

READING ARCHITECTURAL SPACE THROUGH A STAGED EVENT

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ABSTRACT

READING ARCHITECTURAL SPACE THROUGH A STAGED EVENT

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This study is an inquiry into the architectural aspects of “stage space”, which is believed to be the materialization of visual relationships, with the claim that it is also the best illustration of the proposition that architectural discourse is affected by the changes in visual culture. The study is based on the assumption that changes in the conceptualization of architectural space have also been influenced from the shifts in the field of vision, which are the consequences of the changes in the social, political and economical

circumstances as well as the developments in science and technology.

Within the acknowledgement of three major shifts in the field of vision that have been identified by Jonathan Crary, the study focuses on a reading and assessment of twentieth century developments that differ from the “traditional conception of space” and ways of “spatial representation”. Being a key to reconsider architectural space production, the outcomes of these developments are read through the construction of stage and performance spaces.

Stage space possesses knowledge about the making of architecture. This study is an attempt to demonstrate how stage space is in relation to or anticipates changes in conception of architecture. Because of its instant nature and flexibility, stage space can be seen as a tool for making experiments for possible changes in the conception of architectural space.

Keywords: visibility, vision, space conception, performance space, stage space, surface, illusion

ÖZ

SAHNE YAPITI ÜZERİNDEN MİMARLIK OKUMASI

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Bu çalışma, görsel ilişkilerin somutlaştığı bir kurgusu olduğu düşüncesiyle, sahne mekanının mimari değerlerinin incelenmesine yönelik bir araştırmadır. Sahne mekanı, mimarlık söylemlerinin görsel kültür alanındaki değişimlerden etkilendiğinin en açık örneklemelerinden biri olduğu iddiasıyla ele alınmaktadır.

Çalışmanın dayandığı temel düşünce, mimari mekan kavramının, bilim ve teknoloji alanlarındaki gelişmelerin yanı sıra, zamanın sosyal, politik ve ekonomik koşullarıyla biçimlenen görsellik alanındaki değişimlerden etkilenmekte olduğu görüşüdür.

Görme teorileri alanındaki, Jonathan Crary tarafından tanımlanmış olan üç temel değişim kabul edilmiş olmakla birlikte,

alışmanın odağını, geleneksel mekan kavrayışının deęiřime uğradığı yirminci yüzyıl gelişmelerinin okunması ve deęerlendirilmesi oluşturmaktadır. Mimari mekan kavramı üzerine yeniden düşünmek için bir çıkış noktası oluşturmak amacıyla, bu deęişimler sahne mekanı üzerinden okunmuştur.

Sahne mekanı, mimari mekan üretimine ait bilgileri barındırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, sahne mekanı ve mimarlık üretimleri arasındaki bu ilişkiyi ortaya çıkarma ve mimarlık alanındaki deęişimlerin denenebileceęi bir alan keşfetme çabasıdır. Sahne mekanının kısa sürede üretilebilir ve esnek yapısı, onu mimari mekan kavrayışındaki olası deęişiklikler için bir deney aracı olarak inceleyebilmemizi sağlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: görsellik, görüş, mekan kavrayışı, gösterim mekanı, sahne mekanı, yüzey, yansıma

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is an inquiry into an alternative reading and an assessment of architectural space. It is based on the assumption that changes in the conceptualization of architectural space have also been influenced by the theories of vision, which are the consequences of the changes in social, political and economical circumstances as well as the developments in science and technology. Consequently, the changes in these theories effect the notion of space and are reflected in the built environment. Theories of vision are marked by shifts in their conceptualization.

In this study, three major shifts in the field of vision have been acknowledged. These are the major “shifts” stated by Jonathan Crary, professor of art history at Columbia University, in his book, *The Techniques of the Observer, On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century*. The first shift is identified with the Italian Renaissance “that separates the era from medieval imagery”. The second shift occurs in the period of modernity, starting from the early nineteenth century. Finally, the third shift corresponds to the period during the mid-70’s that separates “computer generated imagery from forms of analog media like film, photography, television and

video”.¹ Causes of these shifts in the field of visibility, is the subject of another study; in this research however, these shifts are accepted in order to discuss their architectural consequences.

These three periods that are marked by these shifts, are identified with different conceptions of space. The model of vision in the Renaissance is identified with the “classical” or alternatively -as in some sources- “traditional” conception of space. The shift that marks the distinction between the linear system of the Renaissance and the imagery of the early nineteenth century is identified with a “new” conception of space.

The study focuses on a reading and assessment of the twentieth century developments that differ from the “classical” or the “traditional” conception of space and conventions of “spatial representation”.

Based on visibility, different space conceptions are consequently demonstrated within and outside of architecture. The study is also an inquiry into the architectural space on the stage with the claim that it is the best illustration of the proposition that the conceptualization of architectural space is effected by the changes in visual culture.

A performance space itself, is a materialization of visual relations between performer and audience. This relation becomes apparent through stage space, which can be identified with the models of the theories of vision. Performance space, in other words, which is the best illustration of these models, can be a guide to look at these models. Visibility being an inherent part of stage space, stage space communicates with the viewer

¹ Jonathan Crary points these shifts in his book *The Techniques of the Observer*, p.1

through its visuality The instant and flexible nature of stage space allows experimentation and makes the immediate reflection of the changes in visuality possible.

As a consequence, it is the claim of this study that it is possible to learn from the “art of space” used on stage and conceptualize its way of making. Reconsidering architectural space with this conceptualization will enrich its tools and understanding.

The contemporary conception of space is identified with computer-generated imagery, the third period in Crary’s categorization. It is, however, not the concern of this study for it requires further research and knowledge in the field. The study has also acknowledged the fact that critical distance is essential to achieve an understanding of any issue. Therefore, it aims to evaluate the former examples, in an attempt to explore the interactive relation between architectural space and the space constructed on the stage. It also aims to make use of this interactive relation, so as to make future projections possible.

This study is not a re-reading of the contemporary theories of theatre and staging; rather, it is an investigation in the conceptual achievements of constructing space in theatre that provides tools for evaluating architectural space.

The investigation is carried out through the analysis of a number of significant examples that illustrate the developments in the construction of stage space. Just to name some of them, the works of the avant-garde architects, stage-designers and directors, such as Richard Wagner, Walter

Gropius, Edward Gordon Craig, Adolphe Appia, Antonin Artaud, Oscar Schlemmer are studied in detail.

Among the avant-garde experiments, the work of Dan Graham, who is an artist born in America in 1942, has special significance. The innovations he introduced with his performance spaces were important for architecture and visual arts, as well as performing arts, since they mark a change in their conceptualization. The developments in the notion of both architectural and stage space can be observed through the structure of Graham's performance spaces. The shift in the field of vision that is identified with modernity is demonstrated in the performance spaces of Dan Graham. Through his performances of the 1970's and 80's, he proposed changes in the "conventional structure" of performance space, altering the relationships between performer and audience. His performances mark a change because they require a "new" conception of space, engaging materials that allow a "different composition". Tectonic aspects such as the use of steel and glass structures, use of two-way mirrors, transparency and visual effects such as "simultaneous perception", interaction, awareness of the audience, and time delay, using video projection, are the characteristics of the construction of his performance spaces. In his constructions, the position of the spectator is not fixed to a single point, thus the one-way relation of "traditional spectatorship" is altered with multiple viewpoints. The developments in his work mark the changes in the contemporary practice

that accomplish changes in visual and physical relationships.² A more detailed observation reveals that the role of spectator alters parallel to the changing theories of vision.

As mentioned before, this study aims to demonstrate how stage space can be interpreted as an experimental medium for architectural discourse. This is not a pre-defined subject and it is based on an extensive research in the field. The thesis is based on postgraduate research and studies in addition to practice in stage design.³ Besides professional practice, a wide range of performances have been critically viewed and studied in detail and the aspects of the use of stage space have been examined. These performances were chosen in the light of the advices of professional stage designers and directors. Being staged in various venues, these performances varied in style and in the use of performance space and theatre buildings.⁴ First hand experience contributed to the development of

² Theatre historian Prof. Sevda Şener (born 1928) claims that it is appropriate to bring together examples of theatre and performance art, since they can be seen as being both a continuation and isochronal to each other.

³ Author's experience in stage design officially started at the Middle East Technical University, where she worked as lighting and stage designer in several performances of the Dance Theatre Company. Since March 2002 she has also been working with Handan Ergiydiren Özer, head of the Modern Dance Department in Hacettepe University.

Between 1 August-27 September 2002, the author had the opportunity to work as the assistant of Greek stage designer, Michalis Kokkodialis for the stage and costume design of a Restoration Comedy by William Wycherley, "The Country Wife", which was performed in the Cockpit Theatre in London.

⁴ West-End musicals, which are performed at the Lyceum Theatre, Theatre Royal Drury Lane and Her Majesty's Theatre in Haymarket were, with their well-equipped stage machinery, examples of attractive spectacles, using several techniques to amaze the audience, which are related with the use of performance space.

The performances in the Barbican Theatre included significant directors and choreographers such as Robert Wilson, Merce Cunningham and Dan Hurlin. The opera *Three-Tales*, by Steve Reich and Beryl Korot, defined as twenty-first century opera was also presented in the Barbican Theatre, which was a fusion of video and music. A Japanese performance, *Shinla*, staged at The Place, combining traditional Japanese movement and contemporary Japanese choreography, was an example of the

this study. Back-stage experience in the Lyceum, Blue Elephant, Cockpit and Arcola Theatres in London, *Devlet Opera ve Balesi*, *Şinasi Sahnesi* and METU Cultural and Conventional Center in Ankara provided a practical background and a deeper understanding of the tools used in theatre spaces.

Library research that includes a wide range of sources on visual culture, architecture, history of theatre, and; stage and theatre design was crucial in the development of the terminology and the understanding of the issues in this research project. Bookstores in London specializing in theatre have also been a rich source. Online magazines such as *Scenography International*, *Leonardo* and several web sites were searched in order to receive daily information about recent works.⁵ Written sources dealing with the relations of architecture and theatre mostly focus on the historical development of theatre space. The structure of the performance and its relation to the stage and theatre space; the evolution of theatre architecture; changing intentions in the way of staging; the relationship of the audience and the actors and its effect on the shaping of the stage space have also been studied in these publications. Just to name a few, *The Second Book*

representational approach in defining the stage space and changing meanings of it by the use of a décor element on the stage. A site-specific work by East London Dance Company at Stratford circus was an exploration of the architecture of the building through the language of dance, questioning the meaning of the facade, inside and outside of the building, its public and private parts, as well as the shifting definitions of audiences and performers. Just to name some of the others, open-air performances, student works at Laban Center, site-specific works at the Greenwich Dance Agency, Royal Opera House, Royal Festival Hall, and an art gallery, festivals at Blue Elephant Theatre, plays at Arcola Theatre with flexible spaces of performance, which was a former factory, are examples of different staging techniques presented at different theatre spaces with different uses of stage space.

⁵ Find complete list in the bibliography.

on Architecture by Sebastiano Serlio; *Ten Books on Architecture* by Vitruvius; *The Origin of Perspective* by Hubert Damish, *Essays, Scenarios and Designs* by Adolphe Appia and *On Theatre* by E.Gordon Craig; *Space in Performance* by Gay McAuley; *Architecture, Actor and Audience* by Iain Mckintosh; *Places of Performance* by Marvin Carlson; *Dünden Bugüne Tiyatro Düşüncesi* by Sevdâ Şener; Dennis Sharp's essays *Theatre Spaces and Performances* and *City as a Stage* were the most influencing sources for the development of this study.⁶

This study drew on the knowledge accumulated in the sources mentioned above, but it also made use of them to develop a terminology. Prior to the discussion it is necessary to clarify this terminology, which will be used in the chapters that follow.

In an attempt to define the use of space in theater, theoreticians, despite some differences, agree on similar classifications of the different parts of a theater building. However, the names they give to similar parts vary. Gay McAuley, in her book *Space in Performance*, gives a clear taxonomy of space functions in a performance and also explains several other taxonomies made by Anne Ubersfeld, Steen Jansen, Etienne Souriau, Hanna Scolnicov-Michael Issacharoff and Patrice Pavis.

Their classifications can mainly be grouped in three categories. The first group is the "theatre space", which is the building itself. The second is

⁶ There are also other sources, such as *A History of World Theater* by Margot Berthold; *The Theatre of Robert Wilson* by Arthur Holmberg, focusing on his use of stage space; Diane Agrest, in *Architecture from Without*, evaluating the city as a stage; Tuğyan Aytaç Dural, in her Phd. thesis evaluating the concepts of stage for the use of basic design education in architecture; Didem Dinçerden, in her master thesis analyzing the evolution of theatre architecture and stage décor, starting from Ancient Greece.

the “space of performance”, which is the stage, sometimes integrated with the audience space. The “space of performance” or the “performance space”, is a union of three parts, the “stage”, the “stage-set” and the “audience space”. Throughout the study, the stage, which is the area of performance, is referred to either as “stage” or “stage space”. The second part, “stage-set” is the temporary structure on the stage. It is also defined as “décor”. The notion of “décor” is commonly understood with its pejorative connotations. This is because in the conventional use of the term, the notion connotes a lack of function. However, since the beginning of the century, the meaning of the term décor has been transformed. The Modern Movement in performing arts has challenged the notion of decorative elements designed visually for the stage and which have no function. This can be defined as a break-through from the production of mimetic compositions on the stage. This study acknowledges this fact and for this reason, the word “stage-set” is used instead of the word “décor”.

Finally, the third category is “the theatrical space”, which is the physical and metaphorical space created within theatre space.⁷

The architecture of the building, the stage and the stage-set are interrelated terms. Theories of theatre give shape to both the architecture of the building and the use of stage space in addition to the architectural aspects of the stage-set.

There is one more definition that has to be given, which is that of the word “scenography” or used in particular as “scenery”. The term refers to

⁷ Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance*, The University of Michigan Press, USA, 2000, pp.1-35.

the visual composition of the stage space. The composition includes the elements such as performers, costume, lighting and stage set.

In the following chapters, the selected examples are defined and studied using the terms explained above.

In the second chapter, different space conceptions that have been identified in relation to changing vision theories are investigated. These space conceptions are also read through performance space, which is believed to provide the best illustration of them. It is demonstrated that performance space has been constructed by these conceptions. The “classical” or “traditional” conception has been transformed into the “new” conception of space, which has been identified with cubism.

Additionally, the changes in the audience-performer relationship and its materialization in theater buildings and performance spaces have been exemplified. It has to be stated that, there are many other developments in theatre history that are excluded in this study. However, to limit the investigation only the relevant developments for the study’s argument have been considered here.

Focusing on the modern period, different experiments on the stage have been examined in the third chapter. As a milestone of the transformation of the stage space, it was a must to study the works of directors Edward Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia. As the most significant example about the transformation of stage space, performance artist Dan Graham’s work is studied in more detail. His work is an interface between conceptions of architecture and stage space. Dan Graham’s performances

have been investigated as they illustrate all the aspects of the spatial developments of stage space, altering the construction of vision and the relation between audience and performers thus representing a “new conception of space”.

Finally, in the fourth chapter, Graham’s works are assessed in relation to projects by Bernard Tschumi and Jean Nouvel. The assessment is based on a reading by Terence Riley, who compares their “attitudes” towards the architectural surfaces.⁸

This is a demonstration of how stage space is related to or anticipates changes in the conception of “space”.

⁸ Terence Riley, *opcit.*, pp.7-30

CHAPTER 2

SPACE CONCEPTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS OF STAGE

2.1 Different Space Conceptions

Chris Jenks, Professor of Sociology and the director of Centre for Cultural Studies at the Goldsmiths College University of London, claims that sight is regarded as the “primary of the senses” in the Western thought.⁹ He describes the “modern world” as very much a “seen phenomenon”. Giving reference to known scholars, he makes the comment that “modernity’s project was most effectively achieved through the privileging of ‘sight’ and that modern culture has in turn, elected the visual to the dual status of being both primary medium for communication and also the sole ingress to our accumulated symbolic treasury.”¹⁰

Regarding sight as the primary of the senses, it is not an arbitrary choice to define the human relations with the environs in relation to vision theories. In an attempt to define this relation, vision theories are interpreted with changing “models”.

Jonathan Crary in the book *Techniques of the Observer* investigates vision theories and the construction of vision in a historical context. He

⁹ *Visual Culture*, ed. Chris Jenks, Routledge Press, London, 1996, p.8

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p.2

identifies the “shifts” in the field of vision. He states that the three shifts separate Renaissance from medieval imagery; the imagery of the early nineteenth century from the linear system of Renaissance and computer generated imagery from forms of analog media.¹¹

In the book, Crary starts his investigation with the vision theories of Renaissance period. He makes an analogy of the model of camera obscura to explain the construction of vision in the period. He uses the model to explain human vision, and in his words, “to represent the relation of a perceiver and the position of a knowing subject to an external world”. Operating principle of camera obscura is that “when light passes through a small hole into a dark, enclosed interior, an inverted image will appear on the wall opposite the hole”. This principle is also related with the “cone of vision”, “perspective principles”, “fixed position of a viewer” and a “distinction between ‘subject’ and ‘object’”. Thus separating ‘subject’ from ‘object’, it also prevents the subject to “be a part of the representation”.¹²

¹¹ W.J.T.Mitchell ,editor of Critical Inquiry and professor in the department of English Language and Literature at the University of Chicago, compares Crary’s division with Panofsky’s history of visual culture that covers four distinct epochs: ancient, medieval, Renaissance and modern. For him, Crary finds the roots of this situation going back to 1820’s and Panofsky’s narrative of the “rationalization of the visual image” by Renaissance perspective. (Mitchell, W.J.T., Picture Theory, p.23)

Furthermore, Nicholas Mirzoeff makes a current critique of modern Western visual culture, focusing on the three modes of representation: “the picture, the photograph and virtual reality”. (Mirzoeff, Visual Culture, p.38)

¹² Jonathan Crary, opcit., p.

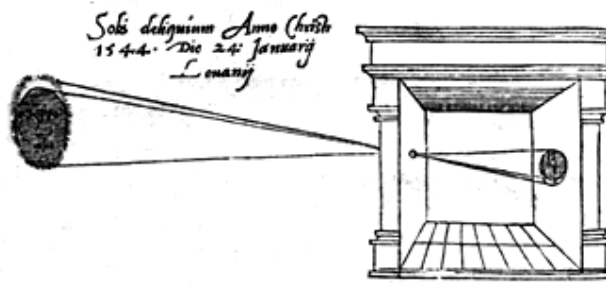


Fig 1. The Construction Model of Camera Obscura (Web site www.acmi.net.au/aic/camera_obscura.html)

Architecture historian Sigfried Giedion, (1883? -1968) in his book *Space, Time and Architecture*, claims that the developments in the Renaissance, result in a conception of space, which is “translated into artistic terms through the discovery of perspective”.¹³ He notes that through perspective representation, every element is “related to the unique point of view of the individual spectator”. Giedion explains the consequences of this invention as follows:

In linear “perspective” –etymologically “clear seeing”- objects are depicted upon a plane surface in conformity with the way they are seen, without reference to their absolute shapes and relations. The whole picture or design is calculated to be valid for one station and observation point only. To the fifteenth century the principle of perspective came as a complete revolution, involving an extreme and violent break with the medieval conception of space, and with the flat, floating arrangements, as its artistic expression.¹⁴

¹³ Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967, first published 1941, pp. 30-31

¹⁴ *ibid.*, p.31

The model of camera obscura marks a division between the subject, ('spectator' or 'self') and the object ('visual image' or 'other').

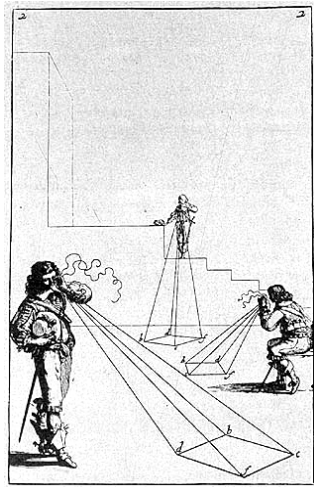


Fig 2. Perspective studies of Girard Desargues(1591-1661) from a study by Abraham Bosse (Web site www.treccani.it/iteronline/interventi/galleria/rp7b1_p.htm)

On the relationship of visibility and the conception of space, Marshall McLuhan, author of *The Medium is the Message*, makes an evaluation:

Since the Renaissance the Western artist perceived his environment primarily in terms of the visual. Everything was dominated by the eye of the beholder. His conception of space was in terms of a perspective projection upon a plane surface consisting of formal units of spatial measurement. He accepted the dominance of the vertical and the horizontal-of symmetry-as an absolute condition of order. This view is deeply embedded in the consciousness of the Western art.¹⁵

The model of vision that was analogous to the model of camera obscura and construction of perspective rules marks a static situation

¹⁵ Marshall McLuhan, *The Medium is The Message*, Bantam Books, New York, 1967, p.57

without duration. This model inevitably changed by the early 1800s. For Crary, the “linear optical system and fixed positions” of camera obscura became “too inflexible and immobile for a rapidly changing set of cultural political requirements”.¹⁶ Therefore the model is altered and the notion of “motion” and “time” became constitutive elements of the new system of vision. Crary defines the “shift” in the field of vision that occurred in the early nineteenth century is a “rupture with Renaissance, or classical models of vision and of the observer”.¹⁷ For him, this shift is “inseparable from a massive reorganization of knowledge and social practices that modified in myriad ways the productive, cognitive and desiring capacities of the human subject”.¹⁸

This study acknowledged the fact that field of vision is in direct relation with the circumstances of a period. The study is based on the assumption that changes in the field of vision therefore influenced the conceptualization of space. Changes in the field of vision, models of vision and different space conceptions are interrelated.

In the theoretical studies of the related fields, the model of vision in Renaissance is identified with the “classical” or alternatively -as in some sources- “traditional” conception of space. The shift that marks the distinction between the linear system of Renaissance and the imagery of the early nineteenth century, heralds a “new” conception of space.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, p.137

¹⁷ Jonathan Crary, *opcit.*, p.3

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p.3

Joan Ockman, in the essay *The Road Not Taken*, assesses this new space conception.¹⁹ In the essay, Ockman summarizes Alexander Dorner's (1893-1957) formulation of the "new concept of space in the plastic arts" in relation to the "classical" space conception. For Ockman, Dorner assesses the classical space conception as "absolute", "uniform" and being conceived from "a fixed point of view".²⁰ The depiction of space is defined as a "perspectival representation", which is "analogous to the scene viewed through a window frame". Three-dimensional volumes are depicted "discrete and clearly defined". Dorner claims that this conception lasts in the period starting from "Renaissance and the Baroque through impressionism and pointillism".²¹ Defining the shift from the classical space conception, he identifies modernity as a breakpoint. Starting with expressionism, the break with this conception is continued with cubism, which introduces the notion of relativity in visual representation.

The "new" space conception is attributed with several qualities. The framed view is altered with a system that depicts all "relative" points of view, on the same plane, which naturally brought the factor of "time". This system no longer requires a difference in the depiction of "near and far objects" as well as background and foreground. Ockman identifies other consequences of this representational system:

¹⁹ Joan Ockman – professor and the director of the Temple Hoyne Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University. Here will be cited her essay *The Way Beyond Art* published in *Autonomy and Ideology*, ed. Somol, R.E., the Monacelli Press, New York, 1997, pp.83-120

²⁰ *ibid.*, p.84

²¹ *ibid.*, p.88

...[m]atter ceased to be understood as opaque mass. The viewer now envisaged different aspects of space simultaneously, inside and outside, convex and concave at once. Matter was decomposed into simple surfaces and lines (as in Mondrian) or became transparent and interpenetrating (as in Lissitzky). With these developments, space came to be understood as “a crossing of movements and energies”.²²

The shift between the two different conceptions of space is defined as the “demolition of pictorial space by the Cubist techniques” and “substitution of a relative point of view for an absolute one”.²³

Ockman emphasizes that Dorner’s articles of 1931, formulating “new concept of space in plastic arts”, has a “significant influence on another theorist of the new space, Sigfried Giedion”.²⁴ Ockman claims that “Dorner’s theory of modern space, as set out in his writings of the late 1920’s and early 1930’s bears comparison to Sigfried Giedion’s central thesis in *Space, Time and Architecture*, written in the mid 1930’s. For her, the resemblances are “more than coincidental”.²⁵

Sigfried Giedion in his book *Space, Time and Architecture* (1941) has also written about the “new” conception of space in relation to the “classical” conception.²⁶ For him, the classical or in his words “classic” space conception is related with the notion of perspective. The notion “had been

²² *ibid.*, p.88

²³ *ibid.*, p.85

²⁴ *ibid.*, p.87

²⁵ *ibid.*, p.90

²⁶ Sigfried Giedion, *Space, Time and Architecture*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1967, first pub.1941, pp.440-450

one of the most important constituent facts in painting since the Renaissance up to the first decade of the present century”.²⁷

Giedion claims that the “new methods of representation after the innovations of cubism” correspond to a shift in the “conception of space” and develops the “form-giving principles of the new space conception”.²⁸ After the innovations proposed by cubist techniques, the space conception, as he discusses, becomes different from what it was since Renaissance. This was a shift from an “absolute and static” space conception. Giedion asserts that the “classic conceptions of space and volumes are limited and one-sided”. For him, however, the “essence” of the new space conception is “many-sidedness” and the “infinite potentiality for relations within it”.²⁹

Giedion evaluates the emergence of cubism as an “anonymous principle” just like the “discovery of perspective”. He claims that cubism is “the expression of a collective and almost unconscious attitude”.³⁰ For Giedion this expression is also related to the scientific innovations of the time:

Space in modern physics is conceived of as relative to a moving point of reference, not as the absolute and static entity of the baroque system of Newton. And in modern art, for the first time since Renaissance, a new conception of space leads to a self-conscious enlargement of our ways perceiving

²⁷ *ibid.*, p.

²⁸ *ibid.*, p.434

²⁹ *ibid.*, p.435

³⁰ *ibid.*, p.435

space. It was in cubism that this was most fully achieved.³¹

As Giedion also emphasizes, the new space conception can best be understood when considered with several notions such as a “relative point of reference” and as a consequence of this, “simultaneity” and therefore “time”. As Giedion explains, these relations:

Cubism breaks with Renaissance perspective. It views objects relatively: that is, from several points of view, no one of which has exclusive authority. And in so dissecting objects it sees them simultaneously from all sides –from above and below, from inside and outside. It goes around and into its objects. Thus to the three dimensions of the Renaissance which have held good as constituent facts throughout so many centuries, there is added a fourth one –time.³²

The changing conception of space is therefore established with “time”. For Giedion there the notion of “space-time” in cubism is explored by “spatial representation”.

2.2 Interpretations of Performance Space

Stage space can be a medium for experimenting and exploring the concepts of vision and visuality. Throughout the performance, the stage is under surveillance. A performance space itself, is a materialization of visual relations between performers and audience. This relation becomes

³¹ *ibid.*, p.436

³² *ibid.*, p.436

apparent through performance space, which can be identified with the models of vision.

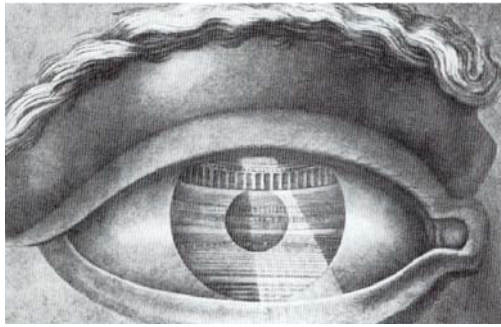


Fig 3. Claude-Nicholas Ledoux, “Auditorium of Theater of Besançon Seen as Reflected in the Pupil of an Eye”, 1775-1784 (Colin Rowe, *As I Was Saying*, Vol.2, p.238)

Different space conceptions have also been demonstrated on the stage. Performance space, which is the best illustration of the visual models, can be a guide to contemplate on these space conceptions.

In the book *Theaters*, Gaelle Breton makes a reading of different space conceptions through theater and stage spaces. Although she doesn't refer to the space conceptions identified by Crary in the former section, it is indeed possible to assess them accordingly.

Breton's reading starts from the ancient theaters. For her, Greek theater “sought a unity” between stage and audience spaces and combined them in single open-air space.³³ This principle also becomes the distinctive character of the Elizabethan theater model, which has been identified with the Sheakspeare's Globe Theater.

³³ Gaelle Breton, *Theaters*, p.5

Breton states that the Italian theater of Renaissance, however, introduces an increasing separation between stage and auditorium and additionally “between theater and the outside world”.³⁴ The fixed position of the audience, who passively experiences the “ideal” one-point perspective illusion created on the stage, has “the conventions of Renaissance painting”. Theatre buildings of the period can also be evaluated as the materialization of the model of perspective principles. In the Renaissance period the first “proper” theatre building in Europe becomes constituted.³⁵ Breton states that in 1580, the architect Andrea Palladio is commissioned to build a permanent theatre, Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza (1585). He is inspired by the model described by Vitruvius in *Ten Books of Architecture*.

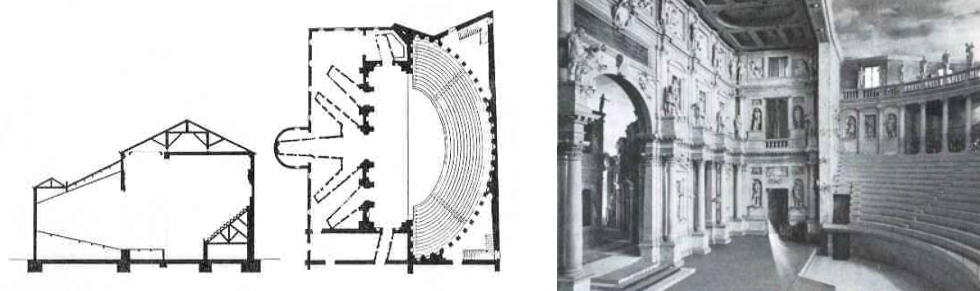


Fig 4. Section, Plan and Interior View of Teatro Olimpico in Vicenza (Breton, G., *Theaters*, p. 8)

In the theatre, the semi-elliptical seating is separate from the stage space. To the stage, his pupil, Vincenzo Scamozzi adds a decorative

³⁴ *ibid.*, p.5

³⁵ The model of the building has become the common structure of theatre buildings in Europe and is still being used in the contemporary theatre practice.

element: five streets painted in a vanishing perspective. This element provides multiple perspectival relations.³⁶

In the book *Dünden Bugüne Tiyatro Düşüncesi*, theatre historian Sevda Şener (1928-), states that the distinctive character of Renaissance scenery is its astonishing spectacle.³⁷ The Renaissance scenery is shaped by the framed view of Italian Renaissance Theatre, which is defined as the proscenium stage.³⁸ Framing the scene helps to control the image and create illusions within. The proscenium stage contains the image and distances the illusory space from the audience.

In *Treatise on Stage Scenery* in *The Second Book of Perspective* (1545), Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554), architect and stage designer of the period, also states that the major purpose of stage design of the period was to amaze spectators by the astonishing spectacle.³⁹ For him the stage-set is “one of the best of the many man made things which give pleasure to the eye and satisfaction to the heart when looked at”. For creating that “artifice”, he comments on several rules like the position of the vanishing point on the stage, slopes for the stage floor to achieve better foreshortening, the position of the last wall of the stage in relation to the vanishing point marking the horizon, arrangement of proscenium and seating steps taking the sightlines into account. In the book, three styles of perspectival scenery for

³⁶ Gaelle Breton, *opcit.*, p.8

³⁷ Sevda Şener, *Dünden Bugüne Tiyatro Düşüncesi*, p.74

³⁸ A more detailed definition of “proscenium stage” is given at page:36

³⁹ Sebastiano Serlio, *On Architecture*, vol.1, Yale University Press, London, 1996, pp.82-93

the stage, comic, tragic and satiric, are formulated. He also comments on the ways of artificial lighting to complete the “spectacle”.⁴⁰



Fig 5. Comic-Tragic and Satiric Stage Set Drawings By Sebastiano Serlio
(Serlio, S., *On Architecture*, p. 87, 89, 91)

Citing from Serlio, Hubert Damish, (1928-) art historian, asserts that perspective used in stage-sets of the period, is not of a flat painting and has its “own rules” since it deals with “real depth and volume, even though these are presented in foreshortening”.⁴¹

Both the stage-sets and the theatre spaces of the period reflect the “classical” space conception. In his book *Houses in Motion*, Robert Kronenburg states that while stage establishes temporality, stage sets of that time are used to establish an illusory permanency on stage. For him, this is established by the “painted scenes on timber frames that illustrates

⁴⁰ His treatise later influenced several architects, designers and directors, among whom is director Edward Gordon Craig, whose work will be studied in detail. (James R. Evans, *Experimental theatre: from Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*, Routledge Press, London, 1989, p.41)

⁴¹ Hubert Damisch, H., *The Origin of Perspective*, The MIT Press, Massachusetts, 1994, p.215

images of idealized cities, executed in correct renditions of the relatively recently rediscovered perspective”.⁴²

The theory of perspective leads to a change in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Breton states that three dimensional depth effects can be created in two dimensions according to the principles set out by Sabbatini in *Treatise on Stage and Machinery Construction* in 1630. His scenery is composed of painted sliding surfaces. This is defined as a change from “plastic décor” with angular frames that exaggerated perspective to “pictorial décor” with flat frames that centered the perspective. The use of these “sliding scenery flats” has two consequences in the architecture of theatre spaces. A stage frame is introduced to conceal the sliding flats and the longitudinal axis of the auditorium is reinforced to correspond to the vanishing point of the stage perspective. This change can be followed from the illustration below, showing the plan and section of Teatro Farnese in Parma (1626), introducing stage frame and U-shaped auditorium.⁴³

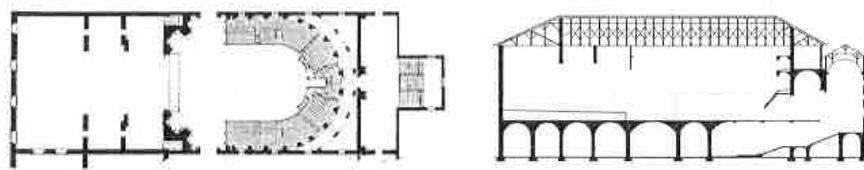


Fig 6. Plan and Section of Teatro Farnese, Parma, 1626 (Breton, G., *Theaters*, p. 9)

⁴² *ibid.*, p.36

⁴³ Gaëlle Breton, *opcit.*, p.9

After the development of the sliding scenery system, the “wings”, the “flys” and the “under-stage”, the stage space extended in three directions. Breton describes the construction as: “[t]he wings were widened to allow for the movement of the sliding flats, the stage wall moves back and greater room was provided beneath the stage to house the machinery, while flys were introduced to move scenery and lights more easily.”⁴⁴ This so-called “magical box of the Italian stage” with all its features is still used in the contemporary practice.

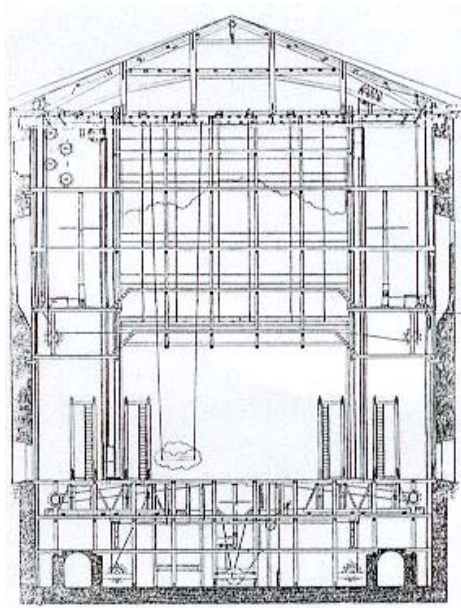


Fig 7. Flys and Understage of an Italian Stage. (Breton, G., Theaters, p. 9)

The Renaissance model of theatre space, however, is challenged by the practice in the period of modernity. Composer Richard Wagner is acknowledged as a frontier in the “theory of the modern stage”. Apart from

⁴⁴ *ibid.* p.9

his theories about staging, the theatre building he designed with architect Otto Bruckwald became a model that establishes the objective of modern theatre theoreticians. In the Festival Theatre at Bayreuth (1876) theatre space is reorganized and the continuity between stage and auditorium is re-established. “Reversing the separation of audience and stage spaces,” the theatre is said to mark a turning point in the evolution of theatre architecture since Renaissance.⁴⁵ In the theatre, the major concern is the “sightlines of the audience”. With the lack of balconies and darkened auditorium, audience attention is directed towards the stage instead of the orchestra pit. The seats have identical visual and auditory conditions.⁴⁶

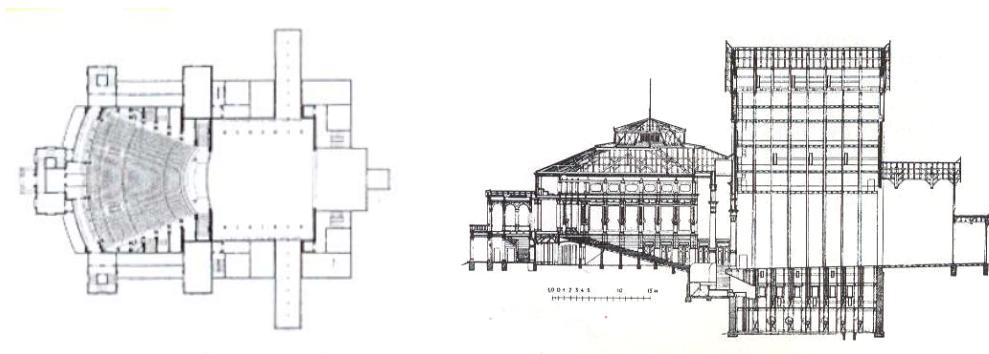


Fig 8. Plan and Section of Festival Theatre in Bayreuth, 1876 (Sharp, D., *Theatre Spaces and Performances*, Architectural Review, No:1108, p. 27)

Breton claims that this break with Renaissance model continues in the twentieth century as a consequence of the changing needs with the technical, artistic and social changes. Theatrical space no longer requires

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.12

⁴⁶ Dennis Sharp, *Theatre Spaces and Performances*, Architectural Review, No:1108, p.26

producing an illusion of reality; rather it becomes a “means of expressing the essence of drama”. For this reason, theatre theoreticians and directors gave shape to changing models of theatre, rather than architects and designers.⁴⁷

Breton states that the illusion scenery is also challenged by the “coming of the cinema, and then by cubism and abstract art that shattered the traditional conception of space and styles of spatial representation”.⁴⁸

The idea of using stage-space as a two-dimensional spectacle is also challenged by the twentieth century theoreticians, such as Bertold Brecht (1898-1956). His staging theory, which is known as “alienation principle”, is a proposal for a new way of making theatre that prevents audience’s identification with the performance on the stage. With this theory, Brecht reminds the audience that stage performance is only a representation. Oscar, G. Brockett, in his book, *Theatre* states that, for Brecht “the audience should never be allowed to confuse, what they see on the stage with reality but rather, the play must always be thought of as a comment upon life-something to be watched and judged critically”.⁴⁹ Brockett also notes that for Brecht, theatre should bring “pleasure that comes from “productive participation”, as a result of a “critical examination” of what is presented on the stage. Brecht’s concept of alienation has been interpreted as the “audience’s continuous state of objective detachment”. Brockett explains the

⁴⁷ Breton points to several directors such as Adolph Appia in Switzerland, Max Reinhardt in Germany, Copeau in France, Edward Gordon Craig in Great Britain and Meyerhold in Russia, *Theaters*, p.12

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.12

⁴⁹ Oscar G. Brockett, *Theatre*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., USA, 1974, p.366

scenery in Brecht's theatre, which does not constitute an illusory place, not "being depicted in detail". It only "suggests a locale". For this, Brecht suggests using "fragmentary set pieces" and to keep the mechanics of the stage visible -such as lighting devices and elements that hold and support the scenery-.⁵⁰ Brockett, explains the characteristics of Brecht's theatre as;

In Brecht's theatre it is not enough to copy reality; reality must be clarified by transforming it and by making it strange. The right kind of scenery allows the spectator, to view reality critically and to understand it- something that would not be possible were it presented in its everyday and familiar guise. With every aspect of drama, then, Brecht seeks to transform the old theatre into a new one in which the spectator can participate rather than merely observe passively.⁵¹

Obviously, Brecht is not the only theoretician who challenged the idea of using stage-space as "illusion scenery". In the essay titled as *Theatre Spaces and Performances* (1968), Dennis Sharp, architectural historian, assesses this challenge, focusing on the changing model of theatre space in relation to the twentieth century concepts of the visual and spatial relationships in the space of performance. Sharp states that, dealing with the spatial problems, architects, are also in search of the ideal performance space, which is the need of theatrical developments. Directors, as theoreticians, have worked with architects in search of that ideal performance space.⁵²

⁵⁰ *ibid.*, p.366

⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.372

⁵² Dennis Sharp, *opcit.*, p.26

Antonin Artaud (1862-1928), a well-known director and author of *Theatre and its Double* describes the architectural quality of the space he is in need of, as “a single, universal locale without any partitions of any kind”. He suggests to “abandon” the architecture of his times and “rent some kind of a barn or hangar” to perform. That is a proposal for a “multivalent” and “flexible” space that brings the performers and audience together. This idea leads to a new conception of performance space as a “total space”, which is redesigned and rearranged for every different performance.⁵³

Another example of the collaboration between architects and directors is the Werkbund Theatre at Cologne (1914), built by Henry Van de Velde (1863-1957), working with director Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1976). Apparently, it is influenced by the Bayreuth Festival Theatre. In the theatre, tiered seating is introduced, the orchestra is concealed and the stage is built tripartite and semi-circular.⁵⁴

Working on the spatial issues of the stage space, Walter Gropius (1883-1969) calls attention for the use of “arena stage” as a solution to overcome the frontality of the traditional model.⁵⁵ Gropius works with director Erwin Piscator during to design the “Totaltheater” project. In the project, spectacle, space and performance are said to have been brought together with “mechanical ideas of rotation”. It is defined as “Functional” and “Modern” in its adaptable planning. Gropius explains his aim as to “create a

⁵³ *ibid.*, p.23

⁵⁴ *ibid.*, pp.27-28

⁵⁵ “Arena stage” is the term used for the arrangement of performance space in which audience is seated around the four sides of the stage. It is illustrated at page 34.

flexible instrument with the mechanisms that transform the stage in order to get all the necessary or desirable changes: forestage, circular stage or stage in depth”.⁵⁶

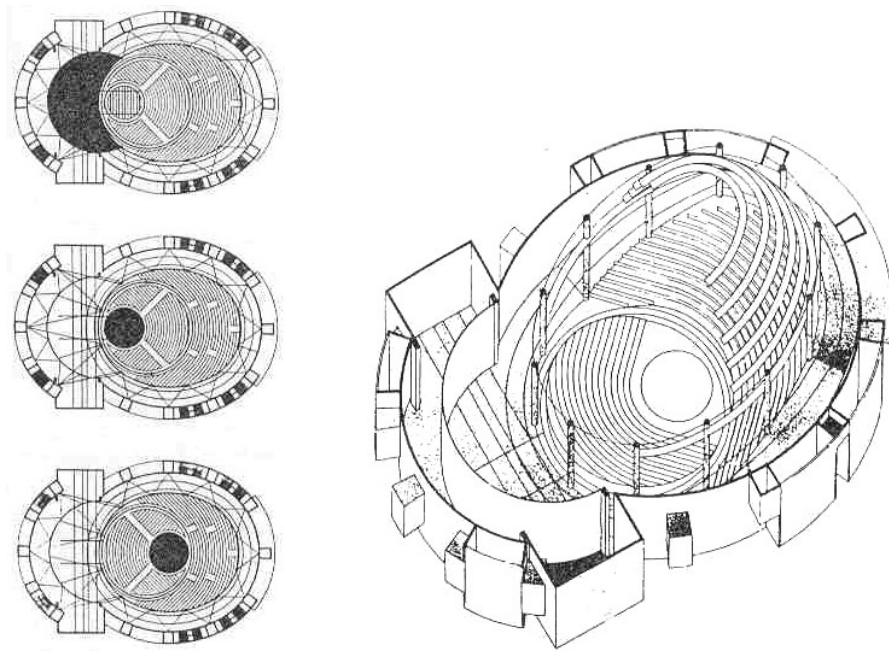


Fig 9. The Revolving Stage of *Totaltheater* Project by Walter Gropius
(Graham, D., *Rock My Religion*, p. 177)

For Piscator, totally mechanizing the theatre apparatus is a way to bring the relationship between the performer and the urban technology back into theatre. For him, this is a way “to imitate the intersecting flows of information constituting the new cityscape”. The tools used in this mechanized theatre space can be “multiple revolving stages, elevators, still and movie screens in flexible positions, sound tracks, newsreels and other

⁵⁶ Dennis Sharp, *opcit.*, pp.27-28

media devices". These devices are used in his theatre, as parts of the "didactic machine".⁵⁷

Gropius claims that proscenium stage that "lets the spectator look at the other world of the stage as through a window, or which separates (itself from him) by a curtain". This stage model as he claims, "has almost entirely pushed aside the central arena of the past." For him, the "picture-frame deep stage" is a two-dimensional condition. On the other hand, the arena stage marks a three-dimensional space in which bodies move as "sculptural forms", in a unity with the audience.⁵⁸ With his "Totaltheater" Project, Gropius makes a proposal for ideal theatre space that responds to the architectonic problems of stage space.

Working with Gropius, painter and sculptor Oscar Schlemmer, makes experiments about stage space at the Bauhaus. Roselee Goldberg states that the purpose of the work at the Bauhaus is to "achieve a synthesis of art and technology in 'pure' forms".⁵⁹ She states that Bauhaus' studies includes problems of performance space such as "the opposition of visual plane and spatial depth".⁶⁰

Schlemmer's experiments can be evaluated as the demonstration of the "new space conception on the stage". As Goldberg notes: "[w]hat characterized the 1920's discussion on space was the notion of 'felt volume'

⁵⁷ Dan Graham, *Rock My Religion*, p.178

⁵⁸ RoseLee Goldberg, *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, Harry N: Abrams, Inc., New York, 1988, p.114

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p.98

⁶⁰ *ibid.*, p.104

(Raumempfindung), and it was to this 'sensation of space' that Schlemmer attributed the origins of each of his dance productions".

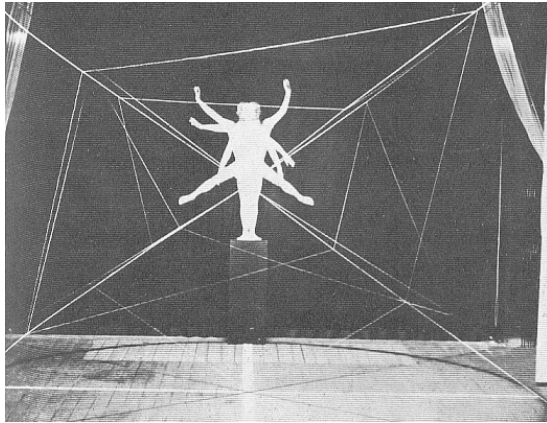


Fig 10. "Dance in Space (*Delineation of Space with Figure*)", multiple exposure photograph by Lux Feininger; Bauhaus Stage demonstration, 1927 (Goldberg, R., *Performance Art: From Futurism To The Present*, p. 105)

Goldberg explains Schlemmer's theories, which he "illustrated" in his performances, considering each experiment "a search for the elements of movement and space":

He explained that 'out of the plane geometry, out of the pursuit of the straight line, the diagonal, the circle and the curve, a stereometry of space evolves, by the moving vertical line of the dancing figure'. The relationship of the 'geometry of the plane' to the 'stereometry of the space' could be *felt* if one were to imagine 'a space filled with a soft pliable substance in which the figures of the sequence of the dancer's movements were to harden as a negative form.'⁶¹

⁶¹ *ibid.*, p.104

Apart from the Bauhaus experiments, the so-called “traditional model” which has been used in theatre practice of the ‘western countries’ is challenged also by the avant-garde performances of Futurists, Constructivists, Dadaists and Surrealists. Altering the relationships, these avant-garde movements replace the traditional model with a new conception of space in performance. This new conception discards the fixed positions of viewers and the one sided composition of stage space. Stage space is constructed as a three dimensional void.



Fig 11. Constructivist stage-set; the architectonic construction expands the stage space (Sharp, D., *Theatre Spaces and Performances*, *Architectural Review*, No:1108, p. 29)

Sharp asserts that Constructivist and Futurist experiments try to change the architectural quality of the stage space. Futurism, according to him, “seeks the transformation of the stage through the spectacular glories

of the machine". Dynamic Futurist scenery, without actors and without stage, is defined as the "architecture of plastic planes in movement".⁶²

This changing space conception on the stage is also related to the social and political changes. Sharp, refers to Bruno Taut (1880-1938), as he works on the social and political potential of theatre, defining the new theatre as belonging to "the united masses". He proposes the abandonment of the proscenium, which separates the "real world" from the "world on the stage" (*Glanzwelt*). The auditorium Taut defines, marks no division but extends on to the stage and the stage is truly limitless sometimes "without an actual end".⁶³

As Sharp states, another architect who works on the problems of theatre architecture is Hans Poelzig, the architect of the Expressionist generation in theatre. The 'Grosses Schauspielhaus' that he built in 1919 is an interpretation of "circus architecture". The arena stage and auditorium forms an undivided single ramped space without balconies. It has a stage space, under the dome that unites the stage and the auditorium, and a panoramic picture stage behind it. It is the theatre director Max Reinhardt had been seeking for. Reinhardt directs performances that require simultaneous use of both stage spaces. The panoramic picture stage provides darkness and chiaroscuro effects, which is also the characteristic of Expressionist German films. In Poelzig's theatre, according to Sharp, the "stage space" is treated as a totally sculpted area.⁶⁴

⁶² Dennis Sharp, *opcit.*, pp. 28-29

⁶³ *ibid.*, pp.29-30

⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp.30-31

In late 1940's the so-called "black boxes" and "flexible spaces" of thrust stages and theatres in the round, becomes the common forms of theatre architecture.⁶⁵ Marvin Carlson, author of the book *Places of Performance* explains this transformation in the theatre spaces as follows:

The idea of such a neutral space, possessing no decorative features of its own and thus totally open to the semiotics of the individual performance, has been enormously influential in modern experimental theatre design, and the flexible "black box" has become one of the most common theatrical configurations of our time. Many later directors and designers have taken the characterless theatre in a direction quite different from the visions of Appia and Artaud, however. They have retained the concept of a space without the traditional auditorium and stage division, but instead of a featureless box filled by light and abstract figures. They have replaced the absent decoration (with all its evocations of a theatrical tradition) with a decoration unique to a specific production, so that the audience, entering the auditorium, is encompassed not within the semiotics of a theatre auditorium, but within those of the fictive world of the play itself.⁶⁶

Public spectacles in the cities or better expressed by Sharp as "the idea of city as theatre" have also been isochronally present with the theatre practice in conventional theatre spaces. In search for spaces that allow different expressions in the theatre practice, the avant-garde performances rediscovered the potential of the public spaces. Alternative spaces such as galleries, roads or public spaces later used as 'spaces of a performance'.

⁶⁵ *ibid.*,p.31

⁶⁶ Marvin Carlson, *Places of Performance*, Cornell University Press, USA, 1989, pp.196-97

There, all the pre-established, conventional rules of the visual and spatial organization in theatre have been altered.⁶⁷

Gaelle Breton, categorizes these developments of the space of performance in the twentieth century, in four major groups. In the first category, the relation of the audience space with the stage space is re-interpreted with the model of auditoria derived from the “Italian model, where a flexible proscenium tones down the stage/auditorium duality”. The second is an interpretation of the “Elizabethan model integrating stage and auditorium in a common space”. Third is “convertible auditorium in which this relationship is redefined for each performance”. The last category is “places not originally intended for theatre”.⁶⁸ Breton states that these four approaches in the contemporary theatre practice have two common objectives. Closing the gap between actors and audience is one of them. However, more important is the “concern to return the stage to its function as an area for acting and no longer to regard it as a box of tricks, to rediscover the reality and the true nature of the theatrical space”.⁶⁹

Oscar G. Brockett makes a different categorization, excluding Breton’s fourth category. He talks about the organization of performance space and identifies four models that are used in theatres.⁷⁰

Given below is the arrangement of a performance space in four main models. A proscenium stage is viewed from the front and in a distance. In

⁶⁷ For a detailed study about performances using alternative spaces, see Appendix C.

⁶⁸ Gaelle Breton, *Theaters*, p.13

⁶⁹ Breton quotes from Denis Bablet, p.13

⁷⁰ Oscar G. Brockett, *opcit*, pp.279-285

the common use of arena stage (or theatre-in-the-round), there is no raised platform that sets up the boundaries of a stage. Seats may be arranged in three sides as well and often they are not permanently set. In the thrust stage, seating is arranged around three sides of a raised platform. The stage and auditorium are unified and a more intimate relationship between actors and audience is established. A flexible stage offers different arrangements in which stage and seating are defined each time for a new performance. In this arrangement there is no distinct division between the audience and performers. The scenery is designed so that “the entire space becomes the setting”.⁷¹ Another visual relation is defined within the architecture of the “arena stage”, “thrust stage” and the “flexible stage”. As a consequence of its visual relation with the audience, these stage models require a three-dimensional design.

⁷¹ More detailed assessment is found in the book, Oscar G. Brockett, *Theatre*, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, Inc., USA, 1974, pp.549-554

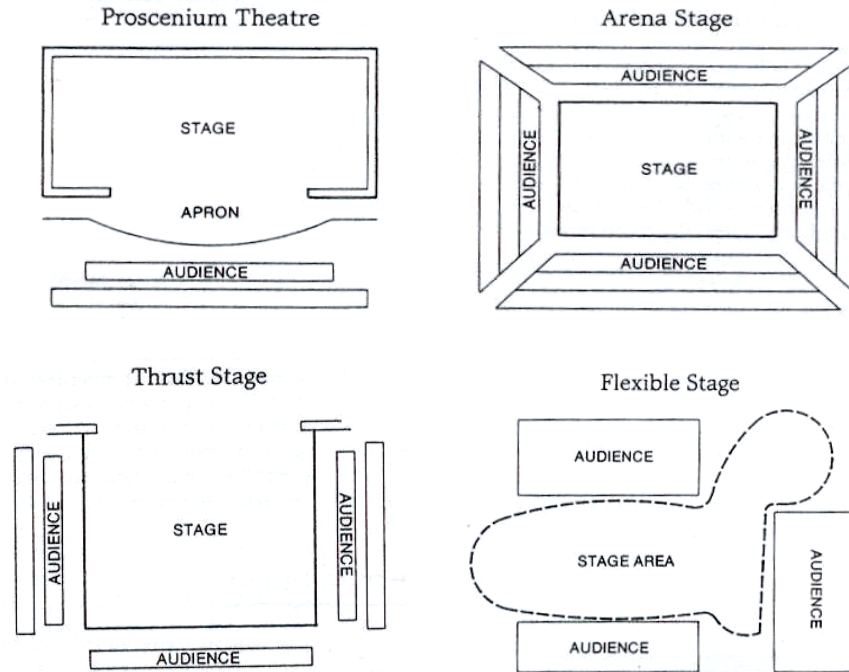


Fig 12. Four Main Types of Performance Space Arrangements (Brockett, O.G., *The Essential Theatre* , p. 280)

These models of performance space and the space conceptions that have been illustrated are still the major types of the contemporary theatre practice.

Every aspect on the stage is designed with the awareness of the audience. The visual relation can be defined as the basic function of a stage-set. Setting up different visual relationships, performance space determines the use and the construction of the stage-set.

CHAPTER 3

THE ARCHITECTURAL SPACE ON THE STAGE

3.1 The Transformation of Stage Space

The elements used on the stage are re-defined for every different relation that a stage space requires. The frontal relation of the proscenium stage requires a framed view. Until the twentieth century, this relation has been designed two-dimensionally. In the early twentieth century, with the experiments of designer-directors such as Edward Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia, this two dimensional view is challenged with a three-dimensional composition of a stage-set.⁷²

French director Adolphe Appia (1862-1918) is considered as an avant-garde theoretician who is concerned with use of stage space and scenery.⁷³ Appia makes studies about the stage space and reassesses stage-set as “space, volume and magnitude”.⁷⁴ He uses pure and three-dimensional columns, draperies and surfaces, “removed from any sort of details”.

His “non-representational sets” visualizes the mood of the play, completed in the imaginations of the spectator. Appia explains his approach

⁷² These experiments will be introduced in the section 3.2.

⁷³ James R. Evans, *Experimental theatre: from Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*, Routledge Press, London, 1989, first published by Studio Vista, 1970, p.48

⁷⁴ Sevda Şener, op.cit., p.232

as; “we don’t need to try to represent a forest; what we must give the spectator is man in the atmosphere of a forest”.⁷⁵ For this, he uses effects of light on the stage. Instead of tree cut-outs, he uses shadows of leaves upon the actor.⁷⁶

Şener states that, he sets his theory on the four plastic elements of the stage, which are “the vertical stage-set”, “the horizontal ground”, “lighting to the stage space” and “performer in movement”.⁷⁷ For him, lighting and music are the essential two elements of the stage that come after the image and give it “depth” and a “live character”.

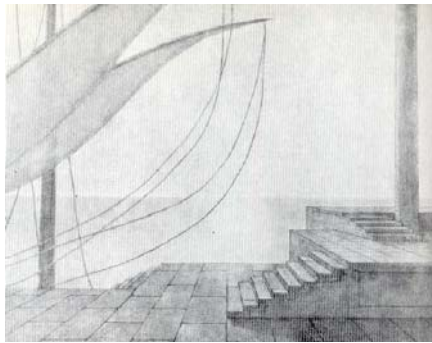


Fig 13. Stage-Set by Adolphe Appia, Courtesy Foundation Adolphe Appia, Berne (Brockett, O.G., *Theatre* p.198)

Lighting effects are said to be the most important characteristic of Appia’s stage-sets. Şener claims that he uses the lighting effects to emphasize the volume and plastic characteristic. Appia is aware of the fact that improper lighting will flatten the scene and that is what he tries to

⁷⁵ James R. Evans, opcit., p.48

⁷⁶ ibid., p.48

⁷⁷ Sevda Şener, op.cit., pp.231-235

overcome through his work. In search of the light and shadow effects, he uses black and white surfaces, making use of their oppositions.⁷⁸

Edward Gordon Craig, (1872-1976) an English director, is also known as a pioneer in the transformation of the stage space to an architectonic composition. Craig's ideas are said to be anticipated by Appia. Using two-dimensional elements, Craig defines an "architectural space on the stage".

Craig made experiments with the stage space and changed the notion of scenery up to his time. Like Appia, Craig's works have also been identified with the anti-realist approach in theatre. Sevda Şener describes the anti-realist imagery as a new attitude towards the aesthetics of the stage, which doesn't necessarily locate itself to a realistic place represented. Pure, total surfaces have been used as tools of visualization of the "atmosphere".⁷⁹

There is a 1:25 scale model of one of his stage sets (now in Theatre Museum, London) that clearly displays his approach to stage design. Its computer animation is based on Craig's drawings, writings and descriptions of the work.⁸⁰ The illustration can be a guide to demonstrate the aspects of

⁷⁸ Sevda Şener, *opcit.*, pp.231-235

⁷⁹ Sevda Şener, *opcit.*, p.231

⁸⁰The modeling is made by Christopher Baugh, Gavin Carver and Cat Fergusson at The Kent Interactive Digital Design Studio, which is a part of the School of Drama, Film & Visual Arts, at the University of Kent at Canterbury using Kinetix 3D Studio MAX software on a PC platform. For making the computer illustration Baugh, Carver and Fergusson emphasized that "no amount of miniaturized lighting of the physical model would achieve the range of possibilities of Craig's idea and also, provide opportunities to see the effects of changing and moving light and shade."

his stage-sets, which is defined by him as “architectonic scene”, and not a “pictorial scene”.⁸¹

The stage in the illustration consists of “surfaces”, which built up a three-dimensional space. Craig is also an expert about the use of lights on stage. His descriptions indicate that it is the quality of light that allows the screens to become three-dimensional.⁸²

The scenography proposed by the pure surfaces is central to Craig’s thinking.⁸³ The surfaces he uses, doesn’t “represent anything; they neither imitate nor (arguably) represent any relationship with the real world”. They only construct “a space for performance”. Constructing the stage-set, Craig “tries to achieve the relationship between theatre architecture and scenic design”.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Edward Gordon Craig, 1909, p.77

⁸² Baugh, Carver and Fergusson in Scenography International Online Magazine,
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/scenography>

⁸³ *ibid.*,

⁸⁴ *ibid.*,

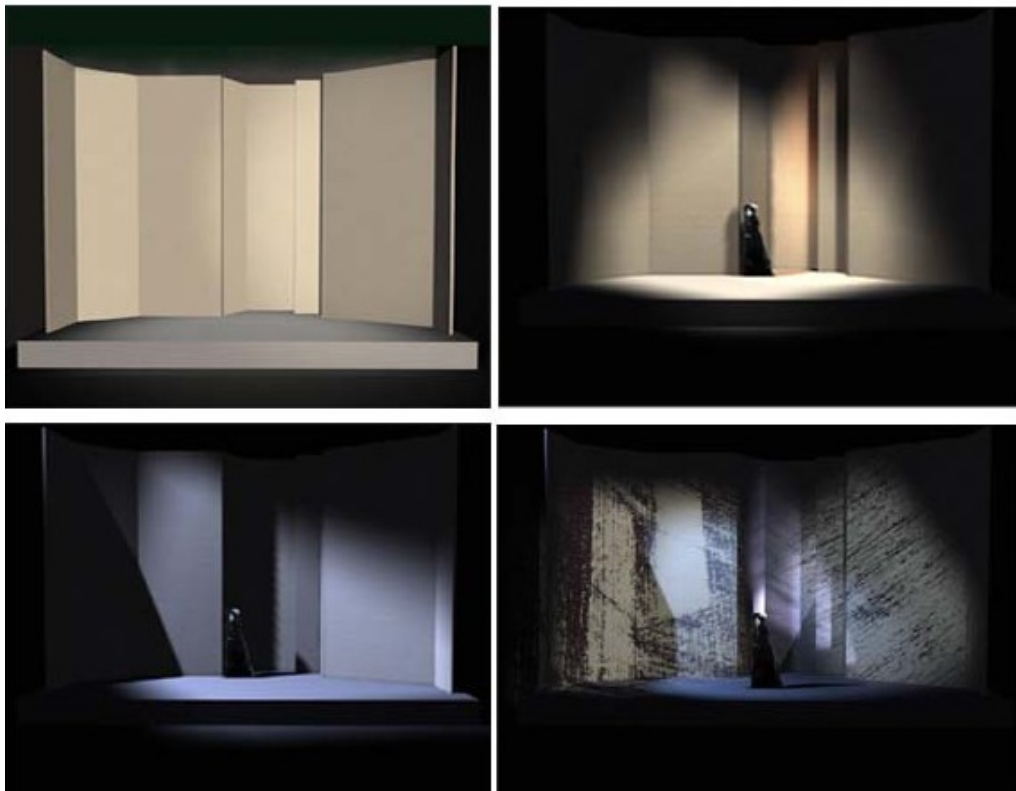
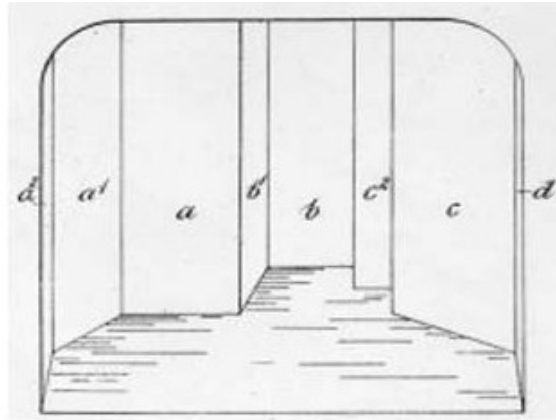


Fig 14. Computer Illustration of a Stage-Set by Edward Gordon Craig
 (Scenography international web site
www.lboro.ac.uk/research/scenography/)

For the non-representative character of the surfaces, Craig explains, “they stand on the stage just as they are; they do not imitate nature, nor are they painted with realistic or decorative designs.”⁸⁵ Craig explains why he uses the term “place” for the space created by the screens rather than a “scene”:

... “[a] nice place”, said a dear old friend to me on looking at the model of the scene ... and I have always thought this was the best word to use - far better than scene - it is a place if it seem real - it is a scene if it seem false.⁸⁶

Craig’s space conception and views about the space of performance had been supported by his studies about the theatrical work in the ancient Greece, Rome, Renaissance Italy, Elizabethan England, and the portable fit-up stages of the *commedia dell’arte*. He notes: “Once upon a time, stage scenery was architecture. A little later it became imitation architecture; still later it became imitation artificial architecture.”⁸⁷

Craig’s theatre is based on “movement”.⁸⁸ The play or plot is replaced with movements of sound, light and moving objects. This approach is defined as similar to The Bauhaus’ experiments with moving forms, color and light.⁸⁹ Also, like The Bauhaus, his abstract art that substituted actors with puppets or “actors dressed to look like robots” within pieces of

⁸⁵ Edward Gordon Craig, *Scene*, p. 1

⁸⁶ Edward Gordon Craig, 1923

⁸⁷ Taken from the Edward Gordon Craig Exhibition at the Theatre Museum, London

⁸⁸ James R. Evans, *Experimental theatre: from Stanislavsky to Peter Brook*, Routledge Press, London, 1989, first published by Studio Vista, 1970, p.41

⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.42

machinery and sculpture, is criticized as being no more theatre anymore, but a “kinetic art”.⁹⁰

Like other avant-garde experiments, the works of Edward Gordon Craig and Adolphe Appia made a difference in the use of stage space that is used up to their time. They introduce new conceptions of stage space and demonstrate a different method of representation on the stage.⁹¹ Peter Brook, European director, made an assessment about their work:

The great days of painted scenery belonged to the era of dim lighting from gas-fed footlights or candles, which flattened the performer so that he and the picture became one. The day the first spotlight was hung on the side of the proscenium, everything changed: the actor now stood out, was substantial, and a contradiction suddenly appeared between his roundness and the two-dimensional trompe l'oeil behind his back. The great innovators in the art of scenic design, Adolphe Appia and Gordon Craig, knew this before the First World War.⁹²

In their experiments, stage is considered as a three-dimensional space that has to be sculpted.

3.2 A New Space Conception on the Stage

The experiments about the construction of a performance space go further from the pioneers' work in the beginning of the century. As stated, the avant-garde performances altered all the pre-established, conventional

⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p.42

⁹¹ For different methods of representation on the stage, see Appendix B.

⁹² Peter Brook, *Threads of Time*, Methuen Publishing Limited, London, 1999, p.48

rules of the visual and spatial organization in theatre. Starting with the works of Futurist, Constructivist and other avant-garde experiments, a different type of stage performance evolved. The experimental medium established its own style and became regarded as “Performance Art”. RoseLee Goldberg, in her book *Performance Art*, states that “performance became accepted as a medium of expression in its own right in the 1970s”. Performance art is said to be generated from architecture, theatre, literature, poetry, dance, music and painting as well as video and film.⁹³

Performance artists exhibited experiments about all the conventions until their period. One of the performance artists, Dan Graham, dealt with the performance space construction and the notion of a new space conception on the stage. His works illustrate the aspects of the changing space conception on the stage. The construction of Graham’s performance space is a translation of the new codes to the stage space. While his projects introduce this new space conception, his avant-garde character makes it possible to discuss his works in relation to the examples of both the space conceptions that have been developed after the “first shift” in the field of vision. Different models of performance space were illustrated in the previous section. Another significant aspect of Graham’s performance space is that it also exhibits the juxtaposition of all the models that have been identified.

Before the assessment of the new space conception in Graham’s works, it is necessary to mention several aspects of his work that are

⁹³ RoseLee Goldberg, *opcit.*, p.9

significant about them. These aspects are to be considered in order to discuss the works within their context.

Graham's works have been affected by Minimalist artists.⁹⁴ Graham was one of the leading characters in the development of conceptual art in 1970's, the same period of the "self-legitimization" of performance art.⁹⁵ It was the period, which theories of conceptual art effected artistic production and "insisted on an art of ideas over the product and on an art that could not be bought or sold".⁹⁶

Having been defined as a "political statement", performance art became a medium that reflected the issues of culture and politics of the period.⁹⁷ Considering Dan Graham's works as implications of "everyday life", popular culture and politics, it is indeed appropriate to use the term statement to describe his work. The issues that Graham raises are based on his critical approach against popular culture.

Graham still continues to work on the issues that he proposed and gives lectures. His work is still being discussed in the academic milieu.⁹⁸

⁹⁴ Graham acted as the manager of John Daniels Gallery in 1964 and exhibited the works of minimalist artists such as, Sol LeWitt, Donald Judd, Robert Smithson, Dan Flavin and Carl Andre. Their works and ideas are said to reflect Graham's "interests". (Brian Wallis, *opcit.*, p.ix)

⁹⁵ Benjamin Buchloh explains the development of the conceptual art and assesses one of Dan Graham's works, *Homes for America*, in relation to "Conceptual practices", in the essay "*Conceptual Art 1962- 1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions*" published in *October- The Second Decade, 1986-1996*, The MIT Press, USA, 1997

⁹⁶ *ibid.*, p.1

⁹⁷ Tomas Ruller, architect, sculptor and performance artist, defines performance art as a "political statement" in *Adprofile, Performance art*, p.62; Borrowing his definition, Graham's presentation on the stage can be evaluated as a statement.

⁹⁸ In Massachusetts Institute of Technology Faculty of Architecture, Robert E. Haywood gives a graduate research seminar titled as "Anarchitecture": Between Art and Architecture in which artistic projects that "intervene in the sphere of architecture" are discussed, such

Terence Riley, for instance, the chief curator of Department of Architecture at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, exhibited one of Graham's "pavilions" called *Two-Way Mirror Cylinder inside Cube* and discussed Graham's work, in relation to other projects in the exhibition called *Light Construction* such as the glass structures by Bernard Tschumi, Jean Nouvel, Rem Koolhaas, Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron, Nicholas Grimshaw and Toyo Ito.⁹⁹

Graham is also known with his inclusive architectural criticism throughout his essays and performances starting from 1960's. He criticized Modern Architecture, which he evaluates as "a utopian language of pure function and pure materiality".¹⁰⁰ He also presents a criticism about the paradoxical use of steel and glass in architecture, which both "hides" and "reveals" privacy. His "first art work", titled as "Homes for America", was an analytic description and criticism of the issues about suburban housing, "everyday life", consumer capitalism and American culture.¹⁰¹ His artistic performances ran parallel with the publication of numerous critical and theoretical essays. Questions about public and private space and their effect on the behavior became one of the major concerns of his works. He

as projects by Dan Graham, Martha Rosler, Richard Serra, Rachel Whiteread, Renee Green and others. According to Haywood, "many of these sculptural, video, photographic and site projects pose questions about private and public space, respond to mass cultural production and "throwaway" architecture, or raise problems about architecture, power, and class. The information about this course can be found at the web address: <http://architecture.mit.edu>

⁹⁹ Terence Riley, *Light Construction*, The Museum of Modern Art, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.*, p.226

¹⁰¹ Brian Wallis, in the foreword of *Rock My Religion*, which is a collection of Dan Graham's essays, edited by Wallis. *Rock My Religion*, The MIT Press, USA, 1993, p.x

produced works related to architecture, popular music, video and television in the field of performance art, by using different media such as installations, videotapes and architectural/ sculptural designs he produced what he calls “pavilions”.

Through his works, Dan Graham has contributed to the transformation of the structure of the performance space. The “traditional distinction” between audience and stage space dissolves into this structure, which corresponds to the transformation in the notion of performance space. He benefits from the model of representation that was developed after the innovations of cubism. The perspectival model of viewing is altered with multiple viewpoints in his works. Working on the audience-performer relationship, he questions the “object” and “subject” relation. He focuses on the participation of audience, making them an integral part of his installations and performances, “restructuring” space, time and spectatorship relations.

The titles of performances also indicate these issues that he works on. Engaging with materials that allow a different composition, with a different notion of time, his performance spaces is an expression of the “new conception of space”. With the performances *Performer/Audience/Mirror* in 1977 and *Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Video-Time Delay* in 1983 the issues of the new space conception are established.

In *Performance/Audience/Mirror*, a performer faces a seated audience with fixed viewpoints. Behind the performer, covering the front wall (parallel to the first row of seated viewers), mirror is placed, reflecting the audience.

The performer uses the mirror to describe both his and the audience's reflected image on it.¹⁰²



Fig 15. “*Performer/Audience/Mirror*” (1977) (Graham, D., *Rock My Religion*, p. 120)

Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Video-Time Delay, performed in 1983 with a musician, Glenn Blanca, is a musical performance with a different arrangement of the performance space. It is a room, in which one of the four walls is covered with a two-way mirror. The audience is integrated in the structure of the work, seated on the right, facing the two-way mirror. Three musicians are positioned on the left, arranged in a triangular position, again facing the mirror.

¹⁰² Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, Goldie Paley Gallery, Philadelphia/Pennsylvania, 1993, p.21



Fig 16. “Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Video-Time Delay” (Graham, D., *Public/Private*, p. 110)

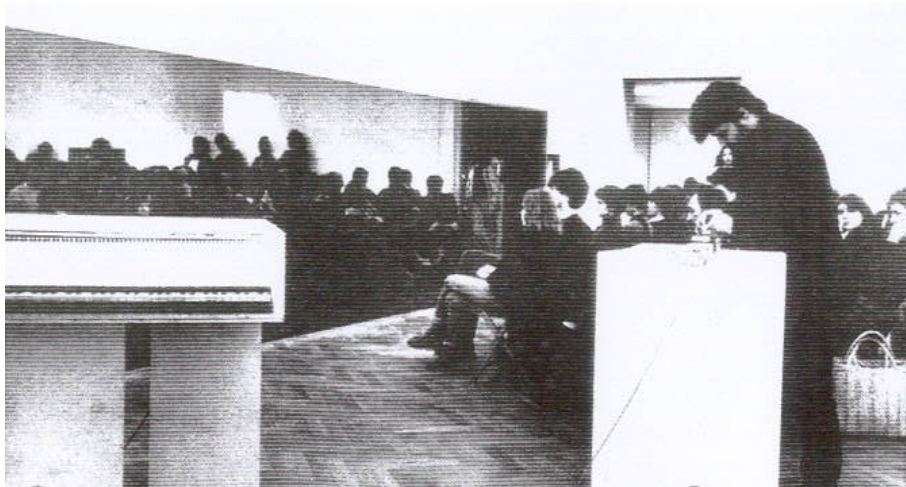


Fig 17. “Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Video-Time Delay” (Graham, D., *Public/Private*, p. 111)

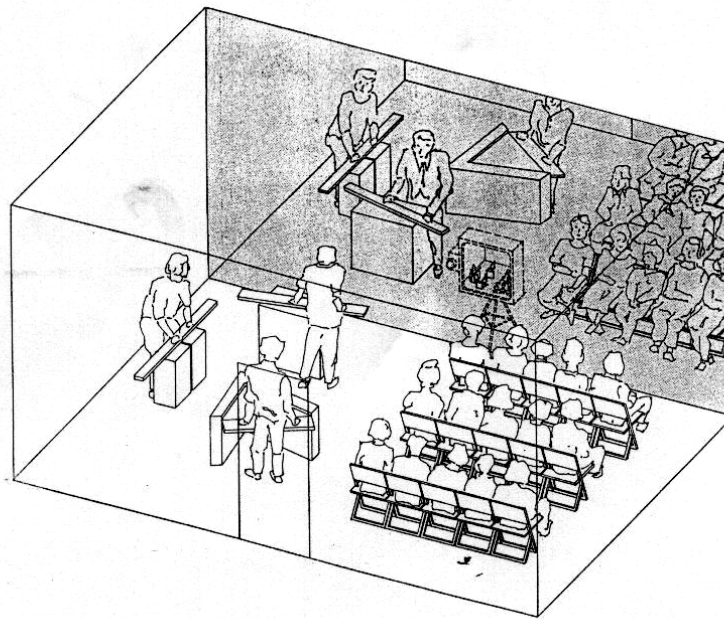


Fig 18. Illustration of the Construction of Performance Space (Graham, D., *Public/Private*, p. 112)

Behind the mirror, a monitor is placed. The image of it can be seen through the mirror. The image of the entire space, shot from the front is displayed in the monitor. The view is taken from a wide-angled lens placed on top of the video screen. A tape delay system causes a six second delay of the images. The audience may look at the mirror or the monitor to watch the musicians. They also see other audience's gazes in relation to the reflections of their own gazes.

Graham's works are evaluated as a "demonstration of a new system of representation".¹⁰³ In several essays, he points out the break of his works from the "traditional rendering of perspective in Renaissance art" in which

¹⁰³ http://www.sfmoma.org/collections/media_arts/ma_coll_graham.html

the viewer faces a painting, looking forward into the “projected space the artist constructs”.

Differentiating the construction that is based on the idea of “fixed perspective” and “predetermined observation point”, his constructed spaces offer neither a “fixed viewpoint”, nor a “fixed image”. The images in the mirror surfaces, opposing mirror and glass surfaces and video images that change constantly by the changing position of viewers are parts of this model of representation that is defined in relation to time and movement.¹⁰⁴

Therefore the constitutive components of Graham’s performance space can be defined as transparency, reflection, video images, time and movement. The performer-audience relation is also a constitutive component of this new space conception on the stage.

Elsa Longhauser, in the foreword of an exhibition catalogue published in 1993, describes his work as: “Graham uses film, video, performance, architectural models and glass and mirror structures to engage the viewer in recognizing the physical, psychological and social interactions that occur within public and private spheres.”¹⁰⁵

Different from any stage performance, the glass and mirror surfaces are constructed as the expression of the materials used as they were, without any theatrical intention. Graham uses the glass and mirror structures in relation to video images, which are assessed by him as different representations.¹⁰⁶ Graham claims that the optical quality of mirror

¹⁰⁴ Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, 1993, p.15

¹⁰⁵ Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, 1993, p.15

¹⁰⁶ Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, 1993, p.13

corresponds to the “flat visuality of Renaissance painting”. An interior space “appears on the mirror as a frontal surface plane”. However, a video image signifies a different representation. For him, in a video image, “geometrical surfaces are lost to ambiguously modeled contours and to a translucent depth”.¹⁰⁷ The presence of the video also brings “the assumption of an independent reality within the framework of the given environment”.¹⁰⁸ It relocates a space that is not present, to another place.¹⁰⁹

Mirror and video images are used in opposition since the mirror “opens up a wider and deeper view of the room environment and magnifies the image of the perceiver as the observer approaches”.¹¹⁰ There are different relationships defined between the observer and the surfaces of mirror and video monitor. Observer’s movements are simultaneously reflected in the mirror whereas the monitor reflects the image that changes by the observer’s relation to the position of the camera. Graham defines and compares images of mirror and video as follows:

In rectilinear enclosures, mirrors create illusory perspective boxes. The symmetry of mirrors tends to conceal or cancel the passage of time, so that the overall architectural form appears to transcend time, while the interior area of the architecture, inhabited by human movements, process, and gradual

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.13

¹⁰⁸ Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, 1993, p.10

¹⁰⁹ Another function of “real images”, presented in time delay can be traced in Graham’s explanation, as a representation for opposing the “historicist idea”: [in] historicism, there is no real past, only an overlay of interpretations of a simulation of the past, [but] in opposition to this notion of history as a simulation, there is possible the idea of an actual, although hidden past, mostly eradicated from consciousness but briefly available in moments not obscured by the dominant ideology of newness. *Rock My Religion*, p.vii

¹¹⁰ Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, 1993, p.13

change, is emptied of significance. As the image in the mirror is perceived as a static instant, place (time and space) becomes illusorily eternal. The world seen on video, by contrast, is in temporal flux and connected subjectively to (because it can be identified with) experienced duration.¹¹¹

Besides the several meanings it gains in relation to the structure of the performance space, the use of video images brings the notion of “time”. Graham’s projects investigate perception of architectural space and “real” time. By using video, he offers time-delay in the constructed space of his performances. This is defined by Graham as a “contrast between two models of time”. While the “(self) image(s) in the mirror(s)” mark the “traditional Renaissance perspective static present-time”, the video feedback offers a “new model”.¹¹² Time-delay, projections, closed-circuit video and mirrors become tools for “manipulating perception”. His work becomes a union of past, present and future within the space of performance, with time delay that is introduced by the use of video.

Apart from other constitutive components, the performer-audience relation also defines the new space conception on the stage. The “conventional system” in theatre separates the audience space from the space of performers. This dual division dissolves in Graham’s works to unite the audience and the stage space in the space of performance. Altering the relationships of performers and audience, Graham challenges the conventional structure of a performance space.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p.14

¹¹² Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, 1993, p.16

This is defined as a “new social relation that allows for a radical reformulation of identification and social connection”. Graham challenges viewers to participate and observe their aesthetic and social environment. In Graham’s performances, spectators’ awareness of their self is activated by their reflected images on the mirror.

Graham tries to activate this awareness in *Performer/ Audience/Mirror* by verbalizing every gesture of the spectators. In the performance, Graham observes the audience, who become involved in performance structure. This connects the audience to the representation on the stage. The artist observes a constantly changing situation.

In the performance called *Performance and Stage-Set Utilizing Two-Way Mirror and Video-Time Delay*, video represents the images reflected in the mirror. The viewer observes him/herself and becomes both the “subject and the object at the same time”. When video is used with time-delay in relation to mirror, it “allows the spectator to see what is normally visually unavailable: the simultaneity of his or her self as both subject and object”.¹¹³

The next step would be eliminating the performer completely to define the audience both as the performer and the viewer.

3.2.1 Ephemeral Space Constructed by Multiple Viewpoints

With the presence of the audience that become participants, Graham’s installations can also be defined as performances. One of these installations

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p.16

is *Public Space/Two Audiences* (1976) which is evaluated as “a kind of stage-set, that remains inactive until audience enter one or both rooms”.¹¹⁴



Fig 19. “Public Space/Two Audiences” (Graham, D., *Public/Private*, p. 35)

Public Space/Two Audiences takes place in a room enclosed within a large building, “creating its own environment”. The space consists of two rooms, divided by a glass wall. At the end of one room, there is a mirror, parallel to the glass dividing-wall. There are two audiences in each room, viewing and becoming the “mirror image” of, each other. According to Graham, the glass divider “represents a window showing the other audience’s behavior”.¹¹⁵ The “observer” in the opposite room of the mirror sees his/her double image reflected on the glass and behind it, on the mirror. The “observer” in the room with the mirror sees a slight image of

¹¹⁴ Mark Francis in *Public/Private*, p.21

¹¹⁵ Dan Graham, *Rock My Religion*, p.190

both rooms reflected on the glass' surface. This is a reflection of the mirror image that "fills in the blank white wall surface behind the glass".¹¹⁶

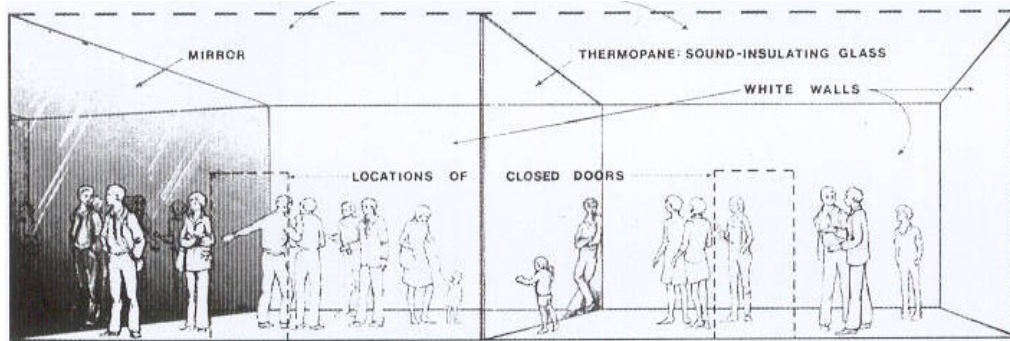


Fig 20. "Public Space/Two Audiences", Illustration of the Construction
(Graham, D., *Public/Private*, p. 36)

The space of performance is only defined for a period of time that lasts during the presence of the audience. The essential feature of Graham's work is that it only functions with the presence of a viewer.¹¹⁷

In this construction, "perspectival", "fixed" model of vision is altered with the looks that are two-sided. Different viewpoints are present at the same time that both are reflected backwards and directed towards.¹¹⁸ The traditional, fixed construction of sightlines is altered with the continuously shifting viewpoints of the moving audience and spectators, defining several "ways of looking" such as the audience looking at his/her own image in the mirror, himself/herself in relation to the other audience, himself/herself in

¹¹⁶ Dan Graham, *Public/Private*, p.34

¹¹⁷ Mark Francis in *Public/private*, p.21

¹¹⁸ Dan Graham, *Two-Way Mirror Power*, ed., Alberro, A., The MIT Press, USA, 1999, p.165

relation to the group of spectators and looking at the glass surface, seeing others but not himself/herself.

Transformability in theatre space can be related to the stage-set as well as the performance space, to attain different meanings for each different performance. However, the idea of transformability in Graham's works differ in using this concept because rather than changeable elements of an architectural construction, it is based on changing visual and perceptual effects within a stable structure. Transformation is achieved through the constant elements of the architectural space.

The notion of transformability is discussed in relation to another concept, which is temporality. Within his performances, Graham questions the ephemeral aspects of a constructed space. Altering visual effects are ephemeral aspects that consequently change the relation with space. As a part of a conscious proposal, these aspects can be evaluated as different experiences suggested by the performance space.¹¹⁹

3.3 Relocation of Space Conception in a Performance

Throughout the study, the space of performance is investigated with its material properties. Being evaluated as the materialization of the visual relations between the performers and the audience, performance spaces are identified with different space conceptions and therefore, theories of vision.

¹¹⁹ For more information about transformability in theatre, see Appendix B.

For all different conceptions of space in theatre, however, there is a common aspect. This aspect is the space that is “created within the audience’s imagination”. The significance of the use of space in theatre is its engagement with the “invisible” that “relocates” the spectator’s conception of space going beyond the so-called “magical-box” of theatre.

The idea of stage space is inspiring for architectural thinking as it has a structure that goes “beyond” the visual and surpasses the limits of physical space. The closed structure of a stage space is used to produce boundless spaces. Space of performance is defined as a “protected autonomous microcosm”.¹²⁰ Another space and time is created within the performance. Director Ariane Mnouchkine, claims that the stage ought to be a space that can be “transformed into an all encompassing whole by the impetus of the combined imaginations of actors and audience”.¹²¹

Paradoxically, the relocation of the space conception is achieved by the material properties of the stage-set as well as the dialogues. Until the developments in staging theories in late nineteenth and early twentieth century, scenery that constituted an illusory space had been used as a tool for relocating the space conception of the audience.¹²² In modern theatre, however, theatrical space became a means of “expressing the very essence of the drama” and not a way to provide an illusion of a so-called, “reality”.¹²³

¹²⁰ Breton, p.4-5

¹²¹ *ibid.*, p.17

¹²² i.e. experiments of French director Adolphe Appia (1862-1918), which is defined by Şener as a new way of providing “identification” with the performance. His theatre required illusion of “an atmosphere” achieved with lighting, rather than illusionistic painting.

¹²³ Gaelle Breton, *Theaters*, Princeton Architectural Press, New York, 1989, p.13

The “new movement in theatre” required a different visual relationship.¹²⁴ The spatial relation was re-considered as the plastic, sculptural forms of the new stage conception required “a three dimensional relationship with the viewer”. Painted canvas scenery that can be used with the frontal perspective of the proscenium theatre, became inadequate for this new space.¹²⁵ The notion of illusion in theatre is therefore related with the theories of staging and it is achieved as an end product of the scenery, designed for this purpose. Stage designers make use of visual properties in order to play with the effects of illusion on the stage space.

During an act of performance, the space conceptions of the audiences are inevitably relocated. Even in the contemporary approach that rejects constructing the idea of illusion, this relocation

This is an inherent quality of performing arts and the notion constitutes the originality of a stage space; “originality”, being used in the most common sense of the term.

¹²⁴ William Condee, *Reform of the Performance*, Architectural Review, No:1108, p.75

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, p.76

CHAPTER 4

RE-READING ARCHITECTURAL SPACE THROUGH A STAGED EVENT

With his performance spaces, Dan Graham proposes several issues directly related with the architectural discourse. Through the glass and mirror structures, for instance, he discusses issues like “transparency” and “minimalism”. With his performance space constructions, Graham makes use of the “material properties” of glass. He compares these constructions with Mies van der Rohe’s Barcelona Pavilion, which is for him “a showcase for its own formal materiality”.¹²⁶

The transparent and the semi-transparent surfaces he uses in the construction of his performance spaces, however, attain different meanings in relation to the changing images that they reflect or reveal. Graham’s structures correspond to two situations in architecture. While transparency suggests depth, reflections on glass surfaces and mirrors construct the illusion of it. The changing effects, transform his performance spaces, which has ‘relatively’ stable structures. They offer ephemeral experiences.

As common properties of his work, these aspects are read from Graham’s other projects such as the proposal for a cinema he designed in

¹²⁶ Dan Graham, *Rock My Religion*, p.190

1981. Being positioned in the ground level of a modern office building, on a busy corner, the construction of the cinema is similar to his performance spaces. The construction has two-way mirrored glass facades. These surfaces, “allow the audience on whichever side is darker at any particular moment to see through and observe the other side (without being seen by people on that side)”. Consequently, they appear as mirrors from the other side. But there is one condition that allows both perceptions at the same time: “When the light illuminates the surface of both sides more or less equally, the glass facade becomes both semi-reflective and partially transparent. Spectators on both sides observe the opposing space and a reflection of their own look within their own space”.¹²⁷ Graham describes these surfaces as “an optical skin, both reflective and transparent inside and outside”.

When the film is projected on the screen, which is a two-way mirror, it functions as a “normal screen” for the interior. However, from the street, the film image can be seen from the reverse and because the interior becomes relatively more illuminated, it becomes slightly transparent to reveal the images of the audience watching the screen.

¹²⁷ Graham describes the project in more detail in, *Rock My Religion*, p.168-69

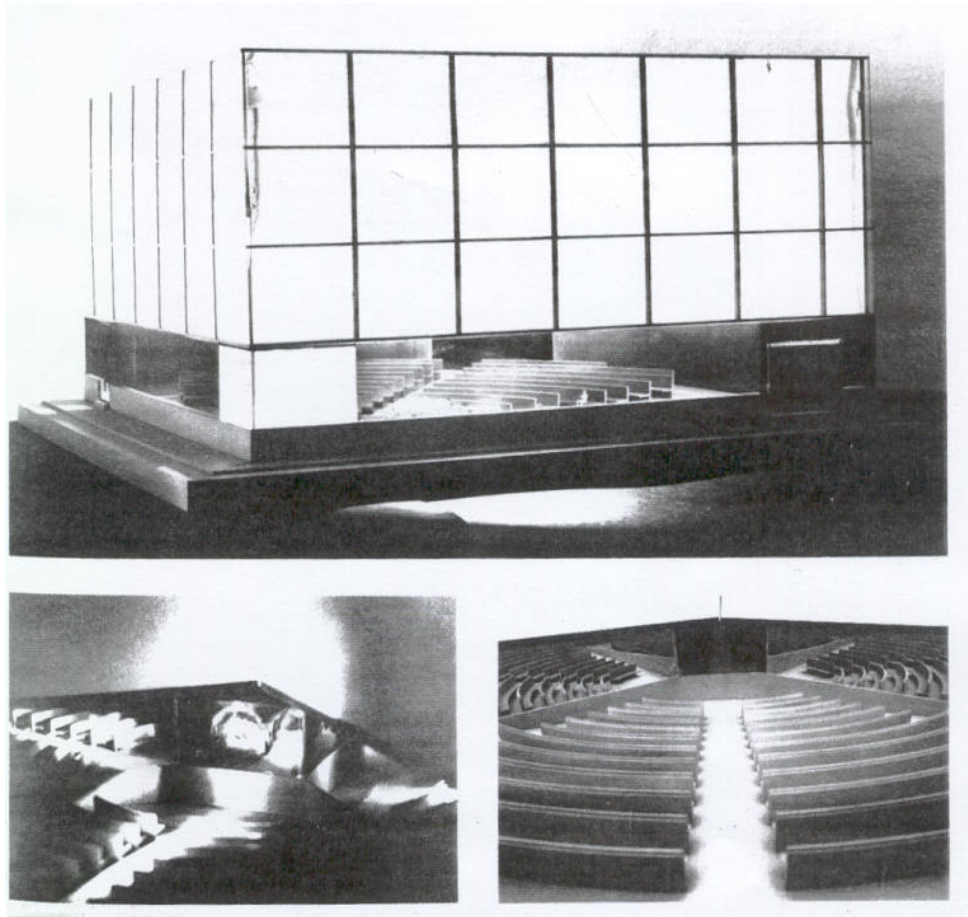


Fig 21. “*Cinema Proposal*” by Dan Graham, 1981 (Graham, D., *Rock My Religion*, p. 169)

When the lights are on, in the cinema, after the projection finishes, the screen and the sides of the building, act as mirrors. They reflect audiences' images and are said to "prevent" their identification with the film with an immediate feedback.¹²⁸ Graham claims that, the audience becomes aware of himself/herself, the environment and his/her relation with other audiences.¹²⁹ On the other hand, the pedestrian, becomes able to look through the window, "remaining unseen". For Graham, consequently, "the awareness of his body and his environment is lost". The project questions the relationships, defined in a "conventional cinema, which must conceal from the audiences their own looks and projections". For Graham, the project "allows inside and outside spectators to perceive their positions, projections, bodies and identifications".¹³⁰

In Graham's proposal of a cinema, the audience himself/herself becomes the object that is being "on view". A similar approach becomes the basis of a project by Bernard Tschumi (born 1944), which is the *Glass Video Gallery*, built in Groningen, the Netherlands in 1990.¹³¹

The Glass Video Gallery is a public pavilion made of a glass structure that is used for watching music videos and contains six banks of video monitors.

¹²⁸ Dan Graham, *Rock My Religion*, p.169

¹²⁹ *ibid.*, p.169

¹³⁰ *ibid.*, p.169

¹³¹ The comparison of cinema proposal by Dan Graham and *Glass Video Gallery* by Bernard Tschumi is made by the author. In the following pages, *Glass Video Gallery* will be discussed in relation to another project by Graham, which is *Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube*. The latter is made by Terence Riley, the Chief Curator of Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The project presents a challenge both to “permanence” and to “preconceived ideas” about the act of viewing. Tschumi claims that the project challenges the “spatial stability” of buildings that have “steel structures and “solid” floors. The structure of the gallery is made of “identical structural glass”.¹³²

Tschumi notes that “monitors provide unstable facades, glass reflections create mirages and limitless space is suggested”.¹³³ The “ambiguity” created by these reflective surfaces, through “immaterial representation of abstract systems (television and electronic images)” is for Tschumi, also a challenge to the “appearance of permanence” established by the materiality of buildings. The multiplying layers of reflection are said to dissolve the “solid surfaces of the glass”.¹³⁴ The experience is proposed to be changed at night, by the changing light and effects that transform the space. Reflections and video screen images, take place of the architectural elements.¹³⁵ For Tschumi, this attributes several definitions to architectural space:

The endless reflections of the video screens over the vertical and horizontal glass surfaces reverse all expectations of what is architecture and what is event, of what is wall and what is electronic image, of what defines and what activates.¹³⁶

¹³² Bernard Tschumi, *Event Cities: Praxis*, The MIT Press, London, 1994, p.559

¹³³ Bernard Tschumi, *Event Cities: Praxis*, The MIT Press, London, 1994, p.559

¹³⁴ Terence Riley, *opcit.*, p.88

¹³⁵ Terence Riley, *Light Construction*, The Museum of Modern Art, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1995, p.88

¹³⁶ Bernard Tschumi, *Event Cities: Praxis*, The MIT Press, London, 1994, p.559

Tschumi claims that video gallery also challenges the “preconceived ideas about television viewing and about privacy”.¹³⁷ The transparent glass structure in opposition to “an enclosed and private space” provides an “extension” to the street. In the pavilion, the audience “watches and is watched simultaneously”.¹³⁸

The basic components of Graham’s performance space, namely, transparency, reflection, video image, time, and movement are also the basic tools that constitute Bernard Tschumi’s project.

Graham’s space conception is also related with Tschumi’s Glass Video Gallery, with his Pavilion sculpture, *Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube*. Graham describes the “pavilion” made in 1989 for the roof at the Dia Center for the Arts in New York, as “an open-air, rooftop performance space, observatory / camera obscura / optical device / video and coffee bar/lounge, with other multi-use possibilities”.¹³⁹

Terence Riley, the Chief Curator of Department of Architecture and Design at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Light Construction*, discusses these two projects in relation.¹⁴⁰ Giving emphasis to their use of material properties, he evaluates the function of surfaces in their works, which he sees as a potential for a “new way of making architecture”:

¹³⁷ *ibid.*, p.559

¹³⁸ *ibid.*, p.559

¹³⁹ Dan Graham, *Rock My Religion*, p.165

¹⁴⁰ The catalogue is published in conjunction with the exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, of the same title.

In recent years, a new architectural sensibility has emerged, one that not only reflects the distance of our culture from the machine aesthetic of the early twentieth century but also marks a fundamental shift in emphasis after three decades when debate about architecture focused on issues of form. In projects notable for artistic and technical innovation, contemporary designers are investigating the nature and potential of architectural surfaces. They are concerned not only with their visual and material qualities but with the meanings they may convey. Influenced by aspects of our culture including electronic media and the computer, architects and artists are rethinking the interrelationships of architecture, visual perception and structure.¹⁴¹

Constructed from a two-way mirrored glass, the walls of Graham's pavilion shift between "transparent and reflective states" as the intensity of light changes. It also creates changing visual effects with the sky, surrounding landscape, and interactions with people on the roof. The project is evaluated as the "idealized performance space". Materials constitute the social relation between audiences.

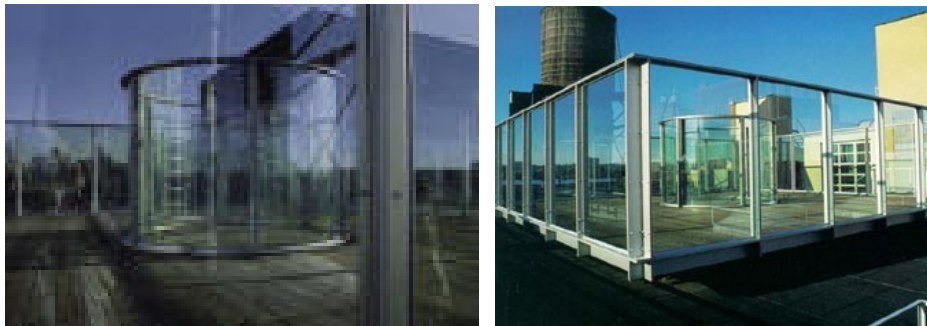


Fig 24. "Rooftop Urban Project / Two-Way Mirror Cylinder Inside Cube"
(<http://www.kiasma.fi/graham/>)

¹⁴¹ Terence Riley, *opcit.*, p.9

Riley claims that the projects of Tschumi and Graham both display a similar attitude towards the use of surfaces as neither of them can be represented by a system that “depicts things that occupy a place and have a shape that can be described by lines”.¹⁴² He asserts that “neither perspective, nor Cartesian space can describe” the space quality of both projects by Graham and Tschumi. For Riley, Graham’s pavilion sculpture corresponds to a recognition of “the usefulness of geometry, plan organization and systematization of the structure while refusing to assign them a transcendent, defining role”. His explanation clearly expresses the essential aspect of the project:

The environment, endlessly reflected, literally superimposes formlessness on the structure’s architectural surfaces, easily overcoming the certitude of the structurally framed view and the idealized abstraction of the circle and the square that create its plan, dissolving their Platonic forms in contingent perceptions.¹⁴³

Riley claims that with its “transparent surfaces, video screens and tilted volume”, *Glass Video Gallery*, also challenges “structural grid and perspective vision to determine the overall image of architecture”.¹⁴⁴ For him the project demonstrates “the ability of the architectural object to be transformed by the dull glow and flickering image of the electronic media”.¹⁴⁵ Riley also emphasizes that; the structure doesn’t “determine the

¹⁴² Riley quotes definition of perspective from Hubert Damish, p.17

¹⁴³ Terence Riley, *opcit.*, p.17

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.*, p.17

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p.21

appearance of the building". For him, there is "no material distinction between the surfaces that enclose the space, and the supports, that provide the stability".¹⁴⁶

In the catalogue, Riley also assesses the other projects in the exhibition and their approach to a "building's skin". For him, many of the projects "share a common approach to the relationship between the structure and the skin: the structural members, rather than framing and therefore defining the point of view are lapped over by single and double layers of translucent sheathing". Moreover, he claims that the relationship between the structure and the skin is "the most evident expression of the theoretical coincidence of perspectival vision and Cartesian thinking".¹⁴⁷

Among the projects that are evaluated by Riley, there is another project that can be evaluated in relation to Graham's performance spaces. The questions that Graham raised in the performance called *Public Space/Two Audiences* are related to the idea behind Cartier Foundation, designed by French Architect, Jean Nouvel (born 1945).

The building, which is the head office of the company and an art foundation, is situated in a garden. It is composed of three layers of glass walls, two of which constitute the facades of the building. There is also another layer that covers the trees, which are in front of the second layer.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p.20

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p.20

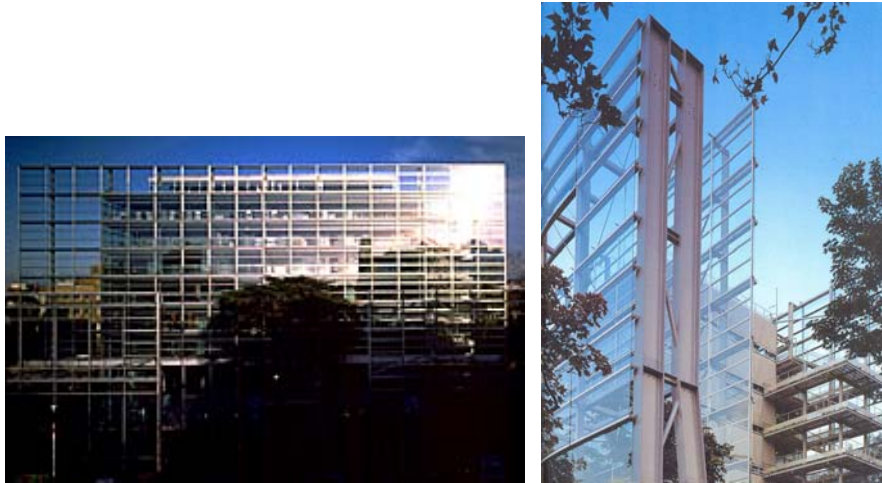


Fig 25. “*Cartier Foundation*” by Jean Nouvel, Paris, 1994

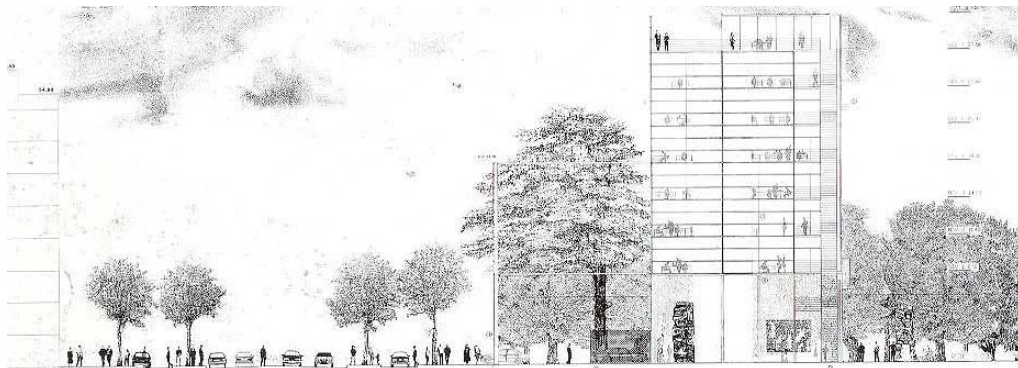


Fig 26. “*Cartier Foundation*”- site section (GA Document Extra, No.07, Jean Nouvel)

With the three parallel glass surfaces that act like “screens”, Nouvel aims to create a “series of reflections”. By these visual effects he proposes the visitors to question whether “the trees are inside or outside”, or “what they see through this depth is a reflection or something real”.¹⁴⁸ Nouvel explains the consequence of the visual effects as follows:

I inserted the trees in a symmetrical system like a virtual image in an optical device, so that when you look at a tree you don't know whether it is real or you are seeing a symmetrical reflection of another tree. When you look through the facade you see the sky through transparency but also through reflection, so there is this ambiguity between virtuality and reality, which is the basis of the building.¹⁴⁹

Riley claims that, “Nouvel does not seek absolute transparency but exploits glass's inherent physical qualities to evoke a subjective visual response”.¹⁵⁰ For him Nouvel is concerned with “glass's fabulous solidity, rather than its transparency”. He claims that the “ambiguous depth”, Nouvel creates, continues, “through the building in both horizontal and vertical dimensions, achieving a level of extreme visual complexity”. This effect of light and shadow is for Riley “associated with solid masonry structures”.¹⁵¹

Like the twentieth century directors, Nouvel also seeks transformability creating an “empty space” in this project. For temporary exhibitions that will be held in the building, he proposes an “empty space”, so that “each

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p.54-56

¹⁴⁹ GA Document Extra, No.07, Jean Nouvel, A.D.A. Edita, Tokyo, p.66

¹⁵⁰ Terence Riley, *opcit.*, p.54

¹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p.54

exhibition can introduce its own built elements”.¹⁵² Nouvel states that he didn’t anticipate “what would be put into the space” during these temporary exhibitions. For Nouvel, the facade also should be absolutely “flexible” that all the glass panels can be taken away to constitute “complete transparency”.¹⁵³

Riley claims that the projects by Dan Graham, Bernard Tschumi and Jean Nouvel, display “similar use of transparent and translucent skins”¹⁵⁴ Rather than displaying “a skin that could be called nonmaterial”; their surfaces, use “the positive physical characteristic of glass”. Their “attitudes” reveal the significance of architectural surface, displaying the changing conceptions of space.

They also illustrate changing models of vision through architectural space. Their structures use a known material property, namely transparency. No doubt, neither of them is not the first to work on this notion, which has been one of the basic issues since the industrial revolution that introduced new materials to the use of architecture.

About the use of transparent materials in architecture, several discussions have been made. In Colin Rowe and Robert Slutzky’s essay written in 1955-56, titled as “*Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal*” the two levels of transparency have been identified.¹⁵⁵ In the essay, the notion of transparency is considered both as a material property and in a broader

¹⁵² GA Document, opcit., p.66

¹⁵³ *ibid.*, p.66

¹⁵⁴ Terence Riley, p.16

¹⁵⁵ Written in 1955-56, the essay “Transparency: Literal and Phenomenal” is published in 1963 in “Perspecta 8”, The Yale Architectural Journal.

sense, a spatial organization.¹⁵⁶ The essay also explains the relation of material properties, their use in architecture and theories of vision. It is also stated that the organization of materials (in the examples -transparent surfaces-) determines the conception of the building's visuality. Rowe defines two types of transparency; "literal" transparency, as the material quality itself like transparent glass curtain wall or mesh and "phenomenal" transparency, as the quality of space organization, which is "a highly developed interlacing of horizontal and vertical gridding, created by gapped lines and intruding planes".¹⁵⁷ While literal transparency is derived from "machine aesthetic and cubist painting", phenomenal transparency is derived "only from cubist painting". The concepts of cubism, borrowed by Rowe to define transparency are: "frontality, suppression of depth, contracting of space, definition of light sources, tipping forward of objects, restricted palette, oblique and rectilinear grids, propensities toward peripheric development".¹⁵⁸ His claim is that these concepts are used by architects in 1920's as the translation of cubist space into three dimensions, both in building and in city scale.

It has to be clearly stated that the use of transparent materials cannot be evaluated only as a transformation with the surfaces, but it also marks a change in visual construction and architectonic quality. They belong to a space conception that has changed in relation to changing theories of

¹⁵⁶ Ayşen Savaş makes a reading of this essay in *ArchiScope* 1, September, 1998

¹⁵⁷ Rowe-Slutzky..., p.162

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p.

vision. This conception has also changed the relations between architectural surface and structure.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study has attempted to unveil the interaction between architectural space and the space constructed on the stage. This interaction can be interpreted in the advance of each medium of space production. Reading architectural space on the stage, the major concern of this study is to assess this relation in advance of architectural space production.

An analysis of space in theatre generates further readings and provides a medium for the re-evaluation of architectural space production. These readings establish the foundations for further discussions concerning several issues such as the changing space conceptions, re-definitions of architectural elements and relocation of space conception through a constructed space.

Changing space conceptions is the basic issue that is read from stage space. In the study, the shifts in the field of vision have been defined and their consequences have been read through stage space. This study has acknowledged the fact that conceptions of vision and space are interrelated. Theories of vision can be conceived as models for the conceptualization of space.

The changes in the theories of vision are the outcomes of the developments in science, technology, sociology and politics that determine the “theories about the relation of human being with the environs”. The study focused on the “shift” in the field of vision that abandoned the visual model of Renaissance period. The shift is defined as “demolition of pictorial space by the Cubist techniques”. The “new” conception of space that have been considered is defined as a union of several notions such as a “relative point of reference”, “different viewpoints” and as a consequence of this, “simultaneity” and “time”.

The “traditional” space conception separates “subject” from “object”, thus prevents the subject to “be a part of the representation”. The space conception changes in relation to this separation. In the “new” space conception, however, the subject and object are juxtaposed.

As a materialization of the visual relationships, performance space illustrated different space conceptions. The “traditional” structure of a performance space displays the separation as performer-audience relation. This separation dissolves with the transformation, as in Graham’s performance space. As stated, the construction of Dan Graham’s performance spaces displays the new space conception that is shaped by the second shift in the theories of vision, which corresponds to the modern period. His performance space also displays other issues of the new model. He introduces different viewpoints to discover the quality of space. His performance space is structured as a materialization of multiple viewpoints.

The audiences observing performers, images of themselves and “other audiences’ gazes” become the basic foundations of this structure.

Graham proposes that mirror images and time delay offer the audience the perception of himself/herself as both “subject” and “object”. Graham’s performance space is unique in the sense of illustrating this space conception and provides evidence for the concern of this study.

Another reading of stage space is related to the changing definitions of architectural elements. Architectural elements are re-defined on the stage. Their assessment provides a critical distance for architectural discourse, in order to re-consider its own production tools and methods.

Graham’s work again provides a platform for the discussion about this reading. Through his performance spaces, Graham seeks to stimulate an architectural awareness. In his works that illustrate the changing space conception, Graham uses tectonic qualities of his constructed spaces. He uses elements such as transparency, video image, reflection, time and movement. His structures correspond to two situations in architectural construction. While transparency suggests depth, mirror as a surface constructs the illusion of it. Therefore the architectural experience he constructs oscillates between depth and surface.

Graham’s interpretation of structure and surface relationship made his performance space related to architectural discourse and provided a re-reading of architectural space. Terence Riley discussed his work in relation to projects by significant architects. Their use of “architectural surface” is the issue that brings together the projects of Dan Graham, Bernard Tschumi,

Jean Nouvel. This issue also provides a context to Riley's discussion. Their projects interpret surface with its potential to attain different meanings within their transparent structure. In the projects, the architectural element, surface, is used for the predilection of temporality as a challenge for permanence of traditional buildings.

Changing definition of architectural elements produced the other reading of stage space, which is the relocation of space conception through a constructed space. It is the claim of this study that a significant aspect of the construction of stage space is the use of its closed structure to produce a boundless space. It is the space that is "created within the audience's imagination" that surpasses the limits of physical space.

As stated, the relocation of space conception, which is identified with the notion of "illusion" in performing arts terminology, is a conventional principle for all staged performances. In other words, any stage performance creates the illusion and the relocation within audiences' space conception occurs. Since any staged event composes a representation, even performed with the staging technique that claims to prevent this relocation by stimulating the awareness of the audience, -which is identified with Brechtian Theory-, inevitably constructs a conceptual illusion.

The architectural projects that have been discussed are related to a staged event as they also try to construct the "relocation of space conception" on purpose. Ephemeral experiences, achieved by changing visual effects are the tools for this relocation. In order to discuss these projects together, this aspect may be a more unique perspective for this

study. In this sense, their “theatrical” approach is the aspect for a critical assessment. However, this approach shouldn’t be conceived as being reduced to mere visuality, since this attitude constructs a structure that is enriched by the different ephemeral experiences, offered by the architectural space. In this sense, the approach provides a different viewpoint to re-read architectural production.

Through the research of the study -as stated above- it is recognized that there is an interactive relation between the architectural space production and the space produced on stage. The assessment of the architectural space in theatre also reveals the significance of architecture for performing arts.

The examples studied, provided evidence that the space produced on the stage is a fundamental issue for a staged event. The architectural aspects of a theatre space and also the architectural elements that construct stage space are the constitutive components of a staged event. Architectural aspects, give shape to the staging technique in order for stage space to communicate with the audience.

Being aware of this fact, theatre theoreticians and directors, in search of their own artistic expression, collaborate with architects with the purpose of producing the ideal space of performance for this expression. For some significant directors like Adolphe Appia and Edward Gordon Craig, setting up the spatial expression is the major concern for a staged performance. Architectural elements can be tools to set expression, -like in Dan Graham’s work-. As a result, it is a fundamental achievement for the

creators in the field of performing arts to interact with architectural production.

As a final point, selected examples have been the evidence that it is possible to discuss the issues of architecture through the medium of performance. They also make evident that a stage performance can be a medium to produce issues concerning architectural discourse.

For the several aspects explained above, an assessment of stage space contributes to architectural thinking. It is proposed that performance space possesses knowledge about the making of architecture. Because of its instant nature and flexibility, stage space can be seen as a tool for making experiments for possible changes in the conception of architectural space. Through the works studied, this research made clear how stage space is in relation to the conception of architectural space. The avant-garde character of these works contributed to the discussions about different space conceptions and provided an understanding that exceed the time and place of their production. It is proposed and through the examples illustrated that stage can be an experimental space for architecture.

Re-reading architectural space through the interaction of architectural space and the space constructed on the stage is the subject of this study and it provides perspective for further studies. The idea of re-thinking architecture with the codes used by stage space result in evaluation of several issues -apart from the ones that have been considered- that may be thought to have no direct relation with architecture such as scenography,

theatricality and site-specificity.¹⁵⁹ The assessment of these issues provides different perspectives for architectural discourse.

¹⁵⁹ There is a detailed study about “site-specific performance” at Appendix D.

APPENDIX A - Architectural Elements of Stage Space

Stage space has been commonly defined and constructed by movable and stable elements. The term 'movable elements' refers to the main components of the stage that are in motion. They can be listed as the performers, light and projections. Besides the performers, another moveable element, light, has been identified as a "fluid structure" and it has been used as a constitutive element of stage space.¹⁶⁰ Another moveable element, projection, expands the notion of space on the stage.

'Stable elements', on the other hand, are the objects on the stage (-objects are identified as "prop" in performing arts terminology-) and the stage-set itself.

1. Moveable Elements

1.1. Performers

The moveable elements on the stage may or may not be considered as objects on the stage. They are the elements of space. Performers are the elements of scenery that constructs a relation with the dimensions of the stage. In the works of Pina Bausch (born 1940), a choreographer and director of Wuppertal Dance Theatre Company, for instance, performers' bodies are the main elements that are constructing the space of

¹⁶⁰

performance. In her performance, *Agua* (2001) designed by Peter Pabst (born 1944), the performers and their movement on the stage define the stage space. Bausch constructs the stage space by composing performers in motion and objects on the stage. Performance space is transformed by the presence of the 'moveable and stable elements'.

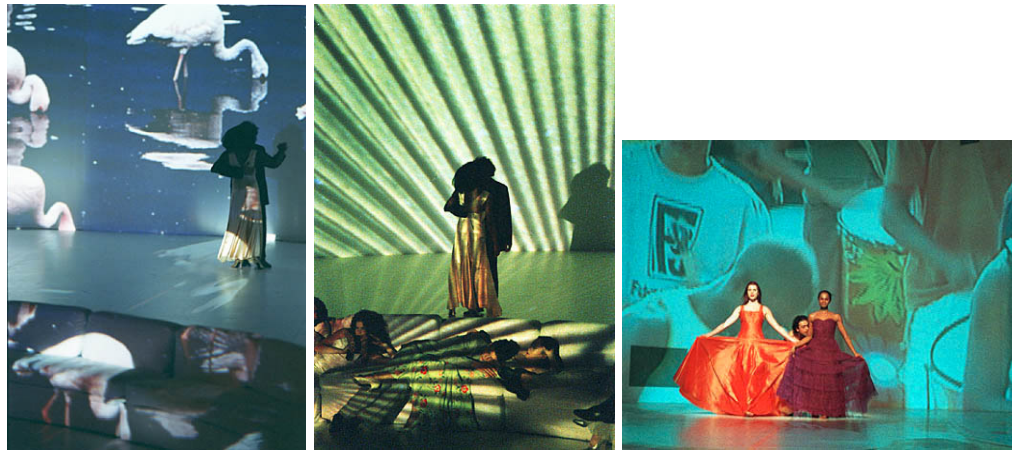


Fig 27. Three Scenes from the performance of “*Agua*” (2001) stage design and video by Peter Pabst (Web site www.pinabausch.de)

1.2. Light

Besides its basic principle, which is acquiring visibility, the major element of the stage, light, is used for several purposes. Light is used for giving expression in a performance. In other words, ‘an atmosphere’ is created on the stage through various use and effects of lights. By making only selected parts visible, light and its inherited entities shadow and color are used to create the atmosphere, give size and focus to the stage space. Making the shapes and outlines visible, light has the power to transform a space totally, dematerialize it and give a sense of depth. Light changes the

space and produces effects on the stage space. Light challenges the tangible and static qualities of the stage space and stage-set.

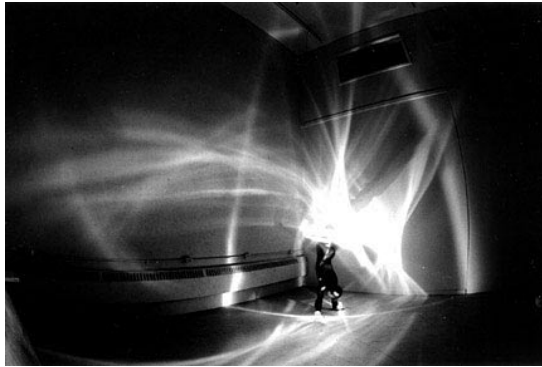


Fig 28. “Liquid Space”, Constructed by Light in “*Light Dance*” performed by Seth Riskin, at Feldman Gallery, May 2003 (Web site <http://www.feldmangallery.com/pages/exhgroup/exhperform.html>)

Light is not a contemporary element for the stage, even in the ancient open-air theatres, torchlight and natural light effects had been used extensively.¹⁶¹ As an already experienced and crucial element of the space and scenery, contemporary stage designers are still making experiments with the use of light.

Robert Wilson (born 1946), who is an architect and a well-known American stage designer and director, uses light as the major element that constructs the stage space in his performances. Light is the basic element that also constitutes the “fluidity” of his scenes and sets. His sketches illustrate his approach to lighting on the stage.

Wilson explains his use of light as follows:

¹⁶¹ Graham Walters, *Stage Lighting Step-by-Step*, Betterway Books, Cincinnati, 1997, p.8-9

Light brings everything together and everything depends on it. From the beginning I was concerned with light, how it reveals the objects, how objects change when light changes, how light creates space, how space change when light changes...¹⁶²

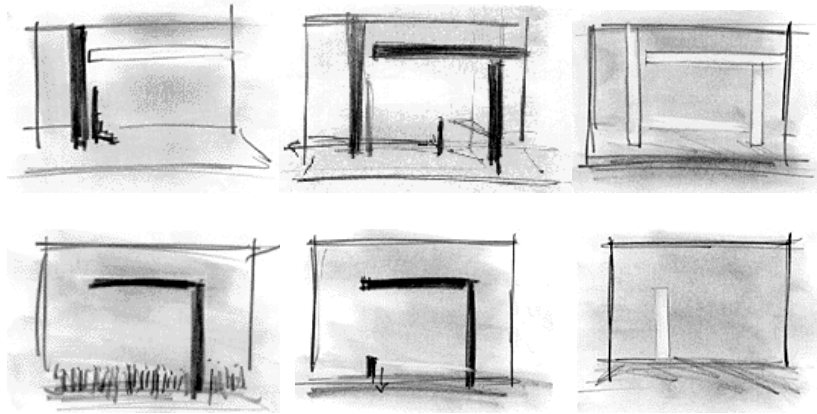


Fig 29. Sketches Indicating the Construction of Space by Light Beams, Dim and Illuminated Areas to Define Stage Space in “Lohengrin” by Robert Wilson (Web site www.robertwilson.com)

Wilson’s design work can be the best illustration of all aspects mentioned above, about the use of light in the production of stage space. In order to give size, make things visible and focus on certain parts, Wilson uses different types of light. The three types of light that he uses are “spotlight”, “sidelight” and “backlight”. Spotlight, highlights a face or an object as the rest of the stage darkens. This is what Wilson calls the "close-up" effect. He gives his stage pictures a “strong focus” that “guides the eye and lets it take in the composition”.¹⁶³ The sidelight, on the other hand, detaches the actors/objects from the environment and from the background.

¹⁶² Arthur Holmberg, *The Theatre of Robert Wilson*, Cambridge University Press, NewYork, 1996

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.

The object separated from the background “floats” in the space. Finally, backlight can be used to separate the back and the front parts of the stage, providing differences in the intensity of light.

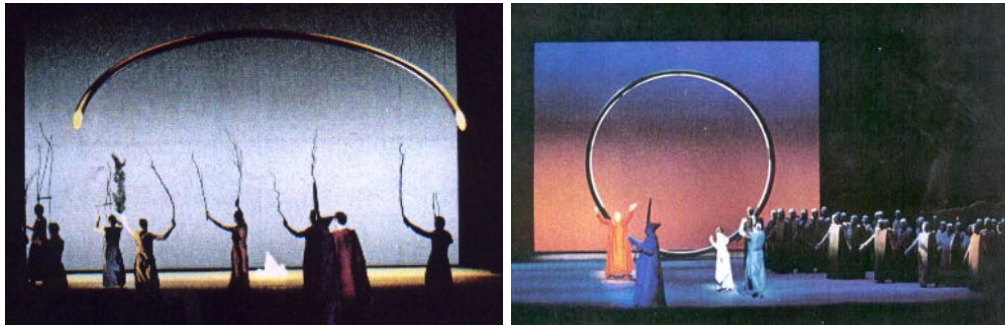


Fig 30. Oppositions are used to define stage space such as, the contrast between light and dark and also between cold light and warm light, from “*The Magic Flute*” by Robert Wilson (Holmberg, A. , *The Theatre of Robert Wilson*, p. 155)

Acting like a simultaneous painting, light can be used to define transformations of scenes. An understanding of the outcomes of these transformations require a discussion on color and shadow, two interdependent aspects of light.

In the play *Woyzeck*, for instance, Wilson defines scenes by using strong colors. The illustration below, explains the transformation of the stage space through the change of color of light to define another space.



Fig 31. Scene changes from “Woyzeck” by Robert Wilson (2002) (Woyzeck 2002 tour booklet)

On stage, another effect of light that has to be considered is shadow, lack of light. It can be used as a tool to change the scenery. The picture below, shows the effect of shadow. When the picture is considered without shadows projected on the surface, it becomes two-dimensional. However, use of spots from different angles, construct the third dimension.



Fig 32. A Performance by dance theatre company, DV8 (Web site www.dv8.co.uk)

Light, shadow and color intensify the effect that is to be given by the texture of the surfaces. It emphasizes motion and changes the sense of depth.

Lighting designers are aware of the fact that light has to be sculpted to overcome the two-dimensionality of the stage. Achieving visibility simply by lighting from the front is said to “flatten the scenery”.¹⁶⁴ Used three-dimensionally and by lighting each object individually, light could be sculpted.¹⁶⁵

Light also defines the space when reflected on the bodies of performers. Performers, in motion, enter the defined field of a spot to make it visible and construct depth.

In order to define dim and illuminated parts on the stage, Wilson uses effects of “negative space”, which is defined by him as “the empty space around objects”. It gives the viewer, “enough space to perceive them”. For him, this prevents visual confusion. The sense of negative space is supported by the appropriate use of light.¹⁶⁶

The idea of negative space can be a key concept for understanding the changing conception of space in the twentieth century. Particularly in architecture, rather than its solid existence, space has been identified with the “void” created.

¹⁶⁴ Francis Reid, *Discovering Stage Lighting*, Focal Press, Oxford, Boston, 1998

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p.25

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p.

1.3. Projections

Different image and vision technologies have been experimented in the stage space. Operating like a picture, they are used for extending and transforming the stage. They are tools for presenting what is 'not' there, in the performance space.

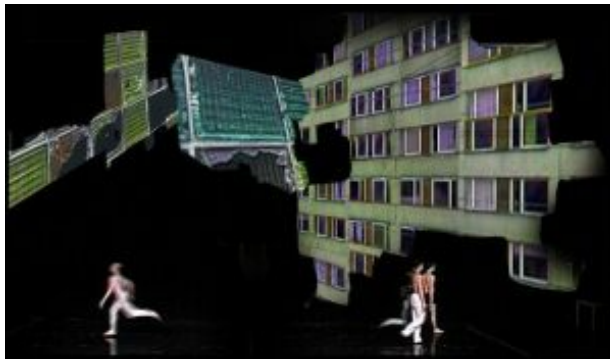


Fig 33. “*Graffiti*” by Josef Svoboda, visualizing an “absent space” (Web site www.laterna.cz)

Josef Svoboda (1920-2002) an architect, stage designer and artistic director of Lantern Magic Theatre, in *Graffiti*, performed in 1958, to provide an exhibit for Czechoslovakia at the World's Fair, experiments a way of juxtaposing images by using projections. He unites the stage and the projection as scenery.

Projections are also used for providing close-up effects, which make visible what may not be seen by a naked eye. This introduces another viewpoint, which is the one of a camera and directs the viewpoints of the audience. Introducing the notion of an apparatus, projected images change

the status of visual representation. The relation of the audience to the scenery is re-defined.

Projected images and films can also be used for changing the scale of the objects and images.

2. Stable Elements

The “stable” elements refer to the objects and the stage-set. For the sake of the categorization they are identified as stable in the conventional use of the term, however, all the elements of the stage space can be defined in motion. The basic property and function of these elements is their transformable structure that provides scene changes. Using several techniques, the transformations of these elements can be provided.

2.1. Objects

Objects or “props” are the elements of the stage. They can be presented in a large spectrum changing from elements that represent a cityscape to a glass. Objects are tactile; material, three-dimensional and they occupy space. The characterizing aspect of an “object” is its physical existence on the stage.

Gay McAuley, the chairperson of the Department of Performance Studies in the University of Sydney and the author of the book called *Space in Performance* claims that objects on the stage have come to the “fore” with

the “abandonment of illusionistic staging”.¹⁶⁷ Consequently, objects become liberated to create their own space.

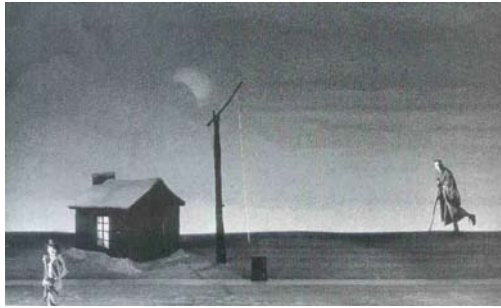


Fig 34. “Civil Wars” by Robert Wilson (Holmberg, A., *The Theatre of Robert Wilson*, p. 96)

Objects on the stage are used to determine scale, which is an important element of the scenery. Contemporary architect and director Robert Wilson identifies three ways of scaling space on the stage: using portraits (“close-up”), still lives (“medium shot”) and landscapes (“long shot”).¹⁶⁸ He is known with his emphasize on these set of scales that are used together. He uses gigantic animals or objects without proportion to alter the sense of depth. In the play *Poetry*, he placed human figures that are in contrast with the huge empty space that surrounds the figures, giving scale to the stage space.

¹⁶⁷ Gay McAuley, *opcit.*, p.170

¹⁶⁸ Arthur Holmberg, *op.cit.*, p. 145

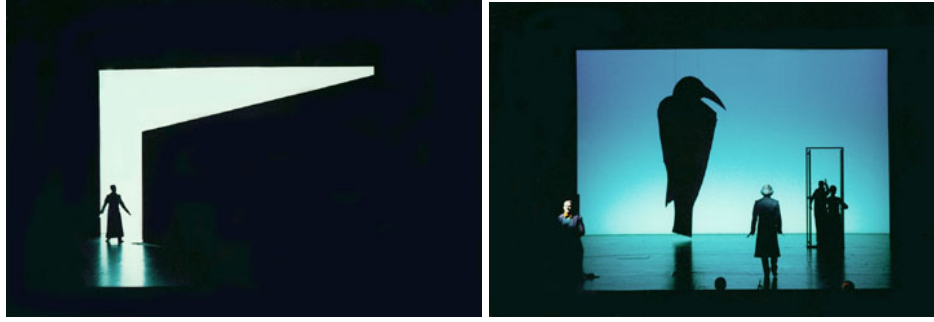


Fig 35. Two Scenes from “*POetry*” by Robert Wilson (Web site www.robertwilson.com)

2.2. Stage-Set

Stage-set is the temporal structure on the stage, which is re-defined for every different performance. The self-referential structural system of the stage-set has two major components; surfaces, and the supports locating these surfaces. It is indeed possible to construct stage sets out of different entities such as pipes, ropes, light and projections but the purpose of focusing on surfaces provides a discursive ground for our study. In all the performances illustrated in this study, the architectural element, “surface”, is utilized to construct the stage-set. Two inherited material properties of the surfaces are focused, namely, reflection and transparency.

A reflective surface is positioned to give the viewer the sense or the illusion of a multiple space or a space in depth. It also provides a different viewpoint. Without changing the position, juxtaposed images are presented for the viewer. It spots to the presence of an expanded space that is displayed from a reverse position. The invisible becomes apparent.

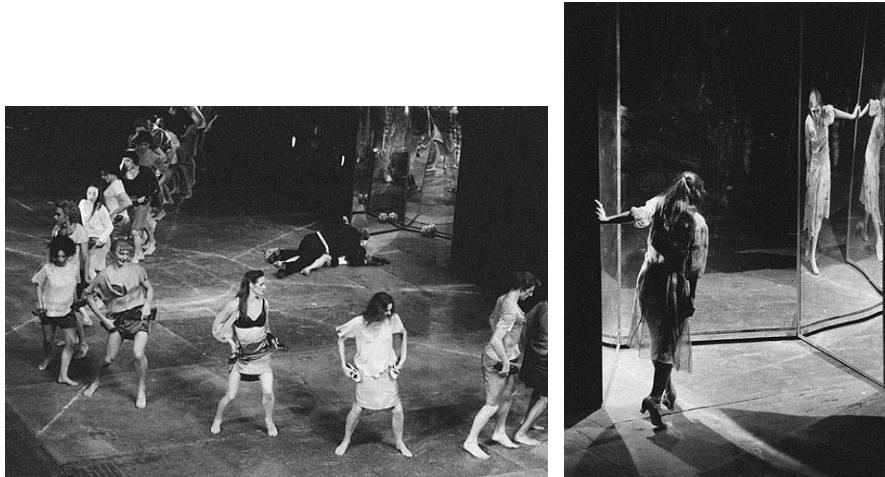


Fig 36. Pina Bausch, “*Die Sieben Todsünden*” (1976), stage and costume design by Rolf Borzik (Web site www.pinabausch.de)

Mirror as a material for reflection, if used in relation to motion offers constantly changing images. It provides views that cannot be painted. It has a different texture than any other materials. Its smoothness and shininess define its unique character. There may be unintended reflections if the material is not used consciously. Its psychological effect on the performer is another fact that changes the use of mirror on the stage. Using real mirror may affect the mental state of the performer during the performance, so it is mostly avoided.

The other material property is transparency. Transparent surfaces are used either for the simultaneous perception of different images or shifting perception. As another way to create depth, transparent surfaces act as screens that hide and reveal a scene. Expectation of seeing what is behind the screen sets a tension for the audience. The material, which is known as ‘gauze’, is mostly used in theatre to achieve transparency. Transparency of gauze changes by lighting from different angles. It becomes transparent

when lit from the back and becomes a semi-transparent or opaque surface when lit from the front.

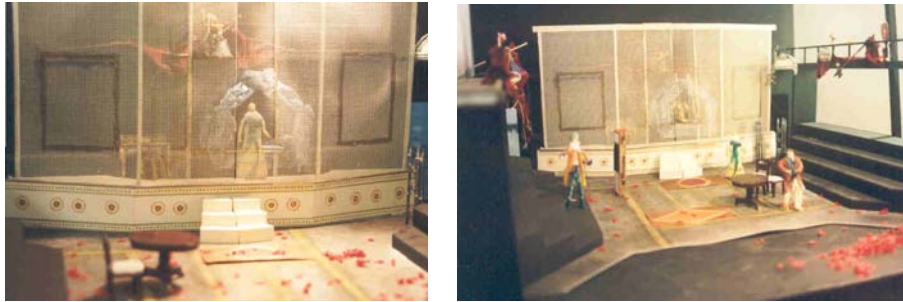


Fig 37. Use of Gauze in Theatre, A Work Model of The Country Wife, made by M. Kokkodialis, S. Temizer (Photograph taken by S. Temizer)

In the dance theatre performance *Körper*, by Sacha Walz with Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, in Berlin (2003), transparent surfaces are used to change the setting by using different light effects. These effects allow an opaque surface to transform into another space. That space is a box, of which one side is covered with a transparent wall. When lit from backwards, the opaque surface reveals the inside, displaying the dancers in the box. Dancers at the back are separated from the audience by a transparent wall.



Fig 38. “*Körper*” by Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz, Staged at 13th International Theatre Festival in İstanbul (2003) (İstanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts archive)

A transparent stage-set operates like a screen, when images are projected on it. Projections are used for juxtaposing images and to make use of the effects of transparency. Reflected on transparent surfaces and used on the background, the images transform the stage space.



Fig 39. “*Trap*” by Josef Svoboda (Web site www.laterna.cz)

APPENDIX B - Temporality-Transformability

The ephemeral nature of stage space contrasts with architectural space that is produced for permanency. The spatial relationship in a performance only exists in a certain period of time. The relationships are fluid and constantly altering. Just like the transformability of the physical quality of the objects, their meanings are also changeable.

A performance is a construction in space and time. Temporal experience of a performance doesn't necessarily require the transformation of the stage set and it may remain the same throughout the performance. However, temporarily changing an empty space requires transformability, which leads to a change in the conception of performance space. Notion of transformation and changeability is used in its construction.

The notion of temporality also requires transformability. Transformability in performance space has different meanings. The notion can be related to the changes in the stage space and stage-set. It can also be related to the changeable structure of performance space that achieves different meanings for each different performance since all performances require different physical relationships between the audience and the performance space. As stated before, changing visual effects and light also changes the stage space.

In order to change the scene in a theatrical performance, Osman Şengezer, stage designer and the author of *Bence Dekor ve Kostüm*, identifies five techniques. He states that scene changes can be made through “black-out” or closing curtains; by the help of a moveable platform; by pulling the back-curtains up or by turning the two (or more)-sided panels and furniture.¹⁶⁹

To make these changes, the stage would better be a more “flexible space”. A performance space, which is appropriate for any transformation, provides different forms of staging. This idea is also strongly related with the relations of performers and audience and interactivity of the presentation. The artificial distinction between the “real” world and the “illusory” space on the stage dissolves in a “flexible space”.¹⁷⁰ Robert Cheesmond (Hull University, UK) claims that this is central to the thinking behind the “flexible studio theatres, which appeared throughout the world from the mid-1960’s on”. For him, contemporary stages should allow these changes electronically, like the Schaubühne in Berlin, in which almost “any conceivable configuration or resizing of the space” may be achieved through an electronic system.¹⁷¹

In search of the flexibility in a performance space, directors such as Peter Brook and Ariane Mnouchkine used abandoned or decaying former factories and similar buildings out of use. Peter Brook, European film

¹⁶⁹ A “black-out” is referred to turning off all the lights in the performance space.

¹⁷⁰ Suggested by Bertold Brecht

¹⁷¹ Robert Cheesmond, Scenography International,
<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/research/scenography>

director, in the book *The Empty Space* defines the performance space as: “I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged”.¹⁷² The stage set he proposes provides changes with simple elements. Dennis Sharp states that in the production *Mahabaratha*, Brook demonstrates his approach: “ a fire was used to depict an outside scene only to be changed, and transformed a moment later by the production of a carpet to give the feeling of a room”.¹⁷³ For Ariane Mnouchkine an empty space is not enough, but it must be inspiring as well.¹⁷⁴ In the essay, *An Empty Space that Provides Inspiration*, she asks questions about the ideal theatrical space and discusses what an inspiring space is, in relation to a theatre, Cartoucherie de Vincennes, which was a former factory. For her, this should be a space that can be “filled with images” to be “theatrical and inspiring”. The essential quality in a performance space for her is not a mere décor but a unique stage that can be transformed by the imaginations of actors and audience”.¹⁷⁵

The notion of transformability is related with the relationship between actors and audience. These relationships have been studied through the works of architects such as Walter Gropius’ *Totaltheater Project*, which is defined as an idealization of transformability of performance space.¹⁷⁶ With

¹⁷² A well known quotation from his book *The Empty Space*, p.

¹⁷³ Dennis Sharp, *Theatre Spaces and Performances*, Architectural Review, No:1108, p.32

¹⁷⁴ Ariane Mnouchkine, opcit., p. 16

¹⁷⁵ ibid., p.17

¹⁷⁶ see Appendix A.

this project, Gropius looks for the flexibility of the stage in order to get all the necessary or desirable changes for staging.

Architects, in search for the possibilities of transformability, found solutions with the mechanization of the performance space. The idea of transformability is limited with the physical quality of materials. Robert Kronenburg, in his book *Houses in Motion* evaluates the idea of temporary building systems, in relation to the materials used.¹⁷⁷ In the book, investigating several fields that enrich the notion of temporality in architecture, such as theatre buildings, he discusses the “architectural forms” that have “ephemeral nature”.¹⁷⁸ He discusses how this notion had been considered in the history of theatre architecture. He states that “the Greeks built special auditoria for performance, which are generally set in natural amphitheatres”. Their “stylized plays” required “demountable props or sets”. According to him, being independent from the geographical location, the Roman amphitheatre created its own architectural type. Until the permanent theatre buildings had been established in Europe, plays had been acted in “demountable theatres that were set up in the town market place”.¹⁷⁹ Theatre buildings had been temporary structures before Renaissance. As the building is conceived as a “permanent” structure, the conception of stage-set also changed. Kronenburg draws attention to this issue, which he thinks is “paradoxical”. For him, while stage establishes

¹⁷⁷ Robert Kronenburg is an architect and senior lecturer at the Centre for Architecture, Liverpool John Moores University (UK) and is principal investigator in the Portable Buildings Research Unit there.

¹⁷⁸ Robert Kronenburg, *Houses in Motion*, Academy Editions, London, 1995, p.7

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p.35

temporality, stage sets of that time have been used to establish an illusory permanency on stage.¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p.36

APPENDIX C - Representation on Stage

The notion of representation is by definition subjective, since it requires interpretation. 'Re'presenting any idea, or a concept in a medium, embraces the possibilities of the way of expression in that medium.

Julian Bell, author of the book "*What is Painting?*" identifies three levels of representation: pictorial, symbolic and systematic. This division is also applicable to the representation on the stage. Architecture is represented on the stage in these levels. Representation of architectural space gives clues about its conception. It is both a way of seeing and a medium that enriches visual experience.

On stage, objects can be used as themselves or they can substitute something else. Either used as themselves or as a code, they are still representations. They are parts of a constructed "reality", which is a (re)presentation itself.

Pictorial representation on the stage can be evaluated as an analogous reconstruction or better to say imitation. Spaces are (re)constructed, preserving the visual properties and mostly, using different materials. The (re)construction acts as if it is there temporarily.

Symbolic representation, which is defined by Bell as "based on a consensus of meanings", can be possible by visualizing the significant

characteristics of a location.¹⁸¹ It can also be possible through the objects that belong to a certain place -for instance an executive desk and a chair can represent an office-. An object on the stage can be used as a symbol whose meaning constantly changes. It may define different spaces each time its meaning changes. Director, Ariane Mnouchkine explains the use of an object in changing meaning:

You lay a carpet on the floor and an actor walks in. Although he is surrounded by a grim, intimidating suburban theatre, the carpet becomes his universe. It is a clearly defined and crossable frontier but it allows both actor and spectator to stand apart and create a changing world; the same actor, on the same carpet, will act at being at sea, in the mountains, or on horseback.¹⁸²

It was also a part of the language used by Kabuki Theatre. A bare platform on the stage could represent “the inside of the house, a palace or a battle-camp” and the area around it “a garden, surrounding a house” or “a lake surrounding an island”.¹⁸³

Materialization of the concepts of a performance, through elements such as light, can also be evaluated as symbolic representation. Visualizing the atmosphere, like in Appia’s stage sets can be an example of this type of representation. The space on the stage becomes an indefinite location, not pre-defined but only the ‘locus in quo’.

Finally, systematic representation is defined by Bell, as a “broader sense of representation: as a system within which certain things stand for

¹⁸¹ Julian Bell, *What is Painting?*, Thames and Hudson, New York, 1999, p.210

¹⁸² Gaelle Breton, *opcit.*, p.16

¹⁸³ James R. Evans, *opcit.*, p.55

other things". Since it has its own language, theatre can be seen as a "total system of representation".¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁴ Julian Bell, *opcit.*, p.213

APPENDIX D - Site-Specific Performance

It can be said that the main difference between an architectural space and a stage space is that the notion of 'space' is the main issue of the former and the tool of the narrative of the latter. However, space can be the main issue in a performance, as it is in the site-specific performances designed for specific locations.¹⁸⁵

Site-specific art is an experimental art form that is specifically designed for a certain "place". Nick Kaye, Professor and Chair in drama at the University of Manchester, in his book *Site-Specific Art*, relates the work of art, to the "place in which its meanings are defined". He claims that, "a site-specific work might articulate and define itself through properties, qualities or meanings produced in specific relationships between an 'object' or 'event' and a position it occupies".¹⁸⁶ Reading from Michel de Certeau in the *Practice of Everyday Life*, (1984), he makes the distinction of "place" and "space". He states that "space is produced by the practice of a particular place". In this sense, a "space" can be defined through "activities". He evaluates the notion of site-specificity in relation to minimalist works that are presented in the "gallery space". Giving reference to Douglas Crimp and Michael Fried, he asserts that "site-specificity is linked to the incursion of

¹⁸⁵ The term "site-specific performance" is referred to a staged event performed in an existing location. It uses the architectural quality of the location, which can also be used to create a meta-language.

¹⁸⁶ Nick Kaye, *Site-specific Art*, Routledge Press, London, 2000, p.1

‘surrounding’ space, ‘literal’ space or ‘real’ space into the viewer’s experience of the artwork”.¹⁸⁷ He discusses site-specificity of a gallery –that signifies “emptiness”- in comparison to a work in an urban space that “offers a profusion and complexity of signs and spaces”.¹⁸⁸

In this perspective, Kaye discusses works by a Polish artist Krzysztof Wodiczko (Professor at Massachusetts Institute of Technology), who makes large-scale slide and video projections on architectural facades and monuments. He states that, in an intention to “reveal the languages of power and authority operating within the cityscape”,



Fig 40. Two projections by Krzysztof Wodiczko (Web sites http://www.roland-collection.com/rolandcollection/section/29/fr_666.htm, www.mcasd.org)

Wodiczko projects images of the body on the buildings or monuments. Kaye claims that “Wodiczko’s projections challenge the distinction between

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p.25

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p.33

the 'built monument' and the 'projected image' by resolving the cityscape into a play of representations".¹⁸⁹

Transforming the cityscape to a stage through temporal structures or like in the works of Wodiczko, by images and projections, provide a different experience of a space within its significance. Performance artists have been making experiments about experiencing a pre-defined location. Thomas Ruller, Czechoslovakian architect, sculptor and performance artist, defines his site-specific works as an integration of architecture and theatre. In his site-specific performances, he states that he works on "the essence" of the site, exploring it "in a specific moment, by action".¹⁹⁰ Architecture and the environment become his "stage" of performance. With their "psychological and ethical qualities", these spaces are interpreted by him as the "fields of energy, which have history".¹⁹¹ Revealing these qualities, he re-interprets a site not only with its "physical quality" but also with its "mental, political and social qualities".¹⁹²

Another approach to a re-reading of a space is exhibited by artists Christo and Jeanne Claude, with their The Wrapped Reichstag Project. (Realized in 1995) The project is both an installation, a public spectacle and a staged event. As a part of this event, the Reichstag Building in Berlin remains wrapped 14 days, and gives a chance to re-think about the

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p.34

¹⁹⁰ From the interview with the artist by Nicola Hodges in *Adprofile: Performance Art*, p.61

¹⁹¹ *ibid.*, p.61

¹⁹² *ibid.*, p.61

environment that is thought to be ‘known’ in advance and provide different readings of the building.¹⁹³

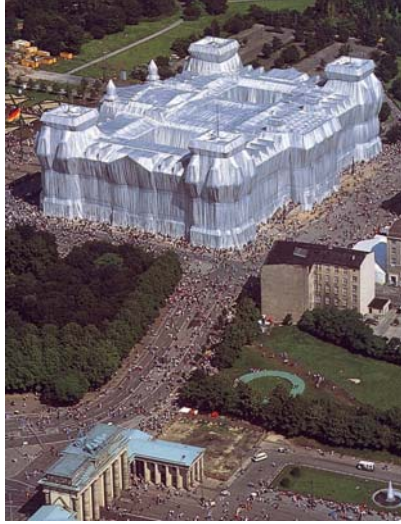


Fig 41. “*Wrapped Reichstag Project*” by Christo and Jeanne Claude (1965-1995) (Christo-Jeanne Claude, *Wrapped Reichstag*, p. 12)

Giving a distance to what is already known it offers a possibility to experience the existing building by hiding therefore revealing its connotations. Christo claims that this project with its ephemeral character is also a challenge to what is “established, solid, static and immortal”.¹⁹⁴

The examples given above are related with the notion of “spectacle”. Wodiczko doesn’t deal with the spatial characteristics, rather with the connotations of an architectural “site”. His projections transform these sites

¹⁹³ A study about this project is written by the author as term paper for the course *Politics and Space* which is given by Assist. Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargin, at METU Faculty of Architecture in 2001-2002 Fall Cimestre

¹⁹⁴ Mantegna, G., *Interview with Christo-Jeanne Claude*, 1999, from a term paper on this project

into screens. Christo and Jeanne Claude deal with a building as a sculpture, however the space is also visually experienced.

There are also other ways to re-read spatial qualities of an architectural space in a site-specific performance. Performances that contemplate on the elements or parts of an architectural space such as window or vertical and horizontal surfaces can be considered for a re-reading of an architectural “site”.

A work on a given location may refer to the issues of architectural discussions, such as transparency. Transparent elements of the stage space were said to act like a screen. In a rehearsal, the facade of the building of contemporary dance school, The Place, was used questioning interior-exterior relationships and relation of the spaces within the building.



**Fig 42. A Rehearsal at The Place, Facade of the Building Acting Like a Screen
(Dance Umbrella 2002, London's 24th International Dance Festival
booklet)**

Site-specific performances, exhibit different relations with the environment. The environment acquires different meanings, affecting the way the viewers perceive or inhabit it.

A staged event can define a pattern to read an existing architectural space. An experimental performance, which transforms a public space, is a way of defining the possibilities that a space offers. Transforming the public space into a stage changes the perception and gives the possibility of another way of experiencing the space that has already been there, that is not constructed temporarily for the performance. The work can be seen as a tool for re-reading the quality of the space, exploring its limits, displaying another way of understanding.

Reading the quality of the experience through a site-specific performance contributes to the awareness in architectural space. In a site-specific dance performance, the relations of body and space are questioned. This is an experimentation of different experiences offered by the architectural space. Being a re-reading of an environment, the staged event leads to an architectural awareness, that in turn effects the way that space is used. This way of thinking has the potential to change the organization of spaces, effecting design processes.

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