





# S K E N È

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Jewish Theatres

Edited by Piero Capelli

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*Founded by Guido Avezzù, Silvia Bigliuzzi, and Alessandro Serpieri*

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NICOLA PASQUALICCHIO\*

**Andrew Filmer and Juliet Rufford, eds,  
*Performing Architectures: Projects, Practices,  
Pedagogies*, London and New York: Methuen, 2018,  
pp. 235**

Abstract

The article presents a review of an important collection of essays on the relationship between architecture and performance as it has been developing during a series of recent interdisciplinary practical experiments and theoretical studies. The brief analyses of each individual essay are preceded by a theoretical contextualization, which is focussed on the abandonment of an external collaboration between these two disciplines, normally confined within the dyad container (space) – contained (action), in favour of a more fertile and intrinsic synergy. This idea of the intersection between the performative quality of architecture and the spatial design of performance is the nucleus of the whole book.

KEYWORDS: architecture; performance; space; interdisciplinarity

Until a short time ago the relationship between architecture and the performing arts was debated and interpreted prevalently as one between the container (the theatre building) and the contained (the works intended to be performed there). Theatrical architecture was supposed to provide an adequate spatial container for performances and their audiences, as well as to allow for the procedures necessary for successful stagecraft, the specifications of visibility, acoustics and technical scenic equipment, and the relationship between performer and public, including the need to divide up the latter according to social hierarchy.

Accordingly, the architecture of performance and performance itself, although interdependent, were two distinct languages, two separate elements, connected but not comparable. Clearly, their liaison has never been without a degree of reciprocal influence and conditioning, as the relationship container-contained would, superficially at least, seem to imply. As we have just seen, both structure and size of the container depended very closely on the form of the contained (the style of dramaturgy, the concept of stagecraft, the dimension of the audience). But, in their turn, those very scenic and dramaturgical characteristics tended to develop along the lines of the modalities imposed on them for the most part by the time-honoured architectural typology. Besides, seeing that this was understood ‘monumentally’ that

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is as a permanently constructed space and not as an ephemeral one, the resulting reaction was that of fixation (it could almost be called 'monumentalization') – also in the case of the dramatic genres and the modalities of staging. Thus, during the periods in which a certain type of spectacle reached the height of its development, and became 'classic', it inevitably found its most appropriate reception in the same architectural typology that it had helped to create. However, every time something caused the forms of dramaturgy and representation to transcend themselves and change, they would find the fixity of the architectural space to be an obstacle to their evolution.

The moment in the history of western drama at which this tension between architecture and performance was felt most strongly was between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was then that the profound renewal of dramaturgy and the flowering of the new artistic vision of a 'theatre of directors' created a widespread intolerance of the Italian-style theatres, which had accommodated tragedy, comedy, ballet and opera for over two centuries. This kind of playhouse had constituted not only the perfect container for all these categories of performance but had hosted the social self-representation of the ruling classes, first the aristocracy and then the bourgeoisie. By locating the theatrical event at a safe distance behind the frame of the proscenium arch thus signalling a clear distinction between the performative space and that reserved for the public, and by the social categorizing facilitated by the boxes which were intended for the showcasing of fashionable society, the traditional theatre building became overly cumbersome. It proved too ostentatious, clumsy and old-fashioned for the reformers of the theatre who came on the scene between the Symbolists and the artistic avant-garde. Some important playwrights and directors went on operating within the traditional architectural canons, while challenging the well-worn formal approaches from the inside (we have only to recall, in the case of directors, the Constructivist productions of Mejerchol'd, and, in that of playwrights, Pirandello's metatheatrical plays). On the other hand, scenographers, architects and *metteurs en scène* design (and sometimes even realise) utopian avant-garde theatres. Among the actually constructed dreams of Richard Wagner (the *Festspielhaus* at Bayreuth) or of Max Reinhardt (the *Grosses Schauspielhaus* designed by Hans Poelzig), many others remained on paper: from Alberto Martini's *Tetiteatro* on the water to Enrico Prampolini's Magnetic Theatre right up to Walter Gropius' Total Theatre for Erwin Piscator, to mention only a few.

And yet, this 'revolution', embarked on by theatrical architecture during the first half of the twentieth century, and persevered in, to a certain extent, during the second half, was not able to distance itself completely and beyond all shadow of doubt from the traditional interpretation of the relationship between architecture and performance according to the model container/contained. And this although it had established more intrinsic links with the performative event and had aimed at a structural pliancy which could foster its effectiveness as to typologies of scenic events which were proving to be increasingly difficult either to codify or to foresee. From certain angles most of the results achieved in this category seem to be inspired by a spirit of 'conservative modernization', which in reality was incapable of effecting a complete severance with the past.

However, by and large in the last three decades certain events have occurred in



theory but also in practice, and as much in the field of architecture as in that of the languages of performance, that now allow us to observe their relationship as one which has been truly transformed and to some extent 'Copernically' reversed. I have just utilized a concept, that of 'field', that in point of fact, as I shall explain below, is no longer correct, simply because it is typical of an outdated way of considering the relationship between architecture and performance. But to help my explanation, I shall continue in this way for a while as if the two languages and their practices could still be collectively placed in two completely distinct fields.

What has been happening in the sphere of the performative, at least on its more progressive and innovative margins, starting during the last century from the Sixties onwards, but with a noticeable escalation during the Nineties is obvious to everyone. Indeed, it has found a semantic container, perhaps a little too generic and thus too amorphous, in the concept of post-dramatic introduced by Hans-Thies Lehmann (2006). The most interesting aspect of this contemporary tendency concerning the performative is the ultimate breakdown of clear-cut distinctions, by now less and less effective in the description of present-day practices, of the borderlines between theatre, dance, musical and artistic performance and installation, not to mention the separation into genres of what belongs to the body, what to speech and what to the languages of the new technologies. Both in artistic practice and in the theoretical knowledge that goes with it, many barriers have fallen, necessitating an interdisciplinary and convergent vision of the languages of staging. This has not, however, made the concept of performativity more generic and muddled; it has, it is true, expanded the context, but at the same time it has redefined its aesthetic specificity in a more precise and complete manner. Among other things, this redefinition has drawn attention to the spatial dimension, previously relegated to second place by the emphasis on the temporal, thanks to the increasing disengagement of the performative arts from text and narrative. A greater emphasis, both theoretical and practical, has thus been placed on the spatial aspects of performance as constituting some of its inevitable and intrinsic characteristics; and from this derives the impulse to design and create a space with the instruments of its own language, finally freeing it from the relationship of conventional dependence on the actual theatre building. In this way performance no longer needs to be 'contained' by a specific space, but it will achieve its own space in 'collaboration' with that provided by the particular context in which it happens to take place.

Accordingly, the performative events of the second half of the twentieth century have more and more frequently chosen non-theatrical venues, electing as their 'spatial interlocutors' (not simply containers) vacant buildings, museums, galleries, living spaces, urban sites, the countryside. This trend has found a happy definition in the expression 'site specific', applied at first to the context of artistic installations, but then extended (with a degree of fashionable complacency) to the performative milieu in general. In this way the architecture itself, no longer a receptacle and even less a neutral background to the performance, has become an actual component of the event, an 'actor' that enters directly into the spatial project of the theatrical experience.

It is, however, precisely from the architectural point of view that in the last ten years a particularly significant transformation has taken place, the more so perhaps

as it was completely unexpected. This was due to the growing perception, on the part of architects and theoreticians, of the performativity innate in the discipline itself. One which was no longer about the unconditional conceptualization of space, but rather concerned an expertise in design which could not exclude the actual experience of the space itself, the movements, the actions, the effects of socialization that are produced within it. A geometric idea of space is replaced by an event-centred one, that is founded on the concept of a space-event that breaks the pattern of the architectural work as a static structure, set within itself, effective and complete *a priori*. This alternative is a work which is in constant development, continually being regenerated by the events it accommodates and stimulates, by making them a part of itself. It is a concept which corresponds in many ways to the idea of 'open work' which Umberto Eco (1989) had defined as the new working condition for the creation of the modern opus. No longer assessed according to 'normal' results, univocal and definite, it is the consequence of an 'open-ended scheme' with different possibilities of organization and actualization and able to guarantee change. This is an art based on a procedural condition which mirrors within itself the mobility of the real world, an architecture that "does not build the object, but prepares a framework for creating situations" and "contributes performatively rather than declaratively to the development of emancipated, open society" (Mrduljaš 2017, 106, 111).

With these premises, it is obvious that the relationship between architecture and performance is no longer one between two enclosed fields but is rather one 'expanded field' of interdisciplinary possibilities; and it is equally comprehensible that such a relationship no longer has the typological problem of the theatrical building at its centre. The common ground upon which the two disciplines can operate is now clearly to be distinguished in the conception of a 'living' space, one which is always accessible in an active manner by a public which transforms and redesigns it. This is a factor which is shared by a kind of architecture that recognizes its own performative qualities and also by a performance that does not only *occupy* a space, but aims at *producing* one. The fresh possibilities opened up by this renewed relationship between architecture and performance has triggered new creative and pedagogical experiments generated by discussion and collaboration among architects, city planners and performers. However, the animated response this has caused has, until now, not been the object of very much consideration by scholars and theorists, with the result that, even studies on the space of performance which are to be commended for their breadth and accuracy (see, for example, McAuley 2000) minimize or do not even contemplate references to architecture.

Therefore the publication of the volume *Performing Architecture: Projects, Practices, Pedagogies* is all the more to be commended. With the direction of Andrew Filmer and Juliet Rufford it brings together a series of important contributions on this theme. The Introduction, by the two editors, immediately makes clear that the book's intention is that of considering "performance and architecture as bound up in action together – rather than categorizing performance as a dynamic/temporal agent and architecture as a static/permanent object" (1).

It is indeed the commitment to this aim that renders the thirteen essays published in this volume, although they are on very different subjects, a coherent and harmonious whole. The underlying unity of the project is in any case guaranteed by

their shared theoretic background, based on the ideas of authors whose names come up with a certain frequency during the course of the book, and whose influence seems recognizable, as the *fil rouge* which holds the entire work together, even at those points where they are not explicitly mentioned. I am referring to three of the authorities on three successive phases of twentieth-century architectural and urbanistic theory: the French philosopher and sociologist Henri Lefebvre (1901-1991), the Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi (b. 1944) and the British architectural theorist Jane Rendell (b. Dubai, 1967). From the first-mentioned expert the volume's essays implement the attention given to the social production of space, understood as the privileged territory of the exercise and experience of bodies, and therefore of the possibility and the reality of the social interactions which are continually both moulding and modelling them (Lefebvre 1991). Even more fertile is the notion of "critical spatial practice" introduced by Rendell, to indicate interdisciplinary experiments of overstepping the boundaries between art and architecture, theory and practice, public and private, in order to question and transform the social and political dynamics of urban spaces (Rendell 2006 and 2014).

But the real tutelary deity of this publication is Bernard Tschumi (1994, 2000, 2004, 2010), famed above all as the designer and architect of the Parc de la Villette in Paris, but also a celebrated architectural theorist. Filmer and Rufford define the theoretical core of his work with a synthetic clarity:

Architect Bernard Tschumi's work is seminal in contemporary engagements between performance and architecture because of his exploration of the disjunction between the *conceptualization* of space in architecture and the *lived experience* of space and his insistence on the centrality of movement, action and event to architecture. Since the mid-1970s Tschumi has championed pleasure, disorder and indeterminacy in his theoretical and built projects, introducing the notion of 'event' and 'event-space' to architectural discourse. (6)

The notion of event-space, which is drastically opposed to the usual definition of architecture within the categories of solidity, stability, permanence of form, is something which appears continually in *Performing Architectures* and in a way represents its emblem.

In the course of the book these concepts return again and again, but in each essay can be found a specific and distinctive variation, so that the theoretical unity in no way compromises the individual originality of the studies nor affects their diversity. In this way each of the thirteen essays contributes information and ideas which are of great interest (with the exception of the last, a brief interview by Filmer with the director Robert Wilson, rather too quick and superficial). The editors have decided to group them into three distinct sections, with the titles which are also the subtitle of the book itself: *Projects, Practices and Pedagogies*.

The first section begins with an essay by Dorita Hannah ("What Might Be a Nietzschean Architecture?"), which concentrates its attention upon a rarely touched subject: Nietzsche's ideas on architecture, and his conception of a Dionysiac space, open to the incursions of forces which are as destructive as they are creative, a space for becoming rather than for being, and as opposed to the static and passive idea of bourgeois theatre as it is to the magniloquent, narcissistic and, in the end,

falsely innovatory concept of the Wagnerian *Festspielhaus*. More in general, Hannah draws attention to how it is the whole architectural idea at the roots of western culture itself which is too restricted and constrained for Nietzsche, who sees it as the rigid crystallization of the Apollonian imposed upon the Dionysiac, which, for its very nature, is 'performative' and impossible to restrain. Architecture, then, for the German philosopher, becomes a clear metaphor for western thought: set fast in categories and procedures which effectively hinder any actual flexibility or progress within it, things which would, however, be ensured by that 'event-philosophy' for which the Nietzschean opus offers itself as an avatar.

The article which follows, "Factory, Street and Theatre in Brazil: Two Theatres by Lina Bo Bardi", by Evelyn Furquim Werneck Lima, examines and analyses two theatres designed by the Italo-Brazilian architect Lina Bo Bardi. If, as has been stated, the theatrical building is no longer the exclusive concern or the primary object of the theoretical attention of those who operate on the borders between architecture and performance, this does not rule out the fact that the more mobile and interactive relationship between the two disciplines may not be of advantage in the design of an actual theatre building. Indeed, it is quite obvious that in this context the design and construction of a theatrical space will become an emblematic operation, and one of great metaphorical impact, and an ideal testing-ground, in its self-reflexivity, for a performative conception of architecture. And this is exactly what happens in the case of the two theatres by Bo Bardi examined here: the SESC Pompeia Theatre and the Teatro Oficina, both in São Paulo. The planning and even the building of the two projects were thought of by the architect as a sort of 'immersive performance' in the anthropological and social reality of the respective sites. Bo Bardi was influenced by the theory and practice of the Theatre of the Oppressed by the director Augusto Boal, which aimed to make theatre a political instrument both of investigation and of consciousness-raising and solving of the social problems inherent in the territory in which it was involved. In this way her work is carried out in a continuum of performative participation on the part of the populace, who, right from the genesis of the structures, find a natural progress towards their active engagement in the performative experiments in the actual theatres.

Walter Benjamin is the main point of reference in Klaus van der Berg's essay "Imaginative Configurations: Performance Space in the Global City". The idea that the 'global city' in its entirety may represent a performative space derives in point of fact from the remarkable explorations of the city as the 'spectacle of modernity' that the German philosopher disseminated in many of his works and notes. These studies were not conducted, indeed, through abstract hypothesizing but through images originating from concrete experience, from the spatial performance of the *flâneur*, who interprets rhythms, places and sounds of the city by exploring it and losing himself in it. Certainly, the objects of van der Berg's analysis are not the modern cities observed by Benjamin (Berlin, Paris) but, on the contrary, the 'global cities', urban areas which are much vaster and more diffuse. The author considers three of these (the region of the Ruhr in Europe, New York and Dallas in the USA) and proposes to apply to a few specific architectural interventions which are in dialogue with these complex geographical realities an idea of a 'dramaturgy of space', developed unequivocally from Benjamin. The contention here is that the

validity of the various architectural interventions is to be measured by their capacity of interpolating their own performance into the complex and hybrid performativity of the new urban spaces.

From the West to India: Himanshu Burte's essay "The Play of Place: Producing Space and Theatre near Mumbai", discusses a particular architectural project which TCT, a theatre company of Mumbai, has been developing over the years in a five-acre extra-urban space. This is a work-in-progress which flatly contradicts every modernist canon of theatrical space. Aesthetic research, at least in the most obvious sense, formal originality, technological display – all are completely missing from this project, which at first sight would even seem to be uninterested in any specific functionality of spaces. The fact is that the originality of this space – an extremely evident feature – is its constant reproduction and readjustment, according to timescales that are certainly not the hurried and rationed ones of day-to-day urban life. Zooming out, the experience could be seen to recall other 'flights' from the city on the part of theatres, to re-establish themselves in spaces and at paces more natural to them, like the well-known case of Jacques Copeau and the Copiaus during the Twenties. But the real core of TCT's experience is the *continuity* between quotidian time and theatre time and therefore between quotidian space and the space of the theatre. This explains what could be seen as a case of considerable oddity, the fact that among all the various buildings on the site there is no theatrical structure meant exclusively for rehearsals. Between living and rehearsing there must be no break in continuity, not even (or least of all) from the spatial point of view. The result is "a continuity of consciousness between the quotidian, and moments of its artistically refracted intensification, the extraordinary work of creating a performance" (79). The theatrical space develops in this way through a sort of anthropological and ecological evolution of the inhabited space and it is therefore clear why "visual or plastic qualities of architecture . . . are not as important as its pliability to *practice*" (82).

"*Khor II: An Architecture-as-Theatre Project*", by Breg Horemans and Gert-Jan Stam, concludes the "Projects" section with a brief summary of a performative experiment thought up by the Dutch company TAAT (Theatre As Architecture: Architecture As Theatre). In this case the 'construction' of the show is completely delegated to the audience, who are provided with instructions both for building, with their own hands, a small pavilion in which the theatrical performance will take place, and for creating and staging the performance itself. A do-it-yourself theatre which is evidently intended to stimulate the sense of community participation and collaboration; however, without actually being involved in this, it is difficult to avoid the suspicion that the apparent public autonomy might be distorted by a sort of pedagogic paternalism.

The section dedicated to "Practices" opens with an article by Cathy Turner and Mike Pearson, "Living Between Architectures: Inhabiting Clifford McLucas' Built Scenography", which discusses a play staged by the Welsh company Brith Gof in 1996 (*Prydain: The Impossibility of Britishness*). The most interesting thing about this work is that by the way of a specific example, it considers the problems intrinsic to the relationship between architecture and performance. Pearson, besides being co-author of this essay, was also one of the protagonists, as director, of the actual

production, which was the cue for a major difference of opinion about their idea of theatre between him and the architect and scenographer McLucas (so serious as to cause the company to break up at the end of this work. The collaboration between Pearson and McLucas in various site-specific performances had had very good reviews, but a disparity of viewpoints was becoming evident even before *Prydain*: “The work was moving increasingly in two directions: towards multi-layered architectural composition (Mc Lucas) and towards an enquiry into the embodied relationship between performers, between performers and audience, and between audience members (Pearson)” (94). Pearson admits that a certain degree of tension between architectural performativity and the performativity of the actors is not only admissible, but may also be a positive factor in the success of the performance as a whole. This tension, however, must maintain a balance between the two, to prevent one giving way to the predominance of the other. In point of fact, it is a question, theoretically updated, which had already been asked by modernism, that placed the advocates of a theatre which was space-centred and that considered the human element as an adjunct to scenographic performance in opposition to those who favoured a theatre whose architectural performativity (precision, coherence, structural stability) was in any case assigned to the bodily relationships between the actors, and also, potentially, between actors and audience.

Two plays put on by the Welsh company NTW, *Mametz* (2014) and *Iliad* (2015), are the subject of the article “Occupying the Scene: Architectural Experience in Theatre and Performance”, by Andrew Filmer. The first play, which represents an episode from the Great War, is “a large scale site-responsive production performed in the farmland and woodland of Great Llanccayo Upper Wood near Usk, in South Wales” (114); the second is a long work divided into four parts and performed in a theatre. Although these two productions are very different both in their formulation and in their setting, Filmer brings them together on the grounds that they both build up an analysable dramatic architecture, which should not be confused with the scenographic elements, either natural or artificial, of the staging, but rather consists in the creation of situations and experiences that the spectator is going to occupy: “. . . here I want to think specifically about how the design and construction of dramaturgical environments or event-spaces can produce architectural experiences through inviting the spectator to occupy the scene” (113).

The next article, “Housing Acts: Performing Public Housing” by David Roberts, offers one of the most interesting experience of all those analysed in this volume. It is the report of the experiment carried out by Roberts himself with the collaboration of the tenants of Balfron Tower, situated in a social housing area of east London, when they had been informed that they would have to move out of their flats so that the refurbishment work on the tower could take place, with no guarantee that they could return. Between 2013 and 2015 Roberts took on the job of organizing, with the tenants themselves, a project of oral history of the building, of who lived there or had lived there, and to the resulting interviews he added a series of performative workshops whose aim was that of investigating daily life in the building, both past and present, and exploring the perception of the relationship between residents and architectonic space. At the basis of this project was the conviction that a building is not simply its walls, but above all it is also its own history, as well as that of

its residents and of the way in which they live and have lived these spaces. The conclusion reached by Roberts, his collaborators, and the tenants was the recognition of the “importance of Balfron’s social context as integral to the vision and function of the building and as an intrinsic part of its architectural heritage” (140). There was no happy ending to this: the Borough Development Committee unanimously voted for a renovation project that took no account of the history of the building and then put all the flats on sale, thus completely eliminating their function as social housing. Despite the disappointment, however, Roberts decided to continue his activity as architect more and more in this direction: “I turned increasingly from architecture to performance to develop a robust and constructive methodological approach to questions of dwelling, development and housing crisis” (141).

With Natalie Renwa’s article “Double Visions: Architectural Models in Performance”, which comes next in the book, we return to more strictly theatrical performance. Here the case is examined of architecture that enters physically into the play, in the form of miniaturized architectural models. Three Canadian plays are taken as examples of this: *887* by Robert Lepage (2015), Wagner’s *Rheingold* under the direction of Michael Levine (2006) and *Me on the Map* by Adrienne Wong and Jan Derbyshire (2013). In point of fact, the presence on stage of an architectural *maquette*, or at least of scaled down architecture, is to be seen in contemporary stagings more often than is imagined. There is no evidence, however, that before this article anyone thought of bestowing upon this ‘scenic theme’ its own place in the categorizing of dramaturgy. It must be acknowledged that Wong and Derbyshire have recognized and highlighted for the first time the significance of the theatrical exploitation of architectural models which transcends the extremely varied separate occasions when this use has been examined. Indeed, beyond the different implications the theme takes on in the three plays (autobiography or memoirs, politics, pedagogy), what really characterizes it is the strength of its semantic and symbolic significance, which renders it a sort of crossroads of functions and values, between narration and space, form and event, thus intensifying its performative and dramaturgical aspects.

The relationship between performer and space finds an unusual application in the performance created by Ward Shelley and Alex Schweder, and it is the latter who recounts this in the essay “In Orbit of Dead Man Friend”. The two artists lived for ten days on a human-sized hamster wheel, without ever coming off it. Around the circumference of the wheel were fixed beds, chairs, small tables, washbasins and porta-potties one of each on each side, the internal and the external, of the wheel. To be able to reach the object they wanted to use, the two architect-performers had to spin the wheel slowly, moving in (or on) it in coordination with one another so that each of them reciprocally counterbalanced the other. In this way, the performance re-invented daily life in an anomalous space. In order to live in it you had to modify your relationship, little by little, both with your environment and with your partner, developing to the greatest degree possible your synergic capacities. As Schweder explains, the objective of this and other collaborations with Shelley is tendentially that of “designing a building to produce a relationship between us, living in it without leaving for a predetermined time, experiencing the ways we are changing, reflecting upon those changes and the work’s meaning both among ourselves and in real-time conversations with those who visit us” (160). The performance of inhabiting, or

better of learning to inhabit, already a theme in preceding essays, those by Burte and Roberts in particular, has in this case a consummate and ingenious example.

The final section, dedicated to pedagogical experiments, opens with an article by Juliet Rafford, "Towards a Tectonic of Devised Performance: Experiments in Interdisciplinary Learning/Teaching", which returns to and develops the theme of the interdisciplinary potential inherent in a performative approach to architecture, which can also, furthermore, be reversed and become an equally profitable 'architectonic approach' to performance. The author states apropos of this: "The central notion I am working with is that architecture, as the discipline *par excellence* of space, form and order, might aid performance's internal organization and, equally, might strengthen our sense of its position in relation to the structures and spaces that condition its production and dissemination" (168). Just like the teaching of architecture, that of performance aims to show how to design space in relationship with other spaces, and in this way it necessarily comes within the ambits of geography, cartography, topology and urban studies. Rafford develops in detail her teaching methods and their relationship with architecture. One in particular would seem to illustrate the most effectively her pedagogic approach: this is a series of 'performative sketches', short improvisation exercises in preparation for the construction of a performance, that are founded on the widely adopted practice of the preparatory *esquisse* in architecture, and share with this the character of "short, sharp exercises in intuitive form-making" (178).

Vice-versa, but in the same perspective, Beth Weinstein's "Bringing Performance into Architectural Pedagogy" emphasizes the utility of a performative approach in the teaching of architecture. She starts from the premise that space is not really such if it is not used, if, in other words, it is not repeatedly crossed and inhabited by human presences. On this subject she makes explicit reference to the theories of Michel de Certeau (1984), and to his conviction that the true space of a city is not the urban structure in the abstract, but that determined by the continuous action of being walked in by its inhabitants. It is not, indeed, the city planned by the authorities, the one that can be seen from above as the crow flies, but that perceived at ground level, walked along, lived in and invisibly redesigned by whoever moves around within its boundaries. A city, then, not for the eyes but for the body, not to be looked at but to be performed. The body, and its connected kinaesthetic experiences, becomes in Weinstein's opinion a privileged instrument for the study of architecture. This new way of considering architecture brings it closer by another route to the stage, and in particular to the theoretical re-considerations on the theatre during the twentieth century. It places in parallel the refusal of the centrality of the text and the consequent aesthetic refocussing on the scenic performance with the refusal of the centrality of the planning and the relative transfer of attention on to architecture as a spatial performance.

This review was translated from Italian by Susan Payne



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