

EPsn

434

**A TANGIBLE ENVELOPE**

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# **A Tangible Envelope**

*An investigation on the relationship between Art Performances and Space*

Thesis I

By Dounia El-Cheikh

# OUTLINE:

## Introduction

### The Mask: Materiality of Theatre: *The methodology*

- Expression of certitude and power: *the mask as it is*
- Phenomena of the Ritual and the "liberal"
  - ↪ Ritual
    - Military March
    - Religious Walk
    - Parades
  - ↪ Liberal
    - Theatrical Performances
    - Nightclubs/concerts

### The Cubical Space

- Performer-spectator within a box: *an indoor dialogue*
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  - ↪ the transverse stage:
  - ↪ The promenade performance

- Inside performances: *case studies*
  - ↗ Taichung Metropolitan Opera House
  - ↗ Total Theatre
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- Body in space: *the body performance within the box*
- Smart Material: *a range of participatory materials*

**Spatial Movement:** *Architectural and human motion*

- Façade Performance: *performance on the skin and case studies*
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- Intersection of space: *dual/hybrid space and case studies*
  - ↗ Nationale-Nederlanden Building
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- Scenarios of every day life: *the everyday body code assigned in art performance*

**Dynamism:** *A Field Of Forces*

- Dialogue within the City: *performance and rituals in Manara*
- Public/Street Performance: *Case Studies: Venice Beach and Theatre d'Avignon*
- Body forms Space: *the body creating space around it*

## **Conclusion**

- ▣ Architecture following Art Performance: *Materials, program and users*
- ▣ The Site

## **Reference**

## **Acknowledgment**

## **Introduction**

All Art performances carry us in a realm that is detached from our daily lives, a realm where emotion and passion, whether it is upbeat or anger, is communicated ardently. Otherwise it gives us another alternative, another view of the everyday life. In both cases, these artistic expressions project, emphasize and re-define our emotions and our desires whatever the shape the art takes: Dance, Music, Chant and the theatres.

When we encounter an art performance of some sort, there is a personal dialogue between us and the performers. This conversation relies on emotion that we share but also it is a physical discourse. We perceive space differently when an art performance is occurring, since there is a direct contact with the presence of the body/ies in space. As Henri Bial has articulated in his definition of art performances "a tangible, **bounded** event that involves the presentation of rehearsed artistic actions", however in order to include the physical dialogue, we come across Jon Mitchell's "Performance is then a bodily practice in one way or another, individual or social, usually associated with **signifying acts** or **meaning**"<sup>1</sup>. Hence, those definitions relate to some extent to Michel Foucault's theory "Heterotopias"; the spaces are defined with the specific performances they symbolize and the ever-present bodily acts that they necessitate within them<sup>2</sup>. Thus, whether it is part of our everyday bodily code or part of an art performance, "It is always, consciously or not, staged, and it is thus always theatrical."<sup>3</sup> How does architecture play a role defining the rhythm of bodily relation? And how the body can perform in and against architecture?

The space changes according to the action that happens in it. This relates to one of Bernard Tschumi hypothesis in *Architecture and Disjunction*, in which he discusses how the events that occur in the architecture are responsible for how we define the architecture itself and how "architecture ceases to be a backdrop for actions, becoming the action itself".<sup>4</sup> The space is transformed according to the act through the performance within a box, the spatial movement of the action itself and the continuous change of the performance's activity. Therefore, **how performance can make us aware and allow us to re-define the typology of space?**

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<sup>1</sup> Harmansah, Omur . "Architecture, Body and Performance." Modernity, modernization and the body. September 20, 2006. <<http://proteus.brown.edu/architecturebodyperformance/444>>.

<sup>2</sup> Foucault, Michel. Des Espaces Autres. Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité , 1984.

<sup>3</sup> Hodder 2006: 85

<sup>4</sup> Tschumi, Bernard. Architecture and Disjunction

## **The Mask: Materiality of Theatre**

Antonin Artaud's text *Theatre of Cruelty* articulates and defines what a theatre should be: A combined world where sharing and continuous exchange is fatal for the action to live. "Every Spectacle will contain a physical and objective element, perceptible to all."<sup>5</sup> (Artaud 93)

From this text I extracted the feature of the mask, which represents the materiality of theatre. A mask can be thought as a transition from the propinquity of the face's expression to its distance, in the city level. In literal term, the mask correlates and complements with the face and conveys a defined expression.

The crucial need of participatory performance identified by Artaud in *Theatre of Cruelty* is associated with Oskar Schlemmer's concept. Schlemmer studied the body in space and formulated three elements of theatre: Man in Space, Light in Motion and Architecture. Many of his studies were concerned with the human form and its relationship to the space around it and also connected to the idea of costume. In "Means of Transforming the Human Body by the Use of Costume" 1920, Oskar Schlemmer discussed a closer study about how architecture, as the costume, can transform the body and hence the space around it<sup>6</sup>. Thus, the investigation will also develop on how the space affects the body and vice versa.

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<sup>5</sup> Artaud, Antonin. The Theatre and Its Double. New York: Grove Press Inc., 1958

<sup>6</sup> "Bauhaus and Oskar Schlemmer." expression image.  
<<http://www.english.emory.edu/DRAMA/HistDrama2/ExpressionImage.html>>.

## ▣ Expression of Certitude and Power

Masks are complementary to the users and it is used to characterize a specific expression that the user or the context wants to convey. In procession rites, masks communicate an element of power. It adorns the whole body and emphasizes the codified aspect of it.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The Mask. <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mask>>.

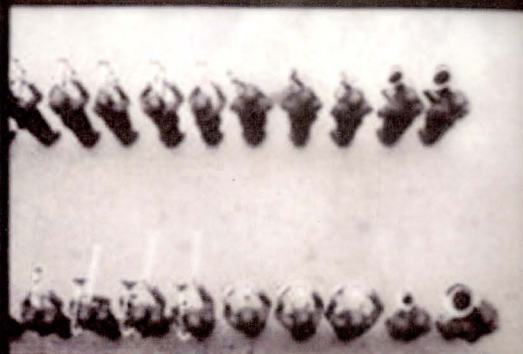
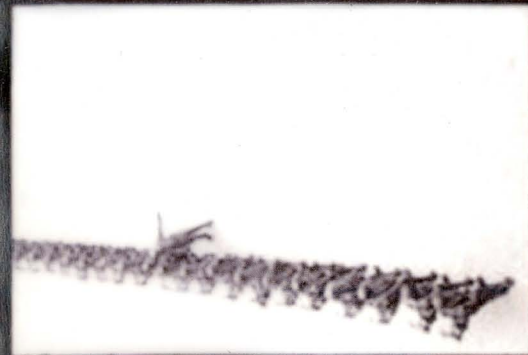


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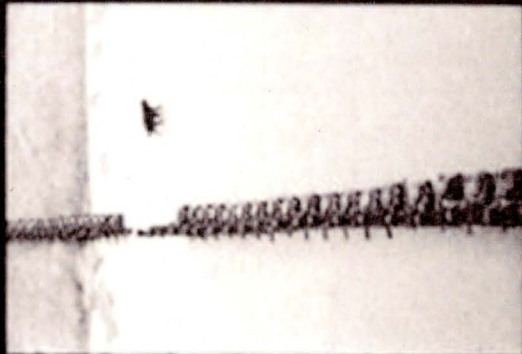
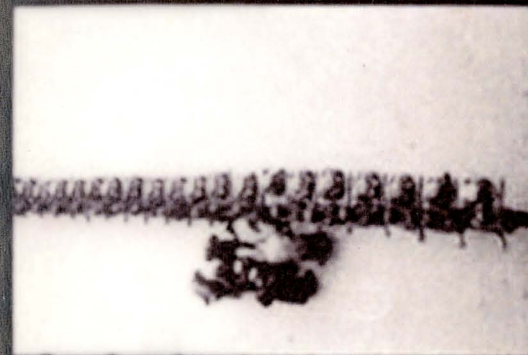
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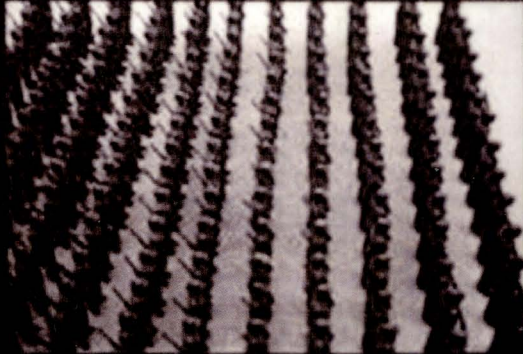
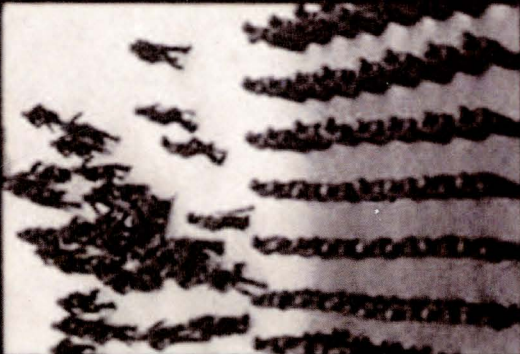
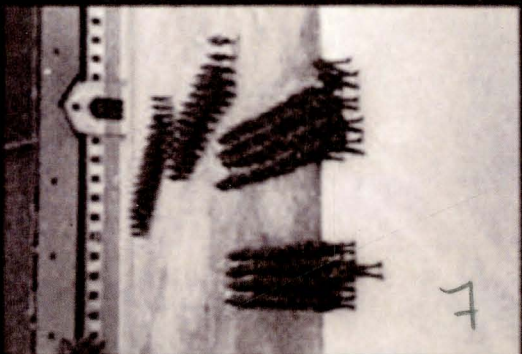
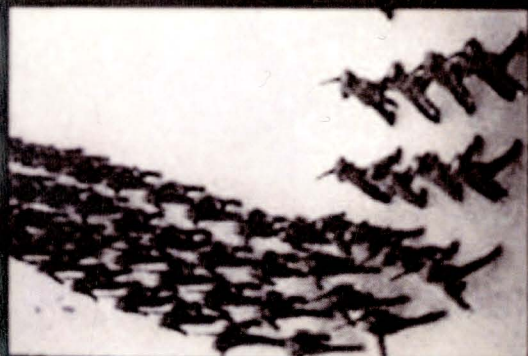
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## ■ Phenomena of Ritual and "Liberal"

### ➤ *Ritual*

A ritual is a repetition of occasion and form, loaded with symbolic meaning. Rituals are not a spontaneous form of performances: on the contrary, the ritual is regulated, set up and codified. As Antonin Artaud would put it "The spectacle will be calculated from one end to the other, like a code. Thus there will be no lost movements; all movements will obey a rhythm [...]"<sup>8</sup> (Artaud 98)

Ritual performances are most of the time religious ceremonies, however political march and parades are considered as ritual performances since they both express strongly the codified aspect of their procession. Moreover, they convey the element of power in their spectacle. Architecture's role in this type of performances provides and emphasizes the powerful aspect of these ceremonies and the parade grounds. Ritual performances are not only identified in ceremonies but also, according to Michel Foucault, are detected in facilities such as hospitals, prisons and museum. They demand different corporal practices than those we are used to in our everyday lives. When these spaces are entered, one would be required to perform and follow fervently the bodily code needed in these spaces. Within Beirut, the ritual performances take its different shape based on the typology of the space; the bounded performances that are happening in the "Corniche of Manara" on an everyday basis follows a different ritual than the one in a street café near by. Like P. Stallybrass and A. White wrote "coffeehouse, church, law court, library [...] each place of assembly is a different site of intercourse requiring different manners and morals" (the Politics and Poetic of Transgression, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986:80)<sup>9</sup>. Following are the examples of ritual performances.

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<sup>8</sup> Artaud, Antonin. The Theatre and Its Double. New York: Grove Press Inc., 1958

<sup>9</sup> Harmansah, Omur . "Architecture, Body and Performance." Modernity, modernization and the body. September 20, 2006. <<http://proteus.brown.edu/architecturebodyperformance/444>>.

- **Military March**

Parade Ground in Nuremberg: During the Nazi regime; Albert Speer, Hitler's personal Architect, designed political marches in Nuremberg (Wikipedia). It provides an intimidated large piazza which indicates an element of power, also the rigidity of the procession and the codified structure of the march gives this feeling of glorious and strict spectacle.

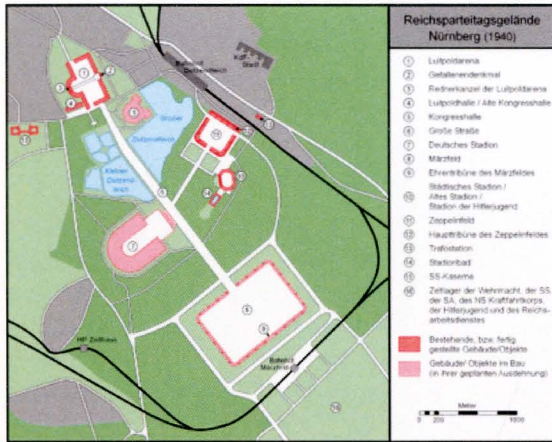


Figure 1: Nazi party rally grounds



Figure 2: strict procession

Another political/military performance is the Hezbollah parade: the guerilla group Hezbollah parades its army in a massive show. The procession follows a rigid code such as the parade of Nuremberg.



Figure 3: Hezbollah performance

- *Religious Walk*

The ritual performances we can find in Lebanon are the religious walk of Achoura. This celebration is truly involved with the rigid body codes performed in the space. It is required for the believers to flagellate themselves through the procession.



Figure 4: the Achoura Walk



Figure 5: rigid body code

- *Parades*

All parades are ritual performances; Such as Carnival, Gay Pride and all other festive parades.

The Techno parade: Although it adopts its spontaneous shape from the dance and the social practice that takes place; it is a structured event and the public are experiencing the space in a codified matter depending on the event. It is an atmosphere of chaos and tolerance, and the people involved have to conduct as such through the space.

In all of these ritual performances, the procession is directly felt. The promenade aspect of the performance gives emphasis to the rite and the expression of power.



Figure 6: Techno Parade

## "Liberal"

The term "liberal" performances may be problematic. Since most theatrical performances are not spontaneous in its form like in nightclubs; there are located in an organized framework with rehearsal and so forth. However the reason that the term "liberal" can still be applied is the fact that in ritual ceremonies the feeling of a structured organization is felt directly towards the spectator, in opposition with the theatrical performances, where the structure is hidden and it's the message that is important.

- *Theatrical performances*

In the theatrical performances, most of the time doesn't share and engage the body movement through space, (only from the performer's side); it feeds the eye and the ear. The theatrical performances are not necessarily defined in a particular space, as long as the place has a visual and hearing quality to it. Those theatrical performances could take place in streets, in amphitheatre and opera houses. There is a wide range; from Frederic Flammand "Metropolis" to the "nutcracker" to musical shows such as "west side story".

- *Nightclubs/concert*

Nightclubs and concert are part of the commercial sector of performances. The definition of a nightclubs or concert vary from person to person but in overall aspect, both of them are providing an entertainment space for music, free dancing, beverage consumption and social interactions. There are social gathering places within the same social group mostly, spaces of escape and excitement. Both of these performances are night spectacles, which transport the spectators in a trance by the music that they hear, the lights occurring in the space and the free body movement they carry through all night. In Lebanon, those types of night spectacles are located in two different areas, Monot and Gemeyzeh. The night spectacle in these streets are not limited in the inside structure but also outside in the streets. The movement of the users creates their own spectacle, such as a contest of who has a more worthy show to offer.

## *The Different types of Theatres:*

*Each kind of theatres serves a distinct purpose and target a definite public. In general, there is the local theatre and the national theatre.*

### *National Theatre*

### *Local Theatre:*

*Educational Theatre*

*Commercial Theatre*

*Children's Theatre*

*Puppet Theatre*

*Children' Traditional Shows Theatre*

*Special Theatre*

*Court Theatre*

*Experimental Theatre*

*Amateur Theatre*

## The Cubical Space

"The laws of the surrounding cubical space", is a sketch done by Oskar Schlemmer. It represents the cubical forms that are transformed to the human shape<sup>10</sup>. This illustration reveals that the body has a reciprocal relationship with its surrounding. "In fact it demonstrates little of the sort: the geometric lines Schlemmer traces correspond only to the dimension of the rectangular space in which the human body is placed"<sup>11</sup>. This close relationship relates to the nearness between the mask's materiality and the user. Thus the outcome of this section would be the relationship within a box, inside a structure.

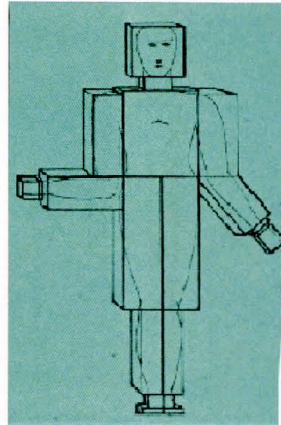


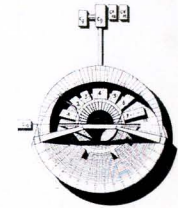
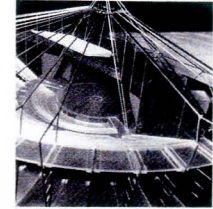
Figure 7: The laws of the surrounding cubical space  
Ambulant architecture

<sup>10</sup> "Bauhaus and Oskar Schlemmer." [expression image](http://www.expressionimage.com).

<<http://www.english.emory.edu/DRAMA/HistDrama2/ExpressionImage.html>>.

<sup>11</sup> "Schlemmer, Moholy-Nagy, and the Search for the Absolute Stage." 2002 . The Yale School of Drama/Yale Repertory Theatre.  
<<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/theater/v032/32.3smith.html>>.

*Ambulant Architecture is defined by Oskar Schlemmer himself. The term Ambulant Architecture can relate us to Jacques Bosson's ambulant theatre. He tried to prove the actual necessity of this type of theatres. Jacques Bosson sees the theatrical liberty in this typology; a theatre where it places itself in existing sites without fixed destination and focuses itself in mobility*



*Ambulant theatre resembles the medieval theatres: During the Middle Ages, many plays were performed in churches, but when the plays became too complex to perform inside the church, they were moved outside. These plays were performed on platforms near the church while the audience stood around it. Sometimes these platforms were attached to the tops of wagons, called pageant wagons, which traveled to different areas to perform the plays. The sets were alike in the fact that they were composed of a row of small buildings, or mansions. This area had no specific setting and was where most of the play's action took place.*

## ■ Performer-spectator within a box

The conversation that happens with the spectator and the performer is physical and it relates to the vision and the ability to hear. The acoustic domain of performances follows strict rules if the sound is crucial in the performance. For example, the isolation of the theatre is crucial in order to get secluded from the outside noises. If the theatrical space has an open roof, therefore it is needed to elevate it from all parasite sounds that may affect. (It has been accomplished in the ancient theatres by choosing their site properly, mostly on the slope of a hill). The surrounding walls of the stage-auditorium affect the acoustic quality of the performance as shown.

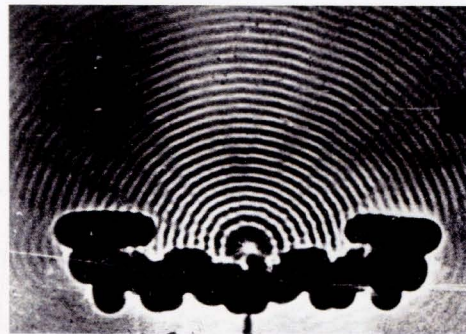
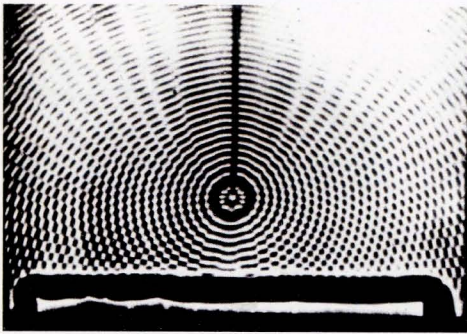
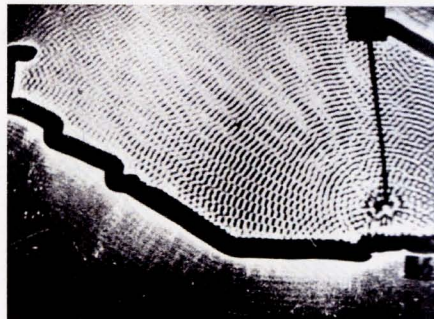
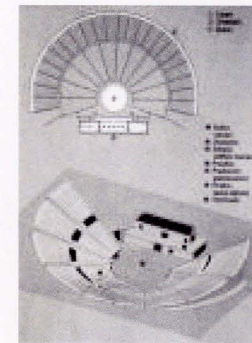


Figure 8-9-10: The Acoustic

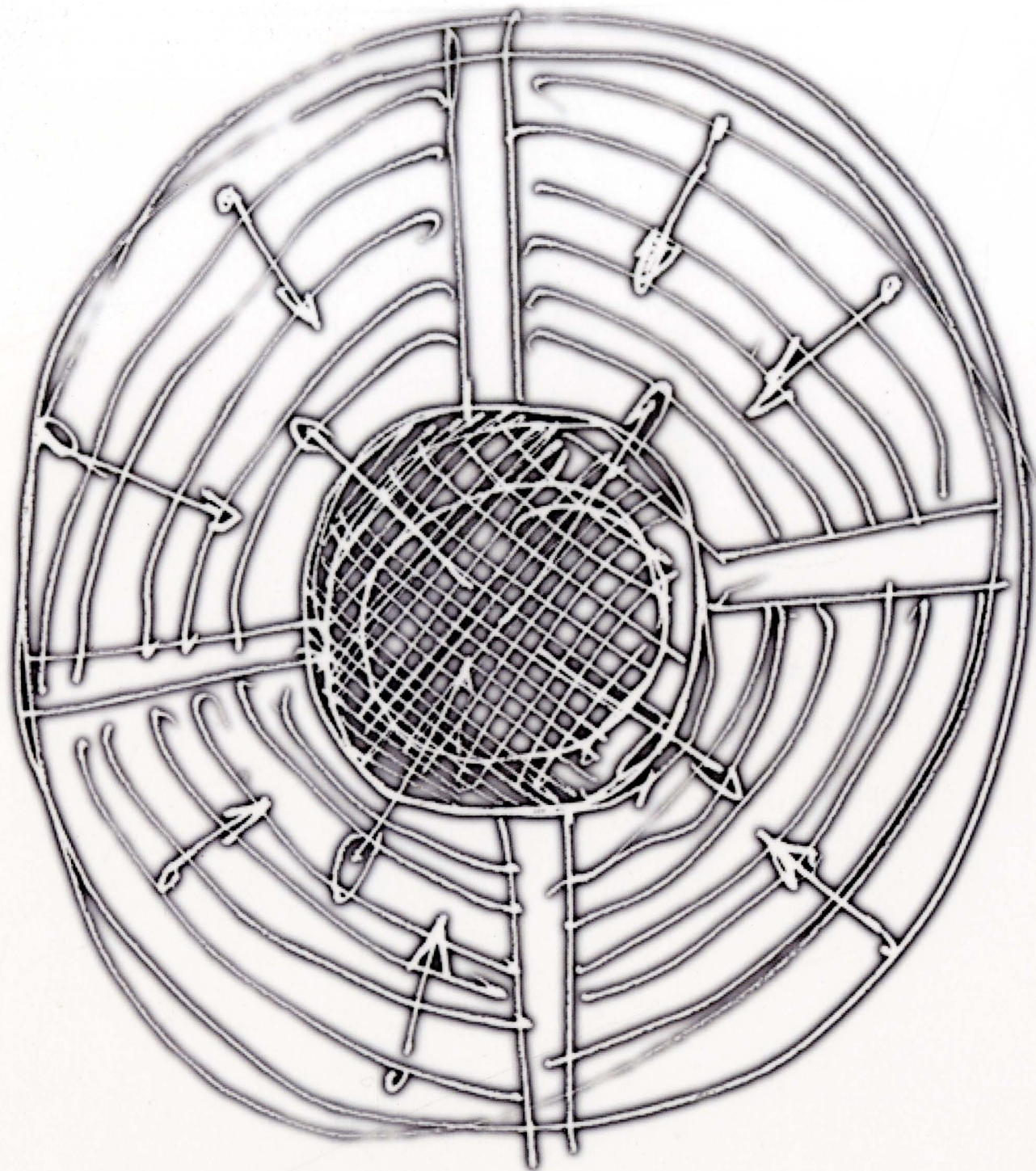


## *The Greek Theatre*

*Typical Greek theaters were based on theaters that date back to the year 500 B.C. The theaters were usually built on hillsides. The seating area, which was known as the theatron- or auditorium, appeared on three sides of a circular stage, then called the orchestra. It was steeply inclined and angled toward the stage. The backstage area was known as the skene; it contained many rooms (possibly dressing rooms), and many arches and doorways from which the actors entered and exited. It is assumed that the purpose of the skene was to hide actors from the audience when not on stage and to store props and equipment that were not in use.*







## Center Stage

The form of the dialogue depends on the stage-auditorium relationship, two worlds combine in one. Each shape of the stage- auditorium focuses on a particular exchange with the spectator and the performers. For example if we take the circular shape which is also called theatre-in-the-round, or centre stage. The entrances are made through the audience or from under the stage, there is no scenic background in the acting area, the capacity of seating places is quite small.

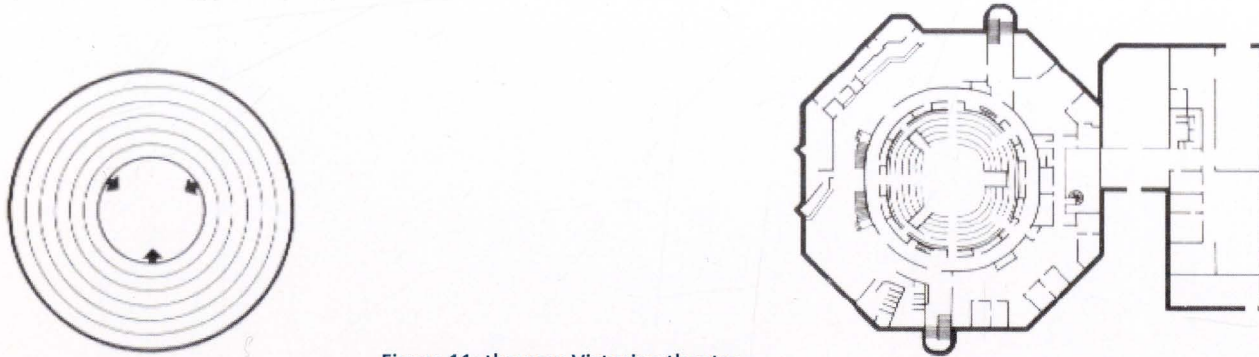
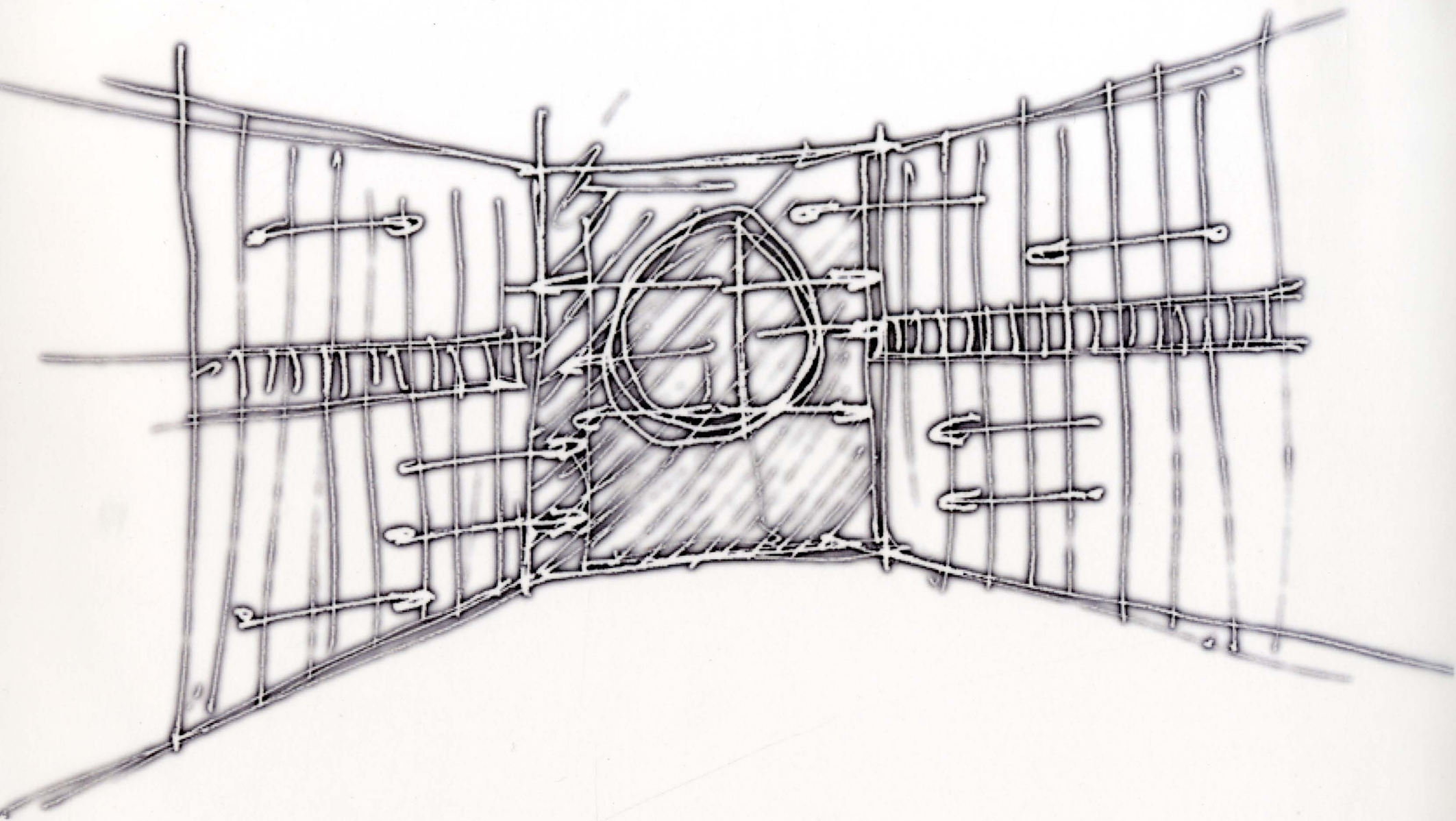


Figure 11: the new Victorian theatre

This form of theatre doesn't only give information about how the participative access is done, but how the body is viewed by the spectator and how this body occupies the space. Since it is a 360 degrees circular shape; the body is viewed from all side, every angle of the performer's body is viewed. The performer can give advantage to the viewers to have a different view in how he occupies the space. Therefore his body movement is freer and the visual dialogue between the spectator and the performer is enhanced. Moreover the visual dialogue happens between the spectators themselves. In order for an art performance to happen, distance is important. Thus in this case the distance allowed in this rigid structure is the stage itself.



**the Transverse Stage**

The audience is seated on the two opposite sides of the stage and they are facing each other. Therefore, the dialogue is limited to the two sides of the action, and the viewer converse with one of the sides of the action itself, and the audience that faces him. The distance allows the performance to take place, since there is a clear demarcation between the performance stage and the audience.

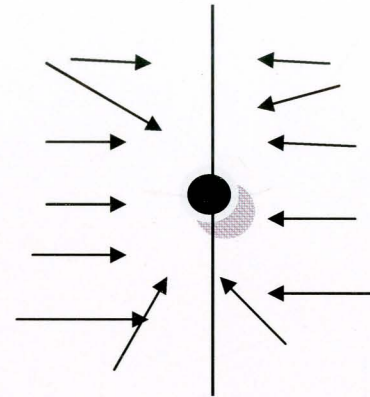
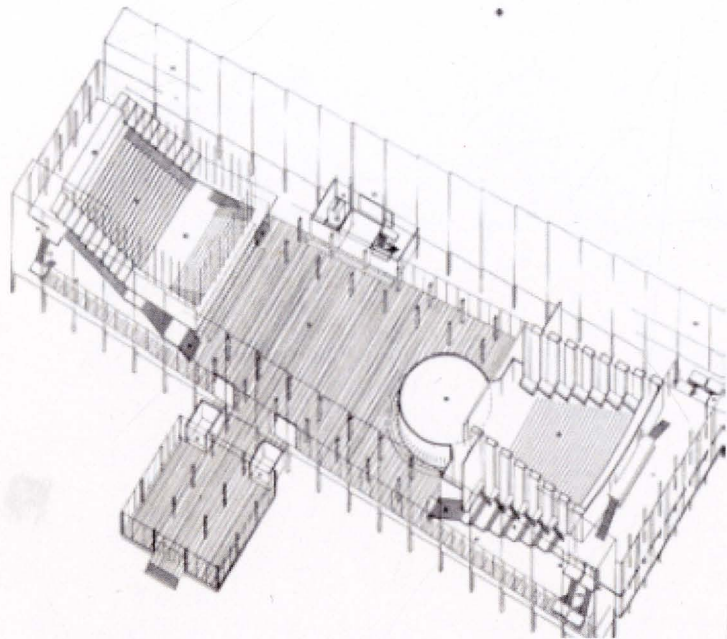
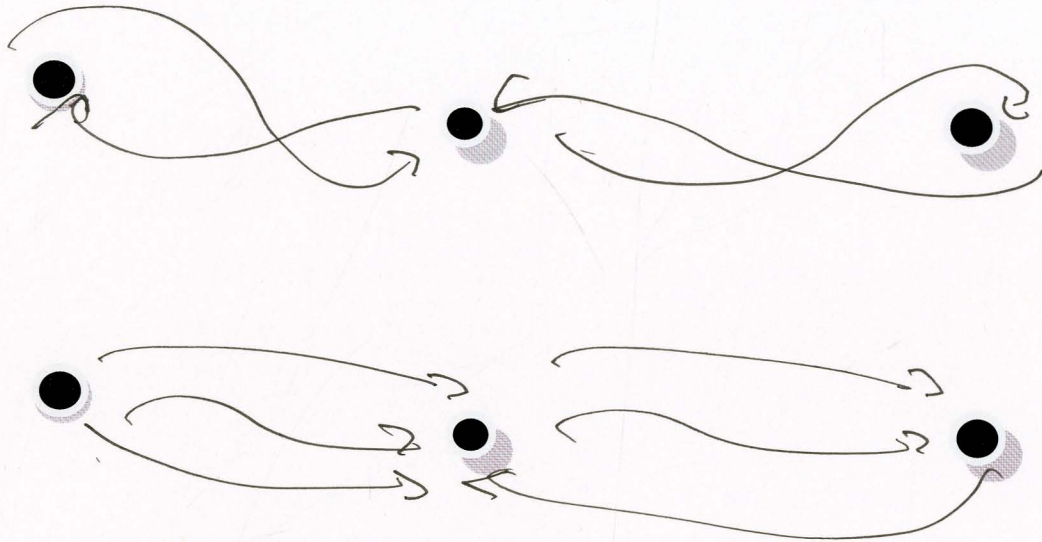


Figure 12: Transverse Stage in Germany

## *The Promenade Performance*

The scenes are taking place in many locations and the audience follows the act. It needs a large flat-floored area with means of lights and other stage elements above it and with 5-6 m clear height. The relationship is direct and the conversation is more liberated from both interlocutors: the action itself and the viewers. However the distance has to still be present, but it is not a fixed gap between the performer and spectator.

In my opinion, the promenade performance has its own rituality, since there is a procession that we have to obey too in order to understand what the performance is about. If this promenade performance represents a theatrical play, Therefore there is a structured hierarchy in the movement of the spectator in order to complete the goal: the spectator should be apart of the first act so as to understand the second one.





## ▣ Inside performances: Different Case Studies

Places of performances “serve to stimulate or reinforce within audiences certain ideas of what theatre represents”<sup>12</sup>.

➤ *Toyo Ito, Taichung Metropolitan Opera House*  
Taichung City, Taiwan

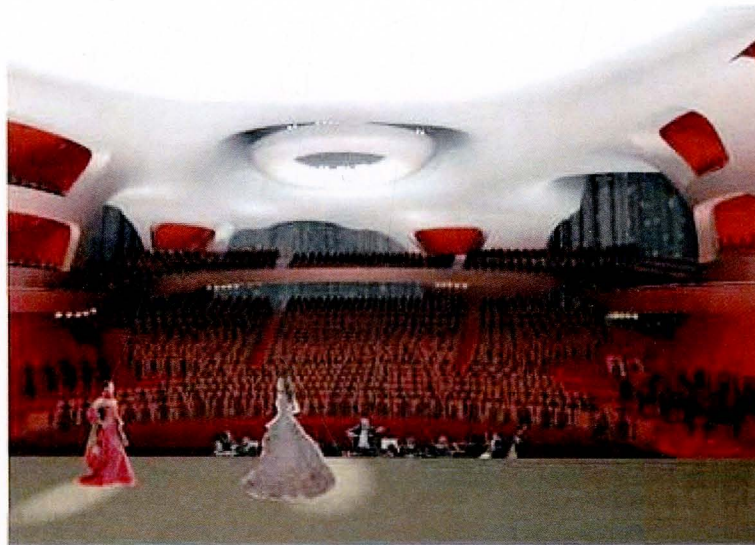


Figure 13: A View on the main Amphitheatre

“The fluid continuity of the structure reflects the idea that the theatrical arts are spatial arts which combine the body, art, music, and performance.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Kruger, Loren . "Places of Performance: The Semiotics of Theatre Architecture by Marvin Carlson ." Modern Philology Vol. 88(1991): pp. 485-487

As seen on the illustration, the relationship stage/auditorium is clearly separated. However the interaction is located in the other spaces, and there are different levels of performances conducted by the users in that facility (an expression of verticality and the duality between outside and inside). This interaction is shown by the visual connection between the different decks of the Metropolitan Opera House. The design is an open structure which dynamically engages its surroundings in all directions and creates occasions for numerous encounters between artists and visitors, stage and auditorium, interior and exterior and so forth. Toyo Ito calls this space the *Sound Cave*.

The Taichung Metropolitan Opera House is composed of: a "Grand theatre", which has 2009 seating places; a Playhouse that seats 800 people, and a Black Box, an experimental stage, which seats 200 people. "The project will also include an art workshop, an art market, an operation department and a parking area."

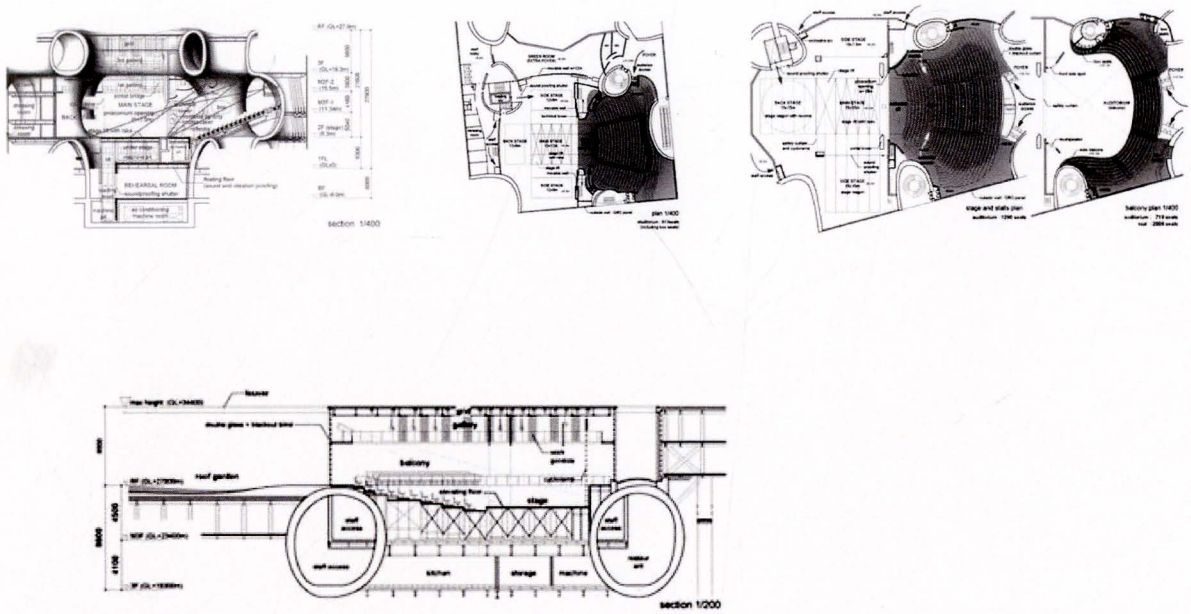
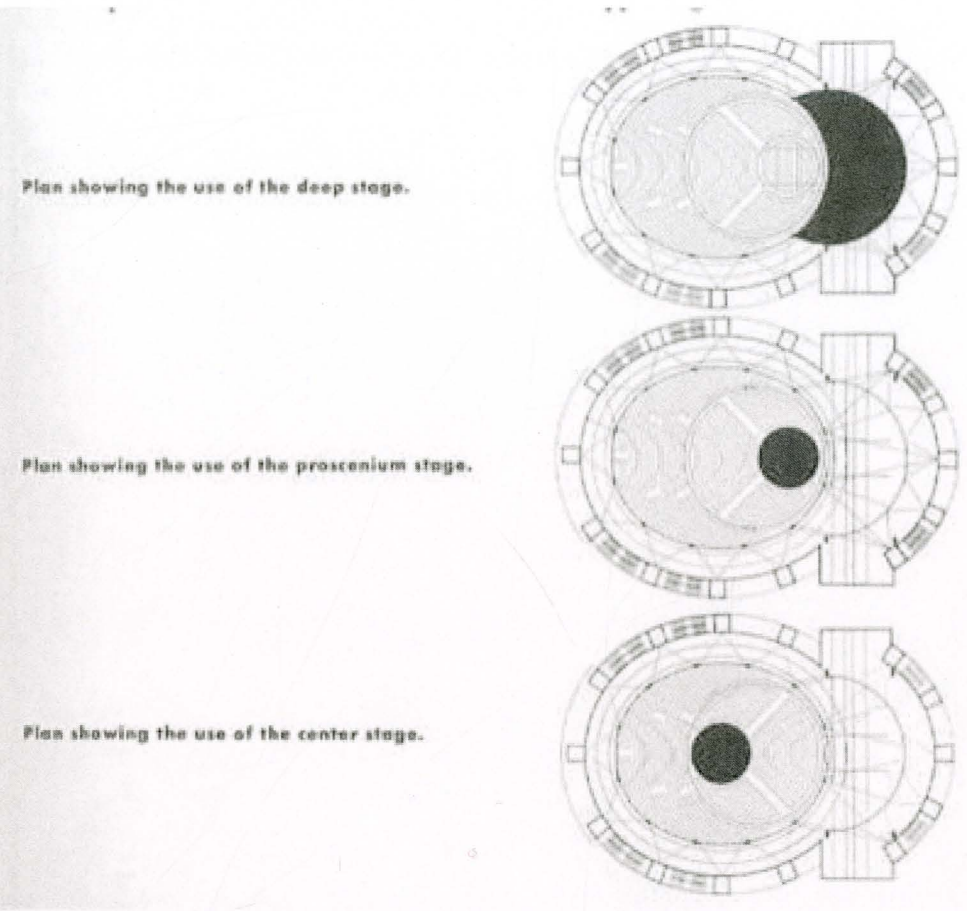


Figure 14-15-16-17: plans and section of the facility

<sup>13</sup> "Taichung Metropolitan Opera House." [arcspace.com](http://www.arcspace.com/architects/ito/taichung/taichung.html). <<http://www.arcspace.com/architects/ito/taichung/taichung.html>>.



**↗ Total Theater by Walter Gropius**



Plan showing the use of the deep stage.

Plan showing the use of the proscenium stage.

Plan showing the use of the center stage.

Figure 18

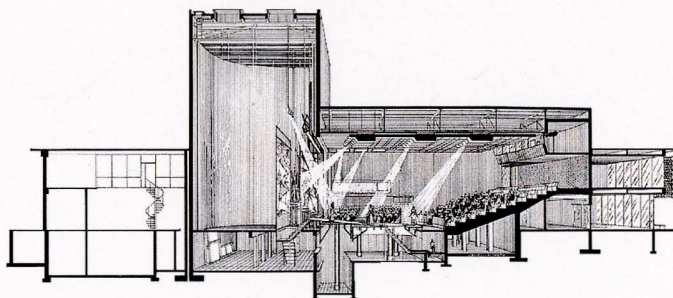
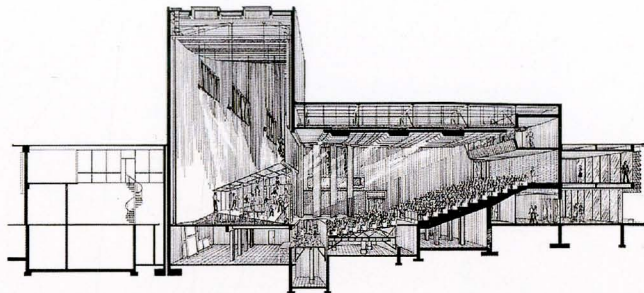
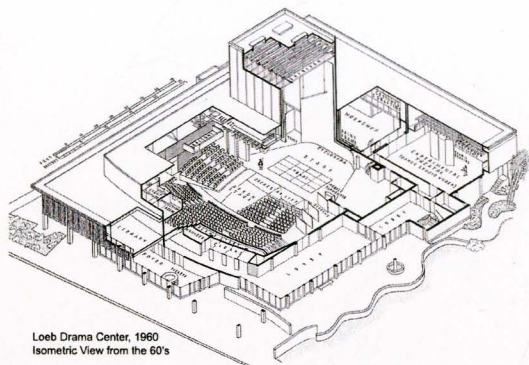
Walter Gropius worked directly on the relationship between performers/spectator inside a structure, and he shows how technicality and mobile structure can solve this problematic. As he said "Much as the spatial separation of the two different worlds, the auditorium and the stage, has helped bring about technical progress, it fails to draw the spectator physically into the orbit of the play; being on the other side of the curtain or the orchestra pit, he remains beside the drama, not in it. The theatre is robbed of one of its strongest means to make the spectator participate in the drama."<sup>14</sup> The Total theatre tried to introduce a new social and architectonic organization. It tried on one hand to support tradition by keeping the three classic stages, deep stage, proscenium and stage in arena, however he gave freedom to this structure where a lot of possibilities and needs can be fulfilled. The first plan represents the deep stage, the physical relationship between the spectator and the performer is one sided: the two realms are literally split, the second plan shows the transverse stage and the third plan shows the center stage.

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<sup>14</sup> City Space. <[www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/mellin/arch671/winter2005/student/wall/StudioHybridrob.html](http://www.arch.mcgill.ca/prof/mellin/arch671/winter2005/student/wall/StudioHybridrob.html)>.

## Loeb Drama Center

The Loeb Drama Center was opened in 1960. The facility includes a main stage which seats 580 people, a black box, a costume shop, three rehearsal rooms, offices, generous lobbies, dressing rooms, and storage spaces. The Loeb Drama Center has the same concept as Total Theatre by Walter Gropius. However those transformations can be produced in 12 minutes, opposing with Walter Gropius, where these transformation supposedly are done during the art performance.<sup>15</sup>



<sup>15</sup> Data Sheet for the Loeb Drama Center. <<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~loebinfo/loebdata.html>>



## ■ Body in Space

Art performances and Architecture have much in common. For the architect, space is the medium through which form emerges and habitation is constructed. For both, the first space we experience is the space of the body.

Oskar Schlemmer sketch, "Figure in space with plane geometry and Spatial Delineations", represent the body in a centralized position which is contained in a geometrical divided space where a series of abstract lines are present. However, if the body was located at one of the cube's edge, the space will be represented as unbalanced. Thus the centrality of the space empowers the body in it.

Although the different position of the body in space re-define our understanding of the space. The width and the obstacles that the body faces re-question our understanding of the space. For example, if one person goes through a narrow corridor then meets at the other end another who goes through the same corridor; the passageway that seems sufficient and comfortable for one person becomes uneasy. The idea of barricade relates partly to the cruel flavor of "Café Muller" by Pina Bausch. The bodies are trying to cross the boundaries they are facing (which are the chairs or the walls).

Based on Bachelard study on phenomenology and space, we do not live in a homogeneous and empty space; it is the total opposite, we experience space through its quantity and diversity. "The space of our primary perception, the space of our dreams and that of our passions hold within themselves qualities that seem intrinsic: there is a light, ethereal, transparent space, or again a dark, rough, encumbered space; a space from above, of summits, or on the contrary a space from below of mud; or again a space that can be flowing like sparkling water, or space that is fixed, congealed, like stone or crystal."<sup>16</sup> (This could relate to café Muller)

*Definition of phenomenology:*

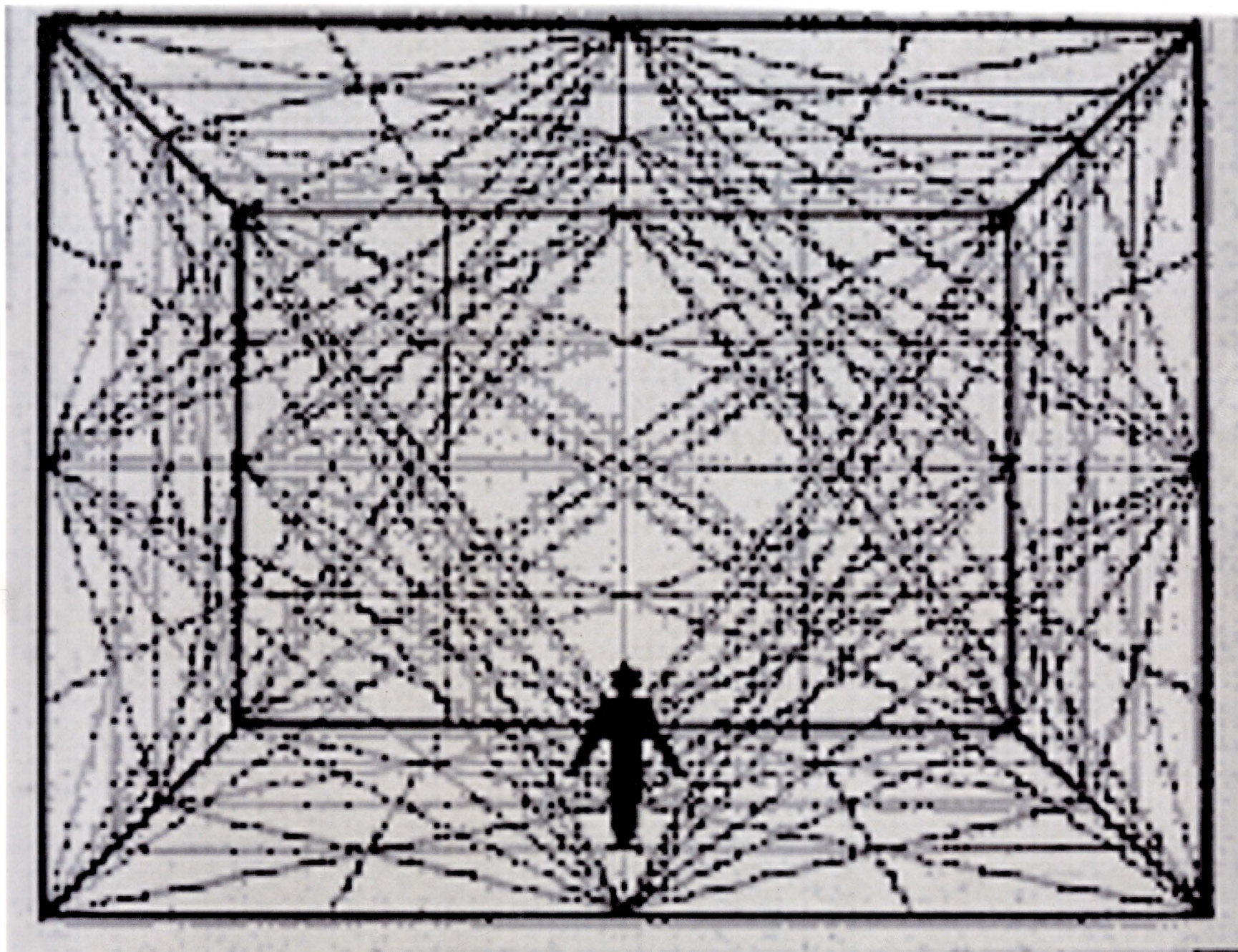
*A philosophy or method of inquiry based on the premise that reality consists of objects and events as they are perceived or understood in human consciousness and not of anything independent of human consciousness.*

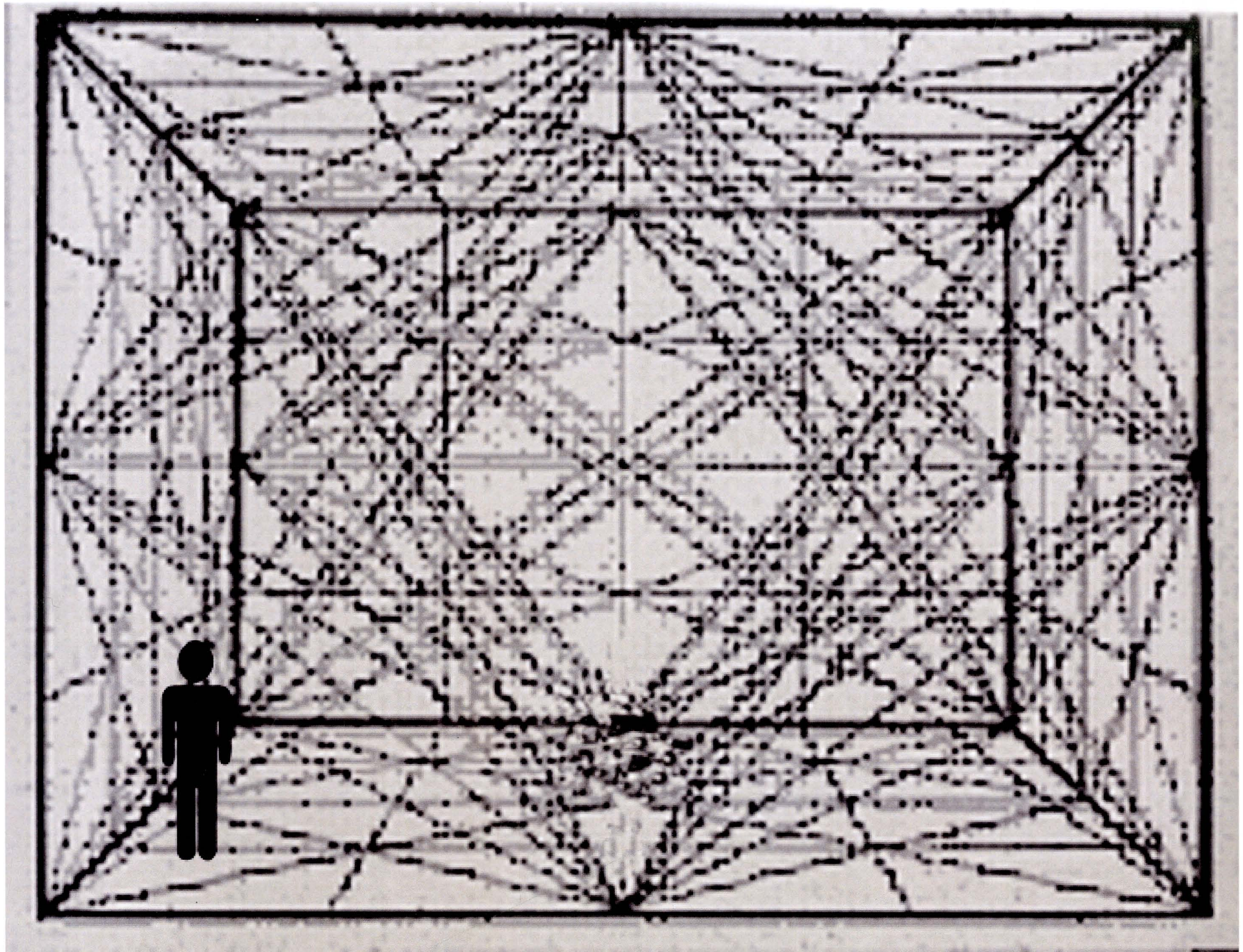
*By Encart.msn*

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<sup>16</sup> Foucault, Michel. "Michel Foucault. Of Other Spaces (1967), Heterotopias." <<http://foucault.info/documents/heteroTopia/foucault.heteroTopia.en.html>>.









## ■ Smart Materials

The body in space performs with and against architecture. Therefore, I investigated the materials that help and emphasize this relationship of the body and its container. Mirrors, steel and wood and most of the raw materials used in a project concur with *theatre of Cruelty* by Artaud, since in his theatre decorative display will not exist<sup>17</sup>. However besides those materials, there is what we call Smart Material. Shape Memory alloy, resin, photo chromic material and rubber are taking a step further and can be literally changeable and flexible based on the body's position in space. Thus, through these materials, we can suggest flexible walls that may mold and print the shape of the body leaning on it, or by using photo chromic materials so that color would change through one's passage.



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<sup>17</sup> Artaud, Antonin. The Theatre and Its Double. New York: Grove Press Inc., 1958

## **Spatial movement**

Another Sketch by Oskar Schlemmer, "The laws of Motion of the Human body in space", represents the various features of rotation, path and the intersection of different spaces that the body experiences, and it "would seem to demonstrate more convincingly the subordination of the human body to abstract geometry"<sup>18</sup>. So, it discusses the relationship between the body and space through its movement and its in-between characteristic.

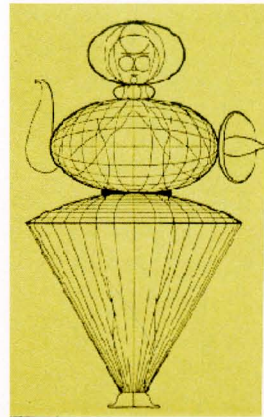


Figure 19: The Laws of Motion of the Human Body in Space

Technical organism

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<sup>18</sup> "Bauhaus and Oskar Schlemmer." expression image.  
<<http://www.english.emory.edu/DRAMA/HistDrama2/ExpressionImage.html>>.

## ▣ **Façade Performance:** *performance on the skin and case studies*

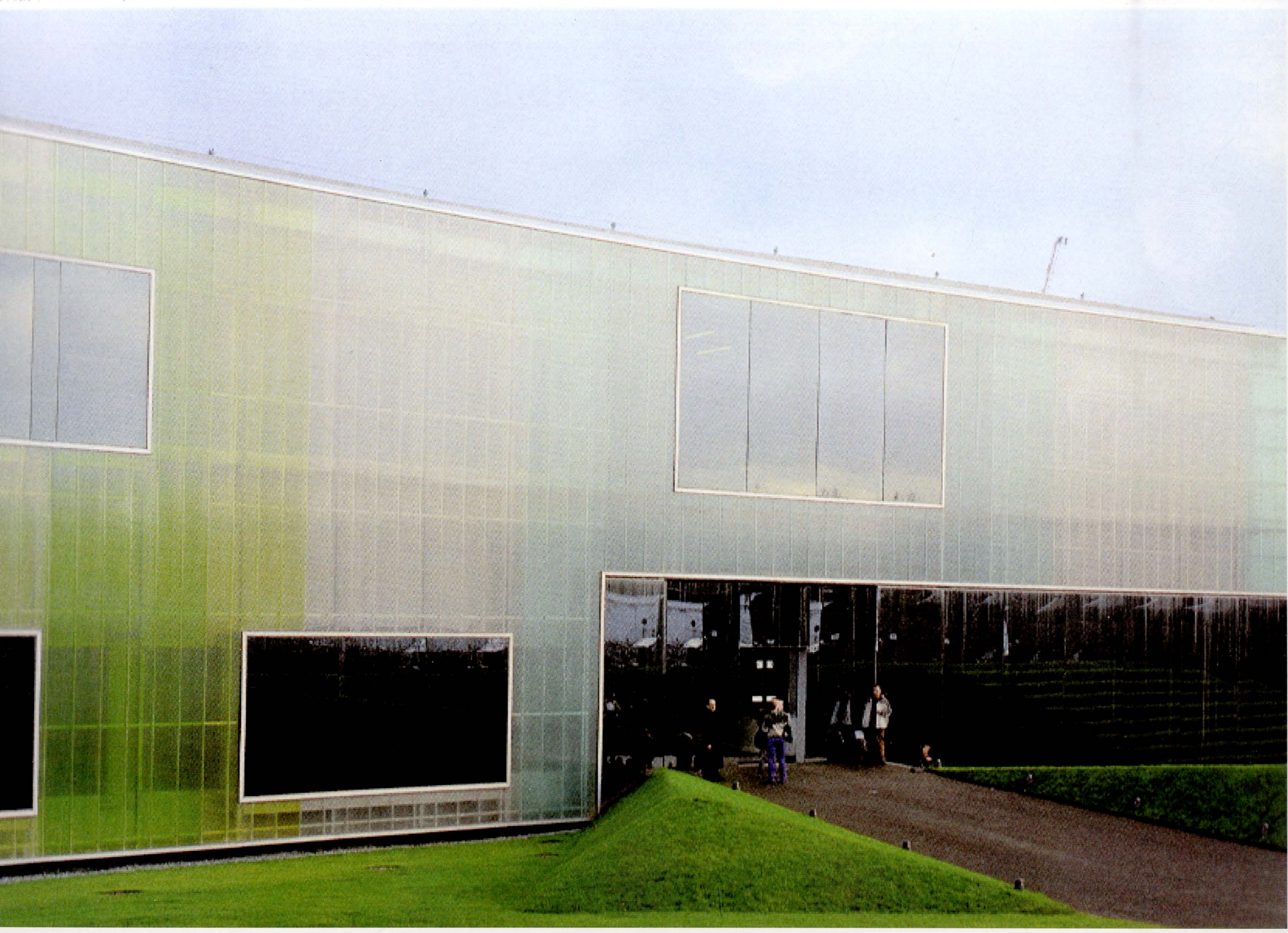
What I understand from the term “Façade Performance” is the spatial association between spectator/performers on the architecture. This in-between relationship reflect on the type of dialogue that occurs: is there only one character involved in this discourse or more? And it considers the matter of outside/inside. The case studies shown below illustrate the visual dialogue through the envelop and the variety of performance that undertakes.

### ↗ *Laban Dance Center*

Laban Dance Center, designed by Herzog and De Meuron, is located in London. The project is located in between an industrial/domestic area, and it points out towards the main cityscape. The Dance Center constitutes of a main auditorium/stage in the core and the latter is surrounded by other programs such as: libraries, cafeteria, studios and the administration section. This project is characterized by the color and transparency of the skin that determine the rhythm and orientation of users and programs, both inside and outside the facility. The exterior skin is unified by the material of the facades, which are transparent and translucent glass panels, and there is a disconnection with the colors illustrated. Because of the material used in this facility; people outside the Dance center will visualize the silhouette of the dancers performing inside (especially at night)<sup>19</sup>. Thus there is a one way dialogue that takes place through the visual screen of the Laban Dance Center; however this discourse is 2 dimensional.

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<sup>19</sup> Herzog & de Meuron. Madrid: El Croquis, 2006.



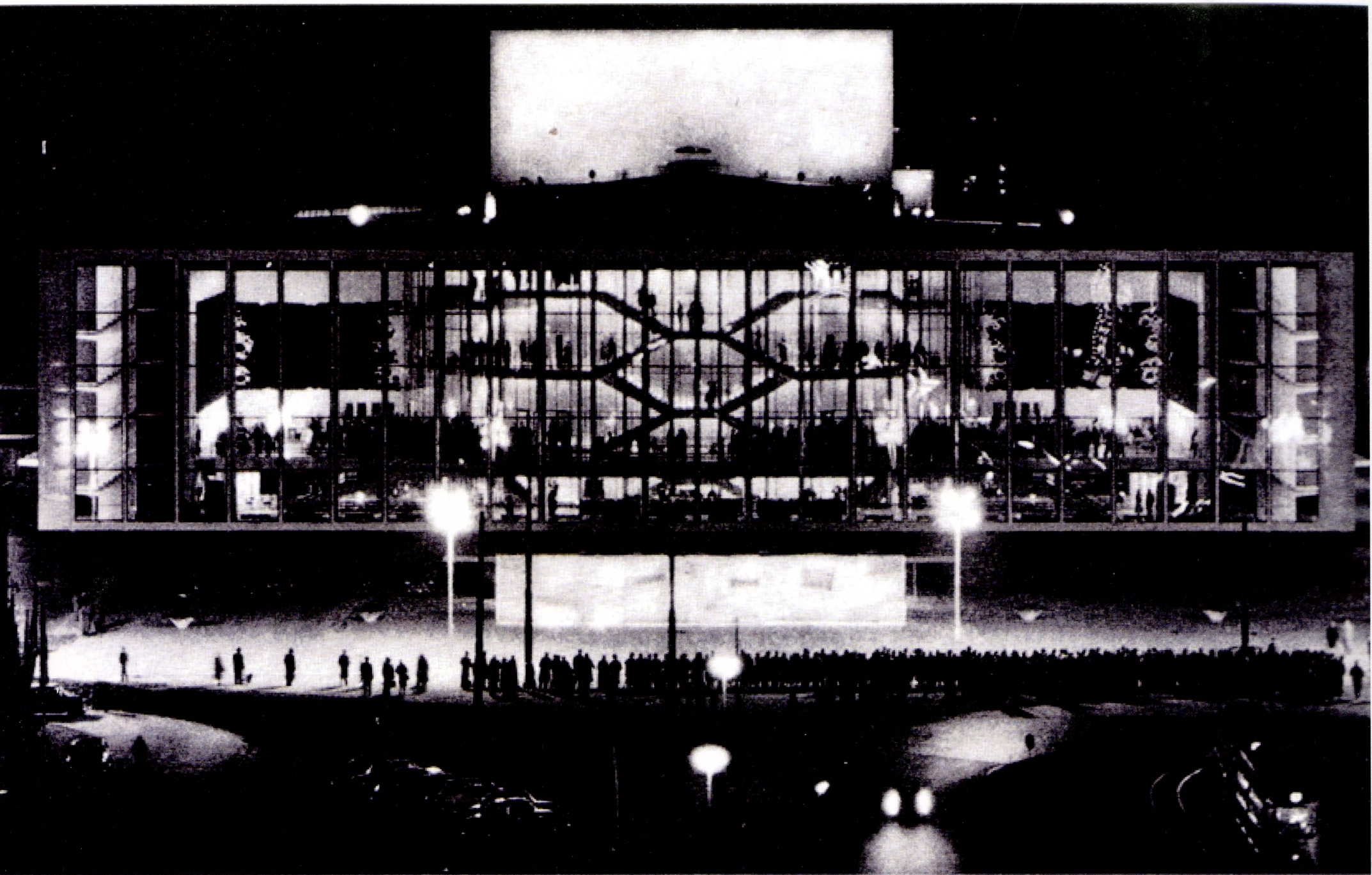
## *The Gelsenkirchen Theatre*

The theatre music theatre Gelsenkirchen, in Germany, was opened in 1950 and was designed by the architect Werner Ruhnau with the collaboration of the artist Yves Klein and Jean Tinguely. It was one of the first theatres constructed after the Second World War. This theatre is composed of "The Big House" an auditorium that seats 1008 people that hosts big productions such as opera, musical and ballet; and the 336-seat "Small House", which is used for small opera, concert, ballet and youth theatres<sup>20</sup>. The materiality of the skin in the Gelsenkirchen theatre resembles the Laban Dance Center. There is a whole screen glass façade. However the performance that happens in this screen does not correlate with the previous case study. The dialogue that happens in this theatre is between the "outside" spectator and the actual spectator that came to see the production played inside the facility. Thus, this dialogue happens between two different characters and the reciprocity is felt. The people inside the facility consider the outside public as the performers; and the outside public considers the people waiting during the recess as actors.

The "skin Performance" in this case study shapes itself partly as a ritual: people waiting for the play to begin or re-start require themselves to a specific body code that is bounded during the time of recess. So, this performance is related specifically on this particular phase.

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<sup>20</sup> Le Lieu Theatral dans la Societe Moderne. centre national de la recherche scientifique. Paris: 1978.



## ↗ Centre Pompidou in Paris

Centre Pompidou designed by Renzo piano and Richard Rogers, is known for its complex relationship with the outside. The structure is designed inside/out. The vertical circulation of this *art factory* is placed on the building's envelop and faces the public piazza "la place Beaubourg". Centre Pompidou is sometimes called Centre Beaubourg, for the reason that it has a strong bond with the piazza in front of it; the amount of performances is quite high in the Centre Pompidou's façade; however the participatory act between the people and the visual performances inside the structure is not as developed as the skin. This cultural center has multiple dialogues and diverse types of performances that are taking place:

- The people inside the structure are viewing the people's performance on the vertical circulation and vice versa.
- The people inside the vertical circulation are viewing the people on the piazza and vice versa.

In opposition with the other two case studies, Centre Pompidou constitutes 3 dimensional visual performances. Due to the vertical circulation that is projected on the skin; the screen like effect of the façade is gone. The projection towards the piazza obviously emphasizes the dialogue between the facility itself and the "Place Beaubourg".







## ■ ***Intersection of space:*** dual/hybrid space and case studies

From Oskar Schlemmer's illustration "the laws of motion of the human body in space", interstitial spaces are extracted from this sketch in order to comprehend the movement of the body in space and its relationship with the surrounding. The surrounding, being no longer a cube, but a "hybrid space" where the boundaries are not clear and is featured by the flexibility. Hybrid spaces can be understood programmatically or spatially. When I consider Hybrid space in programs, I understand it as a mix of program in one space. However it is not an empty multi-purpose room, but a space with specific programs such as restaurants and stage. A Spatial Hybrid space can be understood in the duality of outside/inside spaces. I developed 2 case studies so as to investigate different types of interstitial spaces.

### ➤ *Nationale-Nederlanden Building, By Frank Gehry*

The project is located in an intersection that faces a historic square in Prague. The Nationale-Nederlanden Building is also called the Fred and Ginger building since it reflects dance by the movement and the rhythm through the facades with the curving walls and so forth.

The facility's entrance is carried by a succession of twisting columns, which expresses an insecure feeling and molds no clear path. Those series of sculptural posts form a small covered plaza.

The geometrical space of the building and its entrance recognizes the chaotic sense of movement which describes the human space. The building has an apparent axial entrance that splits the two different characters of the building. This axis suggests the wavering movement of the body through space, which gives an organic sense. Gehry's building demonstrates the body's movement as one of a multitude of directions. "The eyes sense what the feet sense but differently. The body senses what the ears do but differently."<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Frank Gehry. Madrid: El Croquis, 2006.



**FRED AND GINGER BUILDING BY FRANK GEHRY**

➤ *Toyo Ito, Taichung Metropolitan Opera House*  
Taichung City, Taiwan

This facility has been already taken as a case study in order to understand the performance within a box. However there is more in this opera than enclosed space. The Sound Cave, as Toyo Ito named it, correlates strongly with the outside, it merges with the surrounding landscape thanks to the greenery that integrates in the building.

Furthermore, it enhances the dialogue between people. The building invites people from several sides into a maze of diverse spaces. The intersectional spaces inside the sound cave are done through the vertical accesses between the different compartments. As we can see on the model below

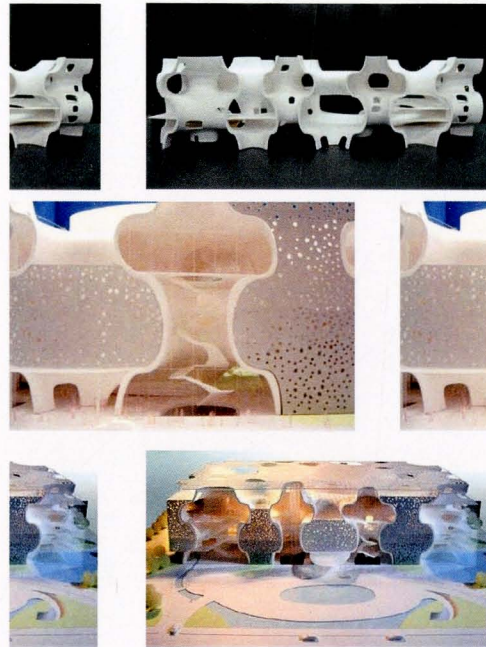


Figure 20

■ **Scenarios of every day life:** *the everyday body code assigned in art performance*

*"An art process is not essentially a natural process; it is an invented one. It can take actions of organization from the way nature functions, but essentially man invents the process. And from or for that process he derives a discipline to make and keeps the process functioning. That discipline too is not a natural process. The daily discipline, the continued keeping of the elasticity of the muscles, the continued control of the mind over the body's actions, the constant hoped-for flow of the spirit into physical movement, both new and renewed, is not a natural way. It is unnatural in its demands on all the sources of energy. But the final synthesis can be a natural one, natural in the sense that the mind, body and spirit function as one". \*Merce Cunningham\**

As said formerly, performances is not only located in the art domain; it is found in the everyday body code, especially when it is bounded and is situated in a specific place. Many artists transferred the everyday body performances and its relationship to space in their production. One of them is Merce Cunningham.

Merce Cunningham is a known choreographer/ dancer that re-characterized what an art performance should be. He develops new technique for the movement's structure, and he also redefines how the audiences view and interpret the dance production. His new methodology about how he represents the dance movement comes from the everyday activities to original and creative chains. Moreover, Merce Cunningham didn't just tackle the structure of his dance but also the position of the dancer in space; he has "decentralized" the body in space; since the pose of one dancer on the stand is no more important than of another dancer. This "decentralized" phenomenon is inspired from the proscenium stage<sup>22</sup>, but it also derived from the scenarios of everyday life: decentralization is common in regular life basis and the relationship between the body and another has no hierarchal positions. This matter relates to the independence of theatrical elements that Merce Cunningham studied. The bodily movement and the music are not reliant to each other. Each element has its own goal to achieve.

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<sup>22</sup> Rockwell, John . "Merce Cunningham." Presidential Lecture: Merce Cunningham. Stanford.  
<<http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/cunningham/>>.

In addition, there is another play that introduces the scenarios of everyday life, which is Café Muller, from Pina Bausch. This theatrical production discusses and highlights the daily life movement by adding a taste of cruelty. The bodies are facing violently the boundaries that surround them and are protesting against the limits that the space offers. The performance repeats extensively the everyday body code until it loses its meaning. Thus, Pina Bausch challenges Jon Mitchell's definition "Performance is then a bodily practice in one way or another, individual or social, usually associated with **signifying acts** or **meaning**". As in the review of the New Yorker describes:

*"The rhythm of a Pina Bausch piece is obsessively regular. Bursts of violence are followed by long stillnesses. Bits of business are systematically repeated, sometimes with increasing urgency but more often with no variation at all. At every repetition, less is revealed, and the action that looked gratuitous to begin with dissolves into meaningless frenzy. "Café Müller," which opened the Bausch season and set the pattern for it, is thirty-five minutes long and feels ninety; its subject is duration, and repetition is its only device. The café--apparently meant to resemble a real place--seems to be the canteen of a mental hospital. A small cast of inmates gives us intermittent doses of violent/apathetic behavior while a woman who may be a visitor scurries noisily about in high-heeled"*<sup>23</sup>

The scene takes place in a mental hospital. The typology of this space brings us back to Michel Foucault's theory, that there is a definite performance occurring in a hospital; since the act of the person in it, is obliged to follow the rigid rules that a hospital would provide<sup>24</sup>. In addition, it relates to one of Lefebvre's definition of space which is the conception of space. It is a space of calculations blended with symbolic and codes. Thus from my understanding of "Heterotopias, it is cut from our everyday existence. Therefore, Pina Bausch plays and illustrates the scenarios of every day life in a different level: she uses the every day body code in this facility and while time passes, those codes lose their significances.

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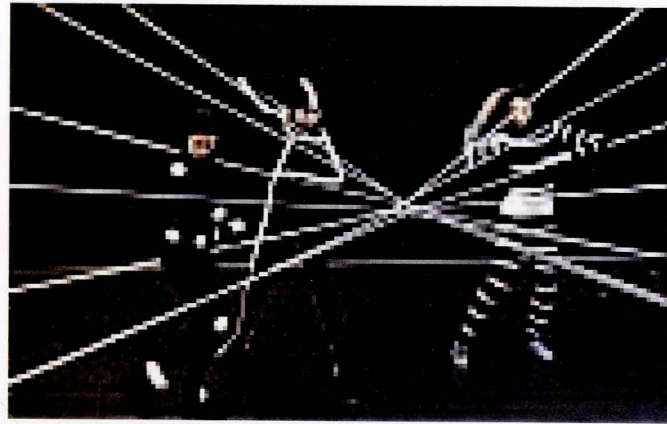
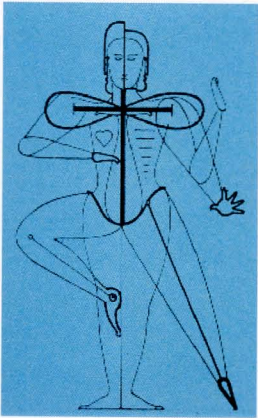
<sup>23</sup> Croce, Arlene . "Pina Bausch." Presidential Lecture: Pina Bausch. Stanford.  
<[http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bausch/cafe\\_m.html](http://prelectur.stanford.edu/lecturers/bausch/cafe_m.html)>.

<sup>24</sup> Foucault, Michel. Des Espaces Autres. Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité , 1984.



**Dynamism:** *A Field Of Forces*

This sketch symbolizes the member and structures of the human body: the main star-shaped, the sign of infinity or arms crossed, the cross formed by the spine and shoulders, the head redoubled and members with multiple division and the abolition of forms. The dematerialisation as would Schlemmer would describe it goes through the dynamic joints of the body



**The metaphysical form of expression symbolizing various members of the body**  
Dematerialization



## ■ **Dialogue within the City:** *performance and rituals in Manara*

As discussed in the previous sections, the relationship with the spectator and the performer can be found outside the stage-auditorium area.

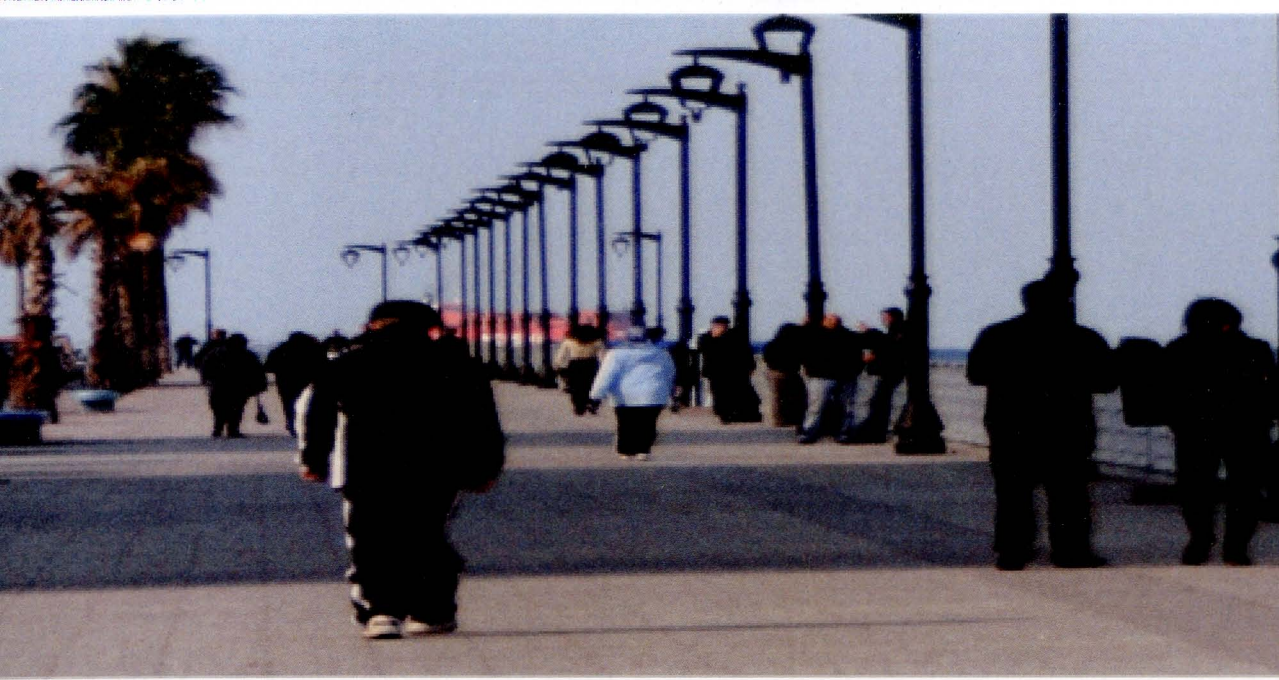
Based on the hypothesis of J. Hillis Miller, a phenomenologist theorist, "Space is perceived through an action that takes place in it [...] our perception of space is inherently narrative". The narrative process in space is emphasized by De Certeau, when he writes, "Stories [...] traverse and organize places, they select and link them together [...] every story is a travel story, a spatial practice." (De Certeau: 115). The narration of space relates to the definition of Architecture as processes, with the intention of considering the production of space. The production of space requires a level of performances.

In Beirut, this relationship is found in many levels in the city fabric. Such as the Gemmeyzeh stairs that links the Sursock Street to the Gouraud Street. In the Manara street where the dialogue is done between many interlocutors: between the different types of pedestrians, between the people living in the buildings vs. the pedestrian, the car vs. the pedestrian.

The Manara Street is a spectacle of its own. People using this path are, most of them, under the ritual performances. The different activities that take place in Manara represent a certain body rite. The people who walk in the Corniche for fitness purposes go through a certain procession. They save a special time for their exercise and they use this public space only for this purpose. Ritual performances that are happening in the Corniche Manara are not only work out performances. People walk for pleasure or just come in their convenient time to sit around and enjoy the view or even to fish. However something that I have noticed while I took the pictures in Manara, people were offended that I would "steal" their private space of performance, even though it is a public space. Of course we should acknowledge the political situation in Lebanon that may explain the reaction of the people. However, I do believe that their personal rites were interrupted with the presence of my camera, thus they didn't feel comfortable.

The physical elements that are found in the Corniche are the handrails and benches. Through the pictures, I will show how the people in the Corniche use these elements. Ironically, the benches located in the sidewalk are not use often by the users since it is so close from the vehicular road; some people bring their own chairs and settle themselves next to the railway. A person who uses the bench has a choice to visualize two different performances: the first visualizing the sea and the people passing by, or the second which is visualizing the dynamic motion of the cars passing by.

The spectator and the performers are not only located on the sidewalk of the Corniche, but also in the cars and the apartment that are facing the sea.



SERIES OF PICTURES SHOWING DIFFERENT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCES







## ■ **Public/Street Performance**: Case Studies

Bernard Tschumi describes the city as a series of events. Space depends and defines itself on the actual event that is taking place.

Street performance or Street theatre is presented in outdoor public space without a target spectator. Street performances can be located also in shopping center, such the ABC malls in Beirut. However they are specially established in outdoor spaces where there is a large audience. The performers on the street may be freelancers or part of an organized theatrical group that want to experiment with performance space or to advertise. Opposing to the indoor performance spaces which is quite equipped; the ability to hear and see the performance is much more crucial in an outdoor space: the performers depend on their normal vocal and bodily capabilities. The act needs to be clear and simple to follow with the purpose of inviting a whole public.

However in Lebanon, there is not much of street performances; the performers have to get a license from the municipality in order to act and perform.

One of the positive points of street performance nowadays tackles the economical aspect of the space. People who can not afford seeing a performance can watch a street act. The targeted user group is not really defined in these shows. But usually the public are part of the neighborhood where the performance is taking place.

Venice Beach is one of the most well known street performance areas. Located in California, we stroll through Venice Beach and encounter dancers, musicians and so forth<sup>25</sup>. The longitudinal street forms many different small squares. The spectator surrounds the performer by creating a gap between the artist and the audience in order for the act to happen. Venice beach relates to the promenade performance.

*Street theatre is arguably the oldest form of theatre in existence: most mainstream entertainment mediums can be traced back to origins in street performing, including religious passion plays and many other forms.*

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<sup>25</sup> en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venice,\_California

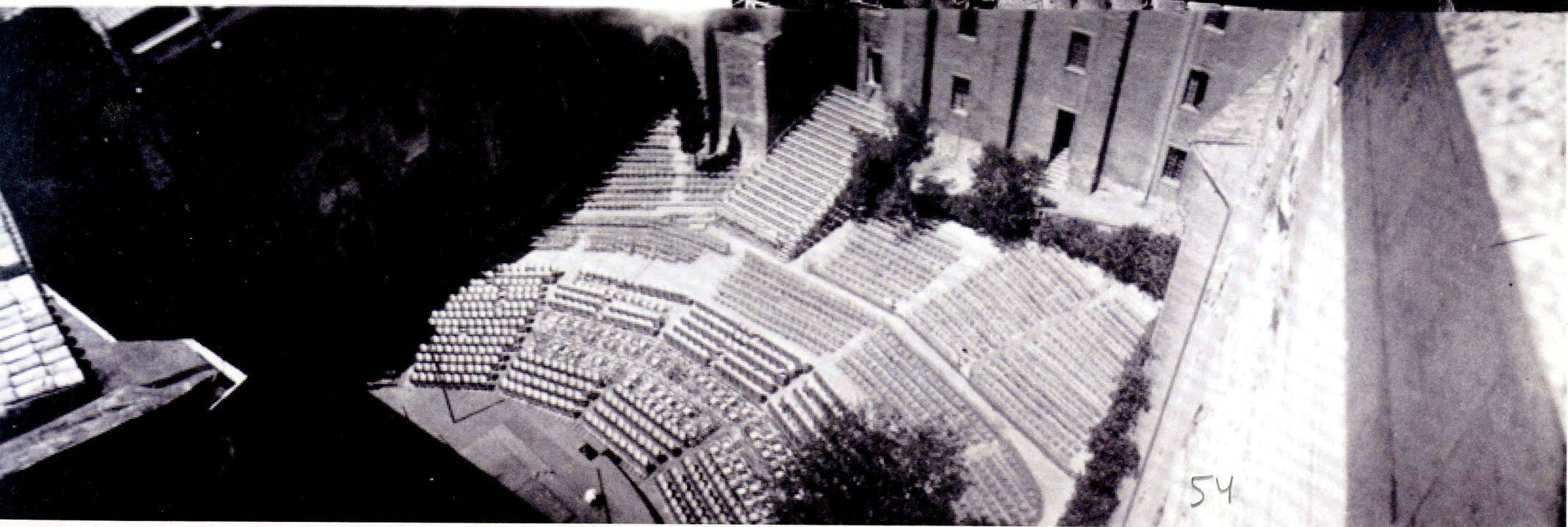
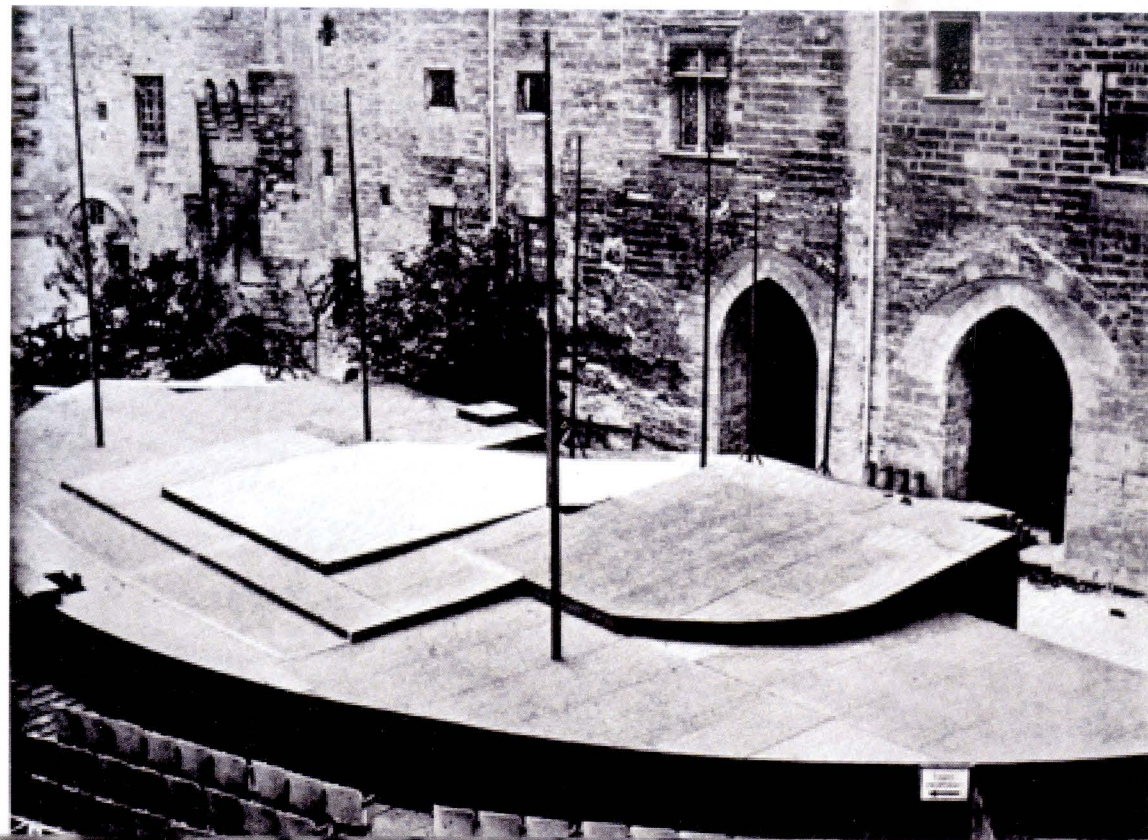
Theatre d'Avignon is also famous for its outdoor performances. Jean Villar discusses the problematic of open air theatre. The acoustic and visual accessibility are one of the problematic but not the only ones: a theatre should call out not only for the visual comprehension of the public but also it should call out for the public's emotion<sup>26</sup>. This exclaim of emotions associates with Antonin Artaud's position "*by furnishing the spectator with the truthful precipitates of dreams, in which his taste for crime, his erotic obsessions, his savagery, his chimeras, his utopian sense of life and matter, even his cannibalism, pour out, on a level not counterfeit and illusory, but interior*" (Artaud 92)<sup>27</sup>. However Jean Villar, unlike Antonin Artaud, still believes that distance between the spectator and the performers must be present in order to preserve the spectator's intellectual capacity.

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<sup>26</sup> Le Lieu Theatral dans la Societe Moderne. centre national de la recherche scientiphique. Paris: 1978.

<sup>27</sup> Artaud, Antonin. The Theatre and Its Double. New York: Grove Press Inc., 1958

**THEATRE D"AVIGNON  
BY  
JEAN VILLAR**



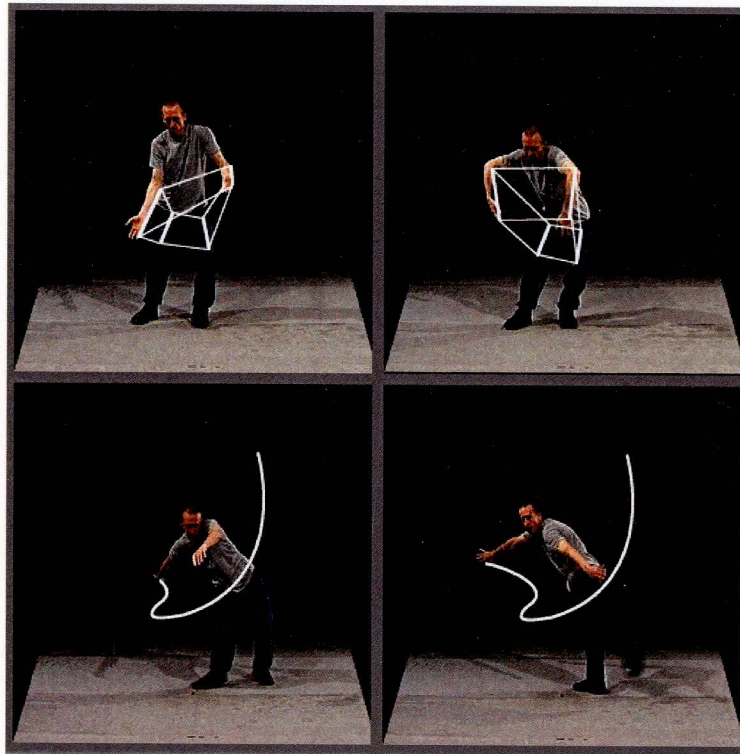




# **Body forms Space**: *the body creating space around it*

"The body believes in what it plays at: it weeps if it mimes grief. It does not represent what it performs, it does not memorise the past, it enacts the past, bringing it to life"

Pierre Bourdieu, The Logic of Practice. Stanford University Press, 1991: 72-73.



“Body in Space” discusses the relationship of the body within its concrete surrounding. However “Body forms space” tackles the spatial production that the body forms around. In order for a body to trace space, a gap from the “concrete envelop” and a narration is necessary. As in this illustration drawn by Oskar Schlemmer, the body is positioned as a center which creates space around it. Thus the space is produced by the movement and the construction around it.

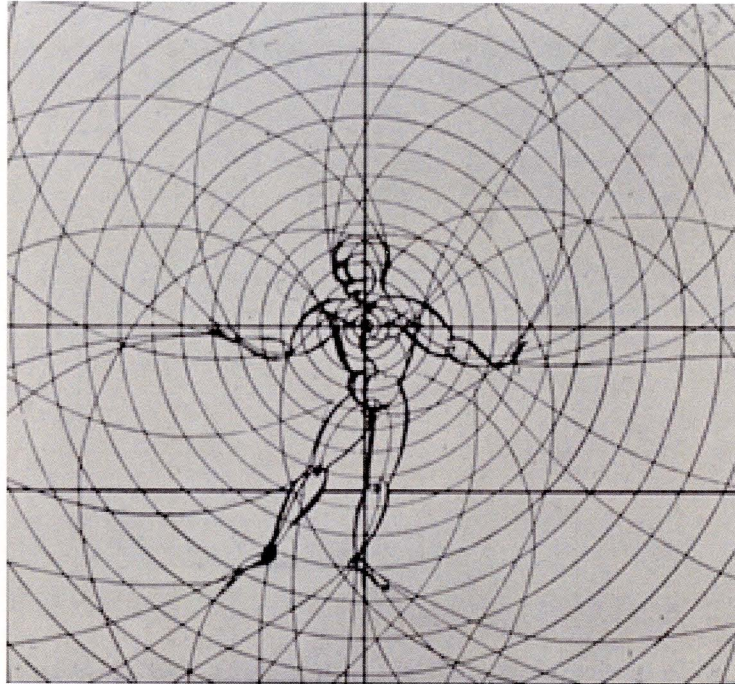


Figure 21: Man as Dancer

Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre define space as a dialogue which is blended with practices of social life. Moreover they define the space as a reproduction of space, "a space as it is found, as it is used, occupied and transformed' (Rendell: 101). Therefore there are "bodies which actively do something", and their actions produce elements of meanings and desires

The production of space understood by Lefebvre, is divided into 3 sections:

1. "*Spatial practice*, embracing production and reproduction, and the particular locations and spatial sets characteristic of each social formation. Spatial practice ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. In terms of social space, and of each member of a given society's relationship to that space, this cohesion implies a guaranteed level of *competence* and a specific level of *performance*. This is space perceived (*perçu*) in the common sense mode.
2. *Representations of space (représentations de l'espace)*: the discourses on space, the realms of analysis, design and planning, which are tied to the relations of production and to the "order" which those relations impose, and hence to knowledge, to signs, to codes, and to "frontal" relations. In other words, the conception of space (*l'espace conçu*).
3. *Spaces of representation (espaces de la représentation)*: the deeper presuppositions behind plans and definitions. Coded, recoded and decoded, these spaces embody complex symbolisms, linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life, as also to art. It provides partially concealed criticism of social orders and the categories of social thought, and may happen through bodies, aesthetics, gender, and so on. As the third part of a dialectic it offers, as lived space (*l'espace vécu*), as historical sediments or glimpses of the new, utopian possibilities of a new spatialization of social life (see Lefebvre 1974; 1991a: 33, 245; Shields 1999: 160-170). "<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Lefebvre, Henri. The Production of Space.

Spatial practice depicts how the space is perceived and how it is appropriated and dominated by the users. The perceived space is strongly related to the everyday body code and the urban fabric, such as the set of connections that links different typological spaces. (Leisure, private, work and so forth)

From the trilogy of Lefebvre's spatial production; the space of representation or the lived space relates closely to the aesthetic performance of the body in space. Filled with symbolic elements and codes; the representational space links strongly to art. "The concept of lived space as denoting imaginative space is crucial for the interaction of design and performance as creativity is embodied and adopted in imagination and the imaginative space."<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, Phenomenology investigates how we identify space through our sensations and particularly through the body. For example, Gaston Bachelard, in the poetic of space, represents also the lived space through experiences by underlining the increased effect of the "imaginative lived space" that has on real space. The narration of the body creates the space around it. Thus, the narration of space relates to the definition of Architecture as processes in order to consider the production of space thus it is once again related to Bachelard understanding of lived space.

*"When I go to the theatre I realize I have to engage with the hierarchy of western theatre space, with its own conventions and rhetoric of upstage, downstage, green space, centre stage. There is a very particular power relationship. **When you put a body in such as space, you are already telling a story.** I find that I am not interested in centre stage any more. Before I choreograph a single movement, just by choosing where I put a dance, I have already made a political choice. The wing spaces, especially that psychologically*

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<sup>29</sup> "Space, Spatiality, Embodiment, Phenomenology." [emergent objects](http://www.emergentobjects.co.uk/archive/glossary.asp).  
<<http://www.emergentobjects.co.uk/archive/glossary.asp>>.

*nebulous place just before entering, is where my interest lies” (Jeyasingh in Goldhill 2004,81).<sup>30</sup>*

## **Conclusion:**

✦ Architecture following Art Performance: *Materials, program and users*

*“The theater, which is in no thing, but makes use of everything -- gestures, sounds, words, screams, light, darkness -- rediscovers itself at precisely the point where the mind requires a language to express its manifestations. To break through language in order to touch life is to create or recreate the theatre.”*  
*Antonin Artaud*

Through the investigation on the relationship of the performances and space at the level of the box, the spatial movement and the surrounding dynamics; the project’s main target will be the youth of Beirut interested in art performances as entertainment or education. The user group will be especially the youth graduating from universities in Beirut (such as A.U.B; L.A.U; Lebanese university, U.S.J etc.); in order to extend the connection between them, under the ministry of culture and education.

The project will create a strong correlation between the public and the performers by participatory acts. Through the previous sections, I based the art performances on following the rhythm, liberty of the movements in space and the participatory features of it. Thus, the project will open up to public spaces where artistic activities may perform. Moreover it will mask itself in a powerful way to attract and bring out curiosity. It will respond and follow the event’s cadence in space by the fluidity of the promenades and the particular interest of the public. Therefore, the tangible and visual dialogue will be enhanced between the users, and also between the public and the architecture.

The following programs will serve the flow of the performances and will provide diversity.

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<sup>30</sup> "dance space architecture." dance architecture spatiality. Stanford. <<http://humanitieslab.stanford.edu/49/75>>.

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REHEARSAL AREA

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I MAIN AUDITORIUM

L G E T

E CAFE MEDIA S D

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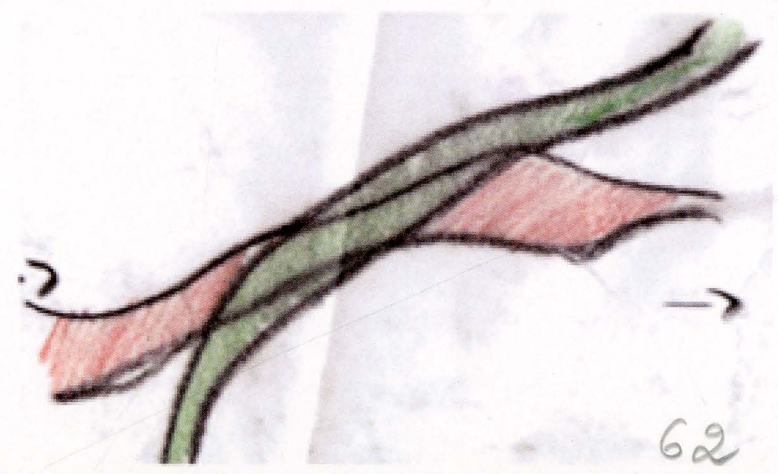
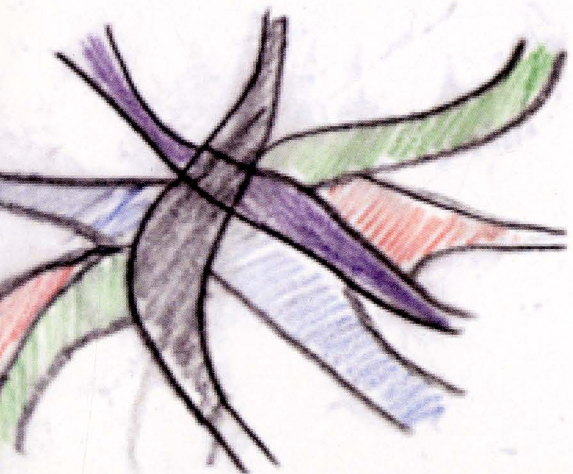
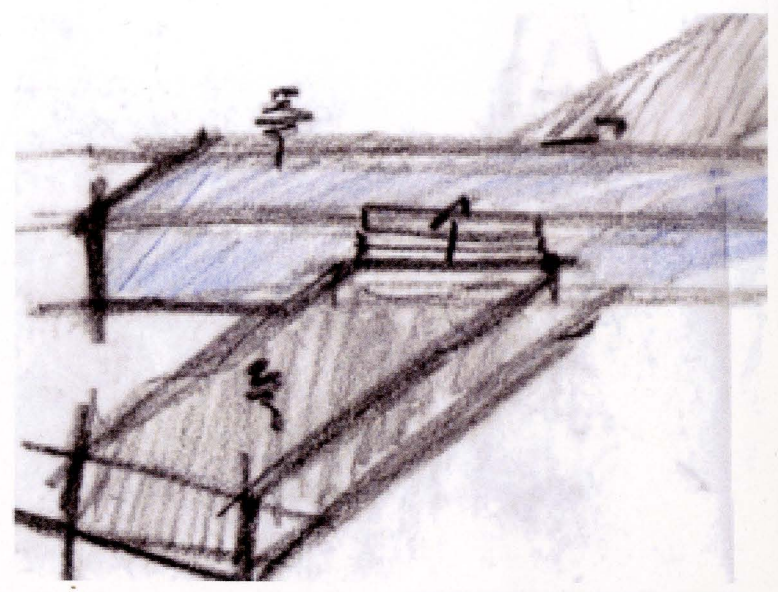
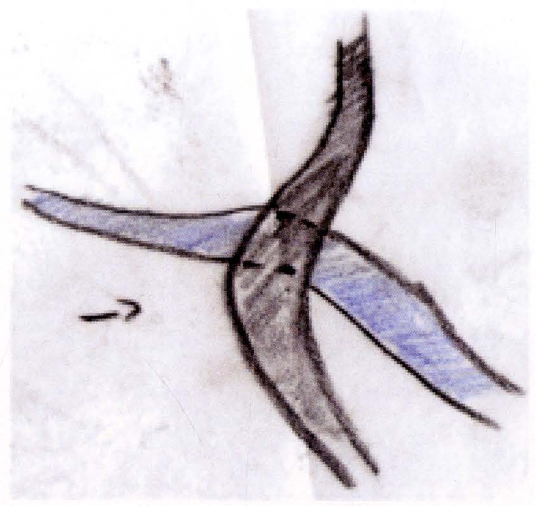
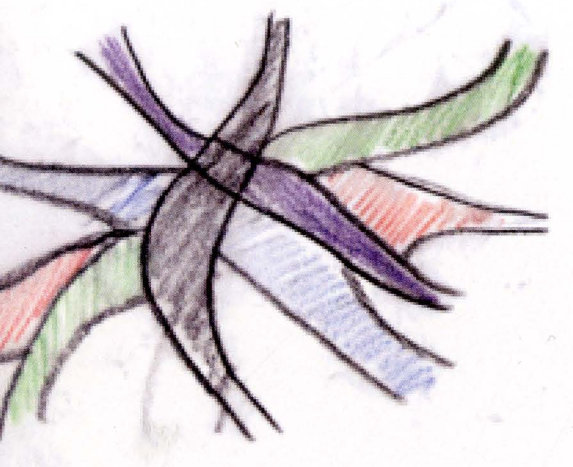
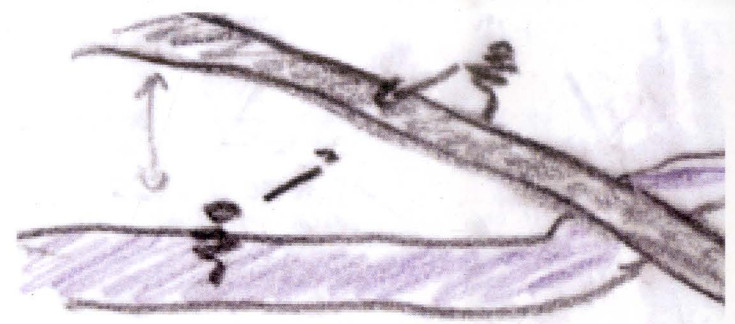
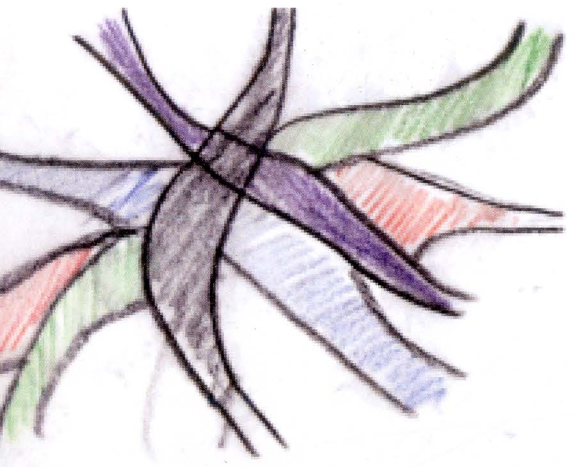
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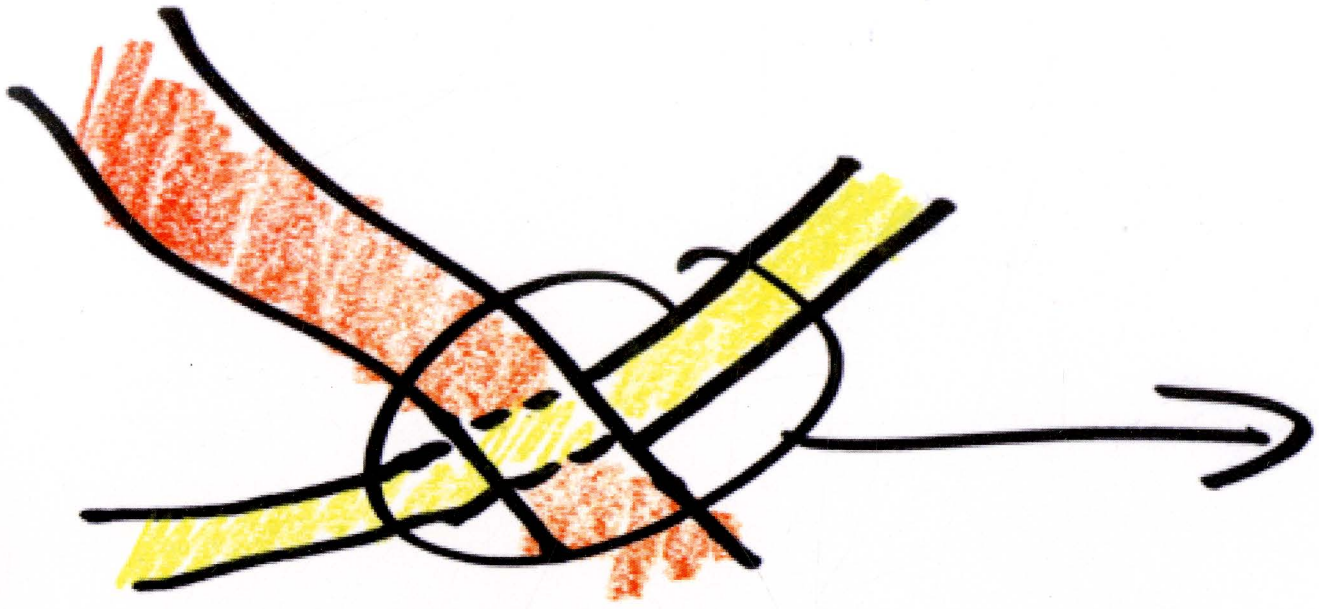
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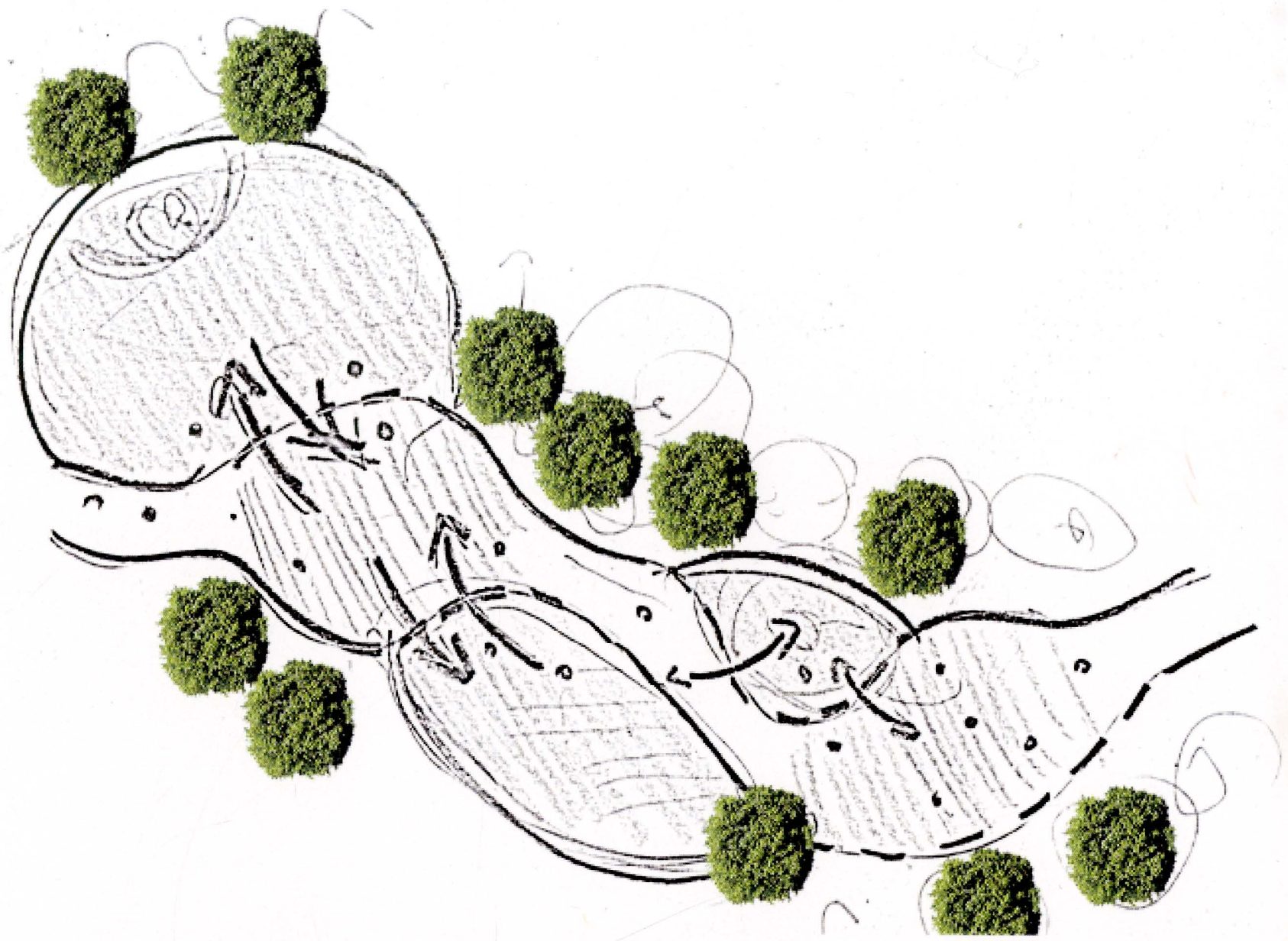
R

E









## 📍 The Site

The site that I think can be suitable for the performance art center is located in front of the Sioufi Garden, in the old NBT Railway Station. The site is not far from educational and governmental facilities.

### THE OLD NBT RAILWAY STATION:



THE  
OVERVIEW

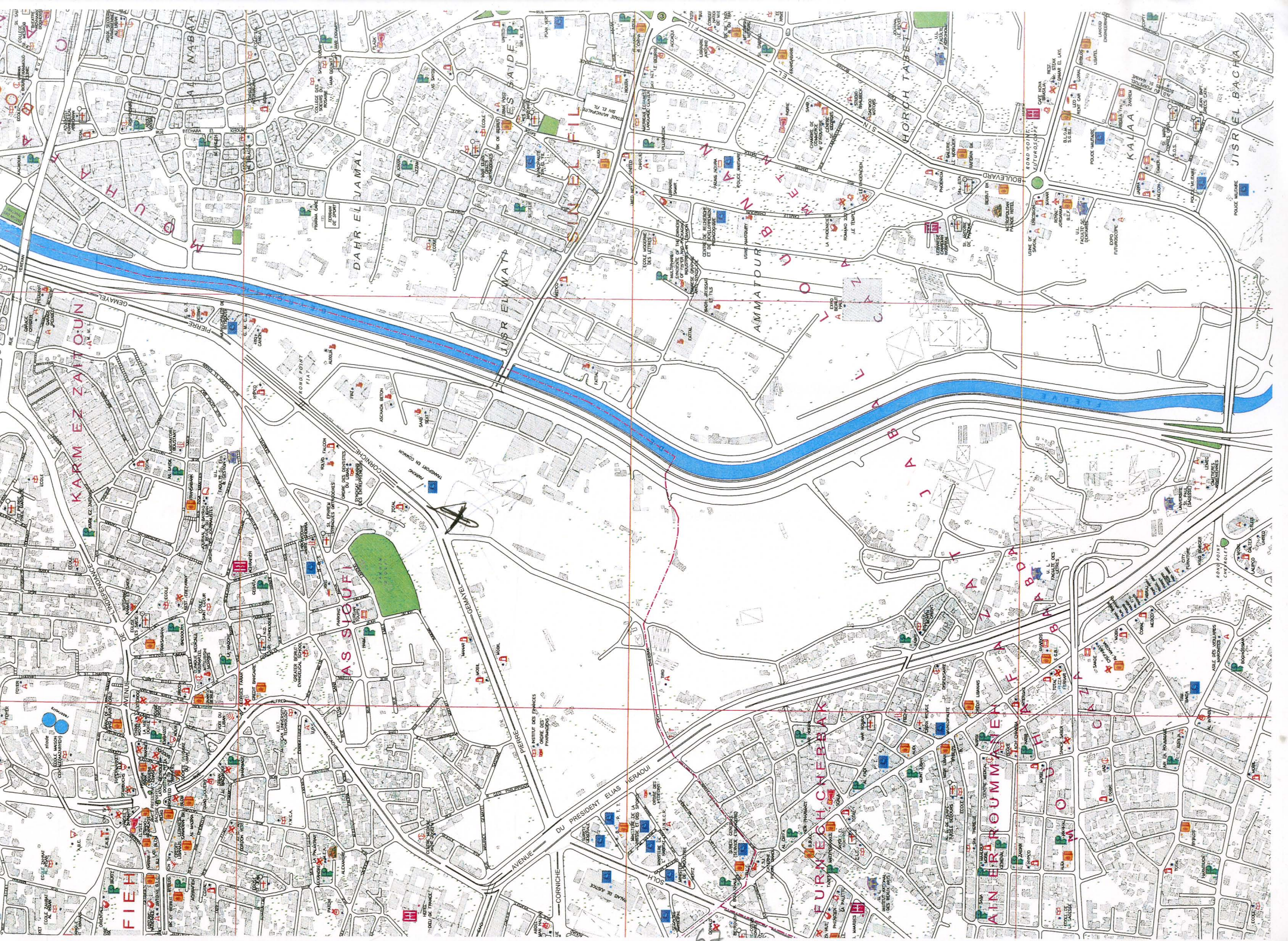


INTERESTING ELEMENTS  
OF THE SITE



THE PLOT IS TO THE **SOUTH EAST SIDE** OF THE NBT RAIL STATION HAS ONE SIDE ON THE HIGHWAY NEXT TO THE **RIVER OF BEIRUT**





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