

THURSDAY, MAY 27, 2021

8:30 - 10:30 (EDT)

# THEATRES OF ACTION

## POETICAL, POLITICAL, PARTICIPATORY

### PRESENTATIONS

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SESSION #

#### **Projecting the Eccentric Theater**

Jodi La Coe, Marywood University

#### **Lecoq's Mimodynamics for Architects: Practising a Renewed Architectural Imagination**

Laura Gioeni, Independent Scholar, Milan

#### **Performing the Common: The Political Imagination of Protest in Place**

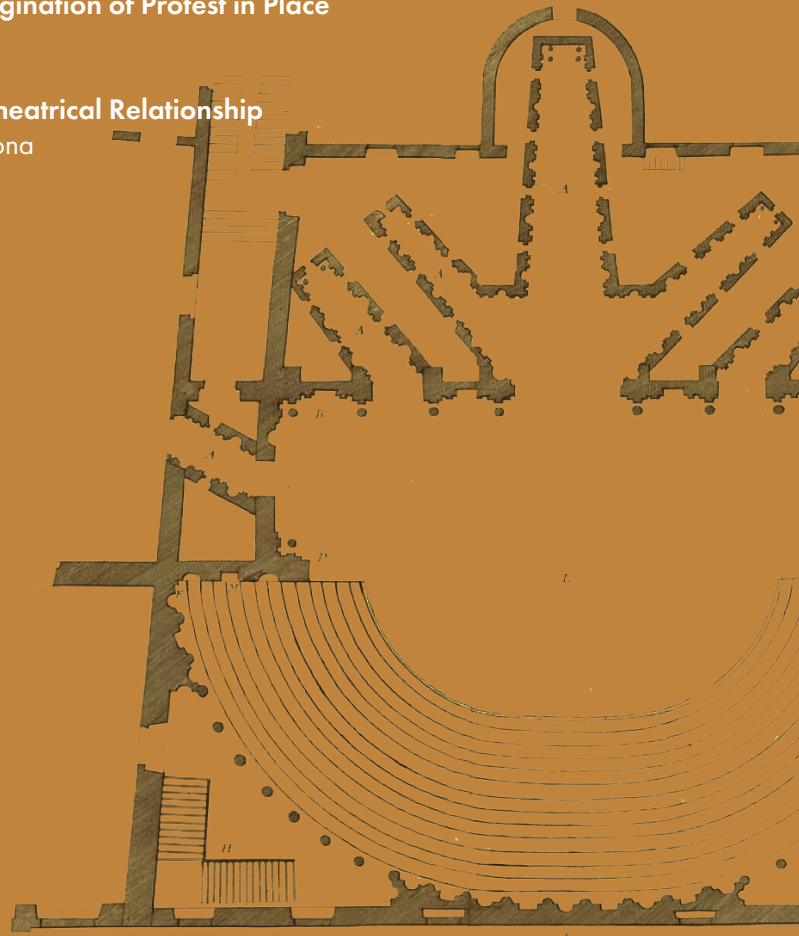
Paul Holmquist, Louisiana State University

#### **Carlo Scarpa and Licisco Magagnato: A Theatrical Relationship**

Alba Di Lieto & Cristina Lonardi, Musei di Verona

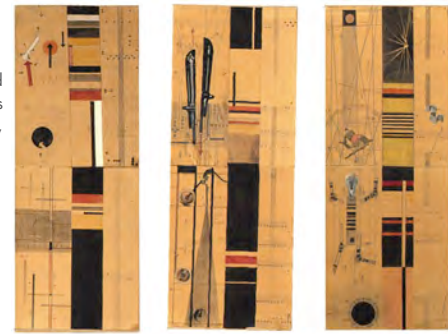
### MODERATOR

Lisa Landrum, University of Manitoba



## SESSION 1

László Moholy-Nagy, Untitled, c. 1924, graphite and color pencils, ink and watercolor, and collaged pieces on paper: 140 x 17.8 cm (55.125" x 7.0156"),



### ACTION

#### Projecting the Eccentric Theater

Jodi La Coe, Marywood University

In his *Das Unheimliche* (*The Uncanny*, 1919), Sigmund Freud claimed that, after the prolonged suffering experienced during World War I, it would take some effort on his part to place himself in the proper frame of mind to recognize and appreciate the uncanny sensation of wit, often found in the humorous, amusing, and laughter-inducing. With the intention of disarming his war-weary audience into a state of emotional openness, László Moholy-Nagy created the *Partiturskizze zu einer mechanischen Exzentrik* (*Score-Sketch for a Mechanical Eccentric*, 1924–5), a theatrical performance employing an exaggerated form of comedy capable of lowering the audience's psychophysical barriers with uproarious laughter and opening them to new socio-political ideas. According to a contemporary Russian manifesto on ЭКЦЕНТРИЗМ (*Eccentrism*, 1922) containing four provocative texts by Soviet film and stage directors, Leonid Trauberg, Grigorii Kozintsev, Sergei Yutkevich, and Georgii Kryzhitskii, a Theater of Eccentrism would awaken the public by employing tactics akin to a variety performance or a circus show. With Vladimir Tatlin and others, these four were faculty of the ФАБРИКА ЭКЦЕНТРИЧЕСКОГО АКТЁРА (ФЭКС, FEKS, Factory of the Eccentric Actor) in Petrograd, where artists and acrobats were trained in the attitudes and techniques of Eccentrism. Around a center ring in Moholy-Nagy's mechanical *Exzentrik*, he combined circus-like form and movements, color lights, sneezing powders, phosphorescence, percussive sounds and sirens, film projections, marionettes, and explosions to immerse and penetrate the audience. Although his mechanical *Exzentrik* was not realized, Moholy-Nagy introduced many of these elements into his stage sets designs for Erwin Piscator's short-lived Piscator-Bühne (1927–29) in Berlin, including the film projections of Berlin street scenes into their scandalous production of Walter Mehring's *Der Kaufmann von Berlin* (*The Merchant of Berlin*, 1929) rousing the ire of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (National Socialist German Workers Party). Examining political theater during the interwar period, this paper will explore the psycho-spatial role of projections – images, lights, and shadows – at the eccentric intersection of film and political theater.

**Dr. Jodi La Coe** is a registered architect, teaching in the School of Architecture at Marywood University in Scranton, Pennsylvania. She earned a PhD in Architecture and Design Research from the Washington-Alexandria Architecture Center of Virginia Tech and a Master of Architecture in the History and Theory of Architecture from McGill University. Her research bridges the art and science of historical visualizations of space – connections, interactions, and inspirations in the relationship between architectural imagination and cultural histories. Her dissertation, *Constructing Vision: László Moholy-Nagy's Partiturskizze zu einer mechanischen Exzentrik, Experiments in Higher Dimensions*, examines spatiotemporal representations of an original synaesthetic performance. Other publications include, "Inside Out and Outside In: Projecting the Idea of the [Urban] Theater," in the *Interior Urbanism Reader* (Routledge, 2021), and "Dreaming the Fourth Dimension: László Moholy-Nagy's Inversions," in *Ceilings and Dreams: The Architecture of Levity* (Routledge, 2019).

### MEMORY

#### **Lecoq's Mimodynamics for Architects: Practising a Renewed Architectural Imagination**

Laura Gioeni, Independent Scholar, Milan

Architectural practice is inscribed in a double gesture: on one hand, drawing actions make visible the invisible; on the other hand, architecture represents the living threshold between our gestures and the world, configuring itself as the double rebound of our gestures.

The theatrical pedagogy of Jacques Lecoq (1921-1999) provides a path towards the practice of a renewed architectural imagination. Widely recognized as one of the most influential pedagogues of modern theatre, Lecoq dedicated a large part of his commitment to the architects' training. His teaching focused on the fundamental relationship between architectural space, body movement and gestures, investigated through miming practices and improvisation, and underpinned by observation of reality and a kind of anthropological field work. In consonance with the anthropologist Marcel Jousse, Lecoq conceived of miming as a universal background of our relationship with the world and an effective pedagogical method that critically refuses the crystallization and formalization of knowledge in dead written words – 'a pedagogy of the legless'. The consideration of the moving body, as generator of both theatrical and architectural space, was the central core of his method. For Lecoq, miming exhibits the mould of the world in order to mean the world. The work of the architect and the mime are exactly placed on the same threshold, between gesture and the world. Hence, the mimodynamic method becomes an effective tool to rediscover the lively and dynamic meaning of architecture. Lecoq's pedagogical proposal reaches the essential roots of the architectural issue, revealing a dynamic interplay between the creative process and the bodily roots of memory.

My paper develops this premise of Lecoq, making further reference to Edward Casey's 'body memory', in which the past is literally "embodied in action," and Marco Frascari's embodiment of lively miming bodies in drawing, with the aim of rediscovering the mediating role of our body to reconnect with architecture and our past.

**Laura Gioeni** (1966) is an architect, philosopher, researcher and lecturer. She initially trained at the School of Mimodrama in Milan, experiencing Jacques Lecoq's theatrical pedagogy. Later she graduated, cum laude, in Architecture (1991) and Philosophy (2002). For over twenty years she worked as architect, in the field of architectural design, restoration and adaptive reuse. As adjunct professor, she taught classes related to architectural restoration at the Polytechnic of Milan and at the University of Parma. In 2017 she got the Italian National Scientific Qualification as associate professor in Architectural Design. She is author of books and essays, including the contributions to *The Routledge Companion to Jacques Lecoq* (Routledge, 2016) and to the conference proceedings *Memories on John Ruskin* (Firenze University Press, 2019). Currently she teaches drawing and art history in secondary schools and carries on her research on the philosophy of architecture. Interested also in dance, she studies and practices Western Africa traditional dance.

### ACTION

#### **Performing the Common: The Political Imagination of Protest in Place**

Paul Holmquist, Louisiana State University

Two African American ballerinas *en pointe* raise their fists in front of the graffiti-covered monument to Robert E. Lee. Children on either side of the US-Mexico border leap to the sky on brilliant pink teeter-totters balanced tenuously on the steel fence. A man stands still for eight hours amidst the violent repression of protests against the razing of Istanbul's Gezi Park. These fleeting actions have left only images. Yet they continue to evoke not only a profound resistance to exclusionary injustice, but also the vital re-imagining of the common within the places where they occurred as an alternative, radically inclusive condition of possibility for human and non-human being.

This paper examines the performative and poetic dimensions of protest action as a participatory mode of political imagination in which the common, as the very horizon of the political following Jean-Luc Nancy, can appear and obtain worldly reality in places. Taking as a point of departure the inherent theatricality of political appearance for Hannah Arendt in which not only actors appear, but, above all, the sense of the human for which they act, I consider how in each of these protests actors bodily perform the commonness that is expressly or implicitly at stake, and that is manifestly extended and experienced through the co-corporeality of participants, witnesses and the common world. I furthermore examine the nature of places of protest as the settings for action. I argue that the Lee monument, the US-Mexico border fence and Gezi Park as places can all be understood to have been momentarily transformed by the performance of political protest actors, both in experience and in memory, by being enfolded within a collective corporeal space of appearance. I conclude by suggesting that in the performative co-corporeality of actors and places, the being-in-common shared by all beings, was and can be, in effect, compelled to appear as the radical inclusivity that reveals the fullness and beauty of the human in difference.

**Dr. Paul Holmquist** is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at Louisiana State University whose research and teaching focus on the interrelationship of architecture, political theory and theory of technology, particularly in terms of conceptions and experience of the public realm. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Architectural History and Theory from McGill University where his dissertation examined Claude-Nicolas Ledoux's architectural theory in relation to the moral and political philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Paul has taught architectural history, theory and design at universities in the United States and Canada, and his research has been published in *Chora 7: Intervals in the Philosophy of Architecture*, *Reading Architecture: Literary Imagination and Architectural Experience*, and most recently *The Figure of Knowledge: Conditioning Architectural Theory, 1960s-1990s* and *Contour Journal*.

MEMORY

**Carlo Scarpa and Licisco Magagnato: A Theatrical Relationship**

Alba Di Lieto & Cristina Lonardi, Musei di Verona

In one of the latest interviews with Carlo Scarpa (1906-1978), before he undertook his last journey to Japan in 1978 (Barbara Radice, *Un Architetto a regola d'Arte*, Modo 1978), he remembered that as a child, in Vicenza, he played with marbles between the columns of the Chiericati Palace, designed by Andrea Palladio. Within a short distance stands the Olympic Theatre, the last of Palladio's masterful designs. Vicenza is where Scarpa spent his childhood. The city was hometown to both Palladio and Licisco Magagnato (1921-1987), the art critic who will be in charge of the direction of the Museum of Castelvecchio of Verona.

A unique dialogue develops between Scarpa and Magagnato, who, besides inviting Scarpa to renovate the Museum of Castelvecchio, was also one of the major scholars of Palladio, especially of the Olympic Theatre. Throughout the renovation of Castelvecchio, Scarpa also executes the projects for two theatres, which were not realised: the Carlo Felice Theatre of Genova (1963-1975) and the Vicenza Theatre (1968-69), where he competed against Franco Albini and Ignazio Gardella.

This presentation sets out to investigate the influence that Magagnato wields on these projects, considering his knowledge of the Classical world and the Olympic Theatre. The studies on Palladio's architecture such as the Olympic Theatre are a continuous thread in the life of the art critic, starting from his 1949 publication, *The Genesis of Teatro Olimpico*, published in the Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes, until his posthumous essay on the Palladian *Teatro Olimpico of Vicenza*.

**Alba Di Lieto** is the executive architect of the City Museums in Verona, Italy. She is also curator of the Carlo Scarpa Archive and she collaborated on various exhibitions on Carlo Scarpa: in Paris, London, Edinburgh, Geneva, Verona and on the first North American exhibition of Scarpa's work in Montreal at the CCA. Recently, she has curated Carlo Scarpa: Vetri e Disegni 1925-1931 (2019-2020). She authored and edited a number of books on Carlo Scarpa including: *I disegni di Carlo Scarpa per Castelvecchio* (Marsilio 2006); the website [archiviocarloscarpa.it](http://archiviocarloscarpa.it), *Carlo Scarpa for the Head Office of Banca Popolare di Verona*, co-edited with Valter Rossetto (Silvana Editoriale 2015). She is a contributor to *Carlo Scarpa and Castelvecchio Revisited* by Richard Murphy (Breakfast Mission Publishing 2017). Since 2016, she is Visiting Professor at the Politecnico di Milano.

**Cristina Lonardi** graduated in Architecture at the IUAV, majoring in History of Art at the University of Verona. She is now working for the City Museum in Verona (since November 2020), after a ten-year role in the Building Department of the City of Verona. She collaborates in exhibition design and museum arrangements. She is a contributor to publications regarding the archeological site of Villadose (Rovigo, Veneto), she is the restoration designer of the Church of San Vito in Bardolino (Verona, Veneto).