

Magdalena Stawman-Tuka

## Emerging Hybrid Workspaces in Creative Practice

Theatrical space is not something that exists before, but what is being created is born in the time spent by actors and audience together – this is what the creative act means. The theatre has to create its space anew every time<sup>1</sup>.

Experiencing the potential that space brings is for me, as a performer and theatre maker, one of the most fascinating tasks in theatrical work. Step by step, discovering what a given space is and what kind of dramaturgy<sup>2</sup> it could contain, is a process that always starts anew. I am more interested in a dialogue with the space, discovering its possibilities, coexisting with it, rather than imposing incongruent forms and ideas. The space co-creates the presence of the actor/performer who is searching for tools and means of expression that open ideas to a relationship with the audience.

The following article attempts to explore the theme posed by the organisers of the 9<sup>th</sup> International Performance Platform Training (IPPT), which took place in January 2023 in Chiusi, Italy<sup>3</sup>: Emerging Hybrid Workspaces: New Practices in Performer Training in the context of After The Empty Space – from traditional settings to new creative ecologies.

This topic/provocation is, in my opinion, only the beginning for a series of research projects, discussions, and analyses, so it is impossible to encapsulate its potential in a single symposium or articles. It is largely an unknown territory, with

<sup>1</sup> T. Suzuki, *Czym jest teatr*, Wrocław, Instytut Im. Jerzego Grotowskiego, 2012, p. 30. (Translation mine).

<sup>2</sup> By the dramaturgy of space, I mean a kind of recognition of the atmosphere, characteristics and gradations of individual places. In my own internal language as a practitioner, I call this: “recognition and the answer to the question: where is the altar?”.

<sup>3</sup> Link to the programme of the International Platform for Performer Training | 9<sup>th</sup> edition 12<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> January 2023 Fondazione Orizzonti d’Arte – Chiusi (2023). Available at: <https://performer-trainingplatform.wordpress.com/programme-of-the-ippt-italy-2023/> (last access: 31 May 2024).

creative experiments just starting to develop; therefore, any conclusions may prove premature.

Thus, I will attempt to address the theoretical material almost exclusively from the perspective of my practical experiences and those of selected artists with whom I conducted interviews and have long term collaborations.

One of the more important aspects when attempting to confront the topic of [what] After Empty Space, is to open research and analysis to a process that, due to its unpredictability and search for methodology, must extend over time and allow for the verification of theses through practice. I will base my article on the work examples of three different artists, thereby presenting three very different possibilities of interpreting the topic. I will conclude the article with a summary, which I hope will create a field for further discussion.

### Empty Space in Room

This theatre [Jerzy Grotowski's Laboratory Theatre] is holy because its purpose is holy; it has a clearly defined place in the community and it responds to a need the churches can no longer fulfil. Grotowski's theatre is as close as anyone has got to Artaud's ideal<sup>4</sup>.

Let us go back to the concept of the Empty Space proposed by Peter Brook<sup>5</sup>, continued by Grotowski, especially after the moment of leaving the theatre<sup>6</sup>, the signs of which could already be observed in the work on *Apocalypsis cum figuris* (official premiere in 1969). In the compilation of essays *Grotowski's Empty Room*, researcher Franco Ruffini summarises the ideas of the empty space as follows:

In the empty room is the 'process', the living stream of impulses; in the big house there is performance with its craft and skill (not performances of the rich theatre, but performances nevertheless). To liberate one's 'process' means staying within it. In the contrast between 'process' and the house around it, we do not only see two different ways of conceiving performance rich or poor; we also see a contrast between two different ways of conceiving the theatre itself, and the different ways of practising it after *The Constant Prince*: theatre either as a context also for the creation of performances, or theatre only as yoga, as a vehicle for the

<sup>4</sup> P. Brook, *The Empty Space*, London, Penguin, 1968, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> In his famous publication, Brook is analysing four modes of theatre: Deadly; Holy; Rough; and Immediate. He is also defining theatre space as follows: «I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged», ivi, p. 9.

<sup>6</sup> Leaving the theatre – a concept describing the fundamental changes in Jerzy Grotowski's mode of creative work, its objectives and in Grotowski's understanding of his own place within the artistic world taking place at the end of the 1960s and in the early 1970s.

spiritual realisation of the individual practising it. The empty room takes its leave from public performances, and already introduces The Workcenter of Grotowski's final years<sup>7</sup>.

The performer moves according to the inner memory map, which has a precise relation to the outer action in space. They direct their concentration vertically, thus trying to find the thread connecting them with the essence of the action. Grotowski's search after his last theatrical production *Apocalypsis cum figuris*, although at different stages, was transferred to the value of the connection itself, whether this is a connection with another human being, with oneself, or with the vertical energy mentioned above. This empty room, as I know from my own experience of working for ten years in Polish theatre company Studium Teatralne<sup>8</sup>, is filled with detailed thoughts, associations and their embodied executions to reach the essence of its emptiness, so that nothing in the space interferes with the focus on action. The floor is of great value, and it is where tears of joy and suffering mix with the sweat during many hours of struggle with material that is impossible to grasp. So, we washed it at least twice a day. But this kind of laboratory work seems, for various reasons requiring broader elaboration, to have faded into the past.

### The return of the montage

My contribution to the four-day 9th IPPT was a multimedia presentation based on the simultaneous combination of: coding language<sup>9</sup> in the composition and control of video images; exploring the physical space of the conference through the presentation of text; and expanding the space with its reflection by overlaying archival video materials with live camera footage of our collective presence.

What interested me was the continuous layering of images, reflections, and the attempt to interpret the meaning of this state for me as an author and performer. The archival materials consisted of a video recording of running through the Ur-

<sup>7</sup> Cfr. F. Ruffini, *The empty room: studying Jerzy Grotowski's Towards a Poor Theatre*, in P. Allain (edited by), *Grotowski's Empty Room*, London-New York-Calcutta, Seagull Books, 2009, p. 110 (trans. by J. Barba and B. Plassmann).

<sup>8</sup> Studium Teatralne was established in 1995 by Piotr Borowski, who worked with Grotowski in Pontedera for seven years. It was located at Lubelska 30/32 in Warsaw's Praga Południe district. Gruszczyński wrote «Studium Teatralne is a strange adventure. It attracts with the force and intensity of expression, with the sincerity of speech. It allows you to discover Polish theatrical paths, where there are not too many travellers, originating from Grotowski, winding to Gardzienice. It refers to theatre as an anthropological experience as well. It allows discussions about the ritualization of theatre, and even pondering the religious conditions of the performance». I was a member of S/T from 1996 until December 2007. The final dissolution of the theatre took place in 2023.

<sup>9</sup> An essential contribution to coding was made by [jackpixley.com](http://jackpixley.com) (last access: 17 October 2024).

synów housing estate in Warsaw. This is the space of my childhood and adolescence, where the sources of my inspirations were shaped. These places are saturated with images of memory, and thus with meanings on the map of an internal journey of personality. Running is an important psychophysical activity for me, capturing these images of memory but not dwelling on them. It moves forward, rhythmically connecting fragments and, over time, merging them into a unified whole. Working on the memory-space map led me to one of the fundamental texts in my research: *The Hymn of the Pearl*<sup>10</sup> – a myth about the loss of memory, self-forgetting, and the journey<sup>11</sup> as the foundation of development.

The theory of montage by Sergei Eisenstein in film, and after him, Jerzy Grotowski in theatrical experiments, also became helpful. Both artists spoke about the collision of seemingly incompatible images or the lack of linear continuity in the narrative as a method of prompting the viewer to actively engage with the work in front of them. The idea was to involve the viewer in the event (film, performance), ensuring their active presence, through which the work achieved its fullness.

The elitism of the theatre, as Grotowski discussed, did not pertain to the economic or social status of the audience, but rather to their readiness for an active, non-passive engagement with the performance. I am not referring to instructions or tasks for the audience in the manner of contemporary Immersive Theatre, although Jerzy Grotowski's spatial theatrical projects were highly significant in the physical relationship between ideas in the work, the performer, the space, and the viewer. Instead, it is about opening up to a theatre of intuition, experimentation, and questioning.

Working with the expansion of physical space by incorporating reflected videos, layered onto a type of archive, has changed my thinking about the expression of movement and body work. My training originates from the tradition associated

<sup>10</sup> *Hymn of Pearl* is a Gnostic-Christian text embedded within the *Acts of Thomas* – complete statement of a classic Gnostic myth describing the exile and redemption of the soul. The text is known occasionally as the *Hymn of the Robe of Glory*.

<sup>11</sup> Thinking about the contemporary role of myth and our relationship with it, I recall Grotowski's words from *Towards a Poor Theatre*, where he talks about confronting myth rather than identifying with it: «[...] Myth was both a primaeval situation, and a complex model with independent existence in the psychology of social groups, inspiring group behaviour and tendencies. [...] But today's situation is different. As social groupings are less and less defined by religion, traditional mythic forms are in flux, disappearing and being reincarnated. The spectators are more and more individuated in their relation to the myth as corporate truth or group model, and belief is often a matter of intellectual conviction. [...] What is possible? First confrontation with myth rather than identification. [...] Retaining our private experiences, we can attempt to incarnate myth, putting on its ill-fitting skin to perceive the relativity of our problems, their connection to the "roots", and the relativity of the "roots" in the light of today's experience». Cfr. J. Grotowski, *Towards a Poor Theatre*, Holstebro, Odin Teatrets Forlag, 1968, pp. 22-23.

with Grotowski's ideas, particularly the period known as Art as vehicle<sup>12</sup>. Coexisting with the given space, having psychophysical readiness to react to what is here and now, was and remains one of the most important aspects of my actor training. However, space changes, evolves, and digitalizes. My studio experiments are 'expanded' with a screen, which can either be a challenge or a limitation depending on the understanding of the nature of this new coexistence. This is certainly not an easy relationship and can quickly be overwhelmed by superficial effects (especially the ability to work with scale/detail), thus requiring the development of new methodologies, following a particular rhythm, and rigorous editing of material in relation to the theme, ensuring consistent dramaturgy.

Here, I will again refer to Grotowski's idea of *via negativa*, which means:

- identifying obstacles and trying to work on/with them towards their elimination,
- understanding what the material is not in order to find out what it is,
- focusing the whole process on the idea.

The project *Girl Descending a Staircase* had its first iteration in January 2016 on the staircase of the Warsaw-based theatre, Studium Teatralne as a "one-to-one" multimedia installation with a live element. The viewer was led to the corridor of the staircase at a level from which they could observe a video projection above, and the body of a woman in her nightdress lying on the landing below, while the sounds of a recorded breath from a running person and the live sounds of the audience attending another performance simultaneously mixed. This kind of spatial-visual-audio montage opened me up to a new type of practice and exploration of layering realities, be them found, recorded, imagined, unexpected and so on. The title of the performance, *Girl Descending a Staircase No.1* derives from Marcel Duchamp's famous 1912 work *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*. The painting was rejected by the Cubists for being too futuristic and found itself in an interpretative space in between, not fitting into formal categories. This kind of workspace has always interested me.

### **From the hole of the kiln to online page**

The space is an organic extension of the actor's body, which in itself is an instrument for transmitting content, while at the same time being the 'birthplace' of the impulse/essence of action and a kind of map of the space of work immersed

<sup>12</sup> Art as vehicle is the final period of Grotowski's work. In the second half of the 1980s, after moving from the United States to Italy, another term – Ritual Arts – was used for a short time. The origins of the term can be found in Peter Brook's Preface to *Towards a Poor Theatre*, where he wrote: «[...] for Grotowski acting is a vehicle». Cfr. *ivi*, p. 12.



Fig. 1. Performance *Burning Method – four lectures on conditional love*; in Grotowski Institute in Wrocław (PL), March 2024. Photo by Tobiasz Papuczys.

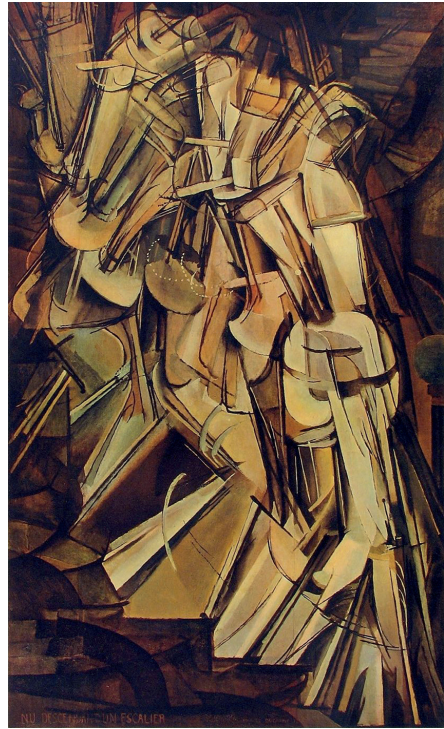


Fig. 2. *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*, oil on canvas by Marcel Duchamp, 1912; in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

in meaning, symbol and myth, where the actor represents a vision of seeking an inner relationship with memory, carried out in physical action<sup>13</sup>.

Like many others, the COVID-19 pandemic found me in the midst of working on new theatrical material. The lack of access to a studio forced me to rehearse either at my home or in open spaces. Fortunately, due to a lucky coincidence, I found myself in Pickering, a town in North Yorkshire. During one of my walks, I stumbled upon a place that immediately struck me with its performative potential, perfectly suited to the project I was working on as part of my PhD at the time. It was an abandoned, walk-in ceramic kiln integrated into a hillside. The space, filled with ashes and roots, immersed in semi-darkness, evoked an atmosphere of destruction and transformation, the birth of something new, a womb in itself. This was where the performance *Burning Method – four lectures on conditional love* had its beginning.

The kiln, as a symbolic space, became a place for creating mythic references and

<sup>13</sup> M. Stawman-Tuka, personal notes to PhD thesis.





Fig. 3. The kiln near Pickering (North Yorkshire, UK). Photo by Myles Stawman.



Fig. 4. *The Kiln* performed during The Horsedonkey Club at vFd; London, September 2022. Photo by Agni Kapuścińska.

the starting point for many performative actions. A kind of culmination of the working process was the creation of an online page based on the kiln embedding images from the rehearsals themselves into it.

Currently, *The Kiln* is a short visual-movement-voice performance during which, inspired by the physical space and projection, I improvise text about the act of birth as the act of the birth of art.

### **The body in crisis finds its expression in hybrid space**

What kind of physicality does hybrid space demand? What kind of stimuli influence decisions about changes in movement? Working on seeking a new space of action led me to reflect on the concept of the body in crisis as a metaphor for the state of acceptance of the process, which is the ultimate form of expression. The body in crisis relates to existing social conditions. It denies norms and, therefore it questions the validity of accepted standards. The body in crisis finds the metaphysics of its existence through the principle of acceptance, and aesthetic principles become irrelevant. The body in crisis experiments; it is open to new expression, individualised, yet with a sense of belonging to primal impulses, the birth of art, awareness of unity with the cosmos. I think the legacy of Antonin Artaud's work and ideas with his concentration on compassion, acceptance of the bodily condition and the attempt to objectify suffering through the perspective of overarching principles, e.g. vibrational work, can be very helpful in the search for new methods in relation to hybrid spaces.

Artaud suggested that, since the actor in training must always face this combined physical and spiritual crisis, then the effects of this crisis should be extended deliberately into performance as 'monstrosity'. Impropriety should thus be recognized as part of the very culture of acting itself, nurtured as a foundation for that culture-in-action, «growing within us like a new organ, a sort of second breath» announced at the opening of *The Theatre and its Double*<sup>14</sup>.

Therefore, the theme of the body in crisis has become the basis for me to engage in a creative dialogue with the London-based artist Dagmara Bilon.

### **Performing recycled document**

The thing is that you mess with my mind. And any more blurry lines adding to my ALREADY confused state. I BELIEVE, BUT WHAT DO I KNOW?<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cfr. T. Gardner, *Breathing's Hieroglyphs. Deciphering Artaud's Affective Athleticism*, in «Performance Research», VIII, 2003, n. 2, pp. 109-116.

<sup>15</sup> From Dagmara's Bilon website: [www.dagmarabilon.com/invisible-contract](http://www.dagmarabilon.com/invisible-contract) (last access: 18 October 2024).



The role of documentation in theatre art is a topic that can be explored extensively, especially in contemporary times due to the omnipresence of cameras in our lives and the constant recording of reality, sometimes leading to participation in events only though the process of recording, such as by using mobile phone cameras during concerts, watching events live on screens, and so on. However, the theme of After Empty Space and Hybrid workspaces in creative practice requires contemplation on the experience of space itself, including digitised ones.

London-based artist, choreographer, and dance movement therapist Dagmara Bilon, in her project *The Art of Dying*, conducts a constant recycling of documents, artefacts, forms, materials, successive registrations, reflections on the body in action, frozen, re-documented, reduced, and recreated anew.

*The Art of Dying* project is an autobiographical odyssey that began with the diagnosis of Ania Bilon, Dagmara's mother, with terminal brain cancer. During one stage of the project, the artist visited places associated with her birth and early childhood years. Despite the years that had passed, she intuitively found places connected to the history of her family. The process of documentation and action in these places, as if marking them with artistic reflection, was a task that guided Bilon towards subsequent forms of expression.

I have asked her about: "Processing of the process of a documentation – an attempt to capture, or recall, or recreate memory in a form of image superimposed on existing reality".

**DB:** The process of writing feels like starting off an old and rusty engine. The engine makes a lot of loud noise but it's not actually going anywhere. It's not working. The car is broken. But it is not dead. I'm seeking to make a noise about the role of performance as a testament to create change. Where does my need to engage in "noise-making" come from? Is it a response to my personal, fractured experience related to my personal, existential essence, or a fractured environment, or a cry for help and attention? Or do I seek to address a wider socio-political landscape? Or is it that I want to fit into a trend of activist art-making? I don't know. But what I do know is that there is an inner feeling of helplessness somewhere, and that I feel that getting into that 'creative/activist' car gives me some kind of omnipotence. It gives me the means to get from **a** to **b**. Even if that is just metaphorically and not actually literally. It's a Bye. Bye to an inner state that I don't wish to be in – to a new state; that I find some refuge in for some time. It is some kind of transportation. Actually, it is not that arriving at point **b** is the actual purpose, but it's the actual journey that is the refuge. It gives me the belief that I have mobility, choice and freedom. And actually, none of this is straightforward. All I can hear right now is a very loud noise of a broken engine. I'm struggling to find my words in a coherent and functional way such as one plus two makes three. There are so many complex layers to a creative process in a performance happening. How to break it down? I'm feeling overwhelmed and struggling to dissect the various layers, which one to talk about

Fig. 5. *Bodies in Crisis or How do you feel about wire sticking out?*; Performance Platform, April 2024. Photo by Ian Whitford.



Fig. 6. *Bodies in Crisis or How do you feel about wire sticking out?*; Performance Platform, April 2024. Photo by Ian Whitford.



and how? And questioning if I really comprehend any of it? However, I do believe that giving visibility to my experience is important to my process of finding the words and repairing the broken engine.

I had the opportunity to participate in one of the stages of Bilon's work process, which was showcased at the Open Ealing gallery in London during the Performance Platform event organised by Weeks & Whitford in April 2024, titled *Bodies in Crisis or How do you feel about wire sticking out?* The physical space of the gallery demanded a significant reduction of elements that we were working on during rehearsals. Therefore, using the aforementioned method of *via negativa*, we arrived at the current theme of post-mortem practices related to the body. A recording of our conversation on this topic, played through speakers, became both the script, music, meditation in action, and reference point during the performance. *The Art of Dying* project is a process/performance of documentation relating to the qualities that fill the moments before what is inevitable and simultaneously liberating.

Tadeusz Kantor placed his entire artistic potential in his Theatre of Death. The Theatre of Death was a space in which Memory was its content, dramaturgy and reason for existence. It is different from the *Art of Dying* which is, rather, a journey through a ritual of purification through the intensity of the body's struggle with the matter of memory, images/documents, remnants, and debris.

The question: "What do the ashes feel/smell of? What do you feel when you smell ashes?" inscribed on the body became an invitation for viewers to reflect on ashes as a space of associations and thoughts. We, the performers, offered our bodies as canvas for the inscription of the viewers' thoughts, thus becoming living archives.

The concept of a living archive is primarily present in visual arts, which is mainly associated with space as a language of presentation. When we go to a gallery, we are not usually dealing with the process of creating the work, but with the result of that process. Theatre must assume in its form a space of the unknown, the unique, and the impossible to reproduce.

Viewers/participants/co-creators of *Bodies in Crisis or How do you feel about wire sticking out?* could interact live with their written reflections. Thus, the performance operated both in the space between theatre and image, through the recording of the past and constant change, and through the confrontation of unpredictable elements.

### **The emerging hybrid workspace of a conceptual three-ring circus**

I use the word semantic for this sort of machine-processible relative form of 'meaning.' The Semantic Web is the web of connections between different forms of data that allow a machine to do something it wasn't able to do directly<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Cfr. T. Berners-Lee. and M. Fischetti, *Weaving the Web: The Original Design and Ultimate*

Art is truth machine / making meaning on loss of / the plot of finding<sup>17</sup>.

I turn my attention briefly now to the performance work of Myles Stawman (UK) for a very different angle on the notion of hybrid workspace. The nature of Stawman's process necessitates a shift in tone from what has preceded, yet he and his work are not unconnected. By his utilising the abstract information space<sup>18</sup> of the *World Wide Web* to formulate a dramaturgy of meaningful interconnection and resonant communication for the physical stage, we remain firmly rooted in the experimental realm of the laboratory.

Stawman has been a long-time key collaborator of mine, facilitating the evolution of my work onstage for many years now, and has previously provided concrete thematic and scenographical context for several of Bilon's more ethereal creations. A self-described independent dramaturg, there are three main aspects at play in his approach to performance. Operating as the sound designer Opaean, he has become a veteran of making live, loop-based mixes to score theatrical work, at first only for his company and then, since 2012, as a freelancer to accompany the vast majority of my own solo and collaborative initiatives. Self-taught in hand coding standards-based HTML, he has since the turn of the century been publishing his live documentation, performative texts, and associated links on the Web at jackpixley.com. Perhaps most notably, subsequent to his original training for the stage under Yat Malmgren and Christopher Fettes at Drama Centre, London, he is the founding ringmaster of Psychological Art Circus (PAC)<sup>19</sup>.

It is through the interdisciplinary PAC project that Stawman aims, ultimately, to combine the three elements of loop-based audio, linked data, and live performance in the hybrid workspace of a conceptual three-ring circus.

By 'linked data', Stawman is referring by another name to the above-mentioned Semantic Web of Berners-Lee. Liveart.work is his current online repository for what I would identify as a poetics of linked data. A compendium of fragmentary notes and thumbnail sketches, the systematised results of his rigorous research conducted over many years is now treated as the springboard into a proposed series of elucidatory lecture performances with which to demonstrate and further develop the dynamic interconnectedness of the work's form and content. I myself was able to facilitate the beginnings of this next stage in the work when I invited Staw-

*Destiny of the World Wide Web by Its Inventor*, New York, HarperCollins Publishers, 1999, p. 185. Sir Timothy John Berners-Lee is an English computer scientist best known as the inventor of the World Wide Web, the HTML markup language, the URL system, and HTTP.

<sup>17</sup> M. Stawman, <https://www.liveart.work/poem> (last access: 18 October 2024).

<sup>18</sup> The World Wide Web: Past, Present and Future, <https://www.w3.org/People/Berners-Lee/9610-IEEE-Computer-v1.html> (last access: 18 October 2024).

<sup>19</sup> Psychological Art Circus [project website] <https://psychologicalartcircus.net> (last access: 18 October 2024).





Fig. 7. Theatre  
Laboratorium Space;  
Wrocław, March 2024.  
Photo by Tobiasz Papuczys.

man in March 2024 to give a short presentation on four of its core concepts by way of a support act to my *Burning Method* lecture performance in the Sala Teatru Laboratorium for the festival *Szczeliny* organised by the Grotowski Institute, Wrocław (PL).

What struck me during his act – performed within what was, in fact, a festival for women in the performing arts – is that, in my opinion, one of the most important postulates constituting the stated aims<sup>20</sup> of his project is:

To stay in the realm of paradox.

It is actually a partial quote, though Stawman uses the terminology of Opaeian in speaking of having ‘sampled’ the phrase from *Ramon Llull and the Secret of Life*<sup>21</sup>,

<sup>20</sup> *Towards a New Circus*: <https://liveart.work/aims> (last access: 17 October 2024)

<sup>21</sup> A. Vega, *Ramon Llull and the Secret of Life*, New York, Herder & Herder, 2003, p. 6 (trans. by J.W. Heisig).



Llull being of seminal interest as a mediaeval progenitor in the computational mechanics of linking data. Somewhat obliquely, Stawman illustrated his paradoxical objective by projecting onto a wall of Sala Teatru Laboratorium the image of, in his words, “a radiant queen, dark blue dress, red book in hand”. Again a sample, this time from an illuminated 14<sup>th</sup> century manuscript<sup>22</sup> credited to Thomas Le Myésier, a disciple of Llull. A unique document in its time for the way it so extensively used pictorial narrative to convey Llull’s autobiographical data, Stawman has processed his image beyond a recognition of its contextual origin and purpose, to instead pose questions of who this woman is or may now represent, and whether indeed she is receiving or giving that repository of information. I would suggest she is the harbinger of an emerging hybrid workspace, from the historical realm of a future paradox.

### Reflections

So what comes After the Empty Space? From the above analyses, it seems that it could be a direction towards embracing virtual, hybrid space, where the question of boundaries does not have a physical dimension but rather involves creating a new language of communication and perceptual possibilities. I will quote the words of the aforementioned author of the Theatre of Death, Tadeusz Kantor, who not only created visual artworks on stage but also sought spaces for receiving the work that were previously unknown to the audience, although close to the experience of every human being:

[...] the experience of constant passing away. The space that has no starting point or boundary, which moves away or approaches on all sides, towards the sides and towards the centre, rises and falls into the depths, rotates on a vertical, horizontal, oblique axis... does not hesitate to intrude into the closed shape, shake it in violent turns, take away its everyday appearance [...] <sup>23</sup>.

If the Empty Space according to Peter Brook could be characterised by horizontal energy, that is, recognizing the moment of theatricality in the arrangement of the spectator-actor relationship in space; and according to Grotowski’s Empty Room, vertical in an attempt to capture the performer-higher connection relationship, that is, referring to the energy flowing beyond the dimension of present experience, towards the mythical condition – what is After Empty Space? The answer may lie in seeking relationships through the hybridity of experience, i.e. a kind of sensitiv-

<sup>22</sup> T. Le Myésier, *Breviculum ex artibus Raimundi Lulli electum* – Cod. St. Peter perg. 92, Karlsruhe, Badische Landesbibliothek, c. 1321, fol. 12r.

<sup>23</sup> Cfr. T. Kantor, in A. Turowski, *Dziura w całym*, Warsaw, Instytut Wydawniczy książka i prasa, 2023, p. 403. (Translation mine).

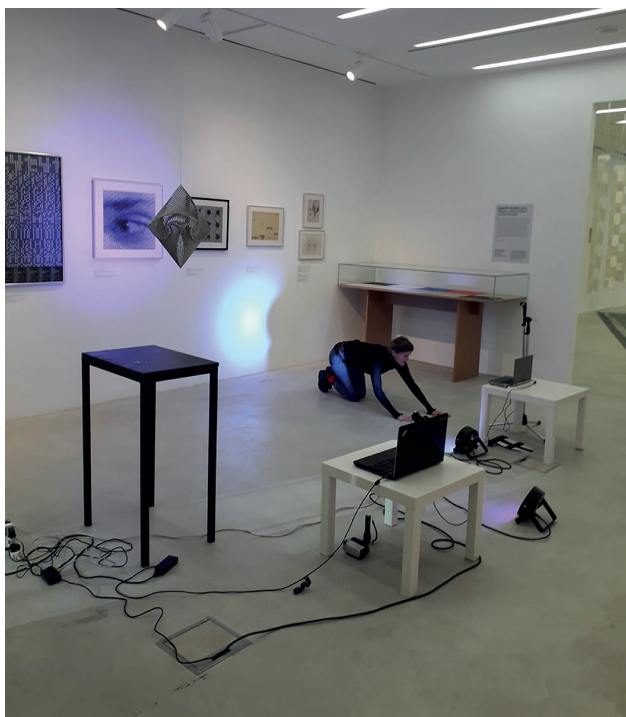


Fig. 8. Waiting for the audience in MSUM+, Ljubljana, November 2018. Project: *1923. webcam*, a Tuka Wach collaboration. Photo of Anita Wach by Magda Tuka.

ity that encompasses with its language the tools of multiplying the image-presence. The concept of presence in hybrid space assumes coexistence with the image of the past, and here the meeting of the idea of the Double by Antonin Artaud can be an inspiration for thinking about the figure in a situation, in dramaturgy embracing the simultaneity of spatial multidimensionality.

Accepting the openness of the form, allowing a kind of confusion in recognising the limits of reality and at the same time working with its processing within a relatively short attention timespan, so assuming potential repetition – these qualities may point towards the creation of a working environment in a hybrid space.

It is also about working with a mediated relationship with the audience. There may be implicit points of contact between performer and audience member in the hybrid space, but it must be assumed that the perceptual state of the spectator and actor often differs greatly due to the co-presence of technology. Arguably, one has to come to terms with mediation and the impossibility of meeting at the level of spontaneity, sensuality and community in relation to a set of symbols, signs (due to the intense polarisation in an age of all-encompassing, fragmented, often context-free information).

We can see this situation as a failure, or a possibility.