

Preface

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The DREX project (*Space, Theatre & Experience – Novel Forms of Evental Space*, 2009–2012) was a co-operation project between three research units at the University of Tampere, Finland: The Centre for Practise as Research in Theatre, TAUCHI (Tampere Unit for Computer-Human Interaction) and Theatre and Drama Research. Its national and international partners included the research project Figures of Touch (e.g. Theatre Academy and Aalto University, Finland); Arts Technology Research Laboratory at the School of Drama, Film and Music (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland); School of Theatre, Performance and Cultural Policy Studies (University of Warwick, UK); School of English, Media Studies and Art History (University of Queensland, Australia); Creative Industries Faculty (Queensland University of Technology, Australia) and School of Computing (Teesside University, UK).

Working at what Chris Salter (2010) would call the “entanglement” of technology with performative practises, a key to the project was the notion of *evental space*. In practise, it aimed at creating and conceptualizing novel ways of experiencing, utilizing, and re/modeling constructed, natural and virtual milieus (whether in cultural, educational, entertainment, or simulation contexts) by planning, demonstrating, and analyzing theatrical applications of multimodal, intelligent, and pervasive technology. More theoretically, the term *evental* here refers to a conception of *space* according to which the reciprocal *agencies* of human and nonhuman actants generate novel *experiences* of said concepts and more; hence also the open access e-publication at hand.

Apart from reporting research in and around DREX, on a variety of virtually augmented performance practises, this publication is intended as something of an “augmented reality check” on how our notions of *technology*, *virtuality*, *mediatization* and so on go with those outlined above: SPACE, EVENT, AGENCY, and EXPERIENCE – in theory or practise, yet mainly in the context of theatre or performance. Where the initial CFP invited short articles/essays/entries on said concepts (for or against, entangled together or focusing on one – whether the author preferred to contemplate their history and philosophical import or offer specific case studies on their current uses), the array of essays we present cover a wide range of theory and practise indeed: from cutting-edge mobile technologies in “alternate reality games” to low-tech video art, from philosophies of *mimesis* to human geography and cognitive studies, from Baroque “virtuality” to motion capture as a means of approaching early modern theatre.

The first three essays can be seen as specifically problematizing notions of EVENTNESS and SPATIALITY – in scenography, performance art, and the “cognitive ecology” of dramaturgy, respectively. In her contribution, “Scenographic Strategies and Communication,” Laura Gröndahl traces general changes in scenography (as event and epistemology) while Annette Arlander, in “Performing Time Through Place,” focuses on her own durational practise of filming her set activities on a Fin-

nish island, once a week throughout the Chinese year of the ox. Where Gröndahl applies Tobin Nellhaus's work on communication practices (itself drawing on Lakoff and Johnson's notion of image schemas) to delineate a key shift in scenography from metaphors of text to those of platforms and the like, Arlander discusses her repeated performances as an attempt at capturing on video the "event of place," with Doreen Massey and Tim Ingold as her prime theorists. Massey and Ingold also figure prominently in Teemu Paavolainen's "Textures of Thought: On Dramaturgy, Cognitive Ecology, and Evental Space"; with further reference to S.C. Pepper's contextualist aesthetics and ecological/enactive notions of cognition, the event of place here becomes a dramaturgical function of performative "textures" and their "interweaving."

With Janne Tapper's "Bodies in Virtual Simulations: Politics in the Age of Information and New Capitalism," a shift is made toward shifting ideas of *virtuality* – in his essay, related to more political spheres of AGENCY and EXPERIENCE. Drawing on Jon McKenzie and sociologists like Sennett, Lash, and Urry, Tapper equates the virtual with a technologized ethos of performance capacity, and finds it opposed to the "human body" whose mere "entrance" may "collapse" its illusions, specifically in the scene/context of work and work places; his examples range from a Baroque arcade in Rome to Jouko Turkka's era at the Theatre Academy of Finland from 1982 to 1985.

With implicit or explicit reference to the key concepts EVENT and EXPERIENCE, the last three contributions survey historical, technological, narrative and philosophical implications of AGENCY and SPACE, whether virtual, intermedial, playful, or mimetic. They address the idea of performance based on anthropocentric comprehension and the (often cognate) problematics that arise when performative, educational or playful environments are geared up with virtual and mobile technologies.

In "Reproduction, Mediation, and Experience," Matthew Delbridge and Joanne Tompkins focus on the digital re/creation – or "historically-informed 're-enactment'" – of historical performance and performance venues with real time motion capture (mocap) technology, and with purpose-built 3D virtual reality environments. Exemplifying the paper's arguments with their research on a detailed 3D virtual model of the early modern Rose Theatre in London, and with mocap work on Christopher Marlowe's *Dr Faustus*, Delbridge and Tompkins consider how this strategy might contribute not only to the study of historical and contemporary performance, but to rethinking the performer-audience relationship and the prevailing perceptions of "space, performance, and memory." Consequently, the paper also contemplates how the Benjaminian concept of *aura* might be reconciled with the "reproducibility" peculiar to digitisation, a condition embracing various experiential and economic issues.

"Narrative Friction in Alternate Reality Games" by Jaakko Stenros, Jussi Holopainen, Annika Waern, Markus Montola, and Elina Ollila introduces the publication to alternate reality games (ARG), and investigates the interaction of player activities with the story-driven game structures and pre-scripted storylines peculiar to the genre. Reporting on a particular ARG production named *Conspiracy For Good*, the paper reflects on the degrees of narrative friction that its realization generated not only between its story content and the players' live/on-site participation and EXPERIENCE, but

also between the modes of play specific to live and online participation. As a result, the writers suggest various design recommendations for similar future productions.

Lastly, Riku Roihankorpi's essay "Performing Exteriority" provides metaphysical, historical, theatrical, and ethical reflections on the relationship between virtuality and the concept of *mimesis*, with a purpose to problematize and widen the themes of AGENCY and SPACE mainly from the viewpoints of anthropocentric performance/EXPERIENCE and the problematic of the *real*. Drawing on various thinkers of mimesis, politics, performance, rhythmicity, and virtuality – from Plato and Aristotle to Elin Diamond, Esa Kirkkopelto, Susanna Lindberg, Samuel Weber, and Rob Shields – the essay participates in the discussions that aim at destabilizing established (and largely anthropocentric) conceptions of *subjectivity*, interiority, exteriority and *truth*.

Inasmuch as a similar affinity with destabilization – and with the consequent processes of reinstatement/recovery – colors all theorization, conceptualization, artistic activity, playfulness, and analysis, the following texts bear a fair share of it. Despite the overwhelming methodological possibilities that the themes of our publication afford, the contributions manage to bring out analytic viewpoints that reflect both long-standing traditions of thought – within artistic, technological, political, ethical, economic, creative, and media-oriented contexts – and methods of enquiry capable of transforming the mentioned traditions into novel and unprecedented lines of research.

Work Cited

Salter, Chris 2010 *Entangled. Technology and the Transformation of Performance*. Foreword by Peter Sellars. The MIT Press, Cambridge (MA) and London.