

SATURDAY, MAY 29, 2021

10:45 - 12:45 (EDT)

SITUATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

INTIMATE IMMENSITIES

6

PRESENTATIONS

This is an Experiment: Design as Collaborative Process in Chloe Lamford's Blue Box
Kristin Washco, Carleton University

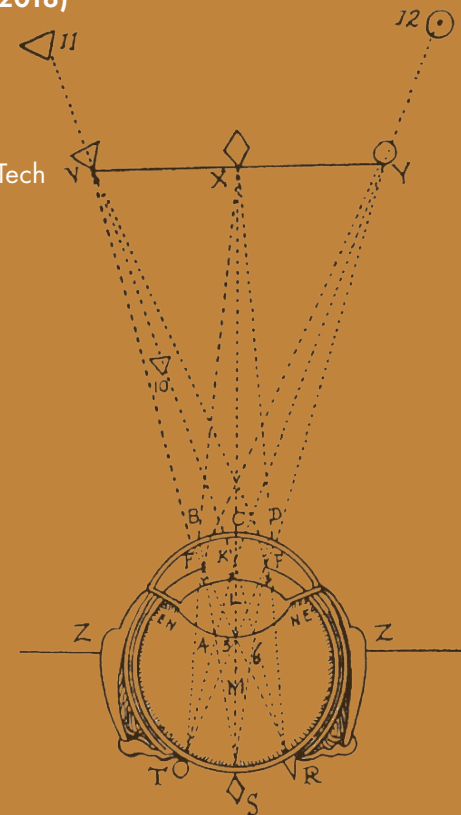
G(hosts): Healing Trauma through Site-Specific Performance and Systemic Constellations
Stefan Jovanović, London

Die Turnstunde: Hans Hollein's Museum Performing Itself
Eva Branscome, Bartlett School of Architecture

A Delegated Performance for Public Space: *The Mile Long Opera* (2018)
Alessandra Mariani, UQÀM

MODERATOR
Marcia Feuerstein, Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center, Virginia Tech

SESSION #



ACTION

This is an Experiment:

Design as Collaborative Process in Chloe Lamford's Blue Box

Kristin Washco, Carleton University

Cosmopoiesis as an act of world-making exists in the translation of drawings into buildings and buildings into drawings.¹ Under the guise of production, in practice this exchange between constructing and construing becomes segmented and unidirectional. Such separation disembodies architectural action, stunting collaborative potential. How can building practices foster greater engagement with three theatres of architectural action: designing, building, and dwelling?

In her introduction to the 2017 installation *The Site*, stage designer Chloe Lamford states the usual roles in theatre: the writer writes the play, the director takes the play on, and the theatre designer visualizes the play.² The premise of *The Site* was to problematize this sequence. Working in reverse of the typical process, Lamford first created a space - a blue box - and then invited five writers to respond to it. Ten provocations such as, "this is an experiment, and a conversation, not an end product" were also established as shared premises for the resulting plays.³ Together, the space and the provocations aided in reimagining the act of theatrical world-making by overtly centering situated action and collaborative exchange in the process. Rather than initiating from scripts, the works were conceived using space and discourse as materials for creation. This reversal encouraged artists and audiences to rethink how plays are enacted and ingested.

This presentation will explore the potential of applying Lamford's experiment to architecture. How might the operations and outcomes of architectural making be challenged to recenter embodied action and collaborative discourse? What alternative "materials for creation" could emerge from this exercise?

1. Frascari, Marco. *Eleven Exercises in the Art of Architectural Drawing*. New York; Abingdon, Oxon;: Routledge, 2011, 94.

2. Lamford, Chloe, "The Site: Interview with Chloe Lamford filmed at Somerset House," 2017 <https://royalcourttheatre.com/Season/the-site/>

3. Lamford, Chloe, "Installation: The Site," Accessed December 15, 2020, <http://chloelamford.com/the-site>.

Kristin Washco is an Instructor and PhD Student at the ASAU, Carleton University. She received her Master's in Architectural History + Theory from McGill University, and her professional degree in Architecture from Virginia Tech. Kristin is a Registered Architect in New York and practiced professionally in New York City before relocating to Canada. Her professional work with NOROOF Architects, DXA Studio and MADERA has won multiple awards, including the AIA Award of Excellence. Her research interests are centered around the synesthetic experience of architecture, methods of architectural representation, and the translation from page to built work.



WORLD[ING]

G(hosts): Healing Trauma through Site-Specific Performance and Systemic Constellations

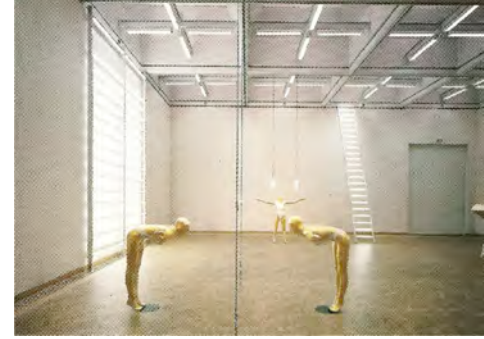
Stefan Jovanović, London

This paper explores the relationship between site-specific performance practices and the therapeutic modality known as Systemic Constellations. It does so in order to examine the healing potentials of performances that have taken place on sites of historical, social and political traumas. What does it mean to produce scenographic and theatrical work in relation to a world, to land and to history that is already there? What effects does this expansive space of rehearsal have on both participants' and performers' sense of identity and affect, when not relying on the theatre building, but on the embodied perception and history of the site of performance? How can performance begin to work more like architecture in a post-pandemic environment, allowing for the accumulation of time in the layering of performance onto space?

This paper works from three definitions of the site-specific: as performance related to the architectural re-use of buildings [*Gododdin* (1989) by Brith Gof]; performance as re-enactment of contested socio-political histories and sites [*The Battle of Orgreave* (2001) by Jeremy Deller]; and performance as ritual for healing on sites of past trauma [*In and Out of the Mountain* (1981-1986) by Anna Halprin].

In identifying the processes of architectural re-use, the socio-politics of the spaces used, and what was at stake by creating and rehearsing on sites harbouring traumatic pasts, I build on Mike Pearson's and Cliff Lucas' distinction between the hosts and the ghosts encountered within site-specific performances. Specifically, I examine this distinction through the lens of psychotherapist Bert Hellinger's method of Systemic Constellations. I propose that these case-studies and other performances referenced throughout the paper, along with their respective *hosting* sites, become literal theatres of the world, rather than enclosures of the world. They become performance-sites that world possibilities for social healing and systemic change through site-specific performance.

Stefan Jovanović is a London-based architect, choreographer, healer and the artistic director of Studio Stefan Jovanović. Whilst qualifying as an architect and establishing a career in the performing arts, Jovanović trained as a systemic family constellator and somatic therapist, integrating therapeutic modalities into an artistic practice. Jovanović's productions have been performed at Sadler's Wells, Siobhan Davies Dance, Tate Modern, Stone Nest, Asylum Chapel, Independent Dance, Goya Museum and Toulouse-Lautrec Museum. Stefan is a graduate of the AA School of Architecture and a What Now? resident artist (Independence Dance, 2014), the recipient of the DanceWEB Scholarship at ImpulsTanz International Festival of Dance (2016), New Museum IdeasCity Athens Fellow (2016), and a resident artist at the Sadler's Wells Summer University (2015-2018).



ACTION

Die Turnstunde: Hans Hollein's Museum Performing Itself

Eva Branscome, Bartlett School of Architecture

In 1972, the Viennese architect/artist Hans Hollein was appointed to design the Museum Abteiberg in Mönchengladbach, Germany. It opened in 1982 to international acclaim. His building was defiantly not a 'white box': its architectural presence instead intentionally responded to left-wing attacks on museums as elitist cultural institutions in the late 1960s. The celebrated German curator Johannes Cladders, who commissioned and directed the museum, had been an active part of this counter-cultural impulse, staging Joseph Beuys's first-ever retrospective exhibition in 1967.

The Museum Abteiberg can however also be interpreted as a theatre of avant-garde art. Its galleries and transitional areas were from the outset conceived as performative spaces. Then, when Cladders retired in 1984, Hollein fulfilled the director's last wish by creating an astonishing site-specific art installation, *Die Turnstunde [The Gymnastic Lesson]*. It staged a unique situation in which the artist, Hollein, reimagined his own architectural environment. The casts of two life-sized female gymnasts standing across from each other, balancing on tiptoes, bowing forward, with their arms stretched wide in a position of utmost tension. A further gymnast stands erect, again arms raised at her sides, facing upward. Their bodies are gilded and mysterious. Their postures are disconcerting.

The essay will discuss this display as a piece of frozen theatre that references the museum's collection by reperforming artworks by George Segal, Giulio Paolini, Yves Klein and Joseph Beuys. But the original bodily provocation of the gymnastics lesson can also be understood as an action environment. It creates troubling thoughts and feelings by presenting facsimiles of the human body within such a carefully crafted spatial juxtaposition. In the interplay of ritualized positions and alienated props they remind us of living creches, tableau vivantes or life-sized three-dimensional dioramas. They ask us a simple question: where does architecture end where does theatrical exhibition start?

Dr. Eva Branscome has been teaching architectural history at the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London since 2012. Originally trained as an interior architect, Eva studied for her PhD at the Bartlett. Her research and teaching work has two main strands: the first engages with the links between built heritage and cultural practices in contemporary Western cities, whether expressed through cultural institutions or counter-cultural street art; the second is in the 19th- and 20th-century architectural history of Central Europe, focussing particularly upon Austria and other regions in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire. Eva has published extensively – including *Hans Hollein and Postmodernism* (Routledge, 2019), the first major monograph on that architect-artist. She has co-curated exhibitions at the MAK Gallery in Vienna, ICA in London and Museum Abteiberg in Germany, and has previously taught architectural history at Queen Mary University, Oxford Brookes University and the University of Westminster.

WORLD

A Delegated Performance for Public Space: *The Mile Long Opera* (2018)

Alessandra Mariani, UQAM

In the wake of the wave of controversy generated by their development of the High Line public park in Manhattan, design studio Diller Scofidio + Renfro created *The Mile-Long Opera: the biography of 7 o'clock*. Critics denounced the accelerating gentrification of areas adjacent to the park. They noted how the recovery, conversion of this post-industrial space came to legitimize and reproduce class inequality and thus, social exclusion. They incriminated the ideologization of aesthetic experience, namely the commodification and spectacularization of this experience as an engine of urban development. Aware of the pernicious dwindling effects of aesthetics DS + R produced a self-critique in the form of an opera, offered to the public for six evenings on the High Line itself. This *Gesamtkunstwerk* – fused by immersive principle architecture, urbanism, poetry and music – referenced to the surrounding environment and its memories, translated into stories performed by a thousand volunteer choristers accompanied by the audience strolling on the linear park. DS + R have significantly scripted these neighborhoods since 2009. They have made the High Line a heterotopic site, physically and temporally suspended from the frenetic circuit of Manhattan, by merging stopover spaces with devices visually framing the city. The opera, inspired by their previous scenographic experiences, aimed to transiently suspend the economic symbolization of the High Line.

This paper will seek to lay out how DS+R implemented the opera in order to mediate architecture's accountability in a context of post-occupation. Following the concept of *Theatrum mundi*, it introduces the High Line as the scene of an interpretative negotiation, framed by the performance orchestrated by DS+R. It will demonstrate that while the opera did not instigate immediate change, it succeeded in proposing a form of alterity and actualization of the perception of High Line. As it raised awareness of architecture's limits, DS+R's strategy of "delegated performance"¹ emanating from a dialogical and communal aesthetic, instigated the perspective of new forms of communal occupation vouching for sustainable public spaces in constant privatization.

¹ Claire Bishop, "Delegated Performance: Outsourcing Authenticity," *October* 140 (Spring 2012): 91-112.

Alessandra Mariani is completing her PhD thesis on the interdisciplinary nature of DS+R's practice. Her research focuses on the relations between contemporary art, poststructuralist discourses, curatorial approaches and the development of DS+R's situated practice in an expanded field. In 2006, Alessandra founded *Muséologies* (www.museologies.org) a journal promoting interdisciplinary research focused on the functions and stakes of the contemporary museum and has been its editor ever since. She has also been lecturing the theory and history of modern architecture at École de design UQAM, since 2011. mariani.alessandra@uqam.ca