

THE ART OF SCENOGRAPHY // International Conference

LMU Munich [Conference Venue: Academy of Fine Arts Munich], 17./18.11.2016 – Abstracts

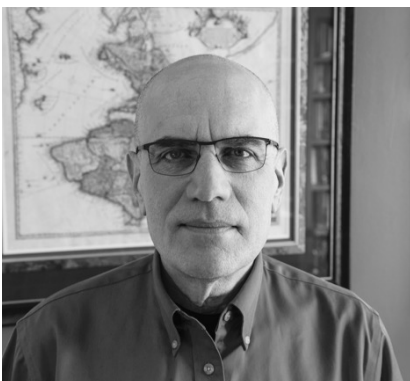
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ARNOLD ARONSON [*Theatre Historian and Professor of Theatre at Columbia University, New York, USA*]

»This Must Be the Place« [Opening Speech/Keynote 1]

In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, the characters Gogo and Didi look about the stage and debate whether or not they are in the correct place. To bolster their assumptions they perform, in essence, a semiotic reading of the scenography. But they remain uncertain. The signs are ambiguous; there is insufficient information. They cannot even agree if they are looking at a tree, a bush, or a shrub (perhaps provoking the spectators as well to ponder the differences among such flora).

In a sense, this is what we do every time we go to the theatre. How do we understand the space of the stage? We recognize a room, a forest, a palace, and so on whether it is created with painstaking illusionism, fragmentary scenic elements, or the abstraction of a so-called ›empty space.‹ But something more fundamental is occurring. We are, of course, translating scenographic signs, but theatrical reception requires multiple levels of translation. We must first of all recognize that we are seeing theatre—that we are seeing a presentation of signs, not merely the objects signified. This requires what might be called an architectural translation. From our position as spectators, we observe another part of the space we share with the performers. Through a series of conventions, ranging from the architectural formality of a proscenium arch to street performers or mummers clearing a space amidst a group of spectators, a segment of the topography becomes separated from the rest, and everything within that space, through the act of framing, is henceforward transformed. One segment of the space—the auditorium or its equivalent—contains essentially uncoded elements of the quotidian world: chairs, walls, other spectators, while another—the stage or performance area—is filled with a Baudelairean ›forest of symbols.‹ (The auditorium, of course, may possess aesthetic decoration and elements of social hierarchy, but they are understood as functional within the experiential world of the spectator.) But within a theatrical context, these symbols, these signs, are multifaceted and often unstable; the component elements can disassociate, separate. Ludwig Klage has suggested that images exist independent of the things they represent and this holds true for stage images as well. Furthermore, the images on the stage possess multiple qualities. When we see a character in a red dress, for example, what has greater significance—that the performer is wearing a dress or that it is red? On the stage, elements normally considered secondary properties may assume primary status. And as the performer moves, as the light changes, how are we able to maintain a continuity of understanding? Gogo and Didi are confronted with an ontological dilemma. In order to know if they are in the proper location, they must determine if the tree they encounter is *the* tree or merely *a* tree (and, in fact, whether it is a tree at all). As spectators, we must, through acts of visual and aural interpretation, determine that we are, first and foremost, in a theatrical space, and then how to read the complex and changing signs with which are confronted.



ARNOLD ARONSON is Professor of Theatre at Columbia University in New York City. He writes on scenography as well as modern and contemporary theatre. Books include *Ming Cho Lee: A Life in Design* (2014); *The Disappearing Stage* (2012); *Looking into the Abyss: Essays on Scenography* (2005); *American Avant-Garde Theatre: A History* (2001); *The History and Theory of Environmental Scenography* (1981), and others. He is editor of the forthcoming *Routledge Companion to Scenography*. His essays, articles, and reviews have appeared in books, encyclopedias, and numerous publications including *The Drama Review*, *Performance Research*, *New Theatre Quarterly*, *Theatre Research International*, the *New York Times* and the *New York Times Book Review*, *The Cambridge History of American*

Theatre, *The Cambridge Guide to World Theatre*, and *The Cambridge Companion to Chekhov*. Currently, he is co-editor of the journal *Theatre and Performance Design*. He has a long history with the Prague Quadrennial, the international exhibition of theatre and performance design and architecture, serving as president of the Jury in 1991 and 1999, curator of the U.S. exhibit in 1995, and general commissioner in 2007.

<http://arts.columbia.edu/theatre-arts/>

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JOSLIN MCKINNEY [*Associate Professor in Scenography at the School of Performance and Cultural Industries, University of Leeds, UK*]

»Scenographic Materiality«

I am interested in how scenography works in and as performance. That is to say, I am thinking from the perspective of scenography as a temporal and experiential event rather than a static image and of scenography as something that manifests itself fully at the moment when an individual spectator senses it working. Implied within this perspective is the idea that scenography is not only a set of visual ideas but also a sensory experience; we feel scenography as much as we read or interpret it.

The embodied sense of ›kinaesthetic empathy‹ (Reynolds and Reason 2012) we experience when we watch human performers can also occur in relation to non-human elements. Watching the movement of a fabric, sensing its weight and texture or registering the gradual fading of a light calls on our embodied knowledge of the material world and shapes our visceral and affective experience of performance. Considering scenography in this way emphasises a process of formation, or scenography as agentic matter coming together in a meshwork of ›material flows‹ (Ingold 2013). And this challenges ways we have traditionally thought about theatre materials as mere ›props‹ and as inert until they are used by actors.

The scenography of Katrin Brack is a particularly striking and pure instance of the materiality of scenography and its operation as a temporal event. In this presentation I will use examples of her work to develop the idea of scenographic materiality and to reflect on what this means for the way we think about creative agency in the processes of scenography. In particular, I will address how traditional conceptions of the roles of designer, the spectator and the scenography itself reconfigured by a focus on scenographic materialism.



JOSLIN MCKINNEY is an Associate Professor in Scenography at the University of Leeds, UK. She leads the Performance Design MA Programme and researches into the materiality and agency of scenography in the theatre and beyond. She completed a practice-led PhD in to the communication of scenography in 2008, and she is the lead author of the *Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* (2009). She has published articles and chapters on scenographic research methods, scenographic spectacle and embodied spectatorship, phenomenology, kinaesthetic empathy and material agency. In 2015 she was chair of the international jury for the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space (PQ). With Scott Palmer, she is the co-editor of a forthcoming (2017) edited collection *Scenography Expanded: an introduction to contemporary performance design*.

<http://www.pci.leeds.ac.uk/>

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KLAUS GRUENBERG [*Stage Designer, Hamburg, D*] and **DAVID ROESNER** [*Professor for Theatre and Music-Theatre at the LMU Munich, D*]

»Composing Scenography. Reflexion on the Theories, Practices and Processes of Klaus Gruenberg's Collaborations with Heiner Goebbels and others«

In this joint presentation/conversation we will interrogate the relationship of scenography with processes of musical composition and/or musically informed directing. We will attempt to integrate the theoretical development and exploration of concepts of intermedial composition and a musicality dispositive in theatre with specific case studies from the variety of collaborations of Klaus Gruenberg. Most notably in this context are the projects with Heiner Goebbels (e.g. *Max Black*, *Eraritjaritjaka*, *Stifters Dinge*, *Europeras*), but these may also be put into further perspective by comparing them to his work with other directors and in opera. - Aspects and questions we will seek to explore are: what relationships can musical and scenographic composition enter? How is a notion of ›musicality‹ articulated in the scenography for specific projects and collaborations? Which role do intentional dramaturgical structures play in comparison to chance and emergence? What is the relationship between performers, physical objects, visual media/light and the sonic environment? How does the scenographic work engage with questions of presence and absence, sound and vision, meaning and its negation?

While Roesner will look at these questions predominantly from an audience's point of view, looking at ways to analyse exemplary productions as performances, Gruenberg will seek to retrace his design process and how he arrived at various scenographic solutions in a confluence of thematic, compositional, spatial and pragmatic considerations and conditions.



KLAUS GRUENBERG studied stage design with Erich Wonder in Vienna and has since worked as a stage designer and lighting designer at theatres and opera houses across Europe as well as Kuwait and Buenos Aires, with directors such as Barrie Kosky, Sebastian Baumgarten, André Wilms, Christof Nel and Heiner Goebbels. Together with Tatjana Gürbaca he developed Strawinskys *Mavra* on the back of a truck (Berliner Staatsoper), followed by various productions at Vlaamse Opera, Theater productions at Vlaamse Opera, Theater Bremen, the Deutsche Oper am Rhein and Opernhaus Zürich. Also, he designed

stage and lighting for Barrie Kosky's production such as *Kiss me*, *Kate* and *Rusalka* at the Komische Oper Berlin, *Tristan und Isolde* at the Aalto Theater Essen and *Der Kaufmann von Venedig* at the Schauspiel Frankfurt. Klaus Gruenberg regularly works with the composer and director Heiner Goebbels on music-theatre productions which include *Max Black*, *I went to the house but did not enter*, *Eraritjaritjaka*, *Stifters Dinge* and, as part of Goebbels' artistic direction of the Ruhrtriennale 2012–2014, John Cage's *Europeras 1 & 2*, Harry Partch's *Delusion of the Fury* and Louis Andriessens *De Materie*. In 1999, he opened the MOMOLMA (museum of more or less modern art) in Hamburg. www.klausgruenberg.de



DAVID ROESNER is Professor for Theatre and Music-Theatre at the LMU Munich. He previously worked at the Universities of Hildesheim, Exeter and Kent. In 2003 he published his first monograph on *Theatre as Music* and later won the Thurnau Award for Music-Theatre Studies for his article »The politics of the polyphony of performance« in 2007. Recent publications include *Composed Theatre. Aesthetics, Practices, Processes* (with Matthias Rebstock, 2012) and *Musicality in Theatre. Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making* (2014). <http://mhn.academia.edu/DavidRoesner>

THOMAS IRMER [*Theatre Theorist and Critic; Author of TV documentaries/ German and international, Berlin, D*]

»Theater Space after the »Spatial Turn«: Moving Dynamics of the Active Spectator«

New concepts to organize theatre space have been around since the millennium. They often focus upon the relation between the performance spectator and the performance in a given space of a more or less conventional theater building that has been rearranged, refurbished or otherwise remodelled and redesigned.

I discuss three examples that have been seen as groundbreaking in this regard. First, Bert Neumann's »Neustadt« and the multifunctional arrangement in the interior of Volksbühne in Berlin that he designed for the present season, as an example for total space with various positions of performance and the audience.

Second, Sven Sören Beyer's staging of Morton Feldman's Beckett opera *Neither* as an example of technologically advanced musical theatre for a »floating« audience in a performance rotunda, that was developed by the renowned sound engineering collective phase 7.

Third, Yana Ross's production of Franz Xaver Kroetz's *Wunschkonzert* (first in Cracow and then shown at Wiener Festwochen this year) as a staging between installation and performance with a special role for the »floating« audience – designed by Lithuanian artist Simona Bieksaite: An example how the spatial organization opens up for the completely new approach of a contemporary classic.

One could argue with these examples for the spatially activated, three-dimensional experience of the audience in theatre as one of the developments that prefigure the ever more dynamic use of space beyond the regular stage conventions up to date.



THOMAS IRMER is a theatre theorist and critic for *Theater Heute*, *Theater der Zeit* and author of TV documentaries on contemporary theatre/German and international. Thomas Irmmer graduated from Leipzig University, Ph.D. on postmodern American fiction. Fulbright grant at SUNY Buffalo 1990/91. He has taught from 1988-96 at Leipzig University and from 2003 to 2012 at the John F. Kennedy Institute, FU Berlin. 2012 guest professor at Theater Dept. Colgate University, New York. 1998-2003 editor-in-chief of *Theater der Zeit*, 2003-06

dramaturg of Spielzeit Europa/Berliner Festspiele. Recent books include *Andrzej T. Wirth – gesprochene Autobiographie mit Materialien* (2013, Polish ed. 2014) and *Castorf* (2016).

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WOLF-DIETER ERNST [*Professor of Theatre at the University of Bayreuth, D*]

»Narrating an unsettled Past. Intermedial Scenography, Dramaturgy, and musical Persona in Berlin's *Jerusalem* [*Holocene* # 1.2]«

This lecture suggests looking at intermedial scenography and musical persona in its dramaturgical function. It starts by discussing the modalities of the intermedial-performance *Jerusalem* [*Holocene* # 1.2]. The performance by the Antwerpen-based group »Berlin« is an interesting crossover project mixing a staged concert with a group of live musicians filling the scene with a three screen video installation. Its topic is the unsettled conflict between Israel and Palestine. In a cinematic style, the group presents footage from their 2003 production *Jerusalem* [*Holocene* # 1]. A narration unfolds, which seems to tell the beholder about the different experiences of a political conflict, which is fuelled by fundamentalist thinking. The audience witnesses, how the protagonists of the 2003 version, some ten years later, seem to be even more entangled in their harmful (hi)stories, which unfold on the split screens. Gradually,

this narration of *Jerusalem [Holocene # 1.2]* refers to an obviously unsettled past and this is, where the intermedial scenography and the musical persona enter the scene. I will read this performance as an actor-network of documented entities, scenography and musical persona.



WOLF-DIETER ERNST is Professor of Theatre at the University of Bayreuth. He has published widely on postdramatic theatre, performance and media art. He is review editor of the journal *Forum Modernes Theater*, and his books include *Der affektive Schauspieler. Die Energetik des postdramatischen Theaters* (2012), *Performing the Matrix – Mediating Cultural Performance* (with Meike Wagner, 2007), and *Performance der Schnittstelle. Theater unter Medienbedingungen* (2003). Wolf-Dieter Ernst has also contributed substantially to the development

of the IFTR Intermediality, Theatre & Performance research group and he is convenor (with Anja Klöck) of the Gesellschaft für Theaterwissenschaft working group on Actor's training. www.theaterwissenschaft-ernst.uni-bayreuth.de

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UWE R. BRUECKNER [*Creative Director and Co-Founder of Atelier Brueckner, Stuttgart, D; Professor for Scenography and Exhibition Design at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland, Basel, CH*]

»You cannot not stage. Scenography – beyond Theatre«

Scenography and stage-setting or scene-settings go back to theatre and the Greek concept of the ›skené‹. Since the 1960s, scenography migrated from theatre and conquered more and more other creative fields of (re-)presentation; this also includes the museum as an institution that is no longer only an archive of cultural heritage, but also a staged environment with synaesthetic qualities, that presents objects, tells stories and conveys experiences to the visitors.

The practices of theatre and museum share a lot of parallels and are very similar in the way things and stories are staged in a narrative, dramatized space. The transformation of design processes, principles and instruments of the theatre into the contemporary practice of developing exhibition concepts and installation designs is an integrative part of Atelier Brueckner's work and success since 20 years. This design philosophy is based on scenographic concepts and dramaturgies, and it is the logical response to the design requirements of our time and the continually changing way in which our society perceives the world. The contemporary museum and every kind of exhibition make use of scenography as a universal, synchron-disciplinary, integrative and holistic design discipline in order to create content-generated spatial settings. The principle activity of scenography is the translation of a particular content into a three-dimensional, narrative space. In order to do so, scenography utilises a multi-faceted set of scene-setting instruments of genres like theatre, opera and film, but also of different creative disciplines, such as architecture and interior design, graphic, light, sound and media design, installation art, performing and fine arts. Traditional borders between the different disciplines are transforming and reforming.

At the conference, Uwe R. Brueckner will give insights into his design philosophy. Accordingly, his understanding of modern scenography is based on five parameters: ›content‹ (story-telling), ›object‹ (subject), ›space‹ (architecture), ›recipient‹ (addressee), ›routing and parcours‹ (spatial choreography and choreographed order of perception). These parameters stand in a field of suspense and interact with one another in a reciprocal relationship; finally they are orchestrated to a holistic, integrative design. But how to achieve this? Here again, the design process shows a striking resemblance between theatre and exhibition: they use similar concept tools, like partituras (scores), storyboards, models and sketches. Uwe R. Brueckner will introduce scenography mainly from the perspective of spatial design as a ›Gesamtkunstwerk‹ and will aim to reveal the extensive relation to theatre while answering questions like: Which scenographic instruments are transformed and used in exhibition design? How

are they applied? And with which impact on the recipient?

Scenography beyond the theatre conquered museums and other cultural venues and became a diversly discussed phrase for a dynamic, narrativ spatial design staging objects, stories and protagonists in an thematically consistent, physically accessible setting. The pure visibility (of traditional ›stage design‹) becomes accessibility, and visual perception becomes exploration. In this regard, curating is always an act of staging, and staging is an act of curating. Choose an ordinary rice corn, place it in a showcase, light it smartly and let it tell the recipient that this one was recovered from Mao's table: this is a statement, an act of staging. Therefore, »you cannot not stage«. – Since its foundation in 1997, Atelier Brueckner realised more than 120 international projects. At the conference, Uwe R. Brueckner will present some selected projects playing in the greyzone of different design formats. As the presentation will show, scenography today has not only become an art form that operates highly interdisciplinary, but also interculturally in many contexts.



UWE R. BRUECKNER studied architecture at the Technical University Munich. After working for several years as a classical architect, he studied stage design at the Stuttgart State Academy of Art and Design with Prof. Jürgen Rose. Together with Shirin Frangoul-Brueckner he founded Atelier Brueckner GmbH in 1997. In addition to his work in the Atelier, Uwe R. Brueckner is an active Professor, teaching in the area of scenography at the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland (FHNW). On both the national and international level, Uwe R. Brueckner

is highly esteemed as an opinion leader in the area of exhibition design and planning. He is regarded as an eminent authority and expert on the development of narrative spatial concepts. On the basis of his philosophy of design encapsulated in the phrase »form follows content«, he has created more than 100 exhibition sets and experiential environments for museums as well as corporate brands. www.atelier-brueckner.de/en

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THEA BREJZEK [*Professor for Spatial Theory at the University of Technology Sydney, AU*]

»Cosmopoiesis, or: Making Worlds through the Model«

[Evening Lecture/Keynote 2]

This presentation builds on my current book project *The Model as Performance: Staging Space in Theatre and Architecture* (Methuen Bloomsbury London, 2017), co-authored with Lawrence Wallen, that is concerned with the history and development of the scale model in theatre and architecture from the Italian Renaissance to the present. In this research, we introduce a new typology of the scale model and argue that the model is a knowledge-producing tool with the capacity to stage space and enable performance.

In the most general understanding, the model is always both idea and object and it is seen to be the physical, virtual or theoretical representation of an object, behaviour, or a set of relations. Model theory, as a subdiscipline of mathematical logics has developed several useful frameworks to explain the functions and attributes of models in a way that theorizes not only mathematical models, but can be extended towards stage set and architectural models. According to Stachowiak (1973), the model is characterized foremost by an intended reduction in complexity and a focus on specific elements and attributes to be visualised and interrogated to gain cognition in respect to distinct phenomena. Any model, be it a theoretical mathematical model or a physical stage set or architectural model, comes into being through complex processes of modelling which are marked by corrections and optimizations, and by the inclusion and rejection of considerations and ideas. The model thus has a dual epistemic function in the production of knowledge through distinct processes of modelling, and in the communication of knowledge through its final form. Additionally, models, in a provocative proposition

by Wartofsky (1979), are purposeful ›modes of action‹ and ›experimental probes‹ that require to be ›performed‹ rather than just devised (148). Models construct their own reality and in this, they are valid instruments of what Nelson Goodman has called ›world-making‹ (1978), a term that points to the desire to imagine, to design, to construct and to apprehend a world through the reductive, surrogate and performative properties of the model. This presentation thus articulates what the model does rather than what it is.



THEA BREJZEK is Professor for Spatial Theory at the University of Technology Sydney, and director of the Interior and Spatial Design Program at the School of Design at UTS. She has a background in opera stage directing and theatre studies; 2007-2012 she was a Professor at Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK), and the Director of the practice-informed PhD program Scenography in a collaboration between Zurich and the University of Vienna. In her research, she publishes and lectures widely on the history and theory of scenography and performative environments with a particular interest in transdisciplinary practices and the politics of space in performance. In 2011, Thea Brejzek was the founding curator for Theory at the Prague Quadrennial for Performance Design and Space

(PQ). Since 2014, she is member of the scientific advisory board of the Bauhaus Dessau and associate editor of *Theatre and Performance Design*. Publications in 2017 include the monograph *The Model as Performance. Staging Space in Theatre and Architecture* (with L. Wallen), the essay »Scenery«, in *The Routledge Companion to Scenography* and the book chapter »Between Symbolic Representation and New Critical Realism: Architecture as Scenography and Scenography as Architecture«, in *Expanded Scenography* (ed. J. McKinney and S. Palmer). www.utsinteriorspatialdesign.com

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DIETER MERSCH [*Professor for Philosophical Aesthetic at the Zurich University of the Arts, CH*]

»The Ungovernability of the Scene« [Keynote 3]

Scenography means literally the drawing, staging, fixing and notation or collocation of places. Originally the scene addresses the stage (or at least a part of it), whereas today the notion encompasses the entire drama or a sequence of actions and their conditions. However a construction of places is needed in order to perform them sound and to make the drama possible. This implies a tension, which inscribes into the scene and its scenery the possibility of frictions, dissonances and contradictions. They finally disclose the scene as ineffable and unrulable. The concern of the presentation aims at a close elaboration of its instability – the opposition between the production of the scene and the performative event. However it is exactly this opposition and its depth, which in turn induces the epistemic power of the scenic.



DIETER MERSCH is Professor for Philosophical Aesthetic at the Zurich University of the Arts (ZHdK). Study of mathematics and philosophy at the Universities of Cologne and Bochum. Dissertation and habilitation at Technical University Darmstadt in Philosophy. 2004-13 Full Professor for Media Theory and Director of the Department for »Media and Arts« at the University of Potsdam. Since 2013 director of the Institute for Critical Theory at Zurich University of the Arts Switzerland. Main publications: *Was sich zeigt. Materialität, Präsenz, Ereignis* (2002), *Ereignis und Aura. Untersuchungen zur einer Ästhetik des Performativen* (2002), *Medientheorien zur Einführung* (2006), *Posthermeneutik* (2010), *Epistemologies of Aesthetics* (2015).

<https://www.zhdk.ch/ith>

SUSANNE HAUSER [*Professor for Art History and Cultural Studies, Director of the Institute of History and Theory of Design at the University of the Arts Berlin, D*]

»Spaces in Process. Designs«

The relation between space and time is a central issue in 20th century architecture. Famous designs and debates deal with the flexibility and movability of architectural elements or even buildings; with fluid spaces and temporary structures; with nomadic equipment like tents; with concepts of use and activities of users and appropriators of built structures. The changing interpretations of space-time relations were not just a challenge for architecture but for any art traditionally dealing primarily with space. The concentration on temporal aspects of spaces implied new concepts and practices of spatial design, especially new reflections on media. Accordingly new strategies in design were developed. They supported processes instead of persistence, change instead of stability, flexibility instead of stasis, dynamic change instead of defined functions. The presentation deals with the process of re-designing design since the 1920s.



SUSANNE HAUSER is Professor for Art History and Cultural Studies and the Director of the Institute of History and Theory of Design at UdK | University of the Arts Berlin. She has written extensively about the relationship between cultural production and the city, on urban landscapes and architecture; recent publications include: *Architektur in transdisziplinärer Perspektive. Von Philosophie bis Tanz. Aktuelle Zugänge und Positionen* (ed. with Julia Weber, 2015); *Architekturwissen. Grundlagentexte aus den Kulturwissenschaften*, Vol. 1 and 2 (ed. with Christa Kamleithner and

Roland Meyer, 2011 and 2013); *Kulturtechnik Entwerfen. Praktiken, Konzepte und Medien in Architektur und Design Science* (ed. with Daniel Gethmann, 2009).

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ALEKSANDAR DENIĆ [*Stage Designer and Scenic Designer for theatre and film; Professor of Film, TV and Set Design at the Megatrend University in Belgrade, SRB*]

- Artist Talk and Presentation -



ALEKSANDAR DENIĆ studied film and set design at the applied arts faculty of the University of Arts in Belgrade. In 1987 he received his first professional engagement in film as production designer, and as a stage designer for the theatre in 1988. Since then he has worked on numerous theatre and film productions throughout the world, including Emir Kusturica's *Underground* (1995). He has received numerous awards for his theatre, film and architectural work (including the Golden Palm/Cannes Film Festival) and was nominated for an Emmy Award in 1996. Since 2010 he is a Professor for Film, TV and

Set Design at the Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Belgrade, and since 2011 he has been a member of Serbia's National Council for Culture. In 2012, he started to collaborate with the German theatre director Frank Castorf, productions include *The Lady of the Camellias* (Odéon-Théâtre, Paris), *Amerika* (Schauspielhaus Zurich), *The Duel* (Volksbühne Berlin), Wagner's *Ring* cycle (Bayreuther Festspiele), *Pastor Ephraim Magnus* (Deutsches Schauspielhaus Hamburg), *Baal* and *Die Abenteurer des guten Soldaten Švejk* at Munich's Residenztheater. Nomination for Best Designer at International Opera Awards 2014. In the same year, he was honoured by the German journals *Opernwelt* and *Theater heute* as »Stage Designer of the Year« and was awarded the German theatre prize DER FAUST. www.aleksandardenic.com

ULF OTTO [Dilthey-Fellow at Hildesheim University and Interimprofessor for Theatre Studies and Intermediality at LMU Munich, D]

»Scenes of Control: Making Stages work«

Not unlike society, theatre has always been a problem of control. Police as well as producers have been concerned with getting unruly bodies in line, onstage as well as offstage. In creating voices that transcend spaces and shaping behaviors that produce feelings, control has also been a productive force in the theatre. A scene might be therefore described as an outcome of techniques that control what can be seen and what not (and more importantly how it will be seen, heard, felt), scenography accordingly as the art of getting (aesthetic) things under control. Since the times of Inigo Jones und Ben Jonson this art has been dominated by a power struggle between poets and painters, and only by installing a third person with absolute (technological and ideological) power did modernism managed to reconcile this conflict: for a century the director ruled in the theatre like the engineer in the factory. Inspired by the recent dominance of cybernetic technologies in theatrical experiments and the common abolishment of a division between spaces to act and spaces to watch, the paper sets about sketching a genealogy of scenography as a problem of control.



ULF OTTO, Post-Doc and Dilthey-Fellow at Hildesheim University and Interim Professor for Theatre Studies and Intermediality at LMU Munich/Institute of Theatre Studies. Areas of research: interconnections of theater histories and the history of technology, gestures and genealogies of reenactments, theatricality of digital cultures, media performances in contemporary theatre; recent publications: *Theater als Zeitmaschine. Zur performativen Praxis des Reenactments* (ed. with Jens Roselt, 2012); *Internetauftritte. Eine Theatergeschichte der neuen Medien* (2013). The current research project (habilitation) deals with the electrification of theatre and the theatricality of electricity at the end of the 19th century.
<http://www.ulf-otto.de>

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BENJAMIN FOERSTER-BALDENIUS [Artist, Researcher, Performing Architect, raumlabor Berlin, D].

»don't be afraid of ... the art of parCITYpation«

There are many words for it and participation is between the worst: co-authorship, collaboration, co-operation, acting together, working collectively, coworking, direct democracy, open source, flat hierarchy, shared economy, community activity, teamwork, open ears, grassroots-bottom-up organisation, anarchy, swarm intelligence, consumer orientation, mediation, compromising... Some sound trendy others oldschool, some have associations to the 1970's and the hippies, others are more related to the squatters movement of the 90's and some are clearly here and now – you can easily imagine the words written with chalk in some cheesy type on a blackboard in one of the gentrified hipser quarters around the world or on the side of a small fast bmw. They all have a slightly different meaning as they all look at the phenomenon from slightly different angles, but – in the heart they have something in common: the search for a common ground.

If you look on this world of togetherness from the outside – say from the position of a solitary working author of books or artworks or architecture or scenography – all these political, moral, religious and economic motivations for participation must look like a nightmare: People standing barefooted in a circle and holding hands before they discuss what to do together, they can only leave if everyone truly feels he wants the same. But the plenum takes forever with no conclusion today, so everyone hops frustrated into his sunpowered electro city car to bury the unrest of his soul in the compost soil of his community garden. Still in the dream you scream »no I will never take part in this«. Wake up! It's a mistake!

Between all the good rational reasons to start a fruitful exchange of our cultural values, there is one that sticks out like a lighthouse: collaboration can be fun! It makes happy because it makes sense. It

just needs A) the right training, B) the right people and C) the right words.

A) If we spend six years at a university to learn how to strangle our own little minds to present a coherent and unique concept, we cannot imagine that by working together, by asking the right experts it is possible to be more experimental, faster, stronger, cheaper and more coherent with the results of our works than anyone else. And we cannot believe that loosing the authorship for a work can be extremely productive. B) The main obstacle is to find the right people to collaborate. Not during the education – here everyone still knows it's more fun to hang out and invent something together – it's after – out there in the real world that people do not believe anymore in the power of co-.... C) Participation describes a process of an author, who invites others into his process – this of course must fail. Collaboration means learning to communicate with a common language – drawing for example – without a hidden agenda. In my practice called raumlaborberlin we work in cities (and cities is everywhere), and we aim to make them better places. In doing so, we don't have to force ourselves to ask local experts, what is the most necessary pressing subject in their neighbourhood – we know they know it better. But we also know we are experts too. And that locals need us as we need them. So we collaborate. Collaboration is not our religion – it's not our way to make more and faster money – but maybe it is a moral act: We cannot solve all the problems in our cities alone, we cannot rely on politicians, governments and the free market – we need small, strong, innovative and altruistic communities, that take their share of responsibility. Collaboration is a matter of trust – no trust no city. But first of all it's our language, a language to learn. And as with every language - as soon as you speak it fluently – it's fun to use. *Parcitypate now!*



BENJAMIN FOERSTER-BALDENIUS, performing architect, Berlin. Benjamin Foerster-Baldenius studied architecture in Berlin (TU Berlin/HdK) and Copenhagen (Art Academy). In 1997 he founded the Institute of Applied building Arts, and has been working as a performing architect since 1998. In 1999 he became co-founder and member of raumlaborberlin, a working group for experimental architecture, art, planning and action. Projects include: *Der Berg*, Palast der Republik, Berlin 2005 (organised by Sophiensaele, HAU, raumlaborberlin and Club Real), *Die große Weltausstellung 2012* (by raumlaborberlin and HAU), *Hotel Shabbyshabby* (Festival »Theater der Welt«, Mannheim 2014), *Shabbyshabby apartments* (Münchner Kammerspiele, 2015), and many more.

www.raumlaborberlin.de

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LAURA GROENDAHL [*Theatre Researcher and Educator, and Adjunct Professor in Theatre Studies at the University of Helsinki, FIN*]

»How to be a Scenographer? Design Education as a Site for researching the Scenographic Practices and Discourses in Motion«

The theoretical comprehensions of scenography as well as the artistic agency and identity of the designer have radically changed along with the postdramatic shift and adaptation of new stage technologies. Yet, it is hard to scope this development in details, since the practicing designers have only seldom articulated their working methods apart from singular avant-garde productions. One site, where this has more or less systematically happened, is the scenography education, where the experienced designers transmit their artistic and vocational know-how to the new generations, who in turn contest and reform the established working methods. The practical and technical skills, which often make the skeletons of the scenography curricula, are connected to different aesthetic, epistemic and ideological beliefs, even if teachers and students would not be familiar with theoretical discourses. Therefore I suggest that modern scenography education can be seen as an initial forerunner of artistic

research in the sense that it has provided understanding and knowledge on art through making practical exercises and material experiments.

As an exemplary case, I will present some aspects of the recent history of Finnish scenography training, which has basically followed the international trends, albeit with a slight delay. The scenographer's professional agency and identity has moved from the artisan backdrop painting to the modernist design, and further to the participation in collective, unpredictable devising processes and performative events. I will focus on the last mentioned turn asking, how the students have learned to think of the stage space and its capacity to carry and produce meanings. How have these conceptions changed during the recent years, and how has their development been influenced by different factors? The discussions on practical working methods seem to raise at least following theoretical questions, which in my view are not restricted only to scenography but are related to larger cultural, philosophical and political standpoints: how do we interact with the spatial and material environment; what kind of a role do the technologies play in art; how is the aesthetic experience constituted; and how should the creative process be mastered?



LAURA GROENDAHL is a theatre researcher and educator, who has specialized on scenography, performance practices and, most recently, on documentary theatre. She holds the title of docent (adjunct professor) in theatre studies at Helsinki University; she has worked as a university lecturer and researcher at Tampere University, as a university lecturer at the University of Lapland and as a regularly visiting lecturer at the Finnish Theatre Academy. Before taking her doctoral degree in 2004 she worked for twenty years as a practicing stage and costume designer in various Finnish theatres, and in 2006-13 she acted as a fixed-termed Professor of Stage Design at the Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture. Laura Groendahl has published several international articles on scenography, among others:

»Stage Design at the Crossroad of Different Operational Cultures. Mapping the History of Finnish Scenography Education«, in *NTS (Nordic Theatre Studies)* Vol. 27. (2015); »From Candle Light to Contemporary Lighting Systems: How the Lighting Technologies Shape the Scenographic Practices«, in *NTS*, Vol. 26/2 (2014) and »Scenographic Borderlines: Reformulating the Practices of Scenic Design«, in *NTS*, Vol: 22 (2010).

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MODERATION [Paneldiscussion]:



SERGE VON ARX, architect and Professor of Scenography, is the artistic director of the scenography department of the Norwegian Theatre Academy (of the Østfold University College). In 1997 Serge von Arx received his degree in architecture at the ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology). In 1998 he began his long-term collaboration with Robert Wilson on more than 30 stage, exhibition, and installation design projects all over the world, and since 2003 he is a regular mentor and architectural consultant at the Watermill Center on Long Island, New York. In 2001 he opened his design studio in Berlin, and since 2006 he is a resident in Oslo. Serge von Arx is lecturing and implementing workshops at various international universi-

ties and other institutions and works internationally as a scenographer, designer and architect, focusing on »performative architecture«, the encounter of architecture and theatre. His research includes various international publications and curatorial engagements. Serge von Arx curated the architecture section for the Prague Quadriennial 2015. Also, he is developing the architecture section together with choreographer Chase Angier for the PQ 2019. For the Zurich University of the Arts he is arranging an international symposium and a series of workshops entitled »Sensory Hacking« relating to the future of higher art education.

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