stage. Throughout the performance, the spectators are on the stage (free to move around if they want to), together with the performers that dance wherever the building permits it: in the auditorium, on the bridges that suspend the lights or else outside. By engaging the entire theatre building, Mriziga suspends the black box's supposed absolute neutrality.

This paper will argue that 7 critiques the institution of the theatre through an affirmation of its architecture as what I have called elsewhere an *architecture-trouvée* (D'hollander, 2023). Using performance philosophy as a methodological framework I will show how Mriziga does not silence the theatre architecture in a black box, but listens to its stories in the sense of William James (Debaise, 2020). By tracing the performance through three theatre buildings in Belgium, I will stay with one of those possibilities for critique, namely the way in which 7 puts the colonial heritage of the théâtre à l'italienne under tension (Amine et al., 2012). I will argue that Mriziga's approach to each theatre building's architectural specificities creates a *Al-Halqa*, a circle that gathers around a storyteller in the Maghreb theatre tradition (Amine, Carlson 28). It is by using its architecture differently that Mriziga installs the *Al-Halqa* in this building typology, once weaponised by the French colonial project. Gathered around in a circle, he intensifies the architectural stories, and makes us listen to it.

11:40 **Discussion**

18th Session

Multimedia Performance II

Chair: Dr. Katerina El Raheb

12:10 **New technologies reshaping the performative space: The Site-Specific Set and the Action Props**

PhD(C) Paraskevi Bokovou

PhD Student, Film department, Aristotle University, Thessaloniki, Greece

Since the invention of film, emerging new technologies have been gradually taking over the stage and the performative space reshaping the art of scenography.

Performances nowadays are mostly participatory and the spectators are directed via technological means, or, in interactive narratives, are the manipulators of the plot. Many site-specific

performances become virtual and the spectators are presented with technological action props that act like catalysts for the existence of the performance.

To support the arguments above, a series of examples will be presented in four categories of performances that use site-specific sets and technological action props. One axis is based on the technological means, and another on the transforming set.

Visual directions are given on screen or via sound while the spectator is on the street of a city for example; audio headsets provide the narration of the experience while the spectator becomes the performer; a Virtual Reality (VR) head set may even transport the spectator to another environment, for which the real set design may be a match, or not; a performance can now be a VR interactive experience; the spectator may even be at his/her place, anywhere with an internet connection, watching a tele-performance, having an experience not unlike a cinematic one.

There are many emerging new technologies that one could use in order to perform, the question is: *which one and why? What more does this specific technology offer to the spectator? Does a performance become an experience just because it includes new technologies? And how does technology influence the performative space and its scenography?*

New perspectives, extra information, new experiences, accessibility to all no matter the space and time; these are some of the reasons for which performances have paired this well with new technologies.

11:30 **Where Do I Play My Body? A Round Trip Between Virtual Stages and Real-World Arenas**

PhD(C) Alessandro Di Egidio

Architect and PhD Student, Diap Architecture. Theories and Project, University of Sapienza, Rome, Italy

In 1991, Brenda Laurel published the book *Computers as Theatre*, positing that to enhance the user experience, computers should engage users dramatically, stimulating both thoughts and emotions. Thirty years later, the computer and the world it opens up have increasingly become the stage for our actions and lives. Conversely, the tangible and concrete world is progressively losing its role as the stage where our stories unfold.

Rather than complementing the real dimension with the virtual, a substitution is taking place. The virtual, welcoming and tailored to the user, is supplanting the real world, which appears harsh and indifferent to human goals. In the virtual realm, everything seems possible and accessible, whereas in the real world, processes are more arduous and complex.

This contribution aims to critically examine this trajectory. By contrasting the virtual experience offered in Alejandro G. Iñárritu's *CARNE y ARENA (Virtually Present, Physically Invisible)* with the experiential physicality of the *Digital Water Pavilion* by Carlo Ratti Associati and the performance *My body, the stones: Accademia sensitiva/somatica* by choreographer Lucia Di Pietro, it seeks to highlight the paradox of considering the virtual as a realm of infinite possibilities. In truth, the virtual is inherently bounded by the algorithms that dictate its limits and usability.

In Lucia Di Pietro's performance, the body, through its interaction with the surrounding environment, discovers infinite possibilities, invents scenarios, deconstructs boundaries, and proposes new codes. It transcends the confines of the real while remaining rooted within it. The real world, if reimagined as a stage, stimulates actions and imagination, fostering the creation of new possibilities. It transforms the body into the true protagonist of reality, engaging in a vibrant and tangible participation that goes beyond mere appearance.

11:30 **In the Dialectic of Space as Body, Body as Space: The Performative Grey Zone**

Altar Çolak¹ & Merve İrem Keklik²

¹MSc Student & Research Assistant, Department of Architecture, Gebze Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

²MSc Student, Department of Architecture, Istanbul Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey

The relationship between body and space is central to human experience, traditionally viewed as a binary where the body inhabits space and acts within it. This binary is questioned through performance, revealing a dynamic interaction where body and space transform each other. As Merleau-Ponty (1962) suggests, the body and space engage in mutual exchange, reshaping one another, creating an ambiguous hierarchy between “body as space” and “space as body.”

The posthumanist perspective supports “body as space,” viewing the body as a deepened site, influenced by Nast (1998) and Hayles’ (1999) posthuman interpretation. Here, space becomes a new body with limbs, systems, and mobility, an idea deepened by Bill Vorn’s robots and Theo Jansen’s structures (Vorn, 2012; Jansen, 2008).

The concept of “space as body” explores bodily extensions that form new volumes, seeing the body as a micro-space, the foundation of spatiality. From a transhumanist perspective, wearable extensions, as seen in Stelarc and Orlan’s practices, redefine both space and identity (Zylinska, 2002). Loie Fuller and Hussein Chalayan similarly examine how clothing transforms the body’s interaction with space (Berg, 2000; Chalayan, 2000).

Bodiacture is an in-situ installation produced specifically for the staircase within the *Body and Space* course in Spring 2023–2024, questioning the dynamic relationship between body and space. It functions as both body and space, creating an environment that challenges traditional boundaries of bodily and spatial identity where bodies interact with, modify, and become part of the space. By engaging participants with shifting thresholds, it enables an experiential transformation, blurring distinctions between body and space. It documents how behavior is shaped within an embodied structure and how new bodies emerge through silhouettes re-produced when performance and structure overlap. It proposes hybrid, non-hierarchical performative spatial practices, revealing tactics at the intersection of transhumanism and posthumanism, transforming binary interpretations into a grey zone.

12:40 **Discussion**

19th Session

Performative Presentations IV

Chair: Dr Dorita Hannah

11:30 **Strategies of Creating Presence in the Space of the City: Analysing the Role of Somatic Practices in Performance within Urban Environments**

Natalia Jowita Kozakiewicz

Performer, researcher, writer, and contemporary dance teacher

MSc Student, Centre of Contemporary Dance, University of Music and Dance in Cologne, Germany

Performance located in public space seems to have a strong potential to create a base for social bonding. Various forms of artistic activism designed for the spaces defined as common and accessible open a possibility of experiencing a performative event collectively, to share a present moment on the physical and thoughtful ground. Somatic practices, emphasizing individual body in relation to

the surrounding environment, have a promise of opening this ground as well. *How the somatic practice of presence in the public space can be cultivated? Is the collective experience of body-awareness enough to make a ground for social change?* Based on the collective score making, presented research-performance practice explored the topic of somatic presence in public, questioning what forms of movement performance can connect both audience and performers in a shared experience. It revealed a prospect of participative performance as a form of collective presence-making and the aptitude of flow as an entrance state for initiation of the process of social bonding. Current further research study focuses on developing the somatic scoring practice as an artistic strategy for exploring body politics.

10:30 **Conjuring the Threshold**

Ridha DHIB

Walking artist and performance researcher

Conjuring the Threshold is a minimalist performance that symbolically repairs an obstructed passage encountered during the performative walk *Ex-tracés*, from Paris to Mardin (Turkey). On July 2nd, 2022, during *Stage 107 between Phères and Ipsala*, at the Greek-Turkish border, the artist was forced to use a motorized vehicle to cross a bridge closed to pedestrians, briefly suspending his walk.

This performance addresses that denied crossing through a precise and pared-down dispositif: a red line on the ground symbolizing the border, and a synthetic voice slowly reciting the GPS coordinates of the bridge from the artist's smartphone, producing an algorithmic logorrhea - a cold, regular, digital mantra. The first half of the coordinates is spoken in Turkish, the second in Greek.

The artist moves slowly, holding his smartphone in one hand - from which both voice and visual scrolling of the coordinates emerge - and in the other hand his walking stick, the very one used throughout the original journey. The physical crossing of the red line occurs exactly as the voice pronounces the central coordinates of the border. The entire action lasts ten minutes, including a precisely timed pause of about thirty seconds at the symbolic threshold. This gesture marks the exact midpoint of the bridge forbidden to walking, embodying a *kairos* - a convergence of space, body, and time.

The performance questions borders as physical, administrative, and symbolic limits, in connection with freedom of movement. It also explores, more broadly, the notion of threshold as a space of transition, shift, and transformation - where the body becomes an instrument of subtle and precise passage. It seeks to poeticize a real rupture and turn it into a symbolic act of repair and embodied affirmation.

13:30 **Discussion**

13:45 **Conclusion**

Conference Participants

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Workshop Descriptions

Performing Spaces: Narrative Spaces and Scenography

Maria Chaniotaki with the collaboration of Eleni Palogou

6 July

Workshop objectives: To explore imagination when it is grounded in reality and a real space.

Duration: One day / 4 hours

Profile of participants: Anyone interested in scenography and narratives of space.

Number of participants: 10 (minimum) – 15 (maximum)

How can a place narrate dramaturgically and become one of the most poetic elements of Scenography? This workshop offers an approach to Expanded Scenography and Performance Design. How do we "read" the narratives that are already embedded in a space in order to bring them to light? How can we inscribe new narratives into a room, a street, or any place around us? We will focus on the spaces around us, including public spaces, where we will wander in search of qualities and elements that hold dramaturgical perspective. We will examine examples from Expanded Scenography, Performance, and Visual Arts, focusing on the methods they employ. Through artistic techniques that explore spatial perception, we will experiment and pose questions about how spaces carry functional meanings, how they can tell different stories each time, and how we position the audience in relation to these narratives.

Workshop leaders:

Maria Chaniotaki is a civil engineer (BA), pianist and stage designer (MA) who has been working as a theatre and costume designer since 1996 and has presented her work as a visual artist in several exhibitions. She has been the founder and director of the Athens Scenography Laboratory (LSA) since 2000. She has published several books and has repeatedly participated in the Prague Quadrennial of Design and Space as a curator and set designer. She is a member of the Society of British Theatre Designers (SBTD), International Institute of Theatre (ITT), Greek Chamber of Fine Arts (EETE), Hellenic Costume Society and Greek Theatre Designers Association.

website: www.mariachaniotaki.gr blog: <https://maria-chaniotaki.tumblr.com/>

Eleni Palogou is Greek architect, set designer and visual artist, currently studying for a master's degree in Applied Clinical Sociology and Art. She has collaborated with several theatre companies and artists, designing sets for theatre productions, short films, art installations and performance projects. She has curated and designed for group exhibitions and festivals such as the *Prague Quadrennial of Design and Space*. Combining her background in architecture, scenography and sociology, her artistic practice focuses on the dynamic relationship between reality and perception, while being deeply rooted in space, representation and audience experience.

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/1072454/1072455>

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The Preferences of the Gods: Spatial Performativity Revealed

Alba Balmaseda Domínguez and Pablo Berzal Cruz

4 and 5 July

Workshop objectives: Consider Mediterranean Spacing through site-responsive group actions.

Duration: Two days / 8 hours

Number of participants: 10 (minimum) – 25 (maximum)

Fifty stades, I conjecture, from Temenium is Nauplia, which at the present day is uninhabited; its founder was Nauplius, reputed to be a son of Poseidon and Amymone. Of the walls, too, ruins still remain and in Nauplia are a sanctuary of Poseidon, harbours, and a spring called Canathus. Here, say the Argives, Hera bathes every year and recovers her maidenhood. This is one of the sayings told as a holy secret at the mysteries which they celebrate in honour of Hera. (Pausanias, II.38.2)

Spatial performativity is the relationship between the sensory stimuli produced by an environment and the cognitive and behavioural responses they cause in its occupants. Sacred space, places inhabited by the gods or places that human beings connect with the divine, is distinguished from the rest of the environment by establishing itself as a centre that organises the territory. In sacred places, spatial performativity is very intense, so even if the ritual activity and its traces have faded away, it is still possible to detect the places preferred by the gods, as spatial performativity persists. In this workshop we propose how to discover the spatial performativity of a place without the constraint of cultural load and current uses through conscious performance. To do so, we propose to transform ourselves into performative detectives to try to solve a mystery that Nafplio holds about its most ancient sacred places: where were the Sanctuary of Poseidon and the Fountain of Canathus mentioned by Pausanias in the 2nd century AD? Using different techniques of focused attention, letting emotions emerge and allowing the body to express itself to the sensory stimuli produced by the environment, we will carry out a performative investigation of ancient Nafplio and its surroundings, in search of its lost sacred places.

Workshop leaders:

Dr Alba Balmaseda Domínguez is a Spanish architect. She combines architectural practice with academic research and teaching. Her work focuses on public spaces, the relationship between body and space, and architectural materiality, approached through design, performance and full-scale construction. Her work is internationally recognised and has won several competitions. In 2022 she was nominated for the Mies van der Rohe Award for her project La Mejicana. She is co-founder of the research project Performing Space and the group OFF SEASON, where she explores her interests in a transdisciplinary way through lectures, seminars, publications, exhibitions and workshops.

Dr Pablo Berzal Cruz is a Spanish PhD architect, landscape architect and performer. Since 1994 he has been combining his work as an architect, performer, curator and teacher. He has designed and curated several exhibitions, performed in different contexts, won several awards in competitions and published his work in different media. His research focuses on the study of performativity in ritual space, and his most recent postdoctoral thesis (2024) is *Performing Epidaurus: Spatial Performativity at the Asclepieion of Epidaurus*. In 2022 he founded the research project Performing Space, of which he has been director since then.

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Mediterranean spacing 2.0

Site-Responsive Actions Exploring Nafplion's Spatiotemporal Performativity

Dorita Hannah

4 to 7 July

Workshop objectives: Consider Mediterranean Spacing through site-responsive group actions.

Duration: Four days /4 hours; 1) gathering/sharing; 2/3) exploring/making, 4) activating/feasting

Profile of participants: From varied disciplines/cultures who are interested in site performativity.

Number of participants: 10 (minimum) – 25 (maximum)

Commensality can be defined as the exchange of sensory memories and emotions, and of substances and objects incarnating remembrance and feeling. (C. Nadia Seremetakis)

Performance is **action-in-space** and site is **space-in-action**– together cohering as **performative spacing**.

However, our globalised worldview still regards time and space as separable and absolute, generally oblivious to spatial dynamics in daily environments. In *Event-Space*, I maintain that, as a performative entity, “space precedes action—as action”. This requires a **relational understanding of place** that recognises the fluctuating relationships between objects, people and environments they inhabit, all charged with meaning within the cultural territory of the site, requiring spatial attunement. This 4-day **collaborative workshop** therefore **investigates the relationship between performance and site through embodied exploration**. Recognising location as an event in itself – resonating with environmental performativity at macro and micro scales, interdisciplinary groups will explore Nafplion to consider “Mediterranean Spacing” with specific reference to *commensality*; engaging with the socio-politics of the table. This leads to a series of **site-responsive actions**, ending with a **shared feast in the landscape**.

Workshop leader:

Prof Dorita Hannah is a New Zealand-based designer and independent academic whose practice and research – operating across the architectural, performing, culinary and visual arts – focus on performance space, spatial performativity and performative spacing. Her scholarship and international projects address the public realm's dynamics, politics and intermediality. Hannah has published on *Performance Design* and *Event-Space*, while designing, curating and directing exhibitions, installations, performances, feasts, symposia and workshops. She regularly exhibits at the *Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design & Space*, for which she has been Design Director, Architecture Commissioner and Theory Curator.

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