

PERFORMATIVE LANDSCAPES

SITE, ENCOUNTER,
PERFORMANCE

by

Carlos Ariel
Gutierrez Torres

Institutions Name: Subject Area Performing Arts

SKH Level of Degree and scores: Master degree, 120 etcs

*Programme / Course: Master Degree in Performing Arts, Independent
Degree Project 30 etcs*

Term and year: SPRING 2025

Supervisor: Jon Refsdal Moe

Examiner: Camilla Damkjaer

STOCKHOLM | STOCKHOLMS
UNIVERSITY | KONSTNÄRLIGA
OF THE ARTS | HÖGSKOLA



STOC
KHOL DR HÖGS
MS AMAT KOLA
ISKA

PERFORMATIVE LANDSCAPES: SITE, ENCOUNTER, PERFORMANCE

ARIEL GUTIERREZ TORRES

For those who pass it without entering, the city is one thing; it is another for those who are trapped by it and never leave. There is the city where you arrive for the first time; and there is another city which you leave never to return. Each deserves a different name; perhaps I have already spoken of Irene under other names; perhaps I have spoken only of Irene.

—Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

This is the written documentation part of my final exam project. As part of this final project, I presented a performance at SKH on May 2, 2023, called *Timelag: corpographies in motion*. This show was the result of a psychogeographic project around the city of Stockholm. For this performance I worked with four performers. (two dancers, an actress/clown and a performance artist/sound designer). Furthermore, this text has been published in a book called *Essays on Psychogeography and the City as Performance: Drifting Through Wonderlands*¹.

This essay intends to explore the existing relationships between sites and performative practices. It examines how a particular site and its subsequent transformations may be inscribed in the bodies of the actors/actresses, how they respond to the contact with the site from an array of perspectives and how this body based research becomes the starting point of a project and the main source of spatial dramaturgy.

In order to test some of my questions, I work with artists from different disciplines who live in different countries and I share with them some of these questions. The intention is to explore with them the relationship between site, the body and the stage in a practical manner. Artists are invited to investigate different performative possibilities the site offers through movement, improvisation and devising. To this end, I create activities using a psychogeographical approach.

Psychogeography can be looked at as a practice that examines how one's environment shapes the emotions, behaviors, and thinking of both the individual and the collective. One of the core elements of the psychogeographic approach is the 'derive'. In his essay *Theory of the Dérive* (1958), Guy Debord defines "dérive" or "drifting", as "a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances." Cities are designed structures where desire and movement are managed by advertisements, street directions, property lines, road signs, posters, fences, walls, trees, parks, benches, public art... etc. We move from point A to point B with blindfolds on, barely aware of how the places we move through make us feel, think,

¹ *Essays on Psychogeography and the City as Performance: Drifting Through Wonderlands* Edited by John C Green This book first published 2024 Cambridge Scholars Publishing

imagine, see. The *dérive* consists of one or more people investigating a geographic location and trying to become aware of the impact of such location on one's psyche, emotions and behaviors. It's clear that psychogeography and its related principles are relevant across disciplines, however, there is a void when it comes to applying the practices of psychogeography to performance per se. My artistic project intends to fill this void by seizing this opportunity to apply these practices and concepts to the development of performative experiences (aesthetic, pedagogical, artistic research).

Why Psychogeography?

- Psychogeography as an attempt to break linearity
- To create new routes
- To make the road open for new associations
- Against the dictates of planning - planning that comes with a lifestyle and maybe a mindset, a concept - the city of others planned for others, inviting for others. That also applies to other aspects of life where many things are circumscribed or put in a box or frame that many times restrains in an inconvenient way.
- From associations to my own story
- What and where are the limits of the city/story or a particular part of the city/story?
- The city as a habitat. What are the aesthetics?
- What is the empirical city and how do we perceive it?
- How do we create community initiatives that involve communal creative devising projects and that could be sustainable?

Methodology

This way of working, which for the purpose of this essay I would refer to as 'methodology', does not intend to be a fixed recipe, a template and/or a set of instructions that, if followed, would guarantee any interesting results. The reason for that is that at the core of all my work is the direct contact with bodies and the relationship among them. It may be misleading to conceptualize a particular methodology and believe it will work in this or that way. Rather, as it is the case with any embodied material, it is a process of experimentation that demands time, patience, dedication and playfulness. Therefore, the invitation for the reader is to take these words as a reflection of many years of embodied research in the space, working with performers, directors, writers, dancers and researchers. I started to use the notion of psychogeography in artistic training at the London International School of Performing Arts in London (where I was one of the teachers) around 2011/2012. At the time, I was finishing my doctoral dissertation around the theme of Theater, cities and globalization². Over the years, I have gathered many of the exercises, procedures, notes and techniques in a workshop titled The City Project (which I still hold regularly in different cities). Here is a brief summary of the way I integrate psychogeography and performance in my artistic practice.

On scoring

One of the most important elements I use when I apply psychogeography to performance is the physical score. The concept of physical score is a very rich, thought-provoking and, at times, controversial one. For many practitioners, a 'score' represents the very skeleton of a piece, the backbone of an embodied idea. For others, a score is experienced as a complicated,

² See Paisajes Escénicos: El Teatro en la Ciudad Global. Buenos Aires 1988-2010. Scenic landscapes: theater in the global city 1988-2010.
<https://scholarship.miami.edu/esploro/outputs/doctoral/Paisajes-Escenicos-El-Teatro-en-la/991031447408302976>

monotonous and dry system of repetitions, a constraint to move away from and, in some instances, as an anachronic and outdated concept. It is not the intention of this section to explore in detail the origins, interpretations, variations and uses of the notion of score, but rather to use it in order to illustrate a particular way of working with embodied material. Nonetheless, some basic historical considerations may be worth sharing. As Eugenio Barba reminds us in *The Paper Canoe* (1995), in the autumn of 1934, The Royal Academy of Italy organized a prestigious world conference on the theatre:

Jacques Copeau sends a text which is to become famous and in which he speaks of the future of the theatre as a popular art. He foresees that it will be either Marxist or Christian, or else will disappear. Meyerhold is absent, officially because of illness. Almost all the other names of dramatic literature, direction, stage design, architecture and historiography are present: Reinhardt, Yeats, Maeterlinck, Marinetti, Beijer... The Congress is presided over by Pirandello. Gordon Craig was not one of the official delegates. Publicly, he did no more than defend regional Italian actors who performed in their own dialects and who were an embarrassment to fascist solemnity. In discussion with Walter Gropius, he defended the autonomy of the director against the tendencies of a creative but constrictive theatre architecture. Finally, he gave a short lesson to Silvio D'Amico, the leading intellectual of the Italian theatre and the real inspiration behind the Congress. The idea was circulating at the Congress that in order to overcome the crisis which was crippling world dramaturgy, one could turn to architects for help. Would a new stage architecture be able to produce a new way of writing for the stage? The idea was not banal (Copeau had made the same proposal). D'Amico insisted emphatically that it was a misleading idea. Craig responded:

Mr. D'Amico has quoted a statement by Mr. Bernard Shaw which probably dates back to about fifty years ago, and which is perhaps one of the most diffuse lies since the world of business began. It has to do with the claim that drama gives birth to theatres but a theatre does not give birth to drama. Mr. D'Amico has reported Shaw's statement and pointed his finger at a little architectural model for a big theatre made of bricks, wood and stone. It is probable that theatre buildings have been constructed (with a little help from architects) by the work of dramatists. But the theatre preceding the drama and which is the only theatre that counts was not and is not a building, it is the sound of the voice—the expression of the face—the movements of the body—of the person—that is, the actor, if you please!

The actor of whom Craig is speaking is not a man or woman in his/her naturalness and spontaneity. It is s/he who embodies an architecture in motion: a Form". (Barba 103).

For Barba, training is one of the ways in which Craig 's ideas take concrete form. When I reflect on the concept and use of a physical score as one element (among others) of the creative process, I resonate somehow with Barba's observation, "A theater before the drama, an architecture in motion" (Barba 111). For me, a score is nothing but a somatic response and a poetic transposition of embodied material (see Jacques Lecoq 's *The Poetic Body*). The source materials from which a score is composed can be almost anything: a piece of music, a photograph, a painting, a poem, a memory, a texture, etc..Every material contains a potential movement dynamic within and the work I do with the actors is to investigate all these movement qualities. Once the material is in motion, our work as devisers is to distill the material in order to keep the richest parts, find a performative language that can serve as a container for the material and start playing with it. In due time, the material will turn into concrete images that will serve as the basis for a montage. It is the performer's association of

thoughts to the chosen material that function as the trigger for the composition of a physical score. They have, as Barba has outlined, certain characteristics: a clear beginning, middle and an end. As Roberta Carreri (foot note) always mentions in her training sessions, once a movement finds its “intention”, it becomes an “action. Hence, we end up with a ‘Dance of Intentions’. Barba adds:

The beginnings and ends must be precise and blend together by means of leaps of energy in a score which is experienced as an organic flow. When a performer behaves in this manner, s/he usually experiences a significant change in the way of perceiving and thinking of what s/he is doing. Some performers say that at this point ‘images start to come into’ their minds. Others claim that when what they are doing ‘works’, the distance between the head, which is giving the orders, and the body, which is carrying out those orders, disappears. Others add: The body leads and the mind follows after.’ Still others say: ‘It is the body which is thinking: the shoulders, the elbows, the knees, the spine. . . “A perceptive change also takes place in the mind of the observer; s/he no longer sees a body doing exercises, but a human being intervening in space. These observers feel they must decipher what they are seeing. Some are bold enough to believe that what they are deciphering in the performer’s actions is actually the content of something objective. Others are more in doubt: ‘Am I projecting my images on what s/he is doing? Or is it s/he who is projecting them?’ (Barba 112).

The notion of physical score is likely to have been influenced by three practitioners: Stanislavsky, Meyerhold and Jerzy Grotowski. However, Stanislavski’s concept of the “score of a role”, differs from Barba in the sense that for Stanislavsky, the score is based on a given script to be performed and upon the ideas actors have about their characters³. In contrast, Barba’s physical scores are created by the performer’s personal response to a given material or theme chosen either by the director or actors themselves. In other words, the score does not necessarily relate to a given script/text but mainly the actor’s imagination and associations in relation to a given material. Another important influence Barba may have had in his use of physical scores is Meyerhold’s notion of ‘biomechanics’. As Elena Masoero notes in her research on Barba and the creation of a performance, “Biomechanics focused on the details of every single action, the concept of rhythm, and the correct positioning of the body’s center of gravity. It also sought to eliminate all superfluous movements. These were all aspects that were taken into consideration by Barba as requisite principles to follow either in his actors’ phase of physical training, or in their creation of the physical score. Furthermore, a parallel can be made between Barba’s concept of physical score and Meyerhold’s “pattern of movements”. Meyerhold wrote:

The essence of human relationships is determined by gestures, poses, glances and silences. Words alone cannot say everything. Hence there must be a pattern of movements on the stage to transform the spectator into a vigilant observer to furnish him with the material. . .which helps him to grasp the feeling of the character.

Meyerhold’s precise and detailed pattern of physical actions or movements was to be considered the first step in creating a role. The actor was invited to start from the “outside” and not from the “inside”. The actor’s emotional and psychological involvement and identification with his/her character was to be considered a consequence of a specific physical action. “Our system differentiates itself from others... We do not start from

³ This was the basis from which the method of physical actions derived and that Stanislavski subsequently elaborated in 1935.

psychology in order to get to the movement, but we proceed the other way around⁴. Furthermore he maintained, “If the ‘form’ is correct and precise, then the tones and feelings will also be precise because they are determined by precise physical actions”. Barba’s physical score embodies these same principles. (Masoero 32).

The other influence Barba had on his elaboration of the concept of score is Polish director Jerzy Grotowski, whom he assisted during his work on *Akropolis* after Stanislaw Wyspiański and *The Tragical History of Dr Faustus* after Christopher Marlowe. Grotowski had written about the importance of a detailed and precise physical score of actions that helped to determine the expressiveness of the actor:

The search for artificiality. . . requires a series of additional exercises, forming a miniature score [my emphasis] for each part of the body. [...] The more we become absorbed in what is hidden inside us, in the excess, in the exposure, in the self penetration, the more rigid must be the external discipline; that is to say, the form and the artificiality, the ideogram, the sign. Here lies the whole principle of expressiveness. (Masoero 34).

In my work as a theater practitioner, (I train actors/actresses regularly in physical theater and I collaborate actively as a physical theater coach; moreover, I also direct my own projects), I use the physical score, as mentioned before, as a backbone of any performance project. It is “the way in” to the work. I would even say that physical scores contain within themselves all the necessary dramaturgical material for a piece to be created. From the form will emerge all the shapes of a story, the characters, the tone, the rhythm and the emotions. It is also worth mentioning that although the concept of physical score has appeared, as explained, in the work of theater practitioners like Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Grotowski and Barba, among others, the way I approach and use scores in my artistic practice is the result of my own research and experimentation with performers. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge the legacy of the aforementioned practitioners in my current work and make a distinction between their approaches and techniques and my own work since I do not attempt to replicate or reformulate their artistic and pedagogical approaches but rather to forge new and genuine ways of using certain concepts that have been present in the theatrical tradition for about a century.

Step 1

The actors receive a prompt to explore a given site using a psychogeographic approach, games. They are all invited to record impressions in the way they prefer. This could be done taking photographs, drawing, painting, recording sounds, composing music, writing some basic words. The exploration of the site takes place alone or in groups of two. Occasionally, the company splits in two large groups and they explore together. They must do at least three explorations which I call Drifts (from the french *Derive*). After these explorations are done, all actors meet in the rehearsal space and present their material to the cohort.

Following the presentation, I ask each actor to create a movement score based on the experience (s) they had with the site. Once they present their score, we begin to integrate all the materials they gathered into a movement sequence. The creation of a movement score will depend on the actors ‘s experience. Actors can take simple scores as points of departure in order to refresh the basic notions of ‘scoring’. This enhances the actors ‘s capacities to

⁴ Meyerhold, ‘Lecture at GEKTEMAS (State Experimental Theatre Institute)’, January 18 1929, in Meyerhold, ‘Directing Lectures’, 1993, p. 102. See also Meyerhold, ‘La bio-mécanique’, 1963, p.171.

develop physical memory in order to repeat different segments of the score. Once actors stop ‘thinking’ about what they need to do (what movement/s come first, directions, size, intensity of movement, etc..), they can begin to play with the material. This is a fundamental aspect of the work since the essence, the soul of the project, is what Jacques Lecoq and Philippe Gaultier used to refer to as “le jeu” (‘the game’). This aspect raises a basic question: What does it mean to play with material? How to play with all the recorded impressions? What poetic universes do they propel? What associations appear in the space and how do they manifest poetically?

After all scores are presented in the space, the actors observe the material and embody each score. The principles of amplification and essentialization are used as a complement to the proposed movement sequences. Furthermore, the notion of ‘objective and subjective’ eye is used to begin exploring variables and alterations of the original scores. Once all the material finds its way into the space, we start the devising process. Identifying the most fertile, interesting, rich and playful images requires a considerable amount of time and repetition. The process is treated like a palimpsest, we work in layers. The selection of the scores/images is a careful process that results from a detailed observation of each score/image, its variables and poetic combinations and the plasticity each image contains in relation to (a): the general dramaturgical notion of the piece and (b): the compositional logic of each fragment.

Step 2: Installation

Each actor/actress creates an installation around their site research. This installation consists mainly of objects and should not include any real body in the space. Each installation has a title chosen by the actor/actress that created it. Once all the installations are created, we construct a spatial map and observe each installation in a particular order. As the observation takes place, we take notes based on each installation (what associations they propose, what is/are the universes they contain, themes, ideas, colors, sounds, shapes. In other words, what is the poetic body of each installation). Even though the map of the installations is arbitrary, it provides an initial idea of order and/or sequence. Based on this initial idea or draft, we can start reflecting on how all the

installations/images dialogue with each other spatially, aesthetically, thematically and rhythmically. Each installation receives a title or a name and is photographed and included in the “first draft” folder. Subsequently the installations may change and be modified taking elements from other images, adding new material that result from personal associations or they may just be reformulated. The option of creating a movement score based on each installation/image and the ‘installation map’ is also an option at this stage of generating material.

Step 3: Embodied images

Actors create embodied images from each installation. Each actor/actress must choose a cast to embody their images/installations and direct the composition of each image.

The whole group looks at each proposal.

Step 4: Variations

Once all the images are presented, each performer presents one variation on each image. A variation is a reformulation of the original image. It may contain all the elements/objects of the original image or it can zoom into one object or even a few objects. The variable should

attempt to contain the essence of the original image but its reformulation is open. An alternative could be to work around variables in a more 'formal' approach (keeping as much of the original as possible with slight modifications) or in a more open approach where all combinations are possible. Each image receives a title and so do all variables.

Step 5: Testing

We test each image and variations in order to choose the most interesting ones. As it is the case with the scores, this part of the process is rather time consuming since all variables are tested and possible combinations are explored, opening new dramaturgical options as the process moves along. In the devising process, we select all the images that we consider to be the chore of the project. After the selection is made, we start working primarily with these images as the backbone of the whole piece.

Step 6: Montage

The next step is the creation of a montage of all images/variations. For the montage, we create new images that serve as transitions for the existing ones. Unlike some of the images that are more thematically oriented, the transitions may result from strictly rhythmic reasons so that a flow between the images is created.

Step 7: Flow

We work on finding the most interesting order of the montage. An optimal order of a montage is a sequence that works well rhythmically. Even if thematically or spatially this may create challenges, having a solid rhythmic foundation is key to the flow of the montage. Only when the montage is fluid, actors can begin to play and improvise upon it. If a montage is very linear, logical or merely psychological, it may not offer as many playful possibilities for the actors to drift off the original sequence (which is one of the intended objectives of the project).

Step 8: Transitions

Work on transitions between images. Construction of new sequences integrating the transitions.

Step 9: Text

Creation of text/s, music and set designs taking the sequence as a point of departure.

Step 10: Design

Light, make up and costume design.

Step 11 (optional)

Meeting with playwrights to create complimentary written scenarios.

Step 12: Rehearsal

Rehearsal process.

Step 13: Open rehearsal

Open Rehearsal sessions.

Step 14: Performance

Work-in-progress showing.

EXAMPLES OF DRIFTS/PERFORMANCES

In the fall of 2019 the Theatre Department at Columbia College Chicago has invited me to lead a project with their cohort. Using psychogeography as a container, the students were given instructions to create their own set of prompts to guide them on a series of drifts around the city of Chicago. One of the participants was Zoe Rose Kriegler-Wenk. Here is a summary of Zoe 's experience as being part of the *Drift* project. “Each drift lasted roughly 3-4 hours and varied widely in terms of location, approach and documentation. Some students were guided by church steeples, some by the roll of the dice, and one by the keen nose and instincts of a trusted pet. As they walked, students shot videos, took photographs, recorded audio and collected found objects from the side of the road. Some dressed to blend in and others to stand out - one student wore a formal suit for the duration of a drift, claiming that it was easier for him to get away with small acts of subversion if he was dressed in the attire most commonly associated with high status and authority. Another participant was Anthony Hudson. Anthony recalls:

I woke up at 7a.m., walked to the ironing board I pre-set the night before, and started ironing a burgundy three-piece. It was a day to do three things against my grain—wear a suit, wake up early, and steal something. Within an hour I was looking sharp and in the South Loop, ordering a coffee to escort me on my Drift. I asked the barista to point me in a direction. One block west, then north. I set off, looking for my target. Two hours later, there was a sign. A literal sign. A City of Chicago sign. I'd imagined the context of this moment the night before. How does someone get away with stealing in a public place? My hypothesis was that he dresses well, has confidence, and makes the confiscation in broad daylight. I was correct. I successfully managed to nab it, ride the 'L' (*Chicago transit system*), and get back to our studio space with no interruption. This experience was remarkably important later in my

work in the studio. The character I created was a tale of two worlds. My upper body was dressed in coattails and lower in pajama bottoms. In the opening montage, I dragged a mattress from one point of the stage to another, looking for the right place to sleep. I increasingly became less settled, to the point of flipping and tumbling with the mattress, all the while unnoticed by the other characters. This half suited, half pajama clad individual was a twirl of my suit experience and a separate Drift experience with Chicago's vast homeless population. In the simplest terms, both their actions can be overlooked but for remarkably different reasons.

As Zoe points out, "For many of the participating students, all of whom had recently arrived in Chicago after studying abroad in Berlin, this psychogeographical expedition became their introduction to a new city. The night before I returned to the United States, I took a walk: retracing the journey from my very first AirBnB, to my starter apartment on the other side of town, and then back to the third-floor apartment on Greifenhagenerstrasse that I had come to associate with the fleeting concept of "home." The act of walking - of reliving my own integration into the city - became a farewell ritual and an acknowledgment of my relationship to Berlin. Retracing my steps through touchstones of emotional resonance allowed me to place my complex emotions about leaving into an embodied, spatial frame. It is fitting then, that a similar frame would act as my guide to a new home" I came to Chicago a stranger; still carrying bits of my previous homes like gum stuck to the heel of my shoe. When I began walking, I did not know Chicago as anything beyond a postcard snapshot. If I was going to get to know the city in all her imperfect intimacies, I needed an entry point, a way in, a big, red "YOU ARE HERE," sticker with enough emotional resonance to keep me engaged, active, and curious. I needed to let the city become familiar by layering the places I already held dear onto her streets. I did not set out with this in mind. Only now do I realize how essential the juxtaposition (*detournement*), the melding, the clash of past and present was to my experience. Only now, can I begin to apply that microcosmic epiphany to a larger historical and performative context. The relationships of our bodies to the spaces they inhabit are infinitely vast and complex. We are forever renegotiating the contracts we have with public spaces; whether in the case of city-sanctioned demolition and construction, tagging, street art or something else entirely. Some of us position our bodies in front of trucks to protect structures we deem sacred, and some march down the center of crowded city streets with the goal of sparking change. Our claim to these public spaces is by no means equal. Psychogeographical tradition idealizes the role of the drifter from the perspective of white, male bodies; a demographic whose safety is unthreatened by its exposure to the public gaze. The female *flaneur* or *flaneuse*, was inherently sexualized and the title came with an assumption that her claim to the streets was a form of prostitution. In 2015, in response to a wave of police brutality directed at black Americans, Ta-Nehisi Coates writes: "The streets transform every ordinary day into a series of trick questions, and every incorrect answer risks a beat-down, a shooting, or a pregnancy. No one survives unscathed." For some, the city is for afternoon strolls, impulsive adventures, or family outings; for others they represent a history of institutionalized violence, poverty and crime. Psychogeography prompts us to think critically about the relationship of our bodies to the city and reminds us to be wary of the human tendency to stop at the theoretical. The notion of "writer as walker" asks us to engage the body, and to continue forward until we learn to locate a sense of agency in the deceptively simple task of observation.

PANKOW

58

Bornholmer Str.

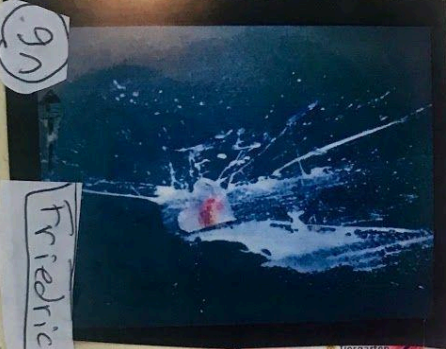
52

Tempelhofer Feld



Gesundbrunnen

9a



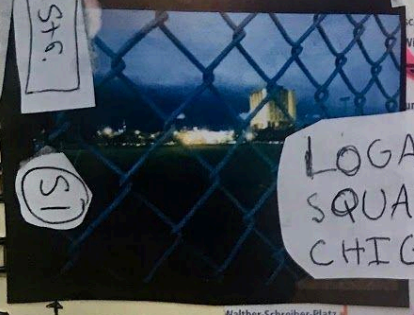
Friedrich Stg.



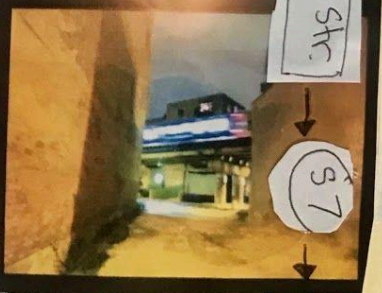
52

Friedrich Str.

51

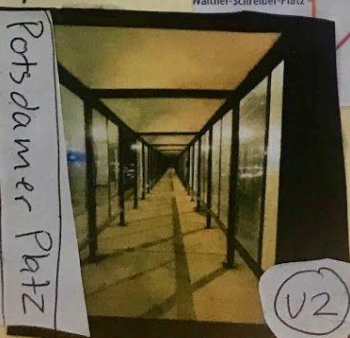


LOGAN 8:30pm
SQUARE 9/16/19
CHICAGO, IL



57

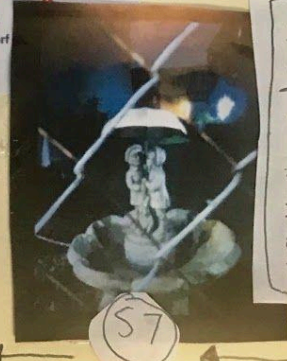
Potsdamer Platz



V2



Zoologischer Garten



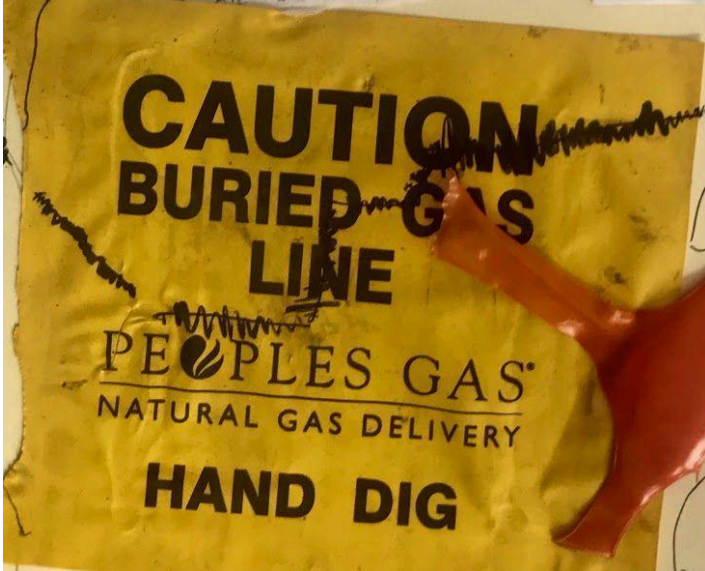
57

Hauptbahnhof

... I kept
blankets during the day... My huge
... looming... teetering sweet
FANNY. I ASKED YOU TO STOP! G
YOU PLEASE GET HER TO STOP!
GARDNER. See here, Mags, Mum asked yo
MAGS. I was so... hungry... losing we
looked like a scarecrow what with the bags u
bits of crayon wrapper leaking out of my clot
... didn't notice. But finally you came to my
... what happened a rescue. It was more lik
... ANNY... writing... please!
GARDNER
... lady...
Mags... winter was almost over
... I must have been having a n
suddenly and Daddy were at my bed, s
quickly moved toward the radiator to see
... If it was the radiator and towered in th
some... Mamma... Mamma! You follow
HERE?... MAGS, WHY... HAV
... She crept forward... it, and th
"IT'S FOOD!" she cried... ALL. IF
BEEN SPITTING OUT... RDNER
TAIN OF ROTTING
FANNY. (Softly.) Yes... coming bak
back...

... it flushed
...ning to you:
out that got pretty
... something to do. It
... as wintertime because I noticed I'd left some crayons on top
f my radiator and they'd melted down into a beautiful
... shimmering globs, like spilled jello, trembling and
GARDNER. (Eyes closed.) "This luscious and impenetrable
... of life
... calls, it appears, of its own weight to earth..."
MAGS. Naturally, I wanted to try it myself, so I grabbed a red
one and pressed it down against the hissing lid. It oozed and
bubbled like raspberry jam!
GARDNER. "When you were Eve, its acrid juice was sweet,
... tasted, in its heavenly, orchard air..."
MAGS. I mean, that radiator was really hot! It took incredi-
... willpower not to let go, but I held on, whispering, "Mags, if
... wherry Street, so help you God!" ... So I pressed down
der, my fingers steaming and blistering...
ANNY. I had no idea about any of this, did you, Gar?
... MAGS. Once I'd melted one, I was hooked! I finished off my
... supply in one night, mixing color over color until my
... swam...! The heat, the smell, the brilliance that sank
... rose...! I'd never felt such exhilaration!... Every week I
... my allowance on crayons. I must have cleared out every
... of Cravolas in the city!

1. Open to random page and
~~... the first line y
... see.~~
... If you go to a
... Page, then you
... will be... if you ope
... to cr... your next
turn will be right.
3. Cant the number of
words in your line. The
number of words is the num
of cross streets before y
turn left or right.
4. If the line ends in a
period, you must obey the
above rules.
5. If the line ends in a
"?" you may choose not
to follow instructions.
6. If the line ends in
an "!" you may continue to
use this rule for a 2nd turn!
7. Speak line loud as you walk!



Main Form of
Documentation
of 1st 2
hours -
And
Re

Fullerton Station - Re
line - 4PM
...
... = conversation
levels
Lincoln Park Hotel - Clar
8PM

Naples: The Body as a Place, The City as a Body

In 2021/2022, I directed a research project based on Psychogeography led by Ilaria de Luca, an Italian actress from Naples. Ilaria became interested in this topic after her experience living in different cities like Cairo, Barcelona and Berlin whilst retaining Naples as her base. In regards to the Naples project, Ilaria recalls:

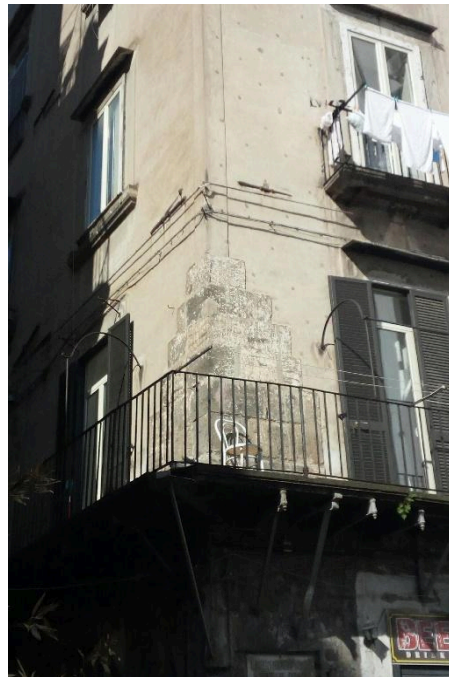
I have always tried to establish a dialogue with Naples. However, not understanding what emotions I felt, I had little agency within the dialogue with “my motherland”. Sometimes I wanted to reject it, at others I felt rejected, sometimes I felt that it would be the only place where I would ever feel at home, at others I felt completely drowned and trapped, but there was no dialogue, everything was happening within myself or to myself.



*At every shrine turn right
At every church turn left*



*At every greengrocer walk with eyes closed for 10 minutes
(helped by your partner)*



*Every 20mins stop for 2mins to look up
At every statue stop to record a sound*



In my last journeys through Naples I began to see the city as a body with different skins and organs and I decided to put the body of the city, its different spaces, in relation to parts of my own body, the body that I am.

This is how, in April, I had the idea to gather a group of Neapolitan friends of my age that were interested in my research. I was intrigued by the different interpretations of the symbolic nature of some places, quarters of the city and the game in itself. Before starting the game, I led a meditation for the group to awaken a more sensitive communication with the body.

I then asked them to do different exercises. The first one was to draw themselves and link each body part to a place in Naples. The second step was to write two letters: the first one to a part of the body and the other to a part of the city. The third and last step was to write a letter about Naples as if they were somebody else: either a person on the point of death, or a person of faith, a person with a broken heart, a politician, a drunk, a character with magical powers. This last step was very interesting because every place of the city they were writing about assumed a metaphor or amplified the emotions felt by the character they were playing. I reorganized their works in a GIS on Google-Earth by placing each letter in the part of the city it was inspired by. For example if someone had written a letter to his/her eyes and he or she had previously connected the eyes to a determined square, I would place their letter there.

I was deeply moved by the vulnerability with which my old and new friends participated in the research. I was moved by their surprise at finding themselves writing and drawing after so long, confiding brief memories, apologizing to and thanking the body and, by extension, Naples. I realized that it is not common to open a space where one can dialogue so intimately with the city, free from the stereotypical discourse of love and hate for it.

I think that relating the city to the body has two effects:

- 1. To see the city as a living body and not only as a background of our lives*
- 2. To begin to question how the landscape of a city (shaped and inevitably interconnected with its history and culture) has an effect on the body.*

I have the strong feeling that, in the same way we live in a place, the place lives in us, in our movements, in our train of thoughts. For example, different spaces provoke different daydreams, different interactions within ourselves and between the people around us. We can then ask ourselves “Why do I go only to certain parts of a city? What is there that is in tune with my way of moving, thinking? Why do I avoid some others? Do they put me in conversation with what I refuse to listen to within myself?”

Every place has different ages, stories, layers, functions that provoke something completely different inside us. In the game I did with my friends I realized how interested I am in trying to create a space where listening to oneself is central to finding a new sensitivity towards places.

As a result of this project, a show came to life. “Comme se fa’?” (How do you do it?) a performance Ilaria created in collaboration with French actress Lucy Fourgs for the Arthaus Berlin Festival 2022. Ilaria recalls: “I cannot precisely say when or how the process of creation for this performance began, but I know that I actively started working on it when I went back to Naples in April 2022 to “drift” and play the games of embodied writing with my friends”.

As I was drifting through the city of Naples, three spaces of the city particularly caught my

attention. The first one is the "vascio". In Neapolitan a "vascio" is a small apartment on the ground floor whose only source of light and air is the generally open door or, at most, a small window, which overlook a secondary street. The space in front of the "vascio" is an extension of the house on the street, where you can hang out clothes or sit outdoors under the eyes of all passers-by. Often framed by plants or by railings and canopies, this space is a place where private and public meet and are in constant dialogue. For this reason, to me this space is highly symbolic because it is the place where intimacy meets the city.



The second are its stairways. There are over 200 stairways in Naples that vertically connect its historical center to the parts of the city that now sprawl on the hills. "In such a chorography, the slopes, the stairs and the ramps get to be natural connections. Ancient paths, more or less steep and articulated, which not only physically cut the urban fabric, but which also have determined its historical form and its evolution." (Guida Ed, 2013: p.9). From this quotation we understand how the stairways, not only have been originally constructed for a human need, but that, by following the landscape with its hills and ancient dried rivers, the stairs themselves have given shape to the evolution of Naples, constituting a proper spine for the body of the city.



The third space is the view of the sea. Thanks to the slopes of Naples a lot of the city has access to the sea view. Even the “vasci”, on the ground floor, often have the sea view. Some of the “vasci” are excavated in the tuff (volcanic soil), under the slopes that go up the hills. While they have no window on three sides of the house, they have the fourth wall facing a breathtaking panorama. This view is always an invitation to leave, to escape and at the same time, with its rhythm and beauty, enchants to stay.

“A Fenesta” by Eduardo de Filippo fully embodies this image:

E tengo na fenesta a pianterreno, My window on the ground floor,
c'affaccia int' a na strada scanusciuta; Overlooks an unknown street;
cu n'aria profumata, e na veduta, There is such a perfume in the
ca si t'affacce, nun t' 'a scuorde cchiù. air, and such a beautiful view. that if you look
out, you will never forget it.

[...]

Quanno senza speranza, e senz'ammore When without hope, & with no love
m'affaccio e vec' 'o stesso bastimento, I look out and I see the same ship,
nce mengo dinto 'o core mio scuntento, I throw in it my discontented heart,
e c' 'o mare ntempesta dico: Va. And with the stormy sea I say to it: Go.

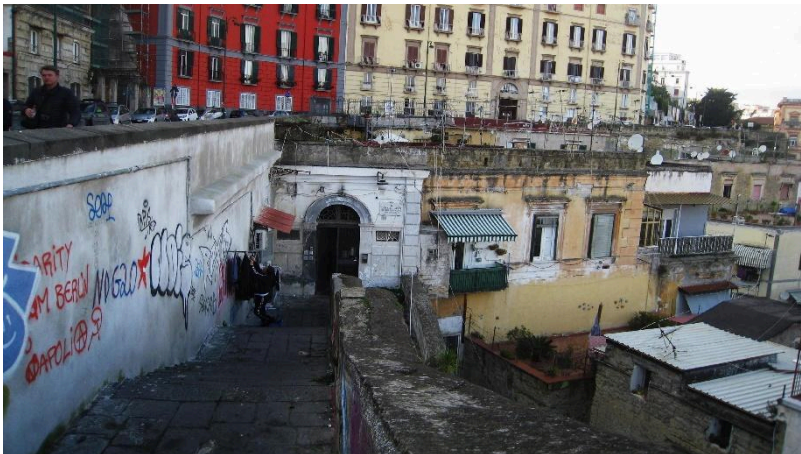
[...]

(De Filippo, 1947)

The way I use the space in my performance is a translation of the inner and spatial movements I have experienced during my drifts in Naples. By inner movements I mean the dynamic of the emotions that Naples provokes in me.

While by spatial movements I mean the up and downs, the curves, the cuttings through of my drifts in Naples.

I used the space in front of the “vascio” as the setting of my performance. To me it evokes the type of space that the clown opens: always very intimate and yet in continuous dialogue with “a public” (intended as people) or with “the public” (intended as the space).



FINAL NOTES

On May 2, I presented at SKH in Stockholm a show called *Timelag: corpographies in motion*. This show was the result of a psychogeographic project around the city of Stockholm. The first public show constitutes the initial and main layer of the project. The continuation of this project will depend mainly on funding and availability of the performers. In addition, I

have been involved in the creation of a project titled *Grounded*, directed by Israeli artist Shai Cohen. A first version of *Grounded* was presented at Arthaus Berlin and it opened as a full performance at Acre theater festival in Israel in October 2023. As part of the research for this show, Shai has conducted research at a Neot Smadar, a Kibbutz in southern Israel, located in the Arava Desert.

REFERENCES

- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*, Beacon Press (1994 edition).
- Barba, Eugenio, *The Paper Canoe*, Routledge, London, 1995.
- Benjamin, Walter. *Berlin Childhood Around 1900*. Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. New York :Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978.
- Chtcheglov, Ivan. 'Formulary for a New Urbanism' (1953).
- Coverley, Melvin. *Psychogeography*, Pocket Essentials (2006).
- Debord, Guy. *Theory of the Derive*. Internationale Situationniste #2 (Paris, December 1958)
- De Luca, Ilaria. *IRP project*. Arthaus Berlin, 2022.
- Greil, Marcus. *The long walk of the Situationist International*. Village Voice, 1982.
- Knabb, Ken.(Ed and Trans) *Situationist International Anthology* (1981).
- Kriegler-Wenk Zoe Rose. *The Passage of a Few People Through a Brief Unity of Time. Theatrical Applications of Psychogeography To a Contemporary Cityscape*. 2022.
- Lecoq, Jacques. *The moving body*. Methuen Drama; Reprint New Cover edition, 2011.
- Masoero, Elena. *The director 's folly: Eugenio Barba and the creation of a performance*. Proquest, 2017.
- Quaderns de l'Institut del teatre. DOSSIER 44: Teatre i ciutat . Escenografies preexistents. Theatre and City. Pre -existing Scenographies. December 2019, Barcelona.

Sadler, Simon. *The Situationist City*, MIT Press (1999).

Sansone, Vincenzo: The Site-Specific Projects of Teatro Potlach: The City as Set Design and Dramaturgy. ESTUDIS ESCÈNICS. núm. 44. Barcelona, December, 2019.