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PLAY SET:
Scenography in Portuguese Theatre for Children

Volume II

Setembro 2015

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Volume II

Ficha Técnica:

Título: PLAY SET

Subtítulo: Scenography in Portuguese Theatre for Children

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Área científica: Estudos Artísticos

Especialização: Estudos Teatrais e Performativos

Ano de apresentação: 2015

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PART III

EXAMINING PRACTICE

This part will analyse further the examples recorded through case studies and the practice-as-research project, as well as other examples taken from the initial general survey, comparing and contrasting them in order to better comprehend the relationship between the scenographer's methods, conditions of creation and conception of scenography. It is organised into three chapters: the first looks at the scenographers' perception of the audience; the second, follows the scenographer's creative process, describing the structures of collaboration observed and its consequences and influences; the third and final chapter puts forward the concept of *performed* scenography as the basis for characterisation of scenography in Portuguese children's theatre.

Chapter 1

PERCEPTION OF AN AUDIENCE

> Audience is a group of people who have come to watch, but more importantly to hear in a
> space that equates to an auditorium. Hearing related not necessarily to seeing. [but] spectator
> is an onlooker, wholly related to viewing and observation.[1]

Differently from an audience, spectators are looked upon by theatre professionals as active participants in the performance. Their presence provokes performers into action, and their reaction is crucial to the creation of meaning. The plural 'spectators' implies that they are understood as a group of individuals, and as such their individual memories and backgrounds play a part in the process. They react to each other as they react to the performance, installing a sense of ephemeral community which characterises each presentation. This dialogue can be comprehended as a type of collaboration, a symbiosis, where spectators' observation and reflexive viewing fills in the narrative blanks offered by the performers.

In practice however, as Joslin McKinney asks: 'what are the "audience" and/or the 'spectator'? There are connotations of passivity or activity in both terms'.[2] The 'audience' is spoken about during rehearsals as a collective cohesive whole. Theatrical professionals', and in particular scenographers', perception of their audience does not, for the most part, recognise individuality. Even though all of the researched scenographers acknowledge the importance of the audience for the production, few appreciate the distinction between a group of spectators and an audience. This fact is related to a comprehension of

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[1] Gareth White, 'Odd Anonymized Needs: Punchdrunk's Masked Spectator', in Alison Oddey and Christine White (ed.). *Modes of Spectating* (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), pp. 219-229.

[2] Joslin Mckinney. 'The Nature of Communication Between Scenography and Its Audiences', PhD Thesis, The University of Leeds, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author.

scenography as something either open to interpretation, and able to be inhabited differently in every presentation, or as something fixed, stable and predictable, choreographed around the performers' blocking. If we think, 'a successful design for the theatre maintains a balance between what it wants to say and what it wants to imply',[3] then the scenography is not complete until it is viewed by the spectators. This implies an acceptance by the scenographer that what is designed is, first appropriated by the performers, and second by the spectators, often developing into something other than the original design. Understanding spectators' bodies and interpretations as a design variable is then part of the creative process. As we will see in this chapter, there are different ways scenographers can do this, particularly in what concerns a children's audience.

There is no question that the space of performance (and the place of performance) is fundamental to the spectators' experience. It is the scenographers' expertise to transform it as part of a specific dramaturgy. Gay McAuley defends 'that spectators are stimulated into beginning to make meaning with what they see due to the separation or demarcation between them and the performers, so the distance is the condition not only of sight but of the beginning of understanding.'[4] This separation can be stable or shift with the narrative. It can be occasionally punctured by the performers or by the scenography, and consequently it is able to be designed. Defining the place of performance, its occupation throughout the dramaturgy is therefore foundational to any scenography. In productions such as *Ainda Não É o Fim...* by O Bando, the site selection responded to the need for a triangular viewing of the stage, but it was the specific topography of the square which dictated the scenography. This interdependence had the spectators at its core: the

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[3] Sofia Pantouvaki, 'Visualising Theatre: Scenography from Concept to Design to Realisation'. *Mapping Minds*, ebook edited by Monika Raesch (Oxford: InterDisciplinary Press, 2011, http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/product/mapping-minds/. Accessed February 2013), p.69.

[4] *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 274-276.

possibility to have multiple viewpoints and approaches to the stage, invited each spectator to create her/his own visual narrative, seating down or walking around it at will. O Bando's inclusive view of their 'audience' determines that every production, and its scenography, offer multiple layers of meaning, engaging all spectators.

Making design decisions with the spectators in mind does not mean predicting what each spectator will think, but rather imbuing the scenography with intentions and suggestiveness, making it an integral part of the dramaturgy. Creating tension at set moments in time and space, which is able to be felt if not completely defined. Therefore,

> something matters to an audience only if you make it matter. If you attend to it, if only for a
> moment, the commitment of your attention will create the tension of attention. If something
> is not attended to decisively (...), then it will not be attended to by the audience. It will be
> invisible. The act of decision gives presence to the subject.[5]

Identifying these moments of theatrical tension is as much part of a director's expertise as the scenographer's. This provides the scenography with a substructure which helps to define transitions and rhythm in the performance's space. These moments are very clear in productions where the meta-theatrical is developed and the spectators are directly addressed. Nonetheless, taking the point of view of a spectator is common in rehearsal as a way to make a specific tension visible. Tension is used to provoke a pause or an acceleration of the action, and be triggered by any theatrical element. When scenography is the trigger, the space of performance is invariably modified. And consequently the spectators' relationship with the narrative.

Improvising an audience.

The analysis of the performing body also tells us something about the spectating body. Whenever I watch or analyse a piece of theatre I occupy a physical perspective, and I rely on

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5 Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 59.

my own physical body as the vantage point of my analysis. So my analysis is always subject to the restrictions or possibilities that my own body imposes or opens up. The 'ideal' spectator exists only as an abstract idea.[6]

Ultimately it is the scenographer who serves as audience in the rehearsal room, checking the work against a set of conditions established by the fiction and by the production. Along with the director, the scenographer serves as the first spectator, splitting attention between the joy of reception and the need to evaluate errors and propose solutions. Bogart puts it plainly: 'the paradox in an artist's relationship to an audience is that, in order to talk to many people, you must speak only to one.'[7] This paradox is unavoidable. But it is the scenographer's choice of how much control she has over the design. How much is objective and how much is subjective. This objectivity is not necessarily dependant on the amount of detail offered by the scenographic material, since detailing can, in fact, suggest multiple avenues of subjectivity. Payne reminds us that it is not only the individual scenographic elements but their context in performance that influences the spectator: 'an audience sees through the eyes of the scenographer, since he both rationally and intuitively selects what they view. Moreover, he controls not only what they see but also the context in which they see it.'[8]

In defining the visual the scenographer can, however, enclose the dramaturgy in such a way, spectators find it difficult to add to it. Visual imagery can both suggest and define. Suggestion is not abstraction. It can take many forms, from naturalism to expressionism, but at its core is the scenographers' will to keep its meaning open to interpretation. Scenographic images are, therefore, performative, in that they depend on

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[6] Colette Conroy, *Theatre and the Body* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 6.

[7] Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2001), p. 110.

[8] *The Scenographic Imagination* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p. 153.

the performer/spectator relationship to create and change meaning. This relationship is, as explained previously, subject to design decisions. The spectators' point of view in relation to the action is the first:

> spectators in the theatre are involved in a vast range of different looks — shared, private, collective, offered, stolen, forbidden, obtrusive, unobtrusive, and so on — and, most important of all, that the look in the theatre is always a process of looking, always complex, always multiple, always energising, and never totally under the control of anyone. (...) The freedom to choose what to focus on is an important part of the risk of live performance, and an important part of the sense of taking responsibility for one's own experience.[9]

In rehearsal the scenographer must choose from where to analyse the performance, from where to 'play at being a spectator'. Changing the point of view may help to establish the limits of an audience's seating plan, but eventually both director and scenographer assume one, abstract position, often frontal and at the centre of the action. This defines the rules of the place of performance, which will be used by all involved in the performance. In reality, 'the acting area has to be planned from the beginning from the spectators' viewpoint.'[10]

This dialogue in boundaries between performance and its spectators, can be disrupted, producing fluctuations in its reception. These transitions cause variation in the space of performance, which in turn need adjustment from the spectators. The scenographer needs to be able to feel them in rehearsal and adjust the scenography accordingly. Disruption can be incited by the performance itself and it is often followed by surprise. Establishing a rhythm of 'attention and distraction' in the scenographic, in contrast or in tune with that of the performers', is one way to expand its meaning:

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[9] Gay McAuley, *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*, 4th edn. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), pp. 270-271.

[10] Pamela Howard, *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), pp. 187-191.

attention and distraction, then, exist on a continuum: 'the two ceaselessly flow into one another, as part of a social field in which the same imperatives and forces incite one and the other'. In contemporary scenography, distraction is as much an organising principle as attention was in the modernist period.[11]

This rhythm is designed from a scenographers' intuition of materials, colours, textures, shapes, etc., but it must be subject to trial and activation from the performers if the scenography is to be moulded by performance conditions. Rehearsing scenography, then, exposes it to an improvised spectator, the scenographer. An individual who will stand for an audience of spectators. How then to 'improvise a child spectator'?

Concepts of childhood.

Activating the scenography by using an external point of view, becomes even more of a puzzle when we are designing for a children's audience. The tendency to understand them as a cohesive whole is even more common, as our preconceptions of what childhood is and how it relates to a theatrical experience frequently overpowers the creative process. The case studies show that some scenographers chose to ignore the specificity of their spectators, such as O Bando[12], working the design as they would for an adult or mixed audience, and others approached the subject by projecting their individual knowledge of childhood, through autobiography and personal memories, such as O Teatrão's costume designer Cátia Barros.[13] Nevertheless they all accepted that the suggestion of theatrical tension through the scenography was fundamental and, in the case of theatre for children, eventually essential. Visual and spatial manipulation was declared crucial by most

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[11] Joslin Mckinney and Philip Butterworth, *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p. 187.

[12] See Part II Chapter 2.

[13] See annex Case Studies Notes: O Teatrão.

researched scenographers, recurrently overpowering dramaturgical text in the finished productions. Therefore, even if the scenographer did not consistently introduced the spectators as a design variable, the idea of childhood was latent throughout discussions and rehearsals. Some theatre companies have, nonetheless, a very specific idea of what making theatre for children is, establishing a list of what is allowed and what is not, and as result, constructing a specific concept of who children spectators are and how they relate to theatre. Matthew Reason, in his book about children spectatorship, includes a statement from the Unicorn Theatre in London, where they clearly state that 'it is vital (...) we take up the challenge if we want to know what young audiences make of their theatrical experiences. And if we are not interested in how children engage with theatre, then how seriously are we taking our audience in the theatre that we make *for* them?'[14]

Along with the sense that childhood offers a certain creative freedom, the responsibility of working for children is here clearly stated. Our collective perception of childhood and how it uses imagination has developed over the last century as something specific and somewhat undefinable. It has been associated with play and naiveté, but it also offers examples of violence and ignorance. As a consequence, theatre for children, oscillates between over-simplistic formats and expertly crafted productions. The distinction between an adult and a children's theatre, as we have seen in previous chapters, has not always existed. In fact, the type of theatre we now most relate to children, puppet or marionette theatre,

> did not make a serious distinction between adult and child spectators, or only began to do so
> when economic factors and attendance suggested to them that children provided a separately
> identifiable market. (...) London in 1838, observed that the audiences were almost entirely
> youthful (eight to sixteen years of age), and preponderantly male. Such audiences witnessed

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[14] *The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing Children's Experiences of Theatre* (Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books, 2010), p. 169.

performances which, by modern standards, would certainly not be regarded as 'plays designed specially for children.' [15]

Until the eighteenth-century, children were perceived as young adults, or adults in the making, socially relevant only in potency. Theatre was open to all audiences, and specific to none. As with puppets, many theatre manifestations were developed outdoors and did not try to select spectators by age, social class or literacy. It was not until theatre became more and more spatially formalised that this 'selection' was possible:

> the shift of many puppeteers from the streets to enclosures in parks had profound implications for the younger spectators too. In the streets they were simply part of the general crowd, but in the parks were in a different context where they were specifically viewed as 'children', and the show was shaped accordingly.[16]

Taboos and misconceptions.

With the definition of the concept of 'childhood' as a specific, if ephemeral, state, literature, education and of course theatre, started to regard children as dependent, unexperienced human beings subject to the influence of everything they came in contact with. This produced the social assumption that adults, and pedagogues and artists in particular, have the authority and the responsibility to dictate what is selected as relevant to be taught and how. As we have seen, theatre for children, theatre in education and drama in education are some of the approaches developed by the theatrical professions over the last fifty years. Here I would like to recognise how specific concepts associated with childhood are used by the scenographers investigated to address their audience. Along with positive definitions of repetition, imitation, imagination and play, a set of

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[15] John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik, *Popular Theatre in Europe, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 79-83.

[16] Ibidem.

negative definitions or misconceptions were identified. These taboos establish a list of rules of what is possible and what is not when working for a children's audience.

We all learn through imitation and repetition.[17] It is the recognition of a gesture or movement and its comprehension through doing that enables us to commit an act to memory and eventually use it in the future. This is learning at its most basic structure, and it is also the foundation for rehearsal or *répétition*.[18] When imagination is added to this act of repetition, the gesture can developed into something else, producing a transition which is in itself a narrative. Play can apply imagination to further the initial imitation or to destroy it, to fragment it, expanding its initial meaning. Both Vygotsky and Benjamin[19] speak of how each time repetition happens, it immediately transforms itself. It is a creative act: 'child's play is not simply a reproduction of what he has experienced, but a creative reworking of the impressions he has acquired. He combines them and uses them to construct a new reality, one that conforms to his own needs and desires.'[20] It is an activity of discovery, of trial and error, but with no right or wrong result except that established by the fiction being created. Performers at play can start from imitation of reality but it builds from it, developing its own truth. Children at play check themselves through the application of rules taken from both reality and imagination. There is a balance between the repetition of the known and the imagining of the unknown, proposing new

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[17] 'One type of activity we could call reproductive, and is very closely linked to memory; essentially it consists of a person's reproducing or repeating previously developed and mastered behavioral patterns or resurrecting traces of earlier impressions.' Lev S. Vygotsky, 'Imagination and creativity in childhood', *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology*, vol. 42, no. 1 (January–February 2004), p. 7.

[18] French theatre term for rehearsal.

[19] Walter Benjamin, *Reflexões Sobre a Criança, o Brinquedo e a Educação* (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2009), pp. 101-102.

[20] Vygotsky, 'Imagination and creativity in childhood.' *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology,* vol. 42, no. 1, 2004, pp. 7–97, http://lchc.ucsd.edu/mca/Mail/xmcamail.2008_03.dir/att-0189/Vygotsky__Imag___Creat_in_Childhood.pdf, (accessed February 2013), p. 11.

formulations of old rules. If it is successful, in the theatre maker or the children's eyes, plausibility of the fiction is achieved and a dramaturgy is formed. Similarly to theatre which is not a clean repetition of reality, children at play transform an amalgam of impressions into a creative whole. In this sense, theatre making is imminently child-like. In reality, there is something about the imitation of another human being, about speaking in another's voice, that requires either a creatural naiveté, a touch of madness, or an invited audience.[21]

Play can have, evidently, a scenographic development. As we have seen above, visual and spatial characterisations of a dramaturgy are understood as primordial when working for children. Walter Benjamim even compares children with uncensored scenographers, able to work materials with no clear intention to make meaning. [22] This ability is dear to scenographers in the initial stages of the creative process. Being free of a rational or the capacity to employ scenographic materials with a right amount of 'vagueness',[23] in short being proficient in play, potencies the relationship between the performers and the scenography. Particularly when the production is being devised in rehearsal. In *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima,* the intuitive choice of found objects brought into improvisation rehearsals, provoked the performers and director's reactions to textures, sounds and colours, unblocking the fictional realm already established. The playful nature of the rehearsal process transferred to the final staging, and in particular to the way the performers considered the scenographic materials in general. They found the fictional authority to use them as a response to impulses of the imagination. When

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[21] Bert O. States, *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: on the Phenomenology of Theater* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 158.

[22] 'Ao elaborar histórias, crianças são cenógrafos que não se deixam censurar pelo 'sentido'.' Benjamin, *Reflexões Sobre a Criança, o Brinquedo e a Educação*, (São Paulo: Editora 34, 2009), pp. 69-70.

[23] I will look at the idea of vagueness in the next chapter, when addressing processes of communication in collaboration.

choosing these materials, I made certain I visualised them at play, their potential for suggesting multiple story-lines, but I knew they would eventually propose different images to different people.

Clearly,

> the scenographer's general view of what an audience is and her views on a specific audience can influence the development of meaning in the scenography. (...) The challenge for any scenographer (...) is to produce meaning which works at individual and social level, to stimulate, provoke and excite spectators and allow them to participate through the activation of their own imagination.[24]

The defeatist side to this scenographer/spectator relationship, in theatre for children as in theatre for all audiences or adults, happens when the designer starts from what it can and cannot do. The assumption that there is a group of rules for each audience is misleading and it hinders creation. Apart from practical production issues, such as official age classification (which is in itself debatable and subject to adult misconceptions of youth), creating theatre for children must take its spectators in consideration in its positive aspects, already described, and not as statutory restrictions to be applied without discrimination. These misconceptions are used as either an excuse to censor verbal and gestural language, or to present poor and simplistic productions.

In the first case, adaptations for children, theatrical or cinematic, are 'dumbed down' to fit an adult conception of childhood as a facile state of understanding, where every step of the meaning making process needs to be supported my multiple forms of illustration. In this procedure of adaptation, layers of meaning are washed out as they are

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[24] Joslin Mckinney, 'The Nature of Communication Between Scenography and Its Audiences', PhD Thesis, The University of Leeds, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author.

deemed unattainable or found 'dangerous' to the education of the child-spectator.[25] While researching O Teatrão during the production of *A Biblioteca Russa* one of the issues repeatedly raised by the producer and assistant director was the need to avoid slang or even 'difficult' words. Any vocabulary that was deemed too risky or complex (there was no clear rule for what could be included here) was targeted during rehearsals and implied a lengthy discussion with the director/dramaturge. Eventually it became explicit that the producers' were worried with the adult spectators accompanying the children, such as parents or school teachers, rather than the children themselves. The experience told the producer that even if the language was used in the children's everyday, there was the assumption that a theatrical institution was not free to use slang on stage. Paying parents or schools would not expect to hear it as part of a performance. Similarly, language considered complex was said to hinder action, as it would slow down or pause their narrative reception. The director finally had the last word on the subject and the production was able to keep the vocabulary and fictional complexity. But any direct slang was cut.

Another consequence of adult misconceptions of childhood are visually poor productions. Scenographic materials are made simplistically or are excluded, as the producing team assumes that

> children have such good imaginations no care need be taken with costumes and mounting. But just because they can create their own images does not mean they do not sometimes enjoy a play beautifully costumed, lighted, and set. To deprive them of this aesthetic experience shows a loss of respect for the audience and disregard for theatre as an art. Indeed, it is a missed opportunity to show that theatre is the only art composed of many forms.[26]

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[25] 'Adults, of course, often 'censor' adaptations, deciding that some are appropriate for children and others not. Or else they change the stories in the process of adapting them to make them appropriate for a different audience' in Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Adaptation* (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 118.

[26] Nellie McCaslin, Seeking the Aesthetic in Creative Drama and Theatre for Young Audiences'. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* vol.39, no.4, 2005, p. 12-19, p. 16.

Ignoring 'production values'[27] in theatre for children or assuming they are not necessary is misunderstanding both children's and adults' imaginations. Thinking of scenography as a mere illustration of a fictional world, creating the 'right' environment for the text to be better realized, is another. It is precisely the overlapping of the scenographic with verbal and kinesthetic experiences, that expands meaning and arouses imaginations. The layered combination, with a fluctuating hierarchy, offers all spectators a way into the fiction. Matthew Reason puts forwards some conclusions on this subject:

> firstly, there is no need to worry about children's ability to comprehend a stage performance. Even for those who have little theatrical experience, the skills are there to be able to read the stage. Certainly, greater experience provides greater competence and greater self-reflective ability, and this enhances the experience. However, the theatrical experiences we offer children need not be simple ones. Secondly, we do not need to worry about a performance filling in all the gaps and can on the whole assume that children will work with a production, engaging with it on their own terms and with their own imagination.[28]

Coming back to the idea that a children's imagination is clearer or better than an adult's, we encounter another problem. It is not a question of quality, but rather a question of experience. The more subjects we put to the previously discussed sequence of imitation, repetition and imagination, building our knowledge and capacity to recognize and apply reflexive thought, the more likely we will be able to respond to a vast number of theatrical stimuli and establish connections between layers of meaning. Having this in mind, complex theatrical creative imagination implies great literacy, something which is not likely a child will have. As a matter of fact,

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[27] A theatrical term that refers to the use of set, costume, prop and lighting as valuables in the spectator's eyes, and worth the ticket purchased.

[28] Matthew Reason, *The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing* (Staffordshire: Trentham Books, 2010), p. 98.

the child can imagine vastly less than the adult, but he has greater faith in the products of his imagination and controls them less, and thus imagination, in the everyday, vulgar sense of this word, that is, what is unreal and made up, is of course greater in the child than in the adult.[29]

The lack of control of a child's imagination is therefore what allows them to fall into the fiction. Nevertheless experience with theatre for children also tells us that children are able to distinguish illusion from reality, and willingly choose to become overcome by the fiction. This choice is made only if the theatrical tension designed by the practitioners induces it. It is not automatic or superficial. It is a concession on the child's part as with any other spectator. And it is the more substantive, the more possibilities are presented.

The pleasure in connecting expression with its respective process of construction is also common to all spectators. Reason explains that children enjoy not just the story but rather the medium by which is told: 'in engaging with theatre as theatre, they are perceiving the workings of the medium itself and appreciating the illusion that is produced; they are following not just the story but also the processes of the construction of the story.'[30] Consequently, the creative process transpiring into the performance is relevant to the fabrication of a child-spectator's theatrical experience. And the scenographic is no exception. Simplistic or patronizing intentions are discernible to the spectators. Taboos or misconceptions of childhood can therefore become overpowering when designing for children, as a specific age group. Working with colour, shape, texture and of course space and time, scenography is as much subject to misconceptions as the dramaturgy or the staging. As with other visual arts, there is the general understanding

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[29] Lev S. Vygotsky, 'Imagination and creativity in childhood.' *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology,* vol. 42, no. 1, 2004, pp. 7–97, http://lchc.ucsd.edu/mca/Mail/xmcamail.2008_03.dir/att-0189/Vygotsky__Imag___Creat_in_Childhood.pdf, (accessed February 2013), p. 34.

[30] Matthew Reason, *The Young Audience: Exploring and Enhancing* (Staffordshire: Trentham Books, 2010), pp. 83-84.

that children do not need or want visual or narrative complexity, opting for, as an example, the use of block primary colours or bright overwhelming lighting, such as in *Corcunda de Notre Dame*.[31] Similarly, transitions between fictional spaces are often over explained, the scenography working only as an (double) illustration of the text, as in *O Feiticeiro de Oz*.[32] Sarah Argent agrees with the need to expose narrative as recognizable by children, but she believes the visual and spatial qualities of a performance can actually be expanded by these spectators' imaginations.

> I am keen to provide children with a theatrical experience in which they can readily identify and recognise the situations, the characters, and the emotions, but which has an aesthetic which is markedly different from the primary-coloured (...) they normally inhabit. (...) The vividness of a small child's imagination offers designers the opportunity to be visually and spatially playful, eclectic, and to marry and juxtapose elements in a surreal way.[33]

O Bando takes this idea further, with *A Caça*.[34] When working for children they not always make 'situations', characters or emotions recognizable. They understand children can, as adults, construct their own narrative, responding not only to the visual-spatial but also to text and gesture. They work emotions such as despair or situations such as a death, alongside joy or thrill. They understand of course that these spectators' reading will be somewhat different from an adult's, but this is not an impediment but rather a challenge or even a desire.

Designing through autobiography and memory.

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[31] See Part II Chapter 1 and annex General Survey Diagram, show nº 2.

[32] See annex General Survey Diagram, show nº9.

[33]'The Importance of Being Designed: the Role of the Designer in Theatre for Young Children'. *Blue Pages: Journal for the Society of British Theatre Designers*, (December 2012).

[34] See annex General Survey Diagram, show nº18.

On a another note, Argent's comment implies that designing for children offers the scenographer greater freedom than designing for adults because these would be less open to the 'surreal' juxtaposition of visual-spatial elements. Our, more or less accurate, association of childhood with the ability to transform reality in fiction, through imagination, can offer the scenographer a rich source of material. In fact, looking at our own memories of childhood is a powerful method when designing either for a children's or an adults' show. I will now look at the role of autobiography in the scenographer's creative process, at how memory is used to activate playfulness, as I have described it above. Kate Hunter explains how memory works in performance:

> Memory is a huge and vastly complicated assemblage of processes and experiences, and when we consider the way it is used in performance practice, the possibilities are endless. We incorporate spatial memory when we work architecturally in space or when inventing small movements across the body; we use personal story and autobiography; we embody explicit and then procedural memory as we learn a movement sequence and then perform it; we practice lines. Memory underpins our aesthetic choices and our tastes: we remember what we like and select material accordingly; we instinctively gravitate towards or away from sounds or words or gestures because of associations and connections. [35]

Scenographers use memory to activate imagination, be it memories of childhood or not. Cátia Barros, scenographer for O Teatrão, activates memories of childhood whenever she is faced with a question of child reception. I used my own when looking for suggestive objects for *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*. Teatro das Marionetas' digital set designers used their memories of Porto to create Mr. Hic's city. Scenographers store visual and gestural information as a rule. A person on a bus, a reaction to a question, a set of hats in a window, etc. We use it to recognize and develop characters and costume, or to

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[35] 'Facts and Fictions: Landscapes of Memory, Imagination and the Brain in Performance Making.' http://www.adsa2012.qut.edu.au/documents/CompassPoints_1_FactsFictions_Hunter.pdf, (accessed February 2013).

define inhabited space, creating relations of familiarity between the fictional and the real world. It is therefore no surprise that we recur to childhood whenever it seems appropriate to the performance. In truth, 'the act of memory is a physical act and lies at the heart of the art of the theatre. If the theatre were a verb, it would be 'to remember'.[36]

Remembering is also a creative act. And remembering through action, such as rehearsing, brings memories to life, eventually overlapping reality or the initial perception of a memory. In *Tropeçar*, by Teatro do Vestido, performers devised action through playing out memories of their own childhood.[37] When we activate a childhood memory through action and repetition, as mentioned above. In fact, 'as memories are recalled, they are reconstructed. The process of remembering is a process of composition. Furthermore, all sorts of personal landscapes inform the nature of recollections, particularly with regard to autobiographical memory.'[38] It is a paradox: in order to remember it we make alive, present, but simultaneously we change it. Using memory in performance is not therefore an accurate reconstruction of childhood facts, 'it is on the plane of the daydream and not on that of facts that childhood remains alive and poetically useful within us. Through this permanent childhood, we maintain the poetry of the past.[39]

Memories are multi-sensory. They are made of fragments and reliving them is building transitions between them. There is therefore a choice on how these transitions are put together: this is done through creation and not memory. These fragments come from diverse sensorial sources: olfactory, taste, visual, tactile or auditive, and connecting them implies a leap of the imagination. In this sense imagination can change our memory, and

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[36] Anne Bogart, *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.22.

[37] See annex General Survey Diagram, show nº26.

[38] Kate Hunter, 'Facts and Fictions: Landscapes of Memory, Imagination and the Brain in Performance Making.'(http://www.adsa2012.qut.edu.au/documents/CompassPoints_1_FactsFictions_Hunter.pdf, accessed February 2013).

[39] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.16.

in consequence the perception of our own childhood, 'studies show that false memories can be created when people think about (and probably imagine) childhood events in an attempt to remember them. (...) A growing literature shows that imagination can change autobiographies.'[40]

Evoking childhood in order to interpret the action of play, or to recognize playfulness in in scenographic materials, is telling a story. It is built from believable memories, from perceptions of the truth, and from imagined images. In its creation, it is not relevant which is which, reality and fiction feed on each other to create a dramatic whole. Nonetheless, 'an image that is incidentally created is more likely to be confused with a past perception than an image that is intentionally created, because memory for the intentionally created image contains information pertaining to the conscious act of imagining.'[41] This means that in the creative act we are aware we are using real images to build a fiction, and it is this choice, and the way it is applied, that characterizes the creative process of of companies such as Circolando or Teatro do Vestido. In *Pedra/Pão*[42] and *Tropeçar* the performers evoked childhood gestures, recovered from memory and from observation of children at play, to define the space of performance. This dual act of remembering and of fabricating is not opposed. According to António Damásio 'images of something that has not yet happened and that may in fact never come to pass are no different in nature from the image you hold of something that already has happened. They constitute the memory of a possible future rather than of the past that was.'[43] It is this

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[40]   Maryanne Garry, and Devon LL Polaschek, 'Imagination and memory.' *Current Directions in Psychological Science,* vol. 9, no.1, 2000, p.6-10. http://cdp.sagepub.com/content/9/1/6.short, (accessed February 2013), pp. 6-10.

[41] Helene Intraub and James E. Hoffman, 'Reading and visual memory: Remembering Scenes that Were Never Seen', *The American journal of psychology* (1992), pp. 101-114. - falta o no.

[42] See annex General Survey Diagram, show nº 31.

[43] *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain.* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), p.97.

movement from past to future, and vice-versa, that marks the use of autobiography in scenography. Developing a visual fiction, and checking it, against memories of childhood, can be an alternative to the use of general assumptions of an audience. Designing from our own memories gives the scenographer the authority to propose solutions which, coming from the individual, can readily be developed by the creative collective, and consequently by the spectators. Research shows that having to define a children's audience as a general concept was avoided by all the investigated scenographers. They resorted to autobiography when in doubt. This exploration of the self is not uncommon in contemporary theatre (or the visual arts). It is a methodology for insight, a trigger for the imagination. Here I argue that it is used, not only as a creative practice, but also as a way to give rise to a relationship with a specific group of spectators.

Chapter 2

COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION AND STRUCTURES OF COLLABORATION

This chapter discusses the scenographer's procedures of creation, starting from the relationship with imagination, through the response to conditions of production, to the use of methods of communication, and its consequences on the professional partnerships developed. Finally, it will dispute conventional concepts of authorship, authority and style in scenography.

Section 1

Definitions of Scenographic Imagination.

> What is difficult to explain to anyone is that while imagination is required in the practice of any art, its real role in the creative process is to select, judge, reject, and synthesize the materials found in the research of external facts and images.[1]

Making meaning through the scenographic is a paradoxical process. The scenographer is asked to interpret the dramatic through the production of images. Contrary to other visual arts creatives, the scenographer is not in complete control of these images. What is more, the scenographic imagery is dependent on the performers inhabiting them. Similarly, scenography uses all the figures of speech of dramatic writing, such as metaphor, metonym or allegory, but it is built from space and time, as well as paint, timber and other materials, and light, composing images which are as variable, and unstable, as their spectators. Scenographic imagination exists in the written word, in a

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[1] Darwin Reid Payne. *The scenographic imagination* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.167.

canvas flat or in a performer moving across the stage. Conventionally, the scenographer is trained to respond first to words, considering that 'in words, the past and the present are in constant collision, which makes them picturesque. (...) Translating this sound into colour and space is an exciting challenge to the scenographer, who needs to establish graphically the quality of the writing.'[2] It flows from suggestion to (un)built environment, creating a meeting place for performers and spectators. It is created with accuracy and intention, but left as open as possible. It is never finished. It exists through successive interpretation.

Suggestion.

One of the scenographer's roles is to pull together research materials as different as words, gestures, fabric or space, and other elements. This ability to search and accept suggestions from multiple, often simultaneous or apparently opposed sources, is what occupies the first stage of 'active interpretation' of the scenographic imagination, 'when you act out a dramatic work you choose to pick on some meanings and not others. You make an explicit or inexplicit critique of other interpretations. So such interpretation is simultaneously analytic and critical.'[3] This is a continuos task. It can be specific to a particular project, but generally the scenographer will observe materials, people, spaces, continuously, collecting, or even 'hoarding', possibilities. Frequently, materials collected long before will serve as the mote to present productions. Assuming that objects, costumes or spaces can have a different significance depending on what is being developed at the time, the scenographer sees past, present and future in all research materials. They have a story, and can therefore suggest context; they have specific physical characteristics which suggest habit and manipulation; and they can be interpreted and consequently have a

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[2] Pamela Howard, *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.57.

[3] Mike Pearson and Michael Shanks, *Theatre/Archaelogy* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.11.

dramatic future. Selecting these materials or rather what they are able to imply and imprint in the rehearsal process is what makes them part of a determined production. Starting a new project, the scenographer will go through her material and immaterial sources which, added to those proposed by directors or performers, initiates the scenographic imagination.[4]

The birth of an image.

Scenography is the creation of images drawn from individual imagination which are afterwards made complex through interpretative interaction. Scenographic images, at this initial stage, are always incomplete. Intuition, emotion and research help the scenographer define an approach to the space of performance, always knowing that the creative gaze will mark it not through presence but through absence. Even so, preliminary images can present themselves as very detailed constructs of the fictional world being developed. Scenographic imagination is not always controlled by its user, but it most certainly draws on previously done research and suggestion. Memory and imagination mingle into a single image. At times scenographic imagery presents itself as a frame of a sequence, already including the performer or rather a body, as the impulse for scenographic movement or transition. These are not built images, they are not consciously composed by the scenographer. They appear to be created without effort or cause. Nevertheless we assume they are accurate and definite. They are felt as intense representations of the fiction, carrying no mistakes and making no compromises. They are perfect. For that short moment when we are under their spell. Images drawn from intuition, which

> is the unconscious assessment of the image in terms of past experience and quite possibly an
> unconscious understanding of how this image might relate to future experience or action (...)

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[4] See Part II, Chapter 3.

> Seeing and intuition are inseparable parts of one another. (...) The investigative mind cannot, however, confine itself to that often very narrow band of rational and logical thought that often declines to acknowledge any solution to a problem outside its own boundaries. No artist, certainly not the scenographer, can afford to discount the powers of intuition or the pursuit of its attainment.[5]

These 'mental images'[6] are the product of intuition and as fundamental to the scenographic creation as rational thought. Their timing is unpredictable, but once they happen they are immediately transformed by the scenographer's perception of a particular production. Depending on the stage of the creative process they can be discarded as an extemporaneous reaction of the imagination, as the fundament for a new design or as conceptual, apparently surreal, suggestions. Blumenfeld describes hypnagogic imagination as the scenographic imagination which produces images that do not respond to the reality of a specific production:

> the symptom of hypnagogic imagination is to identify a non-existent, absent, and neutral phenomenon with irresponsible innocence of a child staring at an empty wall or screen. (...) The trouble, but also the joy with the apparatus of the imaginary, and the hypnagogic imagination in particular, is that the imagery constructed in such a speculative way may have nothing to do with the realities within the play and without it. These are images out of this world, crafted unwittingly in the individual minds in a half dormant state.[7]

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[5] Darwin Reid Payne. *The scenographic imagination* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.152.

[6] and 'because we do not consciously supervise the construction of these mental images, we tend to treat them as we treat memories and perceptions—initially assuming they are accurate representations of the objects we are imagining' in William Gruber. *Offstage Space, Narrative, and the Theatre of the Imagination.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.25.

[7] Lilja Blumenfeld. 'Hypnagogia and Imagination: Scenographic Constructions of Venice in The MOV', 2012, http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/critical-issues/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/hblumenfeld_wpaper.pdf, (accessed February 2013).

This type of imagination serves as a trigger to other images and its apparent randomness opens different avenues of perception. They induce association which is the next stage in the creation of a scenographic image. As hypnagogic images stabilise and are subject to rational interpretation and selection, the scenographer will craft them together with researched items and design requirements in the search for an crystallised image which can be presented, verbally or drawn, to others. The fusion of multiple scenographic images, once they have been pulled apart by research, or drawn out by intuition, is the last step of this provisional stage, creating an untried system of visual-spatial relationships.

Up to this point, the origin of the scenographic image lay inside its creator and was looked upon as wholesome and independent. From now on, the scenographer takes the point of view of both the performer and the spectator, and images are subject to meaning-making processes which rely on the association of multiple elements and people, testing them. These aspects of the creative process do not always happen in succession. In reality they can be either simultaneous or following a different order, depending on the purpose of a project, on the intervention from other collaborators and on the scenographer.

Scenographic imagination creates images which 'can function in different ways: as narrative (through metonymic images), as atmosphere, as metaphor or as symbol.'[8] Transforming hypnogogic images into a visual narrative or an atmosphere, implies that they become framed by scenographic components such as space, time, light, colour, texture and shape. These elements materialise the fiction creating a context for the performance. When the move from concept towards the material happen, new considerations are asked of the scenographic imagination. At this stage, imagination acquires a tactile nature which adds to the visual-spatial characteristics of previous scenographic images. It is able to be inhabited by the performance and as such it must

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[8] Joslin Mckinney. 'The Nature of Communication Between Scenography and Its Audiences', PhD Thesis, The University of Leeds, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author.

develop narrative properties. When creating metonymic images, the scenographer must account for both what is represented and/or built, and for what is only suggested and therefore absent. In fact, a scenography extends much beyond what is seen by the spectators or used by the performers. Scenographic imagination must address all fictional space, indicating one or more narrative alternatives:

> another way in which modes of scenographic representation have been considered is in relation to its metonymic or mimetic properties (...). The metonymic approach is based on likenesses or 'the contiguity of the presence on stage to the absence it represents'. Conventions of theatre allow such approaches to operate selectively. (...) Historical, geographical, sociological and political implications can be inferred from the selection of objects on stage which provide a kind of visual shorthand within which text can be located.[9]

Another way scenographic imagination can create images is through metaphor. Scenography is especially adept at this, since it is in its foundation the addition or juxtaposition of diverse components from diverse sources. In fact, 'the purpose of metaphors may be to make metaphors, which is to say, to make little perceptual symmetries out of a dispersed content of the world, to bring things together in a way they aren't together, or pinned down to a specificity, in rational discourse.'[10] Discovering dramaturgical meaning through metaphor is a pleasurable experience for the scenographer, the performer and the spectator. And it is one of the ways a performative relationship can be constructed. Knowing this, the scenographer will purposely introduce this possibility into the design, selecting or making scenographic items which can evoke memories and extend the image created past its physical setting, and establishing a complementary or contrasting relationship with the text and the staging. The

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[9] Joslin Mckinney and Philip Butterworth. *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.95.

[10] Bert O. States. *The Pleasure of the Play*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 22.

scenographer may choose to enclose the action, to expand it, to support it or to oppose it. In reality, 'notions of separation or estrangement have had just as much influence on scenography as the concepts of fusion and harmony.'[11] Here, scenographic imagination is tested through the introduction of performers to the fictional world created. Its characteristics, in particular its capacity to be inhabited through visual, aural and gestural occupation, are then tested in rehearsal.

Inhabiting imagery.

Theatrical images can be created through action. These are called 'indirect images'.[12] Action can be instigated by performers or by the scenography. Therefore, the scenographic imagination must address, after the visual, spatial and material, the capacity for action. Conveying change through the scenographic, implicates determining the before and after images, as well as the transition itself. The scenographer is at this point inhabiting the image. As Bachelard puts it: 'each of us has seen a few lines on the ceiling that appeared to chart a new continent. A poet knows all this. But in order to describe in his own way a universe of this kind, he goes to live in it.'[13] Picking up on a single line, texture or colour, the scenographer is able to build a fleeting image. But it is only through

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[11] Joslin Mckinney and Philip Butterworth. *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.97.

[12] 'Theatrical images are either presented in a direct way or are created indirectly through theatrical action. The term 'direct' theatrical image refers to the picture conveyed by the physical presence of two-or-three-dimensional objects, such as backdrop paintings and other scenic objects which form the scenography of a performance, including the physical presence of the performers as part of the scenic synthesis (composition). 'Indirect' images are representations created by theatrical action -that is, in the course of storytelling and the elements that it provides- which obtain a form in the mind by virtue of the decisive factor of imagination.' in Sofia Pantouvaki. 'The effects of theatrical storytelling and scenography on children: The case of children's theatre in the ghetto of Terezín (1941-45)' (PhD Thesis, The University of the Arts London, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.25.

[13] Gaston Bachelard. *The Poetics of Space* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p.144.

an effort of (mental) inhabitation of that image, of its spatial characteristics and its possibilities of transition over time, that the scenographer truly understands it. This necessity of an extended appropriation of its own work may seem contradictory, since the image's origin lays in the scenographer, but once the image is registered and put outside the scenographer's imagination it presents itself as a space to be walked. It gains autonomy. And it can be shared with others.

Sharing a rehearsal room, or more than that, sharing a fictional world, implies that the creative team shares the creation of scenographic images. The scenographer also has a new element to discover: the performers. At this point imagination draws a bridge between what has been developed so far and their interpretation of the space of performance. A spatial structure emerges from this collision, as well as errors and omissions:

> during the rehearsal process it surprises me how much I have left out, or not understood, as the scenes evolve and more discoveries are made each day. This is the stage when the scenographer's creativity and vision are at their strongest. During this process the visual pattern of the play reveals itself and starts to be shaped until it feels right, looks right and, eventually, like cracking a code, will play right.[14]

The scenographer's imagination is engaged at a kinetic level, incorporating sensations of spatial occupancy and visibility. Eventually, the scenography will reflect the scenographer's experience as she observes and incorporates the performer's choices in the inhabitation of the fictional space suggested. To inhabit a performance space is to use it as an extension of the dramaturgy. To make it belong to a specific group of characters, but also to make it respond to a specific group of performers. Here imagination moves in between them, it is their combination that defines the necessities of a performance space. The interpretation of movement and gestuality, in its dual relationship with fictional and

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[14] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.39.

presentational spaces, is the principal characteristic of the scenographic imagination in rehearsal. Here metonym and metaphor suggested previously by scenographic images have expanded possibilities as text and movement are incorporated and even transgressed.

Poetics of space and materials.

The purpose of scenographic elements is to serve as material basis for the creation of theatrical meaning. Scenography structures meaning through pictorial and object compositions or images. Understanding objects and raw materials' properties, the scenographer critically proposes to use them in relation to the action and text. These properties belong to two main groups: physical and symbolic. Composing performance space starts by a thorough analysis of the place of performance. Pamela Howard explains it clearly: 'like an animal exploring new territory, the scenographer has to scent and feel the potential, and imagine what can be created from within the space itself. The first time in a space is a glorious private moment.'[15] The intimacy she describes here is solitary but necessary. Uncovering, kinetically and visually, a new space, offers the scenographic imagination the chance to establish a connection with its past, present and future patterns of inhabitation, generating a spatial narrative which will adapt and expand all through rehearsal. Theatrical or site specific spaces are the 'blank' canvas scenographers start with. From there, the scenographer starts a process of selection, adding or subtracting colours, textures or light, according to the significance desired. Joslin McKinney describes it as 'projection':

> working with materials allows ideas to literally take shape whilst concepts are modified and developed in the light of practical experiments. This sort of process has also been described as 'projection'. (...) The work of scenographers clearly involves selection of objects and images and their translation and transformation into moments of significance. (...) The physical manifestation of scenography; the construction and nature of materials; the quality and

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[15] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.9.

nature of the sound; the movement and texture of a costume; the atmosphere induced by light; the manipulation of stage space - all these conditions resonate with possible meanings.[16]

To the complexity of these processes of composition is added their constant interaction with the performers and their evocation of an audience. Scenographic meaning is seldom one or two dimensional, linking multiple layers of significance and especially linking the conceptual and the material, resonating across text, performer and physical setting. As such, the poetic potential of materials used in scenographic composition can not be understated. For example, a scenographer will select a fabric in a production for: its symbolic and pictorial characteristics such as colour and texture, its technical characteristics such as strength, flexibility or durability, or, finally, for its ability to evoke a specific context. These three concerns are always present in the decision making process, as well as other variants and additions. This process grows exponentially when applied to all scenographic components, creating a network of significance which, in turn, responds to a sustained dialogue with performers and director. The scenographic imagination works, therefore, on multiple levels, connecting diverse fields of theatrical work (kinetic, aural, visual, olfactive). With a clear emphasis on its visual-spatial characteristics, scenography, or at least scenographic imagination, touches, nonetheless, all areas of performative research. Moreover, for all its intentionality, scenography's strength lays in its ability to suggest meaning without restricting it. Scenographic imagination must consider what leaves undefined, open to interpretation.

Incompleteness in the scenographic.

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16 Joslin Mckinney and Philip Butterworth. *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp.191-192.

Ironically, working with what can not be predicted is another characteristic of scenographic imagination. It is,

> paradoxical (if not downright contradictory) to say on the one hand, that a scenographer must know every step in the production of an environment as it relates to both the conceptual meanings of a stage work and its physical construction and, on the other hand to affirm that his work can involve images that cannot be logically or rationally explained.[17]

This incompleteness starts in rehearsal when the freedom to experiment and improvise is at its peak. For the scenographer, rehearsal is the opportunity to compose sequentially. Working through repetition, scenographic imagination looks to both keep alive the first intuitive images of a design, and to develop them, in transition, into a fully expanded scenographic composition. As rehearsals progress, it is more and more difficult to remember the pure, untouched, hypnagogic image. It becomes a 'sounding board' against which the scenographer compares and contrasts as the work advances. It is easy to loose track of the original conceptual idea behind the scenography, and up to a point it is desirable that it disappears into the fully grown theatrical composition: 'the nature of any creative process is that you constantly make and discard: the act of forgetting is as important as that of remembering.'[18] Be that as it may, looking at each rehearsal with fresh eyes, while keeping in mind the initial purpose of the production and respective scenographic hypothesis, is fundamental to a creative evolution. In fact, the faculty to examine the everyday with renewed imagination is a distinct feature of a theatre maker. Read describes it this way:

> As Walter Benjamin says in describing a common experience, the relation between foreground and distance is never retrievable in quite the same way after that first glimpse of a

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[17] Darwin Reid Payne. *The scenographic imagination* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.154.

[18] Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (ed). *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes* (Machester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p.60.

new place. It was in recovering this first look that the theatre maker could be reminded of where imagination worked upon the material of life, and where habit and stasis could tyrannise everyday pleasures.[19]

In rehearsal, scenographic imagination will adjust previously created images at each change proposed by the performers and director. But it can also have a more active role and devise further restrictions to the performers' movements. It is a discussion between interpretations of the performance space. Physical or conceptual restrictions provoke the advancement of the narrative, supporting the development of the performers' score and underscore,[20] as well as their kinetic and proxemic relationship with the presentational space. An unwanted constraint can grow out to be the support for the staging. It can be seen, initially, as a violent act, as it imposes a specific, often individual, view of spatial use upon others. What is more, it is seen as an external view, since the scenographer (or director) is not herself inhabiting the performance space. As Anne Bogart puts it: 'the decisive act of setting an object at a precise angle on the stage, or an actor's hand gesture, seemed to me almost an act of violation. And I found this upsetting. And yet, deep down, I knew that this violent act is a necessary condition for all artists.'[21]

Therefore, the scenographer is able to use imagination to indicate space inhabitation, linking what she sees with what can be kinetically felt by performers, and then, experienced by the spectator. Here, as with other parameters of performance, there is no right or wrong. There is only what works within the fictional world being designed. Establishing the visual-spatial rules of that universe, the scenographer provides the

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[19] Alan Read. *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance* (Oxford: Routledge, 1995), p.41.

[20] as understood by Patrice Pavis in *Analysing Performance: Theatre, Dance, and Film* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp.58 and 59, 152.

[21] Anne Bogart. *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp.44 and 48.

spectator with a point of return when interpreting the action. They are not necessarily logical, as we have seen above, but they open a dialogue. The layering of meaning offers the spectator multiple opportunities to actively translate and integrate what they are experiencing:

> it is integral to theatre that one is able to hold multiple characterisations and contexts in one's mind simultaneously. The ability to read dynamics of concealment and revelation, identity and disguise into human behaviour is a basic human social skill. The pleasures of exercising this skill and the analysis of bodies and their actions are among the important pleasures of theatre spectatorship.[22]

Scenographic imagination is a meeting place between what has been proposed by the performance, built or suggested, and the spectators' appropriation. It resists the tendency to fully crystallize a design. It simply initiates a conversation, carried by scenographic images, which will continue past the time and place of performance. Assuming that theatre's nature is to extend past the everyday, examining it, eventually changing it, in a perpetual movement of expansion of meaning,[23] scenographic imagination allows its scenography to evolve within and beyond it, creating a visual and spatial bond with the community on both sides of the stage.

Scenographic imagination is elusive. As we have seen, it involves the accumulation of visual and pictorial impressions, spatial inhabitation and the poetics of building materials. It is not stable, as it resists boundaries between the everyday and fiction, and it

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[22] Colette Conroy. *Theatre and the Body* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.75.

[23] 'Theatre by its nature speaks to the other and often for the other. (...) The theatre, whenever it works, is a forum, but to resist the definition of that capacity as a finite aesthetic form seems as important as resisting the conception of theatre as any other single thing. This continually transformative project does not freeze life in an eternal interval, a duration, but suggests a beyond, a 'movement' to something better, that is always possible but often difficult to achieve' in Alan Read. *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance* (Oxford: Routledge, 1995), p.36.

is open to change through multiple uses. Finally, it is not exclusive to the scenographer, even if the scenographer works from within it. In the next two sections, I will examine how conditions of collaboration and processes of communication can influence the way scenographic imagination is used during the creative process of scenography.

Section 2

Conditions of Collaboration.

For the scenographer, imagination and practical conditions of a production exist hand-in-hand. This symbiosis characterises each creation and determines the processes of conception and construction of a scenography. These conditions include place, time and budgetary restrictions which are used to either refrain the imagination or to further it. Scenographers become experts at manipulating them as prerequisites for a design. This is particularly evident in the Portuguese context where working circumstances are often precarious and uncertain. These three constraints work together and are dependent on each other. Their interaction marks the development of the scenography as it affects not only its materiality but also the how and when collaboration happens. Place may be determined by time or budget, as time is often decided by budget or place, and finally, budget is dictated by place and time. It is an inter-dependable triangle which causes successive unbalances in the creative process. This unbalance may be caused by internal (dramaturgical, scenographic) or external (political, funding) circumstances, and may, in some cases, be used as an intentional disruption of the production with a dramaturgical purpose.[24]

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[24] such is the example of 'postdramatic theatre [which] (...) engages deliberately and self-reflexively with theatre's aesthetic practices and forms, the ways it offers itself for perception. (...) the characteristic aesthetic effects and thematic concerns visible in postdramatic theatre production are a result of its characteristic processes of creation. (...) Consistently, the companies work not to erase their conditions of production by portraying these as an 'empty space' but to highlight how each show is literally made by the conditions of its productions' in Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (ed). *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes* (Machester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p.13.

Place.

Rehearsal spaces are provisional, temporary, since the stage is frequently not available until the last few weeks before opening day. Similarly, site-specific projects may not have the necessary working conditions from the start of rehearsals. They may be part of a theatre company material structure or be lent or rented. Even if they are an uncharacteristic loft or barrack, they are bond to frame the performers, director and scenographer's practice. Their material possibilities depend on the budget available and their use be subject to time constraints. The scenographer is asked to create a mock space of performance from which the performers can work. Size, depth, proportion, materiality and light can greatly differ from the final design proposal. The spatial characteristics of the rehearsal space are integrated into the action, and consequently into the scenography:

> The nature of the rehearsal space, its level of comfort or discomfort, cleanliness, warmth, and the facilities provided, are a further dimension of the physical framing of the practitioners' experience. (...) spatial features of the rehearsal room, which may not be part of the set design, are utilised by the actors, even to the extend of becoming a significant part of the spatialization of the action. (...) The rehearsal space is never a neutral container and, however bleak and empty it may seem to the observer, it is likely to imprint aspects of its own reality on both the fictional world that is being created and even on the physical reality of the set that will ultimately replace the mock-up so carefully indicated within its confines by means of gaffer tape on the floor and bits and pieces of furniture.[25]

In *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*, we worked in an old abandoned power station, with low ceilings and steel floor. The differences between this and the theatre stage were particularly apparent in two occasions: the first, when we realised we were working with the stage depth and avoiding its length, and the second when we realised we were refraining from using the stage's height. The proportions between depth, length and

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[25] Gay McAuley. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.71-73.

height were impeding the performers from using the scenographic in all its possibilities of movement (the fishing net was much wider than the rehearsal space available) and interaction (the fishing net also acted as an independent element, manipulated from the wings and grid, and made to react to the performers actions). Contrastingly, the low ceilings helped with the performers' understanding of a cramped space, its conditioning of movements and gesture, which was a condition of the dramaturgy (two fishermen shipwrecked on a small rock). As they built their wreck from found objects and timber, they learnt to fit them together following a specific order which allowed it to reach the full height of the ceiling. Any other order would make it tumble, or waste precious space. The higher it went, the more possibilities for salvation there were.[26]

In *Ainda Não É o Fim...*, O Bando's scenographer and director started rehearsals for this site-specific performance in a small proscenium-like room. Even though they knew the place of performance would be a square in central Palmela, surrounded on three sides by spectators and architectural facades, João Brites chose to have actors and musicians concentrated in a smaller interior room for the first few weeks. This decision came from the will to build an intimate creative relationship between them and also to protect them from outside working conditions. He believed that, outside, they would worry with issues such as voice projection, which were not as relevant, at this stage, as the dramaturgy or gestuality. The triangular performance space was marked on the floor and a cross, for each vanishing point, marked on the walls. Nonetheless, as there were spectators only on one side of the triangle, some of the performers found it difficult to imagine the centripetal movement which the scenography suggested and the director described. Eventually they moved rehearsals on to platforms embedded between two sets of garden stairs. This allowed the audience to surround the action and the platform's rake presented the performers with a new challenge. Each of these rehearsal phases altered the initial design

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[26] See anexx Case Studies Notes: *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*, Production Journal.

slightly, as it reacted with the performers' actions and the specificity of the places' conditions.

Places of performance are a given in the process of creating a scenography. Contrary to rehearsal spaces which are provisional, they frame the final design and as such are included and manipulated by the scenographer to generate dramaturgical meaning. Along with other scenographic elements, they are the architectural or material features of the production's fictional world. They are know to all collaborators and are expected to become part of the performer's actions as much of the set, costume and set design. They condition the collaboration as much as the rehearsal space, but they are analysed and controlled to function as a symbiosis. They offer almost no surprise by opening day.

Architectural, technical and artistic properties of a place of performance restrict the scenography. These restrictions are welcomed by the scenographer as dramaturgical possibilities, if time and budget allow them to be fully developed. The black-box or the proscenium theatres have different scenographic potentials, especially on what concerns their spatial relationship with its spectators. The decision of where to place a performance marks it decisively. And it also determines how the scenographer will work. In the case of *Ainda Não é o Fim,* the scenography was created from the topography of a local town's square. Rui Francisco, the scenographer, adapted the three triangular platforms to the raked street floors, aligning each one with the townscape and sightlines. Later, when performing in a proscenium arch theatre, Teatro Nacional São João, in Porto, he incorporated the square's topography into the layout, using its rake to determine the spatial dialogue between performers and spectators.[27]

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[27] See annex Case Studies Notes: *Ainda Não é o Fim,* O Bando, Production Journal.

Time and timing.

The sense of play that usually exists in rehearsal amongst practitioners is dependent on available time and timing —moments in time when a new variable is introduced. As with place, restrictions in time configure a performance's formation process and hence its final design.

The scenographer deals with two design phases: conception and production. These phases have different time constraints, which occasionally overlap. Conception asks for flexibility. The creative flow of performers or scenographer does not respond to scheduled slots and as a result it requires a broad availability. In addition, decisions are subject to a back-and-forth rhythm, which tends to extend the initially predicted time needs. Particularly relevant here are the moments when new scenographic elements are added to rehearsal. These include set, costume and objects but also the introduction of the light design. The possibility to illuminate, literally and metaphorically, the scene can bring the process to a pause while the scenographer and light designer discover their common (play)ground. Here, as in video or digital projecting, the designers are often forced to work at the technology's pace:

> There has been no realisation of the effect of this distancing of the operator from the production namely, the potential loss of that sense of 'play', which in other areas of theatre we value as a vital part of the process. The lighting designer is rarely afforded the opportunity for experimentation, improvisation or creative space, for which the design of control technology is partly to blame, as this technology has been created in order to repeat sequences of information again and again.[28]

During conception, timing is very important, as it is the opportune introduction of scenographic material which can make it meaningful to the production. Aesthetically

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[28] Christine White. 'The Changing Scenographic Aesthetic.' *Scenography International*, vol. 1, http://www.iar.unicamp.br/lab/luz/ld/C%EAnica/Artigos/The%20Changing%20Scenographic%20Aesthetic.pdf, (accessed February 2013).

interesting scenography introduced at a too late stage in the creative process can become a dramaturgical or performative problem. In fact, transformation through cooperation can only enrich the scenography, as it needs this inhabitation to become whole. Conception has therefore two times: that defined solely by the scenographer, and that orchestrated by the collaboration, characterising it.

Production time aims at being organised and systematic. It rests on the ability to predict when and how scenographic materials will be built or bought. During this phase the scenographer is asked to manufacture either the finished objects or its drawings. Deadlines become central and the language of cooperation, technical. Here flexibility in thought is as important as accuracy in communication. At this point the scenography needs to be explained to multiple collaborators. This does not mean that it has necessarily found its final shape but rather that it needs to be materially tested. This need transforms the scenography, as proportion, shape, texture, colour, etc., are evaluated and proposed. At this stage, time of production must be in tune with that of rehearsal. Here conception and production overlap and time restraints are at their tightest. While the scenographer asks performers to test set, costume or prop pieces, these are simultaneously being built and detailed at the workshop. Performers will ask to have them in rehearsal and the scenographer will need them at the workshop. Opening day is the same for all involved. Scheduling becomes central to the process as of course, the producing team. In O Teatrão's *A Biblioteca Russa*, delays in production times, mainly with costume making and the finishing of the cardboard set pieces, provoked a delay in rehearsals. Performers' were asked to adapt quickly to both scenery and costume, speeding up rehearsals exponentially towards opening day.[29]

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[29] See annex Case Studies Notes: *A Biblioteca Russa*, O Teatrão.

Budget.

The relationship between time and budget is discussed for each production and it is the most significant constraint a scenographer has. Budget offers either the greatest relief or the greatest restriction. The less time available, the larger the budget needs to be if the scenography is to maintain quality. Considerations of budget are frequently outside the control of the scenographer and are a consequence of a particular project and also of the producing theatre company. Budget can indicate a company's strategy regarding their audience and collaborators. European theatre companies traditional independence from strictly commercial gains has allowed theatre for children to be associated with educational purposes and less with entertainment:

> where state subsidy covered the operating costs of a company, commercial concerns ceased to be an overriding issue. There was less a sense of giving the public what it wanted than of presenting what was considered to be work of a high artistic standard. (...) Entertainment was not absent, but it was linked very firmly to notions of education and improvement, and going to a puppet show was seen as part of the educational process. (...) The fairy-tale, which was the stock-in-trade of the older marionette companies, was frowned on as obscurantist, and positive stories with explicit moral lessons were demanded.[30]

Understanding the politics behind the production's budget is fundamental to a scenographer as it, once again, characterises the collaboration behind the creative process. In the Portuguese context, productions are of low budget when compared with other european countries. Scenographers are taught to work with 'what they can', which means re-using stock or free scenographic materials. This condition is many times at the start of the creative process, becoming its foundation and the scenographic 'raison d'être' of many projects. There is a common challenge to suit the dramaturgy by using less and less resources, and scenographers have become experts at responding to budgetary needs.

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[30] John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik. *Popular Theatre in Europe, 1800-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.206.

Nevertheless, all the scenographers researched agree that the final product of their work is largely dependent on the existent budget, and that using the imagination as a way to overcome a small budget keeps them from making more developed creative choices, diverting efforts from real dramaturgical requirements. In the end, the scenography will suit the budget, instead of the other way around.[31]

Conditions of collaboration such as place, time and budget, are discussed and negotiated throughout the creative process. It is very seldom that the pre-conditions established at the start of a production will remain the same. The scenography imagined will produce new requisites, requiring adjustments, for example. Nonetheless, it is evident that the way these are addressed by the scenographer and the remainder of the creative team characterises the collaboration and, consequently, the scenography. In the next section, I will look at these processes of communication and how their are used to reach the combined effort which is a scenography.

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[31] See annex Case Studies Notes: O Teatrão's interviews and O Bando's Production Journal.

Section 3

Processes of Communication.

> All we communicate to others is an orientation towards what is secret without ever being able
> to tell the secret objectively. What is secret never has total objectivity. In this respect, we
> orient oneirism but we do not accomplish it.[32]

In this section, I will look at forms of collaboration between the scenographer and the remaining creative team. I will give examples from the case studies and the practice-as-research project. Scenographers are trained to use both verbal and visual descriptions as the basis for presentation and discussion with collaborators. They work together to provide a more or less detailed portrait of what they intend to develop and as such they are complementary.

> an image as viewed within one's imagination is physically inexistent and cannot be directly
> seen or understood by others. It can be described to a certain extent with words and, on some
> occasions, it can be depicted in visual representations, such as drawings. These attempts to
> portray an 'imaginary' image can only be partly traced by what this person can draw (unless
> the person in question happens to be a skilled painter). In these cases, verbal description can
> add to the visualisation of an image.[33]

Depending on the state of the scenography, the images expressed must balance doubt and certainty in the scenographer's discourse and they must provide multiple entrance points for the collaboration. As both Cátia Barros and Patrícia Mota, O Teatrão's scenographers, say, not all directors are prepared, or willing, to understand conventional

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[32] Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space.* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), p. 13.

[33] Sofia Pantouvaki. 'The effects of theatrical storytelling and scenography on children: The case of children's theatre in the ghetto of Terezín (1941-45)'. (PhD Thesis, The University of the Arts London, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.25.

methods of space depiction such as plans and perspectives. Depending on the director's, and the dramaturge's, ability to unravel the performance space, discussion of its characteristics and transitions can become more or less dependent on the scenographer's skill to meet them half-way, by using all the available processes of communication. Directors such as João Brites, for whom space, or a sensation of space, is fundamental to the start of the creative process, the use of visual representation is simply an extension of the dramaturgy and the staging, coming natural to both pre-production discussions and rehearsals. Plans, diagrams and three-dimensional visualisations are always present, evolving alongside the script and the musical score. For other companies, such as Teatro de Marionetas do Porto, the performance space is almost fully developed through improvisation rehearsals and puppet manipulation. There is no formal process of communication between the scenographer and director or performers. In reality it is the performers' feel for space, or kinaesthetics, which informs both director and scenographer.: 'a feeling and instinctive reaction is usually a positive point to work from so that the stage space becomes a natural habitat that is owned by the performer.'[34]

In this case, the presence of the scenographer in rehearsal is important, as is the competence to register and dialogue through this creation of 'feeling' and into a specific design for the performance space which translates both the dramaturgy and the performer's intuitive inhabitation of the place of performance. Sketching with words or with lines, can be an invaluable process to bring about a fruitful collaboration, as it implies readiness in response and proposal, as well as a certain amount of openness in form and method. This receptiveness also asks for accuracy from the scenographer: without it intentions can become too vague to be able to be developed into a fully grown scenography. Often this process can become frustrating as the verbal and visual lexicon

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[34] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.186.

used by the trained scenographer do not always correspond to that used by director or performers:

> very often the director misreads the intentions of the scenographer; too often the scenographer does not fully grasp the points the director wishes to convey through the actions of the performers. Interpretation can never be more than subjective discussion. (...) the visual image and written language can very easily become adversaries on the stage. (...) One form of communication cannot ever be an absolute substitute for another.[35]

With this in mind the scenographer has become an expert at using multiple processes of communication, frequently simultaneously. Verbal and visual (digital and analogue) processes of communication can be interchangeable at times but they require a specific skill set which partially determines the way they are used in a dialogue. In the following sections I will look, separately, at how their practice influences scenographic collaboration. The first section deals with scenography which is suggested, discussed and created through verbal discourse; the second, will look at analogue visuals, conventionally used by scenographers and in particular at drawing at the various stages of the design process; the third, offers examples as to how digital visuals, and its very particular methodologies, can be used to further develop the scenography. Even though I will discuss examples of different stages in the design process, I will focus on moments in the collaboration when they are most fundamental, such as rehearsals and director-scenographer discussions.

Verbalizing space.

Jorge Louraço Figueira and Patrícia Mota, director/dramaturge and scenographer for O Teatrão's *The Russian Library,* often collaborated while driving. In fact, much of the

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[35] Darwin Reid Payne. *The Scenographic Imagination*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.104.

scenographic decisions were made while driving from Coimbra to Porto and vice-versa. They found that they did not need to meet formally, and even that the informality of the situation was more conducive to brainstorming. What had started as a pragmatic decision to take advantage of common availability developed into a methodology. After the drive, they exchanged long emails describing their expanded ideas. These were later on explained to the performers and producer. In this process, visuals were almost completely excluded, or reduced to a minimal diagramatic sketches. At points the ideas generated while driving were misunderstood, creating incidents in the collaboration. Since no drawings, or any other type of registering, was made during these conversations, director and designer would sometimes follow diverse lines of thought which were dealt with later on or abandoned altogether. There was the assumption that not all the fiction was shared, which produced both conflict and surprise. Vagueness was welcomed for most of the creative process. Verbal collaboration was immediately followed by digital presentation drawings and scenographic construction. The designer was not able to follow rehearsals very often, which lead to a speeding up of the last scenographic decisions and left the performers feeling they were somehow left out of this verbal collaborative complicity. Nonetheless, verbalizing space, without registering it, allowed the scenographer great freedom, especially in the initial stages of the production.

While debating a theatrical production, people involved refer to the fiction directly: that is, the creative team assumes they are discussing from within the imaginary world.[36] Scenography is no exception. The scenographer tries to make sense of the fictional world while simultaneously creating it. Discovering its rules and boundaries is as much part of the dramaturgy as is of the scenography. Hidden or visually apparent spatial connections can help to establish a dialogue between what is materially and verbally built. A first set of connections is made, through verbal dialogue, between the text or concept (if

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[36] See annex Case Studies Notes: *Ainda Não é o Fim,* Production Journal.

devising a production) and its performance space. An adequate and individual vocabulary is collected and used in rehearsal and meetings. For *Ainda não é o fim...*, João Brites's team assumed the triptych nature of the text whenever they spoke of space: the dramaturgy was a cross between political, everyday and poetic texts by Manuel António Pina, which alternated cyclically as each set of two characters was presented to the audience. A chorus structured the transitions. In rehearsal, the improvisation oscillated between fast-paced physical activity and long talks where verbal communication picked up poetic, political and everyday vocabulary to characterize movement and gesture. Similarly, when the designer, Rui Francisco, intervened he kept the methodology going to the point all phone or internet communications were done using similar language. This immersed the whole collaboration in a cohesive verbal fiction which was easily transferred to space design. They spoke through metaphor and allegory throughout the rehearsal process even when discussing practical issues of production. Construction and making was as much a consequence of these metaphors as performance.

Director, designers and performers all referred to the dramaturgy but this dramaturgy extended past the text and into music and space very early on in the process, creating a network of spatial and formal relationships which were indiscernible from each other. Many of their initial decisions were kept through to opening day. They were put to the test through rehearsal and improvisation, but the fundamental spatial configuration was never sketched and was almost directly drawn for construction. O Bando collective shares a very strong bond which, at times, means verbal communication is not understood by outsiders, being made of half-words and particular expressions. Nonetheless, it is clear that this changes for each production, developing inflections and vocabulary which better explain the dramaturgical connections being made. Spatial meaning is grown from these connections and vice-versa. Fictional space, with a strong poetic quality, creates the performance space.

For the practice-as-research project *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*, I wanted to balance verbal and visual communication between myself, director and performers. Taking advantage of my own ease with drawing and modeling, I tested our response to collaboration through verbal-visual communication. Every time I had the opportunity I would respond to verbal questions with visual answers (drawing and notation), eventually creating a mixed methodology which characterized the whole process and also the final production. Half-word, half-image concepts marked our rehearsals. The written dramaturgy (being registered in rehearsal) became an extension of movement and gesture being improvised through scenographic materials (in turn, previously suggested by verbal dialogue). This layering was imprinted on the character's and the scenography's gestuality, to the point that both videos and sketched registers of rehearsal hardly distinguish visual from verbal expression: on stage, verbal and gestural discourse and in the sketchbooks, notation and mark-making assume similar importance in defining dramaturgic space. Constant translation between gesture, movement, verbal and drawn vocabularies made for a very fast back-and-forward communication, which asked for the ability to propose, test and discard, ideas only decelerated by moments of silent observation. During these pauses, I retreated into drawing at the same time as the director/dramaturge retreated into writing. While performers improvised, communication was sparse and gave way to observation. This alternation allowed us to balance proposal with reflection as well as intuition and reason. We searched for a balance between verbal and visual communication. Since they are both part of a scenographer's process:

> it should be expected that the scenographer will most likely present his ideas in visual terms; but he must also be prepared to communicate in words, when called upon, the reasons behind those ideas. (...) The danger in talk, however, is that it can all too easily become an

end in itself, degenerating into vague rationalization that serves no real purpose in the creative process.[37]

Materialising space: models.

In this section, I will look at drawing and modelling as analogue visual processes of communication. They work as complementary applications, the first more flexible to change and transition (and, consequently time), and the second, more accurate at suggesting three-dimensionality and sound.

Taking into consideration both the three case studies and the practice-as-research project, modelling was mostly used as a presentation aid. They either tested space design (*Ainda Não é o Fim...*) and character design (*Sr. Hic*), presenting a springboard for construction drawings, or they were of a conceptual nature, hinting at scenographic movements, sounds, textures and shapes (*Pequena História Trágico-Marítima)*. In the first two cases, the models were of a more practical nature, a safe-guard to avoid design problems, made to scale, guarantying that everyone was working from the same template. In the last case, models intended to induct improvisation, initiating movement, gesture and sound. They were the product of my research into the themes proposed by the director but they did not intent to reproduce or represent an existent object or a projected scenography. They did not have any particular scale, but rather explored paradox and ambiguity, along with playfulness. The models worked as suggestions for further work development, allowing for manipulation and exploration. They were never re-designed but rather abandoned as performers moved the improvisation from them to the rehearsal space. They belong to the scenography in the sense part of its motions, textures and

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[37] Darwin Reid Payne. *The Scenographic Imagination*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.236-237.

sounds were incorporated into the final design, but they were not materially present on stage.

In any event, communication was always one-directional. That is, models were used to either present a design or suggest a concept, but they were not subject to the back-and-forward which characterises open-ended visual communication such as drawn sketches or storyboards. What was projected through the models was then picked up by other processes of communication. Nonetheless being able to work with and from a three-dimensional spatial representation expands the performers, and the scenographers, tactile and kinetic response to space. Communication is also augmented by the possibility of producing sound and of feeling texture, characteristics unique to analogue models.

Materialising space: drawing.

Complementary to models, design drawings —that is, drawings that are made with the purpose of projecting something other than themselves, and in the case of scenography, of projecting body in space and time, through line, colour, texture and shape — can determine patterns of collaboration between scenographer, director, and performers. They can sustain a conventional director-designer relationship where design is looked at as background to the dramaturgy, or they can induce alternatives:

> At the Berliner Ensemble the sketches became a constant part of rehearsal methodology. Far from serving merely to animate the discussions between director, scenographer and technical crew (as is the traditional function of the story-board), they drew strength from the actors, were fed back to them and served as models for stage blocking and textual development. (...) Neher and Brecht's developed practice of creative collaboration in making theatre exemplifies a practical scenography standing side by side with a practical dramaturgy. [38]

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[38] Christopher Baugh. *Theatre, Performance and Technology: the Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.78.

Design drawings exist overall as testimonies of a creative process. They offer more questions than answers but it is from these questions that the design advances. Over the following section, I will follow the use of drawing throughout the conventional design process —conceptual drawings, such as sketches, which help the scenographer give birth to a design idea and presentational drawing, in particular storyboards, as mediators in the collaboration— and finally I will propose different ways the process of drawing can influence the process of making a scenography, focusing on drawings done in or for rehearsal, either individually or as a conversation.

In the practice-as-research production *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*, one of the precepts was to register all sessions between myself, the director Jorge Louraço Figueira, and the performers, using either text or drawing. All design drawings were purposely made in black-and-white, using stylo pens and Indian ink. As Catherine Dee states:

> monochrome drawing focuses and directs our attention via its economy. (…) Black and white stimulates contingency and openness precisely because of the 'gaps' in illusion due to its simplified chroma. The absence of colour reminds us that drawing's central role is not resemblance, but the conveyance of perceptions, information, and ideas. (…) A black-and-white drawing stimulates a kind of tension from representing simultaneously what we do and do not see.[39]

The medium used allowed for speed and readiness in the drawing, providing a quick reaction to the work happening on the rehearsal floor, to the director's queries and my own impulses. I have stopped the drawings at the point I though I was no longer struggling for an answer to a question or exploring an idea, but rather exploring the drawing as an artwork itself. I have kept the drawings open, some unfinished, as a way to

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[39] 'Plus and Minus: Critical Drawing for Landscape Design', in *Drawing/Thinking: Confronting an Electronic Age*. Edited by Marc Treib. (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 62.

point out areas of the design I was still unsure of, hoping these absences would lead to further contribution from others involved. Simultaneously, I have embraced sketching incidents as possible clues for the design.

Conceptual design drawings initially need only to communicate with their creators. They allow to register, test and collage, researched themes and images. By drawing an object, detailing its shape, contour, colour or texture we can understand its possible significance for the dramaturgy and predict, to a point, its potential for performatic use. A single feature can determine the whole design, and by using drawing to observe it we are asked to 'think through it', rather than around it:

> hunt out the most telling line that conveys the atmosphere and the background. This may give me an idea for a significant piece of furniture, a quality of light or shadow, a colour combination, it may not be an entire setting at all – just something that is associated with the dramatic significance of the moment, but which may become the clue to, or indeed the cornerstone of, the whole setting.[40]

Incidents and absences are frequent. Absence allows the designer the freedom of non-decision at that particular point in the process. As Kate Burnett tells us: 'I realised that my own involvement with the sketch (…) was about the information of the un-filled in —the absences, the spaces and gaps that allow for possibility, invention, for more imagining.'[41] Incident, when assumed, might be recovered later as a legitimate change in the original concept. Both absence and incident when shown too early to others might

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[40] Jo Mielziner interviewed by Norris Houghton for *Theatre Arts Magazine*, cited by Liam Doona in 'Hope, Hopelessness/ Presence, Absence.' in *Theatre and Performance Design: a Reader in Scenography*. Edited by Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet. (London: Routledge, 2010), p.182.

[41] 'Addressing the Absent: Drawing and Scenography' in *Activating the Inanimate: Visual Vocabularies of Performance Practice,* ebook edited by Celia Morgan and Filipa Malva. Oxford: InterDisciplinary Press, 2012, http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/publishing/?s=Activating+the+Inanimate, (accessed March 2013).

advance the design process faster than the designer anticipated. This is one reason why some designers are so protective of their first conceptual drawings.

Conceptual drawing, stylo pen on Moleskine notebook for *Pequena História Trágico Marítima.* By Filipa Malva.

Some techniques are of course more prone to incidents such as water marking, bleeding, or tearing. Because of this**,** they are often used in the initial sketches. They provide freedom and do not ask for too much accuracy in the marking process, allowing for a fair amount of unpredictability and abstraction, often much needed at this stage. They are also fluid in their movement, allowing intuition to take over rationality. Drawing training takes over and mingles with the designer's first concept. The process initiates with a single thought, which is then taken over by the medium, intercepted by memories and

impulses suggested by the marking occurring. Finally, you step back to find a drawing, which is more than the addition of these elements. It is their synthesis and the basis for the remainder of the design.
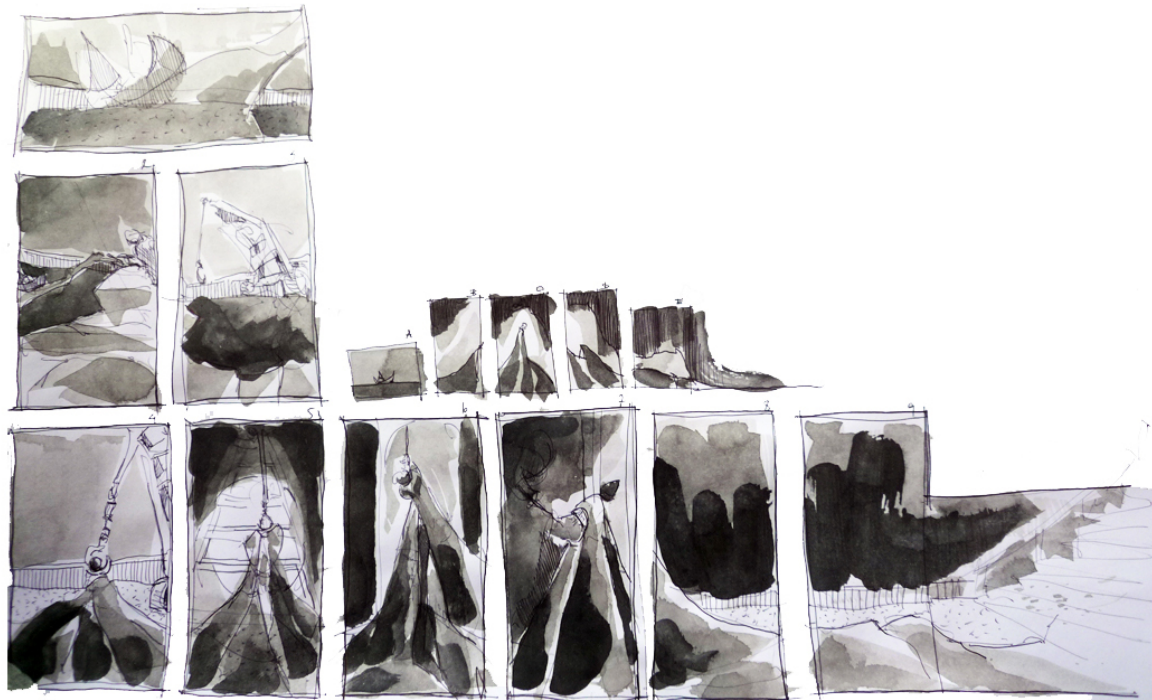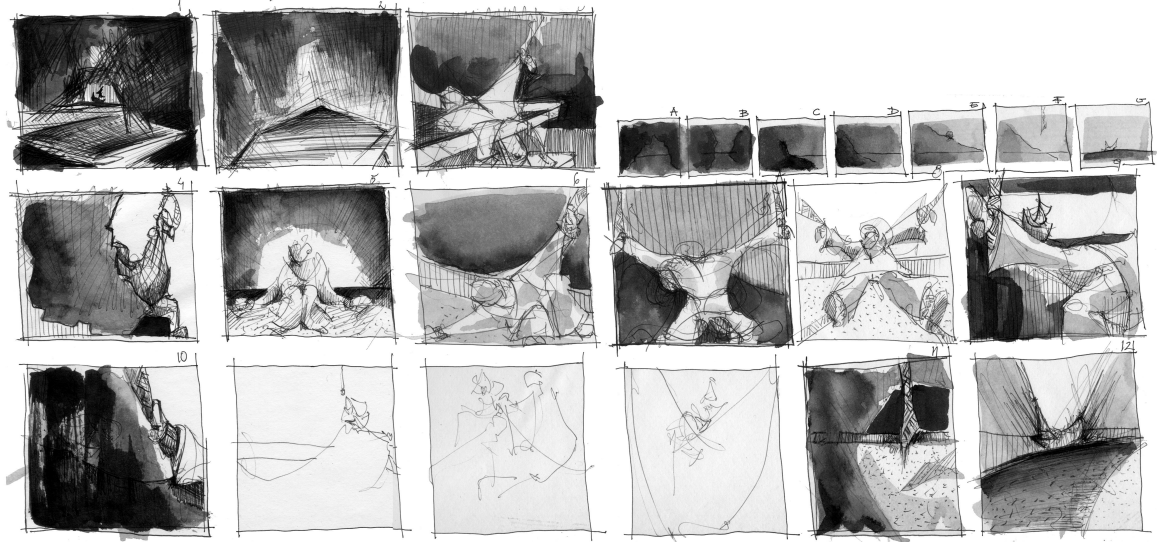
Conceptual storyboards, Indian ink and stylo pen on copy paper for *Pequena História Trágico Marítima*. By Filipa Malva.[42]

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[42] See Part II, Chapter 3 for full scale drawings.

At this stage, sketching in rehearsal allows the scenographer to create a conceptual drawing from the mingling of real action, memory and insight. It also allows the scenographer to discover the individual characters in the performing group. As with drawing, it is often what the performers do not do but what they suggest that generates new drawings and the progression of the design process.
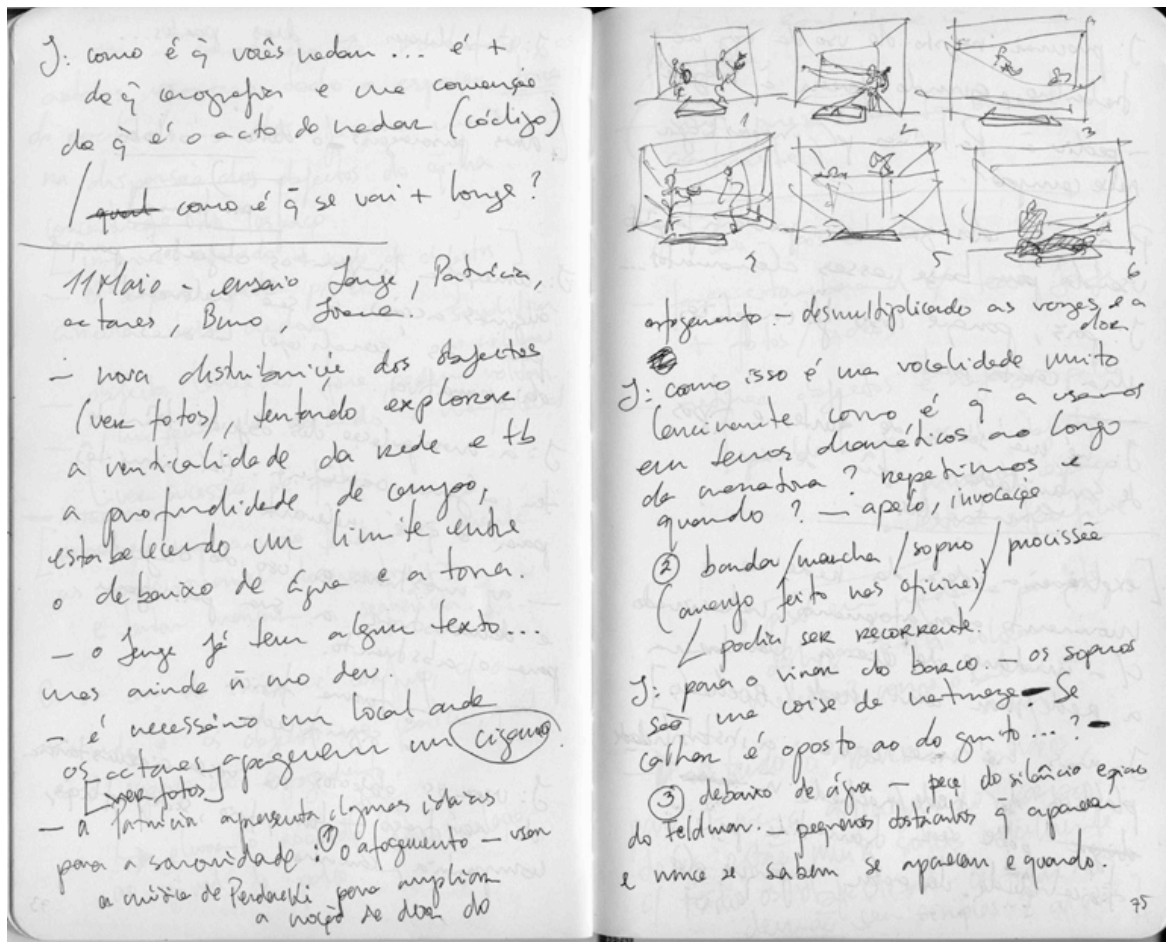
Rehearsal conceptual drawing and notation, stylo pen on Moleskine notebook for *Pequena História Trágico Marítima*. By Filipa Malva

Another quality of the conceptual drawing is the speed at which the sketch drawing allows the designer to work. The rhythm achieved by hand and brain in tune, allows the designer to have

> ideas (…) be proposed, rejected, modified, or accepted quickly. (…) This immediacy allows the mind to race, to build, to draw excitement from the process of creation with an exhilaration that increases with each moment, as one tests sketch after sketch in rapid succession.[43]

The speed at which a designer acknowledges a concept, its qualities and faults, and proceeds to eliminate it in the hunger for another answer, through another drawing, is often matched by the speed a director or performer dismisses a first conceptual drawing. As dear it might be to the designer, conceptual drawings are frail due to her own uncertainties and consequently very open to interpretation or elimination. The willingness to discuss over a conceptual drawing, or even to interpret it, is the first step towards a successful scenographic collaboration. Scenography is not a linear design process. It depends on the back and forth between the various members of the creative team. Depending on the production and the intended process, it can lead to a very clear set of construction drawings or it can never be completely enclosed by drawing conventions. It depends mostly on the performers' actions in rehearsal to become whole. If working from rehearsal, the designer may choose to submit her conceptual drawings directly to the collaboration or to test them by taking them further into presentational drawings.

Presentational design drawings are, by definition, carefully composed to communicate with others. Here, communication is tried by the fact that performers, director and scenographer 'speak different languages', that is, not all are trained in the same techniques — some learn how to read space through drawings, others through

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[43] Marc Treib, 'Paper or Plastic? Five Thoughts on the Subject of Drawing' in *Drawing/Thinking: Confronting an Electronic Age*. Edited by Marc Treib. (London: Routledge, 2008), p.16.

action, for example. Nonetheless**,** it is often what they miss (*the absence*) and where they go astray (*the incident*) that is most important. As such**,** these are developed as both a communication tool and a test to the designer's own initial concepts. A change in the drawings' presentational scale or their arrangement in time and space —storyboarding— will arise new questions, as the design is pushed beyond intuition and abstraction.
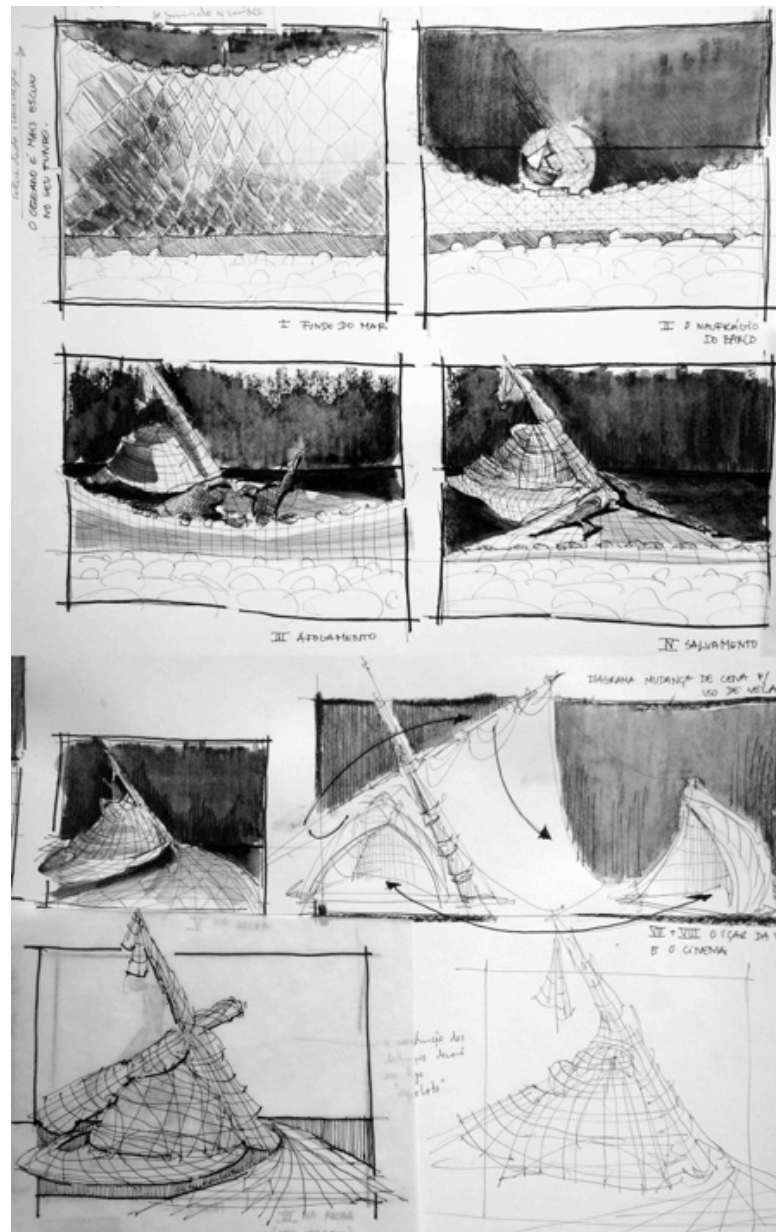
Storyboard drawing, Indian ink and pen on copy on transfer paper for *Pequena História Trágico Marítima.* By Filipa Malva.[44]

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[44] See Part II, Chapter 3 for full scale drawings.

Once the design drawing leaves the safe realm of conceptuality, it becomes more practical, rational, in response to the physical, economical, and time constraints of the production process. Nonetheless, storyboards are also a way to test an idea for a performance space through the performing time. They help to organise action and to layer the human environment with the built environment. Storyboards for the stage depict a conventional point of view, from where we can see the whole space of performance. The designer uses the medium to create a visual hierarchy within each drawing, emphasising elements according to a specific thought process —by making lines more or less intense, by adding shadows, by applying colour. In storyboarding, it is the in-between drawings that suggest the scene change, the relationship between scenography and action. It is in the absences of the drawings that the dramaturgy is found.
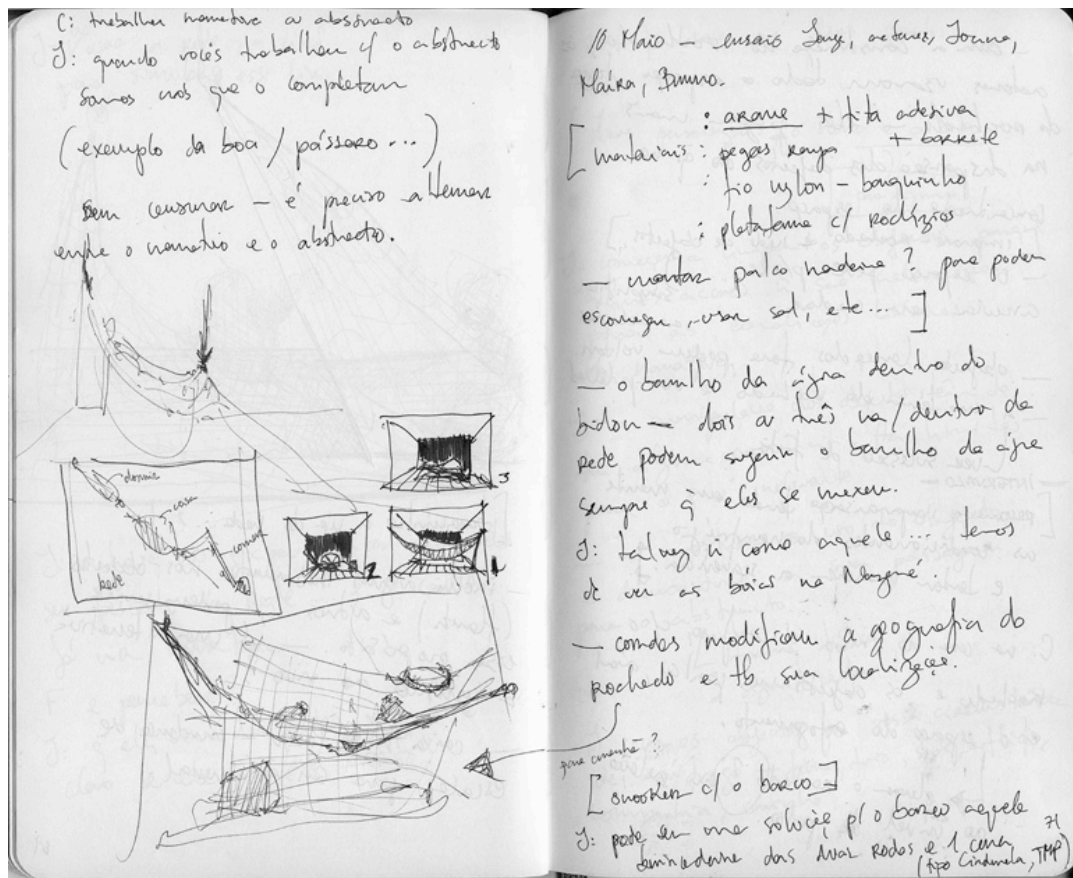
Storyboard drawing, stylo pen on Moleskine notebook for *Pequena História Trágico Marítima.* By Filipa Malva

Drawing in rehearsal, at this stage, helps to ground the design in action and to scale it in accordance with the performing space and time:

> sometimes I draw in a cool, unattached and technically efficient way, and at other times, (…) as a way of recording the devising process of an actor. When the actor is trying to animate themselves past what is consciously believable, drawing can be a mirror, an insight into what was achieved in a fleeting moment.[45]

In rehearsal, bodies are mostly in motion. The designer can sketch from the live models, registering what it sees for later discussion and adjustment or it can use it as an impulse to draw from memory and concept. Both options freeze a moment in time as relevant to the development of a particular design. In rehearsal, we use our capacity to project space and time from a single or multiple body movement or facial expression. Simultaneously, performers respond to previous knowledge of scenes, objects or costumes as presented by director and scenographer.
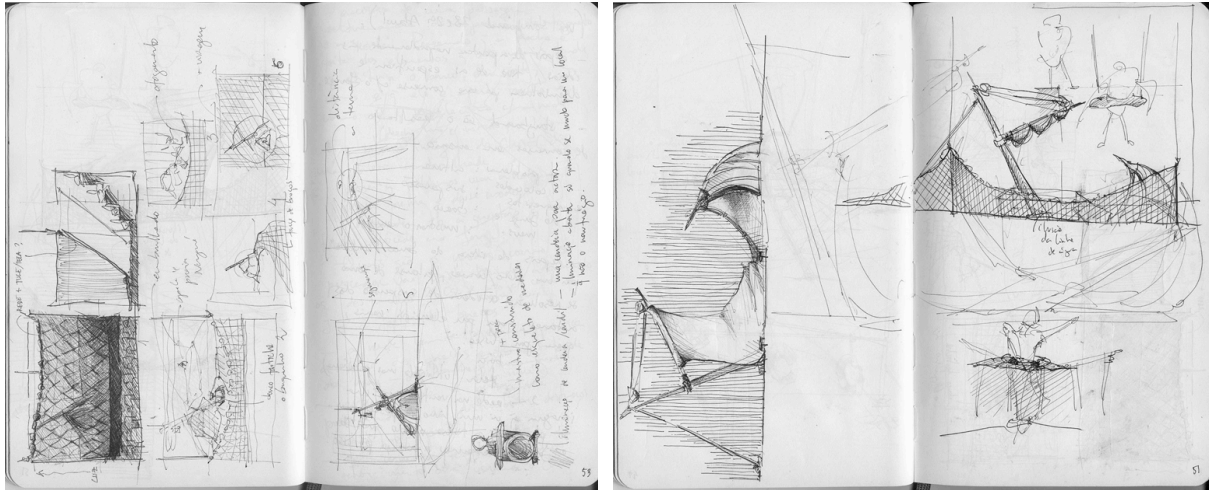
Rehearsal sketches for storyboard, stylo pen on Moleskine notebook for *Pequena História Trágico Marítima.* By Filipa Malva

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[45] Rae Smith, 'Drawing in Rehearsal.' in *Theatre and Performance Design: a Reader in Scenography*. Edited by Jane Collins and Andrew Nisbet. (London: Routledge, 2010), p. 377.

A drawing is always incomplete. There is no question about it. It is open to interpretation or rather to 'ideation' as Bernice Rose calls it.[46] This 'ideation' can happen, from the designer's point of view, when the scenographer goes back to conceptual drawings while observing rehearsal or discussing with a director. The exercise of looking at one's own drawing and allowing the imagination to go further than it had gone originally, is not an easy one. It asks the designer to leave her pre-conceived, individual ideas and embrace collaboration. It is this condition of vulnerability and trust in her intuition and others' interpretations that is fundamental to collaboration. Both conceptual and presentational design drawings allow for this combination to happen or rather they are conducive to it. As a conclusion to this section, I offer a few arguments as to why that is. I will discuss ways the *page*, understood as a conceptual and graphical interaction of drawing and textual mark-making, can be used to structure a collaboration in the making of both the scenography and the dramaturgy.

The process of devising in *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima* had, as a basis, a set of scenographic models, storyboards and found objects which were pre-produced and taken into rehearsal by the scenographer and director. They were selected or produced from direct memories or from research into Nazaré's fishing traditions and community, the initial context for the dramaturgy. As in other contemporary theatrical devising methodologies where 'chance or randomness are combined with some unquantifiable, yet persistent, sense of 'appropriateness,'(...) the work does not exist and is unknown in advance of its making, [but] there is nevertheless an assumption that there is a work to be 'discovered' or 'recognised'.'[47] We researched the objects' sensations of weight, sound, texture, colour and movement. Finally, the objects were further developed or rejected by

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46 cited by Kate Burnett in 'Addressing the Absent: Drawing and Scenography' in *Performance II.* Oxford: InterDisciplinary Press, 2012, (accessed March 2013).

47 Deirdre Heddon and Jane Lilling. *Devising Performance: a Critical History.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 199.

the performers over a period of two months. While in rehearsal, I was able to generate further drawings from the mingling of real action, memory and insight. Every time, I had a choice to submit rehearsal drawings directly to the collaboration or to test them individually by taking them further into presentational, more formal, drawings.

A drawing can propose memories and concepts to both the original drawer and others; those can be interpreted through gesture and body movement as registered through observational drawing; and finally, change notions of time of collaboration, consequently impacting on the performance's timings and transitions or, rather, its dramaturgy. By tracking the use of drawing in rehearsal, I can propose a connection between the generation of the performer's gestuality in the performance space and time and that generated by the drawer on the page while sketching. This interaction, in correspondence or in contrast, helps to create the 'embodied knowledge' used to construct the definite version of the performance. Embodied knowledge as been defined by Nelson as knowledge that 'can only be gained through doing, and thus dissemination of that knowledge can at best only be partially undertaken in words.'[48] For performers, it is knowledge developed and registered through gesture, movement and voice, accumulating over the rehearsal period, and subject to an iterative process of trial and error. For the scenographer, drawing in rehearsal, is both the physical gesture and the registered sketch on the page:

> expression and enquiry are often closely bound together in the creative process - particularly in drawing - and it is not always possible to tell from the outputs whether a drawing was made as research or not. The use of drawing to explore ideas is well accepted. Artists and designers make and modify drawings as part of their creative process. Often these are intended as fleeting representations of possible futures before the time-consuming and costly tasks of converting a selected idea/sketch into a tangible artefact (...) In this sense drawing is

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[48] Robin Nelson. 'Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge'. *Performance Research,* vol.11, no.4, 2006, p. 107.

clearly part of a research process. (...) So drawing research not only informs practice it can inspire it too. The questions and challenges articulated by others can stimulate the critical and reflective capacity that is seen as essential to practice.[49]

As dear it might be to the designer, conceptual drawings are frail due the designer's own uncertainties and consequently very open to interpretation or elimination. However, the willingness to discuss over a conceptual drawing, or even to (re)interpret it, is the first step towards a successful scenographic collaboration, since these drawings can propose memories and concepts to both the original drawer and others. They register memories, lived or imagined, and project ideas and wishes. They are of great intimacy. Even though they do not necessarily aim at being vague —quite often they have considerable detail and complexity —the most effective have the capacity to suggest thoughts without limiting their execution:

> evidence is presented that in the early stages of design or composition the mental processes used by artists for visual invention require a different type of support from those used for visualizing a nearly complete object. (...) sketch attributes preserve the results of cognitive processing which can be used interactively to amplify visual thought. The traditional attributes of sketches include many types of indeterminacy which may reflect the artist's need to be 'vague'.[50]

The set of conceptual drawings I developed for rehearsal (as seen above) interpreted the dramaturge's themes for the performance. They addressed our intention to explore space and body constriction, the need for a supernatural divine presence which could balance the harshness of the shipwreck scenes, and explored the texture, weight and shape

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[49] Steve Garner(ed.). *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research*. (Bristol: Intellect, 2008), p.16-17.

[50] Jonathan Fish. 'How Sketches Work: a Cognitive Theory for Improved System Design'. PhD Thesis, Longhborough University, 1996, http://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/2134/7418, (accessed March 2013).

of bodies against fishing nets, at work and at play. These were presented to the performers and director as elements that set the tone for rehearsal exercises. They offered suggestions of light and shadow, of mass and shape, of movement in space and of transition in time. Some were recognized, some ignored. This 'dismission', immediate or by trial and error, can only be productive if the collaboration has the capacity for trust and assumes its own fragility. If the collaboration itself is of the same nature as the act of sketching. The designer can take advantage of products of sketching such as absence or incident as a way to keep an idea from becoming final. In reality, the occurrence of absence and incident is natural to both the process of drawing and that of theatre making. What has not been sketched or detailed, an absence, and what has not been predicted, an incident, lead to questioning. These gaps create new, and often innovative, lines of thought, even if they also create conflict. This serves the designer's individual creative process as well as her creative relationship with director or performers. At this point in the collaboration, drawing can present a balance between authority and playfulness. On the one hand, drawing has the authority of a registry, giving mater, shape and light to elusive thoughts and, on the other, it is pregnant with play, for both drawer and performers:

> even before grasping the full consequences of any idea, drawing —as a tool neither strict nor demanding— stimulates the inherent playfulness of the creative process. (...) As drawing is 'pressure sensitive' it dramatises ideas by making lines more or less intense and emphatic in a manner that reflects the workings of the thought process.[51]

The capacity for playfulness that a drawing offers stimulates the creative process, a characteristic particularly important in theatre design. After all, to play is what all, performers, director, scenographer, are doing. Sharing the making of a drawing is a pleasurable experience. It is playing at making a play. Even if the imagination takes them

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[51] Marc Treib. *Drawing/Thinking: Confronting an Electronic Age*. London: Routledge, 2008. p.115.

in different directions, the experience shared gives them a point of return and a method at playing. The submission of conceptual design drawings to a rehearsal collaboration expects to render palpable a set of ideas or concepts, more or less detailed, which purpose is to expose frailties, provoke play, and establish a performative dialogue. This dialogue transgresses medium and technique, fluctuating from the page to the stage and vice-versa, through an understanding of the common ground between sketch and gesture.

The conceptual drawings showed before were then interpreted through gesture and body movement by the performers in rehearsal and consequently re-interpreted and registered through observational drawing, towards the creation of the scenography and/or the dramaturgy:

> a crucial element of observational drawing is learning to pause. The pause offers a space, temporal and spatial, to reflect and to prepare your next move. (...) the instruction hinges on the idea that during drawing there may be phases when the eye communicates with the hand spatially rather than using any form of visual memory. There occurs a physical translation rather than a perception-to-action or visual to motor encoding.[52]

The natural pauses that observing requires, allowed me to follow movement as flowing from the stage to the page. Even though this shift was fundamental to the collaboration, this gestural connection made the drawing flow too rapidly, gathering a strength of its own, away from its original design purpose. In order to avoid this, I have kept the drawings open, some unfinished, as a way to point out areas of the design I was still unsure of, hoping these absences would lead to further contribution from others involved. While in rehearsal, I focused on three specific aspects of the performer's actions: first, direction, weight and speed of movement; second, positive and negative space of their bodies against surrounding space (shape and mass); and, third, the use of gesture to

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[52] Andrea Kantrowitz, Angela Brew and Michelle Fava (ed.). *Thinking Through Drawing: Practice into Knowledge*. (New York:Columbia University, 2013), p.67.

suggest physical and emotional character. These helped me to move from my own interpretation of the dramaturgy and into a shared vision which incorporated my own conceptual drawings with their rehearsal research. Eventually these rehearsal, observational drawings originated a scenographic proposal representative of the collaboration. The same drawing often incorporated both observation and presentation. Garner defines them as 'ideational' drawings:

> in an ideational drawing one tries to release from grasp what one knows, re-view what is to be known and how it can be known, and develop the otherly arrangements, talked about above, in order to produce an (ap)prehension of what is still to be conceived in, and as, a yet-unknown future. (...)Ideational drawing is only potent in 'action'. The drawing is remarkably changed when it is read post-process.[53]

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[53] Steve Garner. *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research*. (Bristol: Intellect, 2008), p. 112.

Rehearsals videos' stills and correspondent production journal pages for three consecutive days. See annex Case Studies Notes, *Pequena História Trágico Marítima*, for full videos and drawings.

The table of examples above show that, as with drawing, it is often what the performers suggest that generate new drawings and, consequently, the progression of the design process. Each set of three rehearsal photos explores different aspects of the dramaturgy and each leads to a specific sketch. Even though these drawings' aesthetic quality was not central, they registered a moment in the creative process of the scenography when a conceptual leap was taken. Their importance was only grasped by the members of the collaboration. Their bond with specific observed actions can only be glimpsed by outsiders. In the first row, performers were working on an equilibrium between their bodies and between their bodies and found objects. They examined possibilities for tension and stretch them as definers of the space of performance. They suggested a first sequence of postures which made clear the advantage of including a tensile, textured surface in the scenography (a fishing net), as an aid to the storytelling. The second row shows the evolution of the idea of suspension and height also present in the first storyboards. They moved from a simple extension of their own bodies, to the accumulation of several objects on a single place on stage. Suspension was evoked through both movement and material accumulation. The sketch shows how a dialogue between performers and scenographer was established during rehearsal, simultaneously 'drawing' their own image of suspension.

In fact, the traces left by the pen on the paper, registers the displacement of both hand and observed body. These traces create a history of the thought process, of a reflection, marking intentions which are then developed fully or abandoned. Because they are materialized they can be recovered later on. As a consequence, sketching, with its trace quality, is an excellent method to chronicle movement as the creation of narrative on stage.

The third row of photos registers the performers' reactions to the fishing net's texture and weight. The sketch recorded this relationship which was to became central in

the definition of light and shadow in the performance. Finally, if we compare the three notebook pages we can easily see that the sketches on them were always composed as a sequence and accompanied by short notations: the notion of time was always present in the designing of the performance space.

Notions of time in collaboration can be changed through the use of drawing as an intermediary, consequently impacting on the performance's timings and transitions and the performance's dramaturgy. Design drawings can impact on time by registering transitions of shape or space over time and/or by suspending or expanding the time of collaboration. The first, has the purpose of proposing a solution and therefore is a design presentational technique —storyboarding. The second, can change the course of the collaborative process and is mostly done through sketching.

Time can be portrayed by a sequence of sketches. A sequence of sketches, or a storyboard, is the principal way drawing can be used, in rehearsal, to portray changes in space over time. Drawings

> can have strong storytelling properties. By adding visual storytelling to traditional drawing, drawing makers become immersed in a fourth dimension, wandering across time and space. Storytelling by drawing pictures is about delivering emotions; visceral, emphatic, or voyeuristic. (...) Drawing as storytelling can act as a crucial interface between the visual and the verbal.[54]

While storyboarding in rehearsal, we use our capacity to project space and time from a single or multiple body movement or facial expression. Since in rehearsal bodies are mostly in motion, the designer sketches from the live models, registering what she sees for later discussion and adjustment or she uses it as an impulse to draw from memory and concept. Both options freeze a set of moments in time as relevant to the development of a

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[54] Steve Garner. *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research.* (Bristol: Intellect, 2008), p. 171.

particular design. Even so, in storyboarding, it is the in-between drawings that suggest the scene change, the relationship between scenography and action. It is in the absent drawing that the dramaturgy is found.

In addition, the time that spans the making of a drawing while a director looks on you is longer than the time designers are usually allowed to have when answering a question verbally. The expansion of time in the collaboration happens because both director and scenographer are 'walking the line' as the ink is embedded in the paper. They follow the same line but they are seeing different things. Often the original question is no longer of relevance as brainstorming plays its part in the collaboration. Longer time allows the idea to blossom and decisions to be tested further. In addition, the speed and rhythm of sketching tolerate quick changes in the design direction, testing it as it goes while also registering the process. This creates a visual illustration of the collaboration to where all involved can go back to at any moment. The different routes taken, the dead-ends, and the decisions can be moved around with certainty and swiftness. Time is registered, as 'even spaces between lines show time, and that time becomes part of the drawing itself. Like a single line, an entire drawing can show where it began, where it went, and how it ended, from the beginning to the middle to the end, through the past, present, and future.'[55]

So far I have distinguish three ways drawing can impact on a collaboration: by changing the times of collaboration, expanding or contracting it according to the type of drawing; by creating a register of the questions raised and the chosen solutions; and by assuming the openness of the medium and allowing for absences and incidents to happen and be researched further. Now, I would like to propose another consequence of devising scenography through rehearsal drawing: the possible interaction, in correspondence or in

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[55] Michael G. Moore 'Drawing Drawings' in *Thinking Through Drawing: Practice into Knowledge*. Edited by Andrea Kantrowitz, Angela Brew and Michelle Fava. (New York:Columbia University, 2013), p.36.

contrast, between the generation of the performer's gestuality on stage and that of the drawer working on the page, and how this helps to develop the 'embodied knowledge' used to define the final performance. As scenographers drawing in rehearsal

> we sense material, whether that be the material we are using or the material we are observing. We are empathetic to distance, space, and place, near and far, compression and stretch. We are aware of condition, transparency and opacity, ethereal and solid, clarity and blur, light and dark - and all the in-between states of being. (...) It is touch which informs the artist of the nature of material and sight which completes the understanding.[56]

The symbiosis between touch and sight which comes natural to a drawer, is also what characterizes the work of the scenographer. Being sensitive to texture, depth, scale, proportion or light is essential to all who work with and from space. The ability to analyze and to project space, to read and to propose it, to move from reality to fiction (and vice-versa), is at the basis of our discipline. As such, understanding gesture and movement as the spatial tool of analysis for performers is only an extension of that practice. The embodied understanding of the flux between sight and touch, of lines as (partially) registered gestures, developed by the drawer-scenographer, offers a clue as to how the dialogue with performers can evolve. As lines,

> gestures use analogous simple forms, points, lines, directed lines, containers. Gestures are used communicatively, to explain things to others.(...) More surprisingly, it turns out that gestures aid thinking in those who produce them. (...) But messy lines, as designers and artists know, also aid thought, exactly because they are messy. Messy lines are ambiguous, pre-categorical, so they allow many interpretations. Messy lines promotes discovery of new ideas. Making messy lines allows play and exploration.[57]

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[56] Steve Garner. *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research.* (Bristol: Intellect, 2008), p. 137.

[57] Barbara Tversky 'Obsessed by Lines' in *Thinking Through Drawing: Practice into Knowledge.* Edited by Andrea Kantrowitz, Angela Brew and Michelle Fava. (New York:Columbia University, 2013), p.16.

Therefore, not only we can find a connection between the designer's embodied gestuality and the performers', but we can look at drawings done in rehearsal as a registry of that created knowledge. Sketching in rehearsal promotes open collaboration through haptic (sense of touch), proxemic (distances between bodies) and kinetic (sense of movement) analysis, which in turn informs the creative process of scenographer and performers. While drawing, the scenographer picks up on the kinesthetic of the performers, as the performers can use the drawings as a proposal for movement, distance and gesture. Interpretation of the mark-making submits a possible storyline to the collaboration. In this sense, drawing can be a dramaturgical research method by excellence. It can be applied to body, in motion, in space and therefore to the design of both the performance space and costume. Costume, as we will see, is an extension of the body and as such a mediator in the dialogue it establishes with space. Movement can be materialized through costume design, and in turn costume can determine gesture and movement. This idea 'both facilitates the costume designer's encounter with the physicality of the performing body and enables an examination of this encounter in order to understand how the designer interprets and makes sense of this body.'[58] In reality, the tension created in the empty space between bodies, and between body and space, is addressed in drawing as positive/negative space. The method of drawing negative space helps the drawer to recognize the tension, of repulsion or of attraction, connecting multiple 'positive' masses, and as a consequence, understand the composition as an interdependent whole. Drawing it fixes this tension on the page and allows performers to understand and expand it on the stage. Tensional points can be recognized as vertices in

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[58] Hannah Gravestock. 'Drawing and Re-Drawing: Working with the Physicality of the Performing Body in Costume Design' (PhD Thesis, University of Arts London and University of Surrey, 2011. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p. 3.

the kinetic structure of the production and consequently as roots for the scenography. These points define a movement, a body's route in space:

> movement is not only a displacement of lines, but also it causes pressures and tensions in space. Forces play against one another in this way, giving a living vibrant consistency to space. To define one's route is superficial. A Rodin sculpture, immobile in its own material, moves by itself and makes the space around it move: it draws together in its form the contradictions that animate its dynamics. (...) Theatre with a high level of performance places the body in a space of tension that is higher than what it normally inhabits in life.[59]

To conclude, drawing as an material, and analogue, process of communication offers much of the flexibility, speed and 'vagueness' of verbal communication. All the same, due to its nature, drawing also becomes a register and a reflexion of this communication. As a consequence, a performance composed through design drawings, grows from the accumulation and manipulation of individual view-points which are arranged in layers of meaningful gestuality and mark-making. The visual expressiveness of the scenographer is transferred to the quality of movement of the dramaturgy, and the scenography can acquire the choreographic nature of the performers. In addition, drawing offers the scenographer the opportunity to manipulate timing and time in the collaboration, decelerating or accelerating it as needed. This manipulation has consequences to the devising being done on stage. Finally, when most scenographers communicate with performers mostly through the director, being able to establish an haptic and kinaesthetic dialogue with them, in and beyond rehearsal, can be seen as an advantage in scenographic practice.

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[59] Jacques Lecoq and David Bradby (ed). *Theatre of Movement and Gesture*. (Oxford: Routledge, 2006), p. 89.

Ensuing verbal and material (analogue) processes of communication, I will now look at the use of digital mediums during a collaborative process of creating a scenography.

Digitising space.

Even if digital modelling and drawing entails specific techniques and methodologies, much of what has been discussed in the previous sections can be applied here. It can be used merely as a presentational medium, replacing the analogue versions, where change is discouraged, or it can be used as a sketching mechanism, open to the collaboration and conceptual in nature. However, digital technologies raise a number of issues not only because they are quite recent to the profession and most scenographers' proficiency at them is still somewhat deficient, but also because

> the fundamental lack of substance of the virtual model may also encourage the starting point of thought to be made anywhere within a potential combination of scenographic elements. (...) The controlling capabilities of the computer are providing the opportunity to re-integrate the work of this fragmented team, sharing ideas with other scenographers and, of course, directors and performers. In this way, new technologies offer significant opportunities for creating performance strategies that employ the entire vocabulary of theatrical resources within both dramatic and post-dramatic performance. (...) The contributions of computer-controlled technology and computer-created scenography offer metaphors of transience, instability, multiple framing and interactivity to a postdramatic world of performance.[60]

Baugh distinguishes here two ways the conventional collaborative practice has been altered. On the one hand, the necessary sequence of creation: of conceptualising, then designing, then building, is no longer true, as the designer is able to move from one stage to another at will. Similarly, collaborators can intercede at any point, adding more or less

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[60] Christopher Baugh. *Theatre, Performance and Technology: the Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.214-215.

detail to a specific scene or transition. Digital models have changed the paradigmatic director-scenographer relationship. Once the director has a digital model of the production, he can put the blocking to a trial, change lighting before it is even rigged or manipulate the shape of the performance space without going through the scenographer. The digital page offers anything that the technical and aesthetic capacities of those using it can achieve.

On the other hand, its abstraction, or 'lack of substance', presents an opportunity to model the three-dimensional, to use any scenographic material as the starting point to a design. In that way it is as flexible as analogue drawing and as spatially complex as an analogue model. Notwithstanding, the vagueness which characterises drawing and verbal communication, and provides the scenographer with some 'bargaining' room in the initial research and discussion stages of the design process, is technically difficult to achieve in digital modelling or drawing. The medium excels at offering tools for presentational communication, but it often lacks the openness and expressive uncertainty of analogue equals. If communication is not matched with technical savvy, the collaboration becomes subject to great leaps in the decision-making, which eventually create a gap between scenography and dramaturgy.

In the case of *Sr. Hic...* by Teatro de Marionetas do Porto, the digital designers, experts on three-dimensional modelling and animation, film-makers by trade, were faced with the challenge of creating multiple settings (which was projected onto a screen and a gauze) and the principal character, based on the puppet manipulation being devised by the performers, and simultaneously, being designed by the company's construction workshop. They confirm what Tillis says:

> to create from the keyboard the walk of a figure across a room (...) involves the bringing
> together of separately defined gestural and proxemic movements: first one uses handles to
> define the gestures that constitute walking, and then one defines the animation path and

speed of walk. This bringing together of movements is analogous to the way that puppets are moved. (...) The main difference between the keyboard-created walking of a computer graphics figure and a puppet is that the walk of the former is painstakingly composed over an extended period of time, while the walk of the latter is created all at one, in real-time.[61]

The digital designers were surprised by the fact that the performers kept going back and forth in their search for a dramaturgy, but they recognised that puppet manipulation has the same founding principles as digital character manipulation. Digital creation is done through a keyboard, and as such, depends on the software for the development of its expressiveness but it is manipulation all the same: it starts from the recognition of weight, shape and tension of the characters' parts and the understanding of the space it moves in. Time of devising is of course very different, as Tillis refers. But with adequate digital tools, it is possible for the keyboard artist to react in real time to the analogue character on stage, and vice-versa. In the case of *Sr. Hic...,* the performer-digital dialogue was done through contrast rather than extension. That is, analogue and digital characters recognised each other on stage, but they were materially separate: one, three-dimensional, the other, a projection. Collaboration was dependent on individual preparation, rehearsal serving only to synchronise transitions. Common research and discussion were done verbally.

Digital communication can therefore be as interdependent as the processes described earlier. Depending only on the ability to 'speak' the same technical jargon and on the recognition of its specificity in the times of collaboration.

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[61] Steve Tillis. 'The art of puppetry in the age of media production.' *TDR/The Drama Review* vol. 43, no. 3, 1999, p.182-195, available from Jstor, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1146776, (accessed February 2013), p.187.

Applied Communication.

Theatrical convention tells us that scenographic information is transmitted to the director who then incorporates it into the staging, either through the performers or as a background to the action. This partnership is as strong as the willingness to find common ground:

> a scenographer's relationship to the director can be complex and fragile. The production needs to be set up from the beginning on a time-scale that allows debate, compromise and persuasion. If scenographer and director can begin with a clean slate, isolating the problems rather than seeking instant solutions, there is a real possibility of working together in a partnership of trust.[62]

Processes of communication such as verbal discussion or sketching allow solutions to remain open. Depending on the purpose or concept behind each production, this characteristic can be either desirable or an hindrance to the development of the scenography. In *PHTM*, it was vital, as discussed earlier, but in *A Biblioteca Russa*, it caused a delay in the staging which proved testing for the performers. The decision to use a process of communication depends on the scenographers ability to master it, on the directors' capacity to understand it, and, above all, on whether it responded to the specificities of the production. Choosing to use digital media as both an aesthetics and a process of collaboration, as in *Sr. Hic...* , determined its final outcome. As the analogue and digital were mingled together through improvisation and puppet manipulation, performers became translators in this communication: their bodies developed the capacity to imbue the puppets and the screen with life. Establishing a dialogue with the performers, mainly in rehearsal, as become a central issue for many scenographers. We feel the need to find a direct connection with the work being developed through improvisation, as contemporary scenography changes into a reactive, inhabited, world,

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[62] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.139.

dependent on its inhabitants to gain meaning. Hannah Gravestock discovered that even if she was willing to draw performers in rehearsal as a way to understand the possibilities of the performance space, very seldom she was able to establish a fruitful communication with them. She found that she needed a verbal dialogue to complement her drawings:

> any changes I made to my drawings and any differences I noticed between my drawings and the performance could not be related to the performer's own ideas developing in rehearsals. As a result my drawing and design process remained separate from the performer's explorations and the development of the performance as a complete whole.[63]

Verbal discussion was always essential as drawing was understood as a 'scenographer's medium', somewhat mysterious, needing expertise to do and to translate. Similarly, Cátia Barros, designing for O Teatrão, spoke of the difficulty in working with some directors with almost no knowledge of any kind of spatial notation. As such verbalizing 'drawn thoughts' as become a common trade amongst scenographers. Sketching, either through drawing, digital or analogue modeling, is frequently not enough to convey an idea. Nevertheless, at the early stages of the design composition, sketching is, as we have seen before, essential. Literacy in each others' processes of communication is therefore desirable, even if each production asks for preference of one over other:

> actors and directors should learn to draw, and scenographers should learn to act and direct, so that all could become totally literate and conversant with the multiple disciplines of the theatre. This would enable them to animate and exploit the stage space, to make productions vibrant in their staging as well as in their speaking.[64]

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[63] Hannah Gravestock. 'Drawing and Re-Drawing: Working with the Physicality of the Performing Body in Costume Design', PhD Thesis, University of Arts London and University of Surrey, 2011. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author., p.75.

[64] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.131.

There is, nonetheless, communication which by its suggestive nature, speaks to everyone belonging to the theatrical professions. These will most likely convey different meanings to each person, but can unlock specific nodes in the dramaturgy. Discovery here is instantaneous, a leap in the fiction, different from the brainstorming sequence associated with sketching, storyboarding or verbal discourse. Pamela Howard gives an example of this leap of the imagination:

> not quite knowing what to do, I idly took a length of thin string that just happened to be near at hand, painted it bright green, and laid it across the long, narrow, painted photograph of the Tramway walls. As it fell naturally in curves and rises, it seemed to bind together the walls and disparate spaces with a single strong band of colour. Suddenly the green line spoke to me of the remembered Elysian fields of pastoral Scotland that were in the text, and it also had the up-and-down movement of a roller coaster, the subtext of the fortunes and misfortunes of the country.[65]

This manipulation of visual materials, or of objects, done in rehearsal or in the studio, is not a process of communication since there is no intention to present or transfer an idea, but rather an intuitive reaction to circumstances. In addition, even though they may induce a sequence of events, they do not intent to register this evolution of an idea as it develops over collaboration. They work merely as triggers and can not be sustained over lengthy periods of time.

As such, processes of communication of scenography can be classified as verbal, material or digital. They can be used in tandem, in sequence or in isolation, and are co-dependent and complementary. They are used to register and develop ideas and serve the creatives involved in a theatrical collaboration in as much as they serve a specific production's concept or viewpoint. They define the conditions and the outcome of this

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[65] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.97.

collaboration, and consequently, their selection and application is not neutral to the scenography's stance in the production.

In the next section, I will look at how the conceptual leaps offered by these absences, accidents and incidents of communication influence the creation of the scenography. As I followed the three case studies, scenographers and directors often spoke of keeping the 'process open' until opening day. Later on, during the practice-as-research project, we decided we wanted to take this idea further and look at the staging and scenography as an open sketch: able to change easily and rapidly, vague enough to allow incidents and absences to be used creatively, and reflexive enough to encourage change only where we thought essential. Registering each step of the progression —in drawings, video, physical repetition and writing— liberate us to enjoy the openness of the process.

Section 4

Designing Through Incident and Absence.

> Images and ideas which might be recognised and shared by the community are inflected with individual experience and constructions of the self. I realised that my work as a scenographer could not be simply to transmit ideas, no matter how poetic and subtle. The negotiation of shared images and images which contribute to our sense of self has to operate dialogically as a communication.[66]

The occurrence of absences and incidents is usual in the process of theatre making. They happen in dialogue and the designer can take advantage of absences and incidents as they happen on the page or on the stage as a way to keep an idea from becoming final. This serves the designer's individual creative process as well as her creative relationship with director and performers. In this subsection, I will expand on these concepts, already mentioned in the previous section and examine ways absences and incidents can shape the creation of a negotiated scenography.

Absences.

An absence is the intentional or unintentional omission of information during the creative process and its eventual application in performance. It can happen as a miscommunication, or it can be inserted as to instigate collaboration, either in rehearsal or from an audience. The first instance is common to all collective processes of creation and it stems from the variables and conditions of collaboration between practitioners from different training backgrounds. Scenographers will leave out information that is, intuitively, deemed unnecessary or obvious. Directors will do similarly. These absences can

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[66] Joslin Mckinney. 'The Nature of Communication Between Scenography and Its Audiences', PhD Thesis, The University of Leeds, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author.

cause episodes of confusion and anguish, particularly when formally presenting a design. In a costume design, for example, there can be an absence of gesture or movement, fundamental information for a performer, if the scenographer has only sketched the clothes cut, texture and colour. Correspondingly, a scenographer reading a dramaturgic text will search for clues to the characters' scenographic information, but may find them absent or understated. Eventually a common glossary is developed surpassing the problem. This bridge in communication between scenographer, dramaturge, director and performer comes from a common understanding of the same character, a condensation of material, emotional and physical qualities. It can happen that

> the actor's imagination does not coincide with that of the costume designer. There are actors who imagine their own costume, in the way they conceive their character, and then, when they are confronted with the object itself, they feel bad because things do not coincide and they have difficulty in accepting it (...) I believe that this can be avoided if the construction of a character, throughout rehearsal, works also from concrete wardrobe images and references.[67]

Another way absence can occur unintentionally is while collaborating in rehearsal. The scenographer works fast from moving performers and is forced to select what is included in the speech, drawing or digital model, what is relevant to include in a particular dialogue. Simplification and condensation is pivotal but it leads to absence. There is nonetheless the possibility to incorporate these into the research or collaboration, making the most of what they have precipitated. In practice-as-research, this possibility is essential because it manifests the researchers' ability to adapt to circumstances of the practice and be open to change produced by others. Hannah Gravestock's explains her experience:

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[67] My translation. Interview with Luis Miguel Cintra in Vera Castro, *O Papel da Segunda Pele*. (Lisboa: Babel, 2010), p. 142.

I was forced to use a simplified mark making process that represented only the most important physical features of a performance. However, this did not prevent the drawing process from revealing information. Instead, the rapid drawing style meant that although certain information was inevitably omitted, only information that was most relevant to how I experienced the physicality of the performing body was included. This provided the drawings and drawing process with both clarity and focus.[68]

Absent information can therefore be left out. It does not need to be filled in. It is a product of the selection procedure done by the scenographer. Intentional absence is a proposition, an advancement in the collaborative process, a way into someone's reasoning and intuition. The 'un-filled in', as Kate Burnett puts it, creates a pause, an opportunity for cooperation. Absence is at the basis of drawing techniques such as storyboarding or sketching, as I have indicated before. It is from the unmentioned, in the transition between marks, that creation advances:

I realised that my own involvement with the sketch, even with the more developed costume and set drawings was about the information of the *un*-filled in - the absences, the spaces and gaps that allow for possibility, invention, for more imagining. (...) The gaps and spaces in costume drawings and storyboards however are just as often reassuring, even provocative, to actors and imaginative makers, as they allow for growth, elaboration, or refinement of original ideas in a more collaborative process.[69]

This opportunity for elaboration can be extended to the spectators when it is used as part of a scenographic or dramaturgical partiture. The inexistence of an object, or a performer, were the spectators expect to find them is an act of communication, it has

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[68] Hannah Gravestock. 'Drawing and Re-Drawing: Working with the Physicality of the Performing Body in Costume Design' (PhD Thesis, University of Arts London and University of Surrey, 2011. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.52.

[69] Kate Burnett. 'Addressing the Absent: Drawing and Scenography' in *Performance II. (*Oxford: InterDisciplinary Press, 2012, accessed March 2013).

intentionality and dramaturgical meaning. Absence here acts as ponctuation in the performance's rhythm.[70] In *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima,* however, we decided to create an invisible character, expanding the idea of an absence. Here absence was used not only punctually (whenever an object was missing from a scene, for example) but as a constant. Performers occasionally addressed this character directly, but its presence was felt through the workings of the scenographic elements such as the fishing net. This presence evoked the religious context of Nazaré. It was responsible for the changes in the space of performance and consequently the performers' positions in it. It reacted to change in their discourse, either by supporting through visual context or by constraining their movements. Similarly, we chose to evoke Nazaré's geography through a very simple chalk line drawn on the stage's floorboards by the performers: the absence of detail, which an image or photo would show, presented the spectators with an opportunity for interpretation, an opportunity to connect the verbal dialogue, which was in itself tentative, with the performers' gestures, and the scenographic materials. Absence allowed the spectators to 'follow the line', filling in the blanks as it moved from stage-right to stage-left. Absence 'becomes the means by which a person's experience is broadened, because he can imagine what he has not seen, can conceptualize something from another person's narration and description of what he himself has never directly experienced.'[71]

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[70] 'people, objects and other features can be just as significant when taken away, provided that the absence is apprehended as a communicative tool, a dramaturgic choice', Magdalena Holdar in 'Scenography in Action: Space, Time and Movement in Theatre Productions by Ingmar Bergman', (PhD Thesis, Stockholm University, 2003. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.47.

[71] Lev S. Vygotsky. 'Imagination and creativity in childhood.' *Journal of Russian and East European Psychology,* vol. 42, no. 1, 2004, (http://lchc.ucsd.edu/mca/Mail/xmcamail.2008_03.dir/att-0189/Vygotsky__Imag___Creat_in_Childhood.pdf, accessed February 2013), p.17.

Incidents.

Contrary to absence, an incident is a re-worked presence. Its nature makes it unlikely in performance —incident is unintentional and therefore it exists in performance only through improvisation or accident— and desirable in rehearsal, as it provokes change. It starts from activated gesture or material, it happens in action, contrary to absence which tends to be created from suspension or pause. In research, individual or collective, incident can changes preconceptions, and scenographic materials can easily be its cause. Costume or objects affect the performers' gestuality to the point of incident. In *A Biblioteca Russa*, the mouses' tails attached to the costumes, were often entangled or stepped on. They would cause the performers using them to trip on each other and over the set pieces. Ultimately, they started using them as pretexts for arguments amongst characters, developing their interactions and establishing a gestuality specific to the performance. What started as a problem —the tails were designed to be used with grace and inconspicuously— became the purpose of the design. This is an example of how scenography is, in numerous occasions, the product of occidental action. In fact,

> linear research technique is not always the most productive. At times, when we are least looking for a specific answer to a particular question we accidentally happen upon information that may instantly illuminate our understanding, even causing us to abandon long-held preconceptions. Accidental encounters may even provide information relating to questions of research we have yet to discover.[72]

Once again, the scenographer creating through drawing, digital or analogue, is well aware of this possibility. Recognising incident as an tool for design, can become the central focus of creative processes such as devised performance or practice-as-research projects. Sketching, through mark-making or gesture, allows the scenographer to work

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[72] Darwin Reid Payne. *The Scenographic Imagination*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.179.

through and with recurrent incidents and corrections. These are records of a process of conceptualisation, or rather, a thought in movement from concept to materiality, to which we can always come back to. The registering of incident in thought, shows collaborators both the frailties and the strengths of the scenographer's proposal authorising them to enter into the intimacy of creation, simultaneously keeping the end result open to change. This vagueness is responsible for the 'sense of liveness'[73] in the drawing and in the research itself. Honesty and vulnerability of an open proposal changes creativity, compelling it towards cooperation.

Scenography grows from both absences and incidents. The imbalance they produce creates conflict in the collaboration and asks for a compromised resolution. But this imbalance is what incites discovery, as Anne Bogart explains it:

> art begins in the struggle for equilibrium. One cannot create from a balanced state. Being off balance produces a predicament that is always interesting on stage. In the moment of imbalance, our animal instincts prompt us to struggle towards equilibrium and this struggle is endlessly engaging and fruitful. When you welcome imbalance into your work, you will find yourself instantly face to face with your own inclination towards habit. Habit is an artist's opponent.[74]

Negotiation is therefore at the core of the creative process of scenography. The scenographer starts her practice by negotiating between her own intuition and imagination and the need to answer the production's purposes and conditions. Absences and incidents are as much part of this internal negotiation as they are of the rehearsal room. Technique and training make the scenographer tend towards habit, towards a closed, defined design. Discovery happens only when routine is broken and put to the

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[73] Kate Burnett. 'Addressing the Absent: Drawing and Scenography' in *Performance II.* Oxford: InterDisciplinary Press, 2012, (accessed March 2013).

[74] Anne Bogart. *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre.* (London: Routledge, 2001), p.130.

test. For each production, different conditions, processes of communication and therefore different sets of incidents or absences prompt different reactions. These all shape the method of collaboration which can not be wholly defined but from the point of view of each individual production. As we have seen so far, the proposition of the scenographer, and her creative partners, towards openness and compromise, the willingness to build on each other's imagination, to learn from incident, to propose from absence, is common to all the examples described and it somehow defines their starting point in any collaboration.

The next section will close this chapter by addressing conventional concepts of authorship, authority and style in scenography, and how they were put into question by the examples researched.

Section 5

Authority, Authorship and Style.

The final section of this chapter addresses concepts of authority, authorship and style in scenography, and how they were put into question by the examples researched. Collaborative relationships in theatre defy demarcation and restriction. We can say there is a specific relationship not only within each creative team, but also for each particular production. Diverse theatrical projects ask for and result in diverse patterns of collaboration. Despite that, in the examples researched it is clear that conditions and methods of collaboration can induce, if not limit, collaborative practices which, in turn, resonate in the scenography created. I will argue that beliefs of trust, intimacy and authority during rehearsal and production times influence the creative process of the scenographer, and consequently, the scenography as the final compromise in the dramaturgical collaboration. Moreover, new definitions of scenographic authorship are developed, as cooperation dissolves the conventional boundaries of the profession. Finally, I will put forward the hypothesis that scenographic style is founded not only in the scenographer's imagination and technique but mainly in the way she operates a specific collaboration to the fulfilment of a specific dramaturgy.

The Portuguese context analysed here is an example of the constant collision in the history of theatre: 'the collision that can occur between the ideals of working as collaborative artists alongside the vision of a unified art of the theatre is self-evident and has been illustrated throughout the twentieth century.'[75] As described earlier,[76] O Bando, Teatro Marionetas do Porto and O Teatrão, all present themselves as collectives, as theatre

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[75] Christopher Baugh. *Theatre, Performance and Technology: the Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.74.

[76] See Part II, Chapter 1.

companies that put collaboration and cooperation at the core of their creative process. Nevertheless, scenography comes up at distinct stages in each process and the director/performer/scenographer collaborative triangle is explored differently.

Conventionally, the director is the one who determines the scenographer's influence in the rehearsal process, inviting more or less intervention on its part. Balancing the described collision between multiple participants and a single theatrical work usually falls to the director, even if all contributors function as equals in the creative process. The scenographer's relationship with the performers is often mediated by the director. The scenographer seldom address the performers directly in rehearsal, seeking 'permission' from the director. In this case, the scenographer/director relationship is the central collaboration in the development of the scenography. This association can have different configurations. Brecht and Neher's *Buhnenbauer* proposes that both professions stem from a clear and free understanding of the 'act of performance'. Consequently the collaboration must not be dependent on 'established theatre etiquette'[77] which can overly restrict the process, but rather on the needs of the production. Similarly, Josef Svoboda called for a 'symbiotic relationship between the work of the director and the designer'.[78] Only through a profound understanding of each other's work precepts and constraints can a scenography be fully integrated and meaningful in a performance. Contrary to both Brecht and

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[77] 'The scenographer as *Buhnenbauer* (...) believes that the job is to build a scene as an integral component within what Brecht termed the 'practical dramaturgy' of the play in performance. Working in this way, therefore, the scenography must be conceived as an act of performance: as a combination of thinking and its associated active intervention. The scenographer will be responsible, along with others, for the construction of theatrical 'components' within the overall machine. (...) The ability for director, writer and scenographer to consider *all* aspects of theatre without following an established theatre etiquette of professional 'areas of responsability' lies at the heart of the collaboration between Neher and Brecht.' in Christopher Baugh. *Theatre, Performance and Technology: the Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.76-77.

[78] Joslin Mckinney and Philip Butterworth. *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography.* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.72.

Svoboda, Peter Brook's earlier writings state his uneasiness with leaving his play's design to others.[79] Controlling the moment and degree of integration of the scenography in the staging and dramaturgy is essential in Brook's work, and he assumes here that cooperation, falling outside his control, is not always desirable. The symbiotic ideal described by Svoboda is not achievable in all occasions and some directors opt to either not 'have' a scenographer or at least to be able to control her work.

With all three authors, the collaboration operates from without the proscenium arch: that is, as intimate or as hierarchical a director/scenographer relationship is, they both stand outside the performers' realm, looking in. It is their prerogative and their necessity. Compromise and symbiosis are reached from this position and as such the triangle described above is not usually equilateral, the scenographic collaboration having a greater emphasis in the scenographer/director axis. This is confirmed by O Bando's and O Teatrão's work analysed.[80] Teatro de Marionetas do Porto is, however, unconventional, as their manipulation and character making techniques demand that all involved be a constant part of the process. In their case, the director or choreographer respond to a very practical need to have someone outside looking in. As we will see further down[81], since character and performer often replace each other, the scenography is necessarily created from an act of performance where there is no need for a director to act as a mediator. If anything, the scenography (marionettes and puppets) is the mediator between the

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[79] 'Although I have loved working with designers, I find that it is terribly important in Shakespeare in particular that I design myself. You never know wether your ideas and the designer's are evolving at the same rate. You come to a portion of the play that you cannot find your way through. At that point the designer finds a solution which seems to fit and which you are bound to accept, with the result that your own thinking on that scene becomes frozen. If you are doing it yourself, it means that over a long period of time your imagery and your staging evolve together' in Peter Brook. *The Shifting Point: 40 Years of Theatrical Exploration 1946-1987*. (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 91.

[80] See Part II, Chapter 2.

[81] See next chapter, Section 2, *Manipulating*.

scenographer and the performers. As such, scenographic collaboration takes place between scenographer, director and performers simultaneously, creating bonds dependent only on the specificities of the production.

Trust/Intimacy/Authority.

Cooperation in rehearsal depends on questions of aesthetic and technique but also on conditions of collaboration and on methods of communication, as seen above. These can create (or not) relations of trust and intimacy which favour the development of scenographic imagination. This trail of brainstorming moments are then organised through decision making. At several moments during the creative process, dramaturgical, directorial and scenographic authority are defied and discussed before a performance's final configuration is reached. Here authority is defined as the source, single or multiple, of decision-making (director, performer, etc.) but mainly as the sounding-board against which theatrical meaning is created (a set of concepts, a text, a space, etc.). It is not only a discussion between opposing interpretations, but also between individual views and whatever arises from their cooperation. The result is greater than the sum of its parts.

My research shows that a hierarchy between creative collaborators is always somewhat present even when the production is formally attributed to a collective. It is the form that that hierarchy takes that differs. Trust and authority are balanced differently, blossoming into a creative intimacy. Sharifi distinguishes two, opposed, collaborative formats:

> departments of theatre in 'tree' form are rigidly structured and there are parent/child or master/slave relationships among them. In 'tree' form, scenography as a department is subordinate on transforming information to audience and acting is the dominant driver of theatre. In 'tree' form, the hierarchical relationship among the different departments forms the theatre of representation. In contrast in 'rhizome' form, the power of agency is distributed evenly among the departments and information perceived by an audience lacks stress,

hierarchy and focus to be a perfect mimesis, therefore 'rhizome' produces assemblages of affects instead of producing pure representation.[82]

He argues that in a 'tree' form collaboration acting is the key stone of the creative process, as we can see in O Teatrão, while in the 'rhizome' format there is an equal participation of all performative elements, as is attempted at Teatro de Marionetas do Porto.[83] Linking the collaborative structure to its results, Sharifi recognises as Anne Bogart says, that 'a rehearsal is always about relationships, about being in the room together with other people, working towards something. The circumstances of a rehearsal inevitably conjures up difficult and contrary emotions.'[84] In rehearsal, freedom and responsibility work hand in hand: with the possibility of being an active agent of change comes the responsibility of decision-making. Trust and fear are instrumental in advancing the imagination: 'Are the choices made in rehearsal based on a desire for security or a search for freedom? I am convinced that the most dynamic and thrilling choices are made when there is a trust in the process, in the artists and in the material.'[85] The capacity for trust even when feeling fear is an element of a fruitful collaboration. As is the ability to interact, to argument, to eventually disagree, strongly or lightly, with others, questioning the authority of each participant's ideas, without loosing track of the performance's objectives.[86] Nevertheless, interaction is not necessarily collaboration and we could say that 'there seems to be a specific mind to collaboration —an acknowledgement. (...)

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[82] Parjad Sharifi. 'Bioscenography: Towards the Scenography of Non-Representation'. in *Performance II*. Oxford: Interdisciplinary Press, 2012, (accessed March 2013).

[83] See Part II, Chapter 1 and 2, for further details on each creative process.

[84] Anne Bogart. *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre*. (London: Routledge, 2001), p.144.

[85] Anne Bogart. *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre*. (London: Routledge, 2001), p.83.

[86] 'To be silent, to avoid the violence of articulation alleviates the risk of failure but at the same time there is also no possibility of advancement.' in Anne Bogart. *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre*. (London: Routledge, 2001), p.49.

[W]hat could make it successful other than consistently making it the priority at every stage of my process.'[87]

A scenographer chooses how to operate in rehearsal, how to collaborate. Working either in tree, rhizome format, or other, the scenographer places herself within, besides or beyond action, in accordance to her own view of what scenography's role is in performance, creating a relationship of more or less intimacy with the performers' actions and consequently the director's work. Conventionally, the dramaturgy extends its authority over the whole creative process and as such a sounding board against which director, scenographer and performers test their respective ideas. The dramaturgy organises all theatrical elements and it can be introduced before rehearsal or be created during it. In the first case, the scenographer can align itself with the dramaturges' conception or may choose to contrast it, as the dominance recognised in the dramaturgy by all participants justifies many scenographic options. In the second case, dramaturgy and scenography can be created together, developing an intimacy specific to devised processes: 'when your starting point is very open from the outset any gesture, comment, action, atmosphere or improvisation might offer the key to where and how to begin work. (...) This process of discovery requires, not distance and remoteness, rather intimacy and closeness.'[88]

Even in devised performances, a balance must be struck between what the scenographer and dramaturge intend and what is being designed by the performers. In fact, the dramaturgy is found in their dialogue as is the scenography.[89] Scenographic authority (not necessarily that of the person of the scenographer) comes from the needs of

[87]Lilja Blumenfeld, 'From Hamlet with Love: a Letter to the Other' cited in Jean-Marc Puissant's introduction to Kate Burnett and Keith Allen (ed.). *Collaborators: UK Design for Performance, 2003-2007.* (London: Society of British Theatre Designers, 2007), p. 39.

[88]Synne K. Behrndt. 'The Dramaturg as Collaborator: Process and Proximity', 2008, www.tau.ac.il/~dramatur/docs/Paper%20-%20Behrndt30.doc, (accessed April 2013).

[89] See Part II, Chapter 3.

the performance and therefore, in order to find it, the scenographer must be able to analyze action, its dramaturgical meaning, deciding on what, where and how spatial and pictorial intervention is required. Imposing scenographic elements on the performers (and director), may add to a predefined visual composition, but it does not necessarily create theatrical meaning.[90] We may say that creative intimacy motivates artistic authority. And so, scenographic authority comes from a recognition of dramaturgical meaning and the willingness to make it relevant in the final outcome. To select it, to interpret it and finally to make it visible to others, who, in turn, will do the same. As Manuel Gusmão says, 'to dialogue is to assume that making sense is a collective task'.[91]

The scenographer may find different ways to establish a dialogue with action. Pamela Howard believes that 'being present at as many rehearsals as possible, drawing what is happening, and working alongside the director is absolutely essential for any meaningful discussion about the intention of the scene and the needs of the actors.'[92] Other scenographers prefer to select specific stages in their process to immerse themselves in rehearsal. Both Rui Francisco, O Bando's set designer, and Patrícia Mota, O Teatrão's scenographer, find that they only need to be present in a few specific rehearsals. They do not draw the action (only a few diagrams) or keep a detailed record of the action. Still, they agree that their work stems from it, refusing a pictorial or merely illustrative

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[90] 'Problems are always likely to arise if the actors' task is reduced to that of finding ways to use what has been imposed on them from without, whether by writer, director, or designer, rather than emerging from their own work in developing character and motivation, and using space fully. If objects are seen merely as decorative background to the action, if their presence is controlled by pictorial rather than theatrical imperatives, and if their use does not emerge from the actor's work, then a valuable and potentially very powerful means of expression is being under utilised.' in Gay McAuley. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), p.205.

[91] My translation. Manuel Gusmão, *Uma Razão Dialógica: Ensaios sobre Literatura, a sua Experiência do Humano e a sua Teoria*. (Lisboa: Edições Avante!, 2011), p. 381.

[92] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.157.

scenography. Consequently, it is not necessarily the physical presence of the scenographer in rehearsal which guaranties the scenography's capacity to grow with, from and towards other dramaturgical elements of performance. Rather, what assures it is the scenographer's willingness to see it as a growing network of communications where some lines of dialogue are developed and some are lost:

> the production process itself is a continuos saying, unsaying and resaying of the said. Some of what is said is dropped in the middle of the game; some of it gets lost and is never recalled. The sincerity of saying is the attribute of a designer and, in its transparency, it is also a scandal; we can call it, 'a scandal of scenography'.[93]

The shared experience of trial and error, common to theatrical rehearsal, is ideally developed in an atmosphere of trust and results in the development of an artistic intimacy specific to a particular production. Creating, in theatre, is fundamentally an act of violence, of of revolt. It breaks established boundaries, expanding the creator's and the spectator's preconceptions, responding to a single authority, that of the work of art itself. The space of performance grows from this weaving of boundaries between scenography and all other dramaturgical components.[94] So the question arises: who authors the scenography?

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[93] Lilja Blumenfeld, 'From Hamlet with Love: A Letter to the Other' in Christine White (ed.). *Directors and Designers*. (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), p.248-249.

[94] 'To be successful the boundaries between director and scenographer have to be subtly interwoven, so that they are invisible to the spectator. These boundaries are greatly affected by the use of the dramatic space. In a truly fruitful and collaborative creation the scenographer works alongside the director to make the space speak through the performers.' in Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p.125.

Authorship.

Theatre credits are not always an accurate representation of the collaborative structure of a production.[95] The attribution of a particular work to an individual artist is especially unreliable in what concerns theatrical collaborators. Authoring implies the creation of original work which can be circumscribed within its context. Only by identifying the source of creation can we accurately recognise the author amongst others. In theatre, as a collective work of art where each participant has its own specific purpose and interpretation, there is a wide range of creation which is authored by all involved. In fact, it is from this middle ground that the work grows into a fully developed work of theatre art. Blurring the boundaries of artistic intervention results in a fully integrated piece which, when offered to an audience, can speak for itself.

The scenographer is, of course, an author of scenography. But as we define scenography as a wider and wider concept, which includes not only the design of space and costume, but also of gestuality or movement, authorship becomes more and more difficult to attribute to the one identified in the credit sheet as the scenographer. Ironically, the wider the concept of scenography is, the more it touches within the theatre work, the more the scenographer reaches towards the performative, the more will eventually either share authorship or have to assume the role conventionally held by other creatives.

In scenography, there is simultaneously a layer of interpretation and a layer of creation of fully original work. The scenographer will move from one to the other as the interpretation of the text or research leads the imagination to the creation of concepts for the performance space, objects or costumes. Payne goes further:

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[95] My translation: 'There are shows in which sets are essential e almost more important than directing actors, on another costumes can be the most important element. Therefore that classical order with the director first, then the set designer, the costume designer and so on, seems to me it is not true to reality' Vera Castro. *O Papel da Segunda Pele*. (Lisboa: Babel, 2010), p. 136.

the scenographer (...) is always engaged in a form of research that in many ways resembles scholarship; he is not, usually, creating something completely new and original on his own. He is, in fact, an interpretative artist whose product depends largely on how, successful he is in digging out meanings and information the playwright has hidden in his work and may even be unaware that he did so.[96]

Here Payne describes a scenographer as an archeologist, finding and relating diverse pieces of information, translating them into a spatial or pictorial language. This seems to be a passive understanding of the profession. In reality, more and more often, scenography has become the motor behind a production, and the scenographer is not the interpreter of signs but rather their creator. The scenographic image, as described earlier[97], is now recognised as producer of meaning and inductive to the development of the dramaturgy. Christine White explains how this shift in the significance of scenography happens:

(...) the scenographic team has become the auteur because of changes in the means of production; the specialist departments in the theatre; the importance of image to convey meaning and the involvement of the audience as maker of meaning. These modes of production brought about by the changes in technology have facilitated a rise in the presence and significance of scenography as part of a new text which we could call the 'performance text or dramatic text'.[98]

Contemporary scenographers therefore accumulate the capacity of interpretation of the written dramaturgy with the creation of original scenographic elements which extend, suggest and create the script for performance. Because the scenographer walks the

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[96] Darwin Reid Payne. *The Scenographic Imagination*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.114.

[97] See Part III, Chapter 2, Section1.

[98] 'The Changing Scenographic Aesthetic.' *Scenography International*, vol. 1, http://www.iar.unicamp.br/lab/luz/ld/C%EAnica/Artigos/The%20Changing%20Scenographic%20Aesthetic.pdf, (accessed February 2013).

line between space, form and text, they are performers, dramaturge and eventually director. But 'within the mystery of the production process, the designer is always masked; the designer is a performer, but a veiled performer of backstage.'[99] The scenographer shares with the performers and director the responsibility of interpretation of the dramaturge's words without exposing itself to an audience. The scenographers' presence is felt through visual-spatial materials.

In some cases, the scenographer assumes, up to a point, the role of the dramaturge. As definitions of both dramaturgy and scenography develop to include devised processes of creation, the scenographer finds itself making decisions which are conventionally attributed to the dramaturge. When the dramatic text is produced in isolation and establishes itself as the starting point for a production, the dramaturge can be seen as the theatrical author par excellence. In reality, 'the act of writing is the quintessential expression of authorship: a solitary creative act that commits to paper one vision of the show-to-be, excluding alternative visions.'[100] In devising, the 'intimate dramaturge'[101] authorship is more difficult to determine and can even become irrelevant to both the participants and their spectators. The scenographer working also from rehearsal is asked to be able to react to performers and director, designing through and with their

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[99] Lilja Blumenfeld, 'From Hamlet with Love: A Letter to the Other' in Christine White (ed.). *Directors and Designers*. (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), p.253.

[100] Alex Mermikides 'Forced Entertainment, The Anti-Theatrical Director' in Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (ed). *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes*. (Machester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p.115.

[101] 'The intimate dramaturge is by no means a guardian of predetermined decisions or assumptions about the material, instead she discovers in 'real time' what may be possible and important for the performance as well as for everyone involved. (...) the dramaturge's contribution involves observing the different (invisible?) journeys and intentions that run through collaborative processes.' in Synne K. Behrndt. 'The Dramaturg as Collaborator: Process and Proximity', 2008, www.tau.ac.il/~dramatur/docs/Paper%20-%20Behrndt30.doc, (accessed April 2013).

improvisations. As we have seen before[102] the scenographer working in rehearsal is the scenography's first spectator. But this is a special spectator, one who has to be able to 'shift perspective and be able to gain another point of view within an existing point of view which remains valuable; to be able to shift and move between radically different ideas and perspectives' [103] and 'to become absorbed yet to be able to regain a different perspective on what is going on is naturally a key dramaturgical responsibility.'[104]

Similarly, 'if the ultimate purpose of directing is one of design, putting all the pieces of a production (actors included) together, then a designer who understands directing can also fashion and guide the production into its final form.'[105] This approach is fully integrated in the work of O Bando. João Brites, their director, comes from a visual arts background and his spatial analysis and intuition is often at the basis of their productions. In this case, it is the director who has qualities usually attributed to the scenographer, but it is their integration, not the source, which characterises the collective's performances. Pamela Howard's work is a good example of the opposite move: of scenographers towards directing. She expanded the definition of scenography to first include the performers as part of the scenographic image (constituted by a succession of groupings of characters in costume)[106], and then music, as the originator of movement and therefore transition in time and space.[107] Scenographic composition, defined in this way, is very close to directorial work.

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[102] See Part III, Chapter 1.

[103] Synne K. Behrndt. 'The Dramaturg as Collaborator: Process and Proximity', 2008, www.tau.ac.il/~dramatur/docs/Paper%20-%20Behrndt30.doc, (accessed April 2013).

[104] Ibidem.

[105]Charles Erven, 'Hand in Glove: the Designer as Director as Designer' in Christine White (ed.). *Directors and Designers*. (Bristol: Intellect, 2009), p.25.

[106] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), p. 156.

[107] See Part III, Chapter 3 *Transitioning*.

Considering this expanded definition of their field of work, scenographers have the option to assume responsibility and authorship of the whole production or to share it according to the needs of the creative process. In sharing authorship, the scenographer is not relinquishing professional or artistic authority, but rather is allowing scenography to fully develop its   connective characteristics, serving as a building structure for a performance. In the end, 'a collective is not the negation of the individuals of which it's composed.'[108]

Style.

Sharifi, as seen above, argues that processes of collaboration help determine the performance's format.[109] Practice transpires into form and influences scenographic style. Considering style as 'a distinctive appearance, typically determined by the principles according to which something is designed'[110] and following on previous descriptions of scenographic authorship, I propose that style, in scenography, is invariably linked with its processes of collaboration. Even if we regard imagination and technique as the point of departure of a scenography, it is through operations of collaboration that it comes to maturity. As we have seen, variables such as conditions of collaboration or processes of communication influence it, impacting on the final outcome. It is the scenographer's (and her collaborators') understanding of the discipline and of the reach of her involvement in the practice which will finally impress on the spectators:

> What you do in rehearsal is visible in the product. The quality of the time spent together is
> visible. The chief ingredient in rehearsal is real, personal interest. And interest is one of the

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[108] David Williams. *Collaborative Theatre: the Théâtre du Soleil sourcebook*. (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 61.

[109] Parjad Sharifi. 'Bioscenography: Towards the Scenography of Non-Representation'. in *Performance II.* Oxford: Interdisciplinary Press, 2012, (accessed March 2013).

[110] Angus Stevenson. *Oxford Dictionary of English*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

few components in theatre that has absolutely nothing to do with artifice. You cannot fake interest.[111]

In Teatro das Marionetas do Porto, collaboration stems from a common training in object and puppet manipulation. Their ability to share a single marionette's manipulation has produced a particular style of scenography (and performance) where a character is presented to the spectators via multiple visual sources[112]. This division allows all performers to contribute to all characters which, in turn, are created from an addition of the performers' underscores and scenographic ideas. Characters are understood as a single but complex entity. The scenographer designs them according to both an visual take on the production and a manipulation technique. This technique needs to be meaningful in itself as it portrays the character's kinaesthetics. Manipulation is not a technical necessity but another agent of scenographic characterisation which is fully developed in rehearsal as it is in the workshop. TMP's scenographic 'distinctive appearance' is therefore defined by principles of collaboration such as shared manipulation and multiple source characters. These principles structure the work developed by the scenographer, creating a framework for a specific style.[113]

This chapter examined the practice of the scenographer from the point of view of its structures of collaboration and imagination. It offered some conclusions on how the methodologies of scenographic creation were used in the examples researched in the second part of this study (Part II: *Observing Practice*). Touching on apparently diverse concepts, such as intimacy and authority, or the creation through absence, this chapter underlined the importance of collaboration in the creative process of the scenographer. Methods, types and mediums of collaboration condition not only the practice but the

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[111] Anne Bogart. *A Director Prepares: Seven Essays on Art and Theatre*. (London: Routledge, 2001), p.120.

[112] See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 2: *Manipulating*.

[113] See Part III, Chapter 3, Sections 1 and 2.

style of the work produced. What is more, the chapter concludes that the scenographer's work relishes in this collaboration, growing from it. As Pamela Howard puts it:

> collaboration is more than an ideal — it is the most important creative force that enables ideas to be discussed and battled for and eventually to be coherently realized. (...) Collaboration is the battle for harmony on the stage, in which all the players share and seek contributions from each other in order to gain strength through unity.[114]

The next chapter analyses possible relationships between the scenographic works researched and their respective creative processes. It introduces the concept of *performed scenography* as a specific aspect of Portuguese contemporary scenography in theatre.

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[114] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxford: Routledge, 2009), p.124.

Chapter 3

PERFORMED SCENOGRAPHY

This chapter analyses possible relationships between the scenographic works analysed in the previous chapter and their respective creative processes. After looking at the scenographers' perception of his audience and describing the structures of collaboration in place and its consequences and influences in the scenographer's creative process, methods and practices, this final chapter puts forward the idea of *performed scenography* as the basis for characterising scenography in Portuguese children's theatre. The chapter is divided into four sections and results from a reflection on the work presented in Part II. Each section proposes a different aspect of performed scenography. It uses Joslin McKinney's grammar of scenographic exchange[1] and its distinction between scenographic material, scenographic construction and scenographic action. Action, for Mckinney, is the experience which 'stimulate in viewers experiences of iteration, intervention, transformation or disruption between the scenography and other aspects'[2] of a performance. I will look at ways this scenographic action emerges in performance, using examples from the analysed shows, and giving particular emphasis to the relationship between performers and scenographic components.

The first section, *Inhabiting,* describes practices of occupation or inhabitation of scenery as well as of operation of scenic materials directly by the performers, which provoke development in the space and time of performance. The second, *Manipulating,* takes the concept of operation further by introducing the intention of performers in giving life to or creating characters from scenic materials. It advances the idea of puppets

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[1] Joslin Mckinney. 'The Nature of Communication Between Scenography and Its Audiences', (PhD Thesis, The University of Leeds, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.25-26.

[2] Ibidem.

or marionettes as material characters, with specific capacities for inhabiting the space of performance, through performers' manipulation. The third section, *Transitioning*, explores the moments and sequences of metamorphosis in performance which reorder the relationships between the scenographic and performers. These moments can make the time of performance apparent, by showing a progression in the performance space. Here examples of transition in light and sound are particularly expressive. Finally, the fourth, *Evoking*, describes ways the scenographic can show connections between what is being seen and heard and what is beyond the space of performance. It analyses examples of how it summons up and suggests meaning from the exploration of everyday materials brought into performance.

I argue that performed scenography is manipulated and relies on manipulation, dependent on the performer's actions and body but simultaneously changes them, contributing to the development of a spatial dramaturgy defined by both scenographic materials and the performers' movements. I also argue that the examples studied, in particular those followed from production to opening, establish a link between the scenographer's creative process (imagination, methods of creation, structures and conditions of collaboration), his views on his audience and the generation of a scenography. *Performed scenography*, a scenography that looks to the performer as its principal partner in action, characterises Portuguese scenography in theatre for children, and it is the result of its methodologies and practices. The concept of performed scenography results from the process by which performable is made. Therefore, conditions of collaboration, and the formal structure of a theatrical team during creation determine whether scenography is able to become part of the development of the mise-en-scène. If we accept the idea of a scene as a machine for performance, as Appia understood it[3], and

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[3] Chris Baugh. *Theatre, Performance and Technology: the Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century.* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 46-47.

we take it further drawing on Christopher Baugh[4], rehearsal is the process of constructing a scene machine which reflects all the intervening theatrical components and the method by which they are connected and transform each other in performance. As such, performance is a reflection of this process, and more specifically, scenography is only performable if the dialogue with the performer, with light, and with sound designs, is started in rehearsal. This is only possible if the scenographer is allowed to cross the conventional boundaries of her professional status in the rehearsal room, that is, if she is allowed to include movement, action, intent, tension and repose (verbs traditionally linked with interpretation or staging) as part of her tools. What is more, if she is allowed to address performers as partners in the creation of the scenography. Brecht and Caspar Neher's *buhnenbauer*[5] is clear in establishing 'scenography as an act of performance: as a combination of thinking and its associated active intervention'[6], bounding its practice with the ability to interfere in rehearsal as part of a trial and error creative process. This idea invalidates the conventional distribution of roles in theatrical practice, as the scenographer needs to be able to address all aspects of performance. As a consequence, collaboration etiquette rests on the performance work itself, rather than on a pre-defined set of rules.

By linking examples of *performed scenography*, with their respective conditions of collaboration and particularly with the practices of collaboration which originated them, we are able to understand how scenographic performativity was generated and draw conclusions as to how conditions of practice influence, not only the scenographer's creative process, but also the mise-en-scène.

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[4] *Theatre, Performance and Technology: the Development of Scenography in the Twentieth Century.* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 74-75.

[5] Idem, p. 76.

[6] Ibidem.

Section 1

Inhabiting: Presence, Reference and Occupation.

Scenography can be performed primarily through the occupation of scenery by the performer's actions, body and gesture creating an organised connected system of inhabitation. As the performer impress change on the space of performance, it also changes the performer, by regulating his body in action.[7] Scenography which has been performed has therefore been transformed in its meaning, its physical qualities, or its placing in space and in time of performance. In, *Inhabiting*, I look at transformation made happen by presence (1), by reference (2) or by occupation (3). These three processes can happen either in sequence or separately.

Firstly (1), when a performer steps onto the performance space, his simple presence modifies the scenographic materials which constitute it. His body shape, the type of movement and the space which, at each point in his progression, is left between himself and the scenography, are enough to bring it to the forefront of the performance. From the point of view of the body moving through it, space is apprehended in various ways, 'such as the 'kinaesthetic' (sense of movement through muscular effort) and the 'proxemic' (pertaining to distances between people) and the 'haptic' (understanding through sense of touch).'[8] A scenography's limits, qualities and development are seen through the presence of the performer, even if it is visually apprehended at a glance at the start of performance. Scenography establishes

> patterns of movement [which] provide actors with 'reference points and orientation in space'
> and provide spectators with a sense of the development of a character or itinerary of a

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[7] João de Lima Mendes Ribeiro. 'Arquitectura e Espaço Cénico: um Percurso Biográfico', (PhD Thesis, University of Coimbra, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.291.

[8] Joslin Mckinney and Philip Butterworth. *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.7.

performer which is 'inscribed in space as much as space is inscribed in them'. (...) Behind much of the work that represents developments in scenographic thinking is the concept of space as a dynamic and creative force and the reciprocal action between stage space and performing bodies and stage space and the objects contained within it.[9]

In *Ainda Não é o Fim*, the space for the performance was slowly configured by the performers' entrance. In a darkened square, where even the street lighting was off, it were their shadows against the very dim light of some tents that marked the beginning of performance.

Actress Sara de Castro in *Ainda Não é o Fim*, O Bando, opening night, Palmela. Photo by Filipa Malva.

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[9] Joslin Mckinney and Philip Butterworth. *The Cambridge Introduction to Scenography*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.124.

Even if we could hardly distinguish body from shadow, it was their progress in space to gather into three groups at the corners of the stage that allowed us to understand any materials or constructions as part of the scenography. This site-specific presentational space could easily had been read as just another construction site. The simple, but strong, presence of performers, and their purposeful motion towards a specific position, created the tension needed to indicate the start of performance. They indicated their characters' starting point in space, crucial to its evolution along the time of performance. Their presence and motion energised materials, creating action within the scenographic.

Secondly (2), the performer may refer to the scenographic[10] making it present within his actions. This reference, gestural or verbal, focuses attention on a specific aspect of the scenography which in turn provides visual context to the action.[11] These references, used throughout performance, can create a conceptual map of a specific characters' view of the space it occupies. It complements physical occupation or it can counteract it. For example, a performer may choose to physically avoid a part of a scenography while verbally and gesturally describing its qualities. In this case the scenography is made from the addition of what is seen with what is described. In *A Biblioteca Russa*, Pedro Lamas' character, the Russian library mouse, uses speech and gesture to direct our attention towards a space in the distance. Behind the performance space he uses, there was a white room. This abstract section of the scenography was characterised through his tales of a

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[10] later in this chapter, section 4, I will look at the ability of performers to evoke contexts beyond the space of performance, expanding the fictional space and time. In this case, scenographic materials can establish links to what is not on stage.

[11] the connection between scenography and the performative gesture is explained by D'Arcy as 'the scenography is initiated by a performative gesture, a bodily movement giving words, things, images, lighting and performers a space where they can be animated, and allowed to come alive.' Eamon D'Arcy. 'Scenography from the Inside'. (http://www.academia.edu/2760603/Scenography_from_the_Inside, accessed March 2013).

laboratory were his nephew worked and his repetitive gesturing towards it. Here, his gestures were supported by a piece of scenery, placed down stage left. This piece enhanced the purpose of his actions, working in consequence with his verbal references. Once the performance moved into the laboratory, its purpose and its possibilities in action were already established.
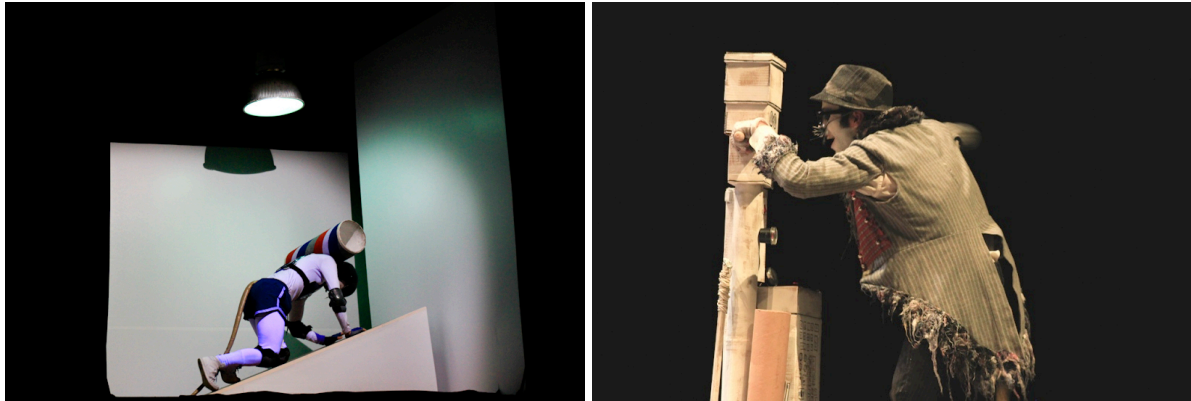
On the right, actor Pedro Lamas describing the laboratory. On the left, later in performance, actor Luis Eiras in the mouse's laboratory. *A Biblioteca Russa*, O Teatrão, Coimbra. Photo by O Teatrão.

The last process (3) refers to the occupation of scenographic materials by the performer's body. Different from presence, occupation introduces the variable of transformation of the scenographic by direct intervention of touch or the transference of trace. Inevitably, a performer's occupation of scenographic materials transforms them despite the fact there may not be any intention to control them.[12] Along with costume, touch animates scenographic materials, be it fabric or other. Costume clothes the performer and simultaneously it is shaped by him. A costume's occupation by the performer's body, put into action, is a costume which has been inhabited and consequently performed. In addition, performers feel taken over by a costume, creating an interactive relationship, both physical and psychological, which affects performative and

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[12] later in this chapter, section 2, I will look at possibilities of transformation through touch which implicate the intention to manipulate, to make manifest or to transition.

scenographic action.[13] When costumes were introduced to the rehearsals of *A Biblioteca Russa,* performers were given a prosthetics tail to work with. Their *kinesphere*[14] was immediately altered as they were asked not only to modify their movements, but to incorporate it. Since the tail was made from soft materials, and had no supporting structure, it was particularly difficult to control. Without the performer's actions it carried no significance other than the immediate illustration of a mouse's tail. Its overt handling, individually and collectively, created a bond between characters (and performers) identifying them as a particular group with human and mice qualities. Even though the tail was introduced late in the rehearsal process, this costume detail put into action was in turn responsible for the development of the performers' understanding of their characters.

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[13] Jessica Bugg explores this relationship further. In her research she found 'the embodied experience of wearing clearly effected different respondents in different ways however there were clear areas of shared emotional and haptic experience of wearing clothing sometimes across the respondents and sometimes in relation to particular age groups or sexes. The most common emotional associations and retelling of embodied experience were in relation to comfortable clothing, restrictive clothing, movement and freedom and the need to express personal identity or a group or sub cultural identity through clothing. (...) The findings suggest that the physical and emotional narratives were clearly communicated to the performer and she demonstrated this both in her physical and verbal response.' in Jessica Bugg. 'Emotion and Memory: Clothing the Body as Performance' in *Performance II.* (Oxford: Interdisciplinary Press, 2012, accessed March 2013).

[14] The kinesphere is the shape of our bodies and the surrounding space assigned to those bodies by ourselves, always, of course, within the limits and dictates of our time and culture. (...) The costume designer either retains that kinesphere or alters it. The alteration might be dictated in part by the time and culture of the production. It might also be dictated by the artistic statement of the costumer in collaboration with the artistic ideals of the director. The shape of the kinesphere is crucial, for it may alter intrinsic energy or energy required for movement in space.' in August W. Staub. 'The Director, the Scenographers and the Issue of Theatrical Energy', *Theatre Arts Journal: Studies in Scenography and Performance,* vol. 1, Fall 2009, (http://www.taj.tau.ac.il/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6&Itemid=3, accessed March 2013), p.85-56.

A Biblioteca Russa, O Teatrão, Coimbra. Photo by O Teatrão.

Similarly, the occupation of space of performance is perhaps the most clear process of inhabitation. Through either touch or the transference of trace, the performer settles into his performative environment. Here I look only at the act of inhabiting, through the connection with an environment over a period of time, eventually leaving evidence of this occupation. In a way, other processes of performing scenography (manipulating, transitioning, evoking) will leave multiple traces. Nevertheless, to inhabit through occupation refers to the foundation of all actions: that of recognising, touching and abandoning. This finds examples in scenery, a door which is left open is a testimony of a performer walking through it; in costume, an abandoned coat over a chair's back; and, finally, in objects or props. The repetition of an action can leave similar vestiges behind, which ultimately, if left on stage, become itself the representation of said action. In *Ainda Não é o Fim,* actors performed a ritual at each corner of the stage which marked a death and burial, depicted by a bunch of flowers in a bucket. With each scene, performers adjusted their movements to a different side of the triangular stage. Its geometry,

introduced at the beginning of the production process, marked every aspect of rehearsal, creating a clear pause at the end of each side of the triangle, a pause needed to develop the idea of ritualised movement. After the first two rituals, the bucket, evidences or traces of a specific action, signalised the performance space's inhabitation process. What is more, their repetition announced the possibility that the performer's actions would continue long after the show had finished. On the contrary, in *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*, with the the revealing of traces seen in the final scene, each scenographic material was used and discarded to announce the end of performance and of the tale. As a consequence of rehearsal, where a multitude of found objects created a link between the scenographer's thought process and the performer's, these objects cluttered the performance space, abandoned where action had finished, creating a trace of the performers' progress. One of the traces was a chalkline on the floor, drawn at the beginning of performance and erased by successive dragging feet. These literally marked the inhabitation of the scenography.

On the left, corner of triangular stage after act 1, *Ainda Não é o Fim*, O Bando, Palmela city centre. Photo by O Bando. On the right, actor Ricardo Correia in the final scene of *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*, Teatro Académico Gil Vicente, Coimbra.

Therefore, to inhabit a scenography may be understood as the process of introducing presence, reference through speech or gesture, and finally to occupy through touch, leaving multiple traces of actions performed. As Gay McAuley explains, 'it is through the agency of the actor that objects are brought to the attention of the audience, and it is the actor who creates the mobility that is characteristic of the theatrical function of the object: the actor can, with a gesture or an act, transform'.[15] To inhabit, to dwell or to live in generates a performative bond, more or less visible, between the performer and his performance environment, scenery, costume and object, structuring a visual-spatial dramaturgy and placing his actions within a specific context.[16] Eventually the transference is complete when performers become as inhabited by scenography as scenography is by them. As Bert O. States explains, 'in the graphic economy of theatre symbolism, rooms, like all images, must eventually justify their presence: they must inhabit the people who inhabit them.'[17]

A specific example of inhabitation can be found in the use of digital scenography. The possibilities of interaction between the analogue environment of the stage and live performance and the imagery projected into it, pose additional questions. It is easy to imagine that the performer's presence against a digital background, transforms it, if

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[15] *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre.* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), p.91.

[16] Payne agrees that 'most dramatic characters live in spaces thus established. They reflect the hypothesis that a person who lives in a particular place for a period of time creates, although unconscious of its happening, a highly distinctive and personal environment. The resulting space is slow in evolution, however, and overall effect is primarily accumulative in nature, not, as stated before, consciously planned.' Darwin Reid Payne. *The Scenographic Imagination.* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.15.

[17] *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: on the Phenomenology of Theater.* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 46.

nothing else, for the immediate contrast between his three dimensions, and his shadow, and a flat screen. This contrast is what performers have to engage with if there is to be any kind of performative dialogue.

Actor Rui Queiroz de Matos in *O Senhor Hic*, Teatro de Marionetas do Porto, Teatro do Campo Alegre, Porto. Photos by TMP.

Inversely, the performer's presence can also be multiplied by projection, expanding his presence by a change in scale or in numbers. In *O Senhor Hic* performers found multiple strategies for building this dialogue: in a bird scene the projected image multiplies the number of birds handled by the actor, responding to his cries; in a motorcycle scene, the screen provides a dislocated background for the ride. Connected visually — the first, through the overlapping of the live performer onto the screen, using his shadow to multiply the presence of the marionette bird; the second, through the conceptual link between an object, bike, and its possible context, road — the live action and the digital scenography integrated and expanded each other.

Similarly, a performer's reference to a digital scenography, which can be either rehearsed and synchronised or improvised, through gesture or speech, expands the imagery, establishing a link in meaning between his actions and what is on screen. As Mendes Ribeiro puts it:

> video projections open themselves up to the amplification of the characters' mental theatre as well as to the duplication of the performers' bodies, in complex games of scale and tension between living body and its reflected image, allowing also the multiplication of perspectives of a score.[18]

Rehearsals of *O Senhor Hic*, in the presence of the digital and sound artists enabled performers to create a bond with the emerging digital scenography, influencing its development and addressing it as a character in the story. In two scenes, speech and gesture were fundamental in connecting the scenography and action. In the first, the marionette describes his town while looking at a bird's-eye view of it on the screen. Even though the marionette and his home were three-dimensional, there were common visual

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[18] My translation. João de Lima Mendes Ribeiro. 'Arquitectura e Espaço Cénico: um Percurso Biográfico' (PhD Thesis, University of Coimbra, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author.), p. 361.

elements in both scenographic materials to realise this cohesion. Nonetheless, it was the spoken link which was strongest, moving his subsequent actions into a wider environment. In the second, a scene made for pause and reflection, the performer moves around the gauze screen where Senhor Hic's character floats. Physical laws did not seem to apply to either of them and tension between live and digital rested solely on gestural reference existing between them.

Actress Sara Henriques in *O Senhor Hic*, Teatro de Marionetas do Porto, Teatro do Campo Alegre, Porto.

Finally, the use of digital images and respective projection techniques lends a new immersive quality to scenography. In performances where the immersion of the performer's body is enhanced, his body is absorbed by the scenography in such a way it may be seen as a scenographic material. Reynolds definition of 'scenographic body'[19] establishes a direct connection between the investigation of the performer's body of its environment, or inhabitation, and the potential for his body to become environment. In this process, occupation of a scenography through movement and action can transform, not only the scenography, but also the performer's body to the point they are, for a moment, expressions of each other. The gauze screen used in *O Senhor Hic* obscured the performers' bodies behind a screen of light and shadow, transporting them into the scenography. Costume was an extension of the projected images and allowed them to play at the frontier between the three and two dimensional. Performers belonged, for the moment of action, to the scenographic. Inhabiting it and consequently being absorbed by it.

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[19] 'it is the inhabitation of the stage environment - the inseparability of the movement from the place that the movement is in. (...) the performer's body is capable of investigation beyond the limitations of the intellect. The body can investigate an environment, and ultimately, serve as a complete demonstration of an environment through movement alone.(...) However, the character is still on the stage; they cannot be dissolved entirely, but only absorbed into the environment, to become a scenographic element. Scenographic acting, therefore, can be described as the ability to perform in, and transition between, playing the character in the stage environment (...). When the body becomes primarily an expression of the environment, the point at which the scenographic is produced has been reached. (...) as the scenographic body emerges, the actor takes on the properties of an object.' in James Reynolds. 'Acting with Puppets and Objects Representation and perception in Robert Lepage's The Far Side of the Moon'. (*Performance Research,* vol. 12, no. 4, 2007), p.132–142.

Actress Sara Henriques in *O Senhor Hic*, Teatro de Marionetas do Porto, Teatro do Campo Alegre, Porto.

Here *inhabiting* as an aspect of performed scenography becomes *manipulating*. The performers' intention to transform scenographic materials and its organisation, scenographic construction, modulating them with and into action, develops the performative relationship between performer and scenography. It suggests the intention to transform at will, not only to occupy or create a presence superimposed on scenographic materials, but more precisely to operate them in action. The next section will look at ways this has been achieved in the analysed performances.

Section 2

Manipulating: Animation, Extension and Constriction.

This section develops the concept of *performed scenography* further by introducing the intention of performers to control, operate and, eventually, animate scenographic materials. On the one side, (1) it looks at puppetry as an example of manipulation of the scenographic. It explores possible connections between scenography and puppetry and advances the idea of puppets or marionettes as scenographic performers that can assume numerous, successive or parallel forms, multiplying the character's presence on stage. It considers the difference between operation and animation in the creation of a puppet or marionette character and its interdependence with the performer's body.

On the other side, (2) it examines additional examples of manipulation of scenographic materials used to physically extend or constrict performers' movements in action. Performing scenography through manipulation implies control over its materials and the intention to animate them into action. It is dependant on body and movement and as such dependant on the physical characteristics of such materials. This develops Reynolds 'scenographic body' described in the previous section[1] where the process of inhabitation of a costume was already discussed. Here, I reinforce the argument that an dressed costume modifies the performers' body and in doing so its movements — costume changes the performer as much as he changes a costume. Similarly, the use of objects, conventionally called 'actor's props'[2], as part of a performer's costume adds to its performative possibilities, creating a purposely designed body.

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[1] 'When the body becomes primarily an expression of the environment, the point at which the scenographic is produced has been reached. (...) as the scenographic body emerges, the actor takes on the properties of an object.' James Reynolds. 'Acting with Puppets and Objects Representation and perception in Robert Lepage's The Far Side of the Moon'. *Performance Research,* vol. 12, no. 4, 2007, p.132–142.

[2] props or properties that are portable and directly handled by performers as opposed to larger set properties which are conventionally part of the scenery.

The process by which a sculpture is animated (1), becoming a marionette, starts with the its materiality. Defining its plastic qualities such as weight, size, colour, shape and range of movement, is essential to determine the possibilities of its manipulation in performance. In this interdependence lies the character and interpretative bond between performer and marionette. The dialogue between what is tried out in rehearsal and what is developed in the workshop, often by the same person, puppeteer/puppet-maker, lays the rules for its manipulation and consequently its expressive capabilities. To manipulate is to balance the marionette's physical characteristics with those of the performer while creating, or bringing out, its possibilities for narration. Joel Schechter understands marionettes as sculptures: 'in the puppet theatre sculpture serves a quasi-narrative purpose, if narration is understood as the revelation of an inner world and if we allow the possibility that the narration hinges on and is inspired by the sculpture.'[3]

An operation of scenographic materials involves its movement into position, or even into action, but animation implies the generation of character. For some puppetteers it also implies understanding the movement impulse coming from the puppet itself:

> through their weight, their form and their musical qualities the objects themselves pass on movement impulses to the performers who allow them to resonate within themselves and then return them, intensified, to the objects to allow every possibility contained in them their full expression. (...) This form of object theatre rehabilitates the independence of objects. The rules and gestures of the game find themselves in a mutually respectful exchange, like a spirited dialogue between player/performer and object.[4]

Cinderela, by Teatro de Marionetas do Porto, gathered several examples of animation. Rod puppets were handled horizontally and string marionettes were handled vertically, supported by two long flat set pieces. Puppeteers shared the stage with their puppets. They were in costume and as lit as the marionettes or the scenery. Their

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[3] Joel Schechter. *Popular Theatre: a Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2003), p.46.

[4] Penny Francis. *Puppetry: a Reader in Theatre Practice*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p. 21.

technique included conventional *bunkaru* movements, standing backstage, hidden in shadow, but they also travelled around the performance space, playing with and against the marionettes. The variety of manipulations and created distances between the performer's body and the marionette had consequences to their flow of movement. Each character acquired its particular expressive characteristics, in accordance with their role and the specific point of the narrative. Some were distinguished by its technique: the King, on a string, was restless and imposing, while the Prince, on a rod, was calm and subtle.

The Prince, in *Cinderela*.
Photo by Susana Neves, printed with permission from Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

Others had multiple bodies and techniques, a change in manipulation signifies a change in mood and rhythm. The convention of having a single puppet standing for a single character was challenged and, in the process, the limits of scenography were expanded. Through this modification of the convention of one marionette for one character and the expansion of the traditional manipulation technique where a costume change may imply a change in the puppet's head or body[5], Cinderela was portrayed by multiple marionettes. She started as a small marionette, balancing between her sisters, her movement trapped in a rocking motion: with a single pull, Cinderela moved from one sister to the other, while they alternate insults. Finally, when the evil sisters were rendered unimportant by Cinderela's success with the Prince, they became two flat windows on the set, portrayed by illustrations of the original puppets.

The evil step sisters and the moment when Cinderela gets her crystal slipper, in *Cinderela*.

Photos by Susana Neves, printed with permission from Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

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[5] In the past, 'costume-changing was less common, but heads and bodies were interchangeable and, once a character had left the script, the head might be put onto a different body to represent another character in a later episode.' John McCormick and Bennie Pratasik. *Popular Theatre in Europe, 1800-1914*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p.130.

They are characters, which can, through manipulation, exist as three-dimensional marionette or as part of the painted scenery. Each character evolves to incorporate change in materiality and in manipulation. As a result, the creation of character through manipulation is not dependant on the operation of a single object or sculpture. In fact the manipulation of multiple materials can contribute to the development of a single character. Animation is therefore the association of scenographic materials, objects and/or sculptures, with a specific flow of movement dependant on the performer(s) manipulating them, creating a range of expressions which characterise a character over space and time of performance. This dialogue is found in performance and it has consequences for the construction of the materials to be animated. Finally, the animated marionette is part of the puppeteer's performance, they are an extension of each other's expressions and movements impossible to dissociate in action.

Another example of animation in *Cinderela* was Shirley, the single woman band, who played the motherly characters: the evil stepmother and the fairy godmother. In the first, the performer manipulated a sculpted mirror, directing her lines at it. She created two faces to understand a single character, one scenographic, the other human, both the evil stepmother. In the second, the fairy godmother, she used a pair of goggly eyes, a half-mask to physically transform her. Characters played by Shirley were built from the combination of scenographic materials and performer, as with Cinderela, even if in this case manipulation was resumed to holding and wearing.

Shirley as evil stepmother and as fairy godmother, in *Cinderela*.
Photo by Susana Neves, printed with permission from Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

We find another example of wearing a character in *Cinderela*. Two performers used bird-hats and their own fingers to play a set of two Brazilian birds. They were upset because they wanted to help Cinderella but they did not know how to do it. Their fast paced repetitive movement along the edge of the tallest flat of the set and the discrepancy in scale between their heads and their feet, the performers' fingers, emphasised their nervous nature and characterised them as outsiders to the principal action. Here, as with Shirley, performers wore their puppet, becoming puppets themselves. As Tillis explains, 'the actor may be called a puppet when the actor presents him or herself in such a way that the audience perceives him or her, not only as alive, but also, in whole or in part, as an object.'[6]

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[6] 'Toward an aesthetics of the puppet: Puppetry as a theatrical art'. *Contributions in Drama and Theatre Studies*, no. 47, 1992, (http://www.google.pt/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4uspGC4xM9cC&oi=fnd&pg=PR11&dq=steve+tillis&ots=lxSps-evPR&sig=yvhYm3QgRkTN9dc9yYhRYkkKwHg&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=steve%20tillis&f=false, accessed February 2013), p.20.

The Brazilian birds in *Cinderela*.

Photo by Susana Neves, printed with permission from Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

This last example moves towards another aspect of manipulation: the operation of costume and object as extension or restriction to the performers' movements (2). Differently from the animation of marionettes where materials are sculpted as independent interveners in performance with a specific role, the manipulation of costume or object does not intend to animate sculpture into character, but rather to expand the performer' actions supporting his own creation of character. That is the case in several appearances in *O Senhor Hic,* such as those of Mrs. City, The Doctor, The Twins and The Traffic Policeman.

Mrs. City, The Doctor, The Twins and The Traffic Policeman in *Sr. Hic*.

Photos by Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

Mrs. City was a mysterious character, who said no words, and came on stage to illustrate Mr. Hic's description of his home town. Sara, the performer, balanced a large hat carrying a scaled model of a street scene, while playing a melodica. The winding mechanism of the model allowed her to move it in a circular motion around her head. This object and the instrument conditioned her movements immensely, her presence becoming a feat of equilibrium. Her steadiness and immobility contrasted with the subtle movement of the model which became the centre of the narrative for the remainder of the scene. It brought about a restriction which amplified her actions and their presence. Additionally, the manipulation and the placement of the object (as a headpiece), transformed her actions into more than a straightforward operation of scenographic materials, producing an ensemble of specific qualities, of body and of motion.

Similarly, the other three characters were formed from the interaction of costume and body. As Monks explains,

> costume is that which is perceptually indistinct from the actor's body, and yet something that can be removed. Costume is a body that can be taken off. (...) When we watch a performance, the meanings and functions of costume might move from being a pleasurable spectacle to becoming an element of set design, or a stage prop. Costume does not remain stable or fully knowable, but rather depends on what we see and how we look at what we see.[7]

In *O Senhor Hic*, costume was used as a restriction to the performers' movements that modified their rhythm and their range of action, as it would happen when modifying a marionette's manipulation technique. During rehearsals, performers experimented with several flexible sheets of materials which mimicked the physical behaviour of the fabrics proposed by the costume designer. They rolled themselves in it, testing their capacity for movement. The final materials used, more or less thick, more or less flexible, and their weight influenced manipulation, imposing specific qualities to each character. The Doctor

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[7] Aoife Monks. *The Actor in Costume*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, p.11.

could only move sideways; the Twins could only move together, each performer using one arm but two legs; and the Traffic Policeman's shoulders and arms extended only to the cone which formed its upper body. Since these appeared shortly on stage, it were these formal and motion restrictions which distinguished them, engulfing the performers' body into the scenographic. Here an 'aesthetic body'[8] emerged. This is a body which, as Reynolds' 'scenographic body'[9], is seen as part of the scenographic, connecting historical costuming codes with visual-plastic codes created for a specific performance. When costume is fundamental to character and fuses with the actor's body, it becomes self-expressive, making room to a balanced exchange between action and scenography.

The manipulation of costume and object in *O Senhor Hic* was nonetheless centred on the individual performers, one succeeding another on stage. While TMP chose to apply various manipulation techniques and mediums to performers and marionettes, in the examples found in O Bando's shows, the manipulation of costume or object generated constrictions to action with consequences for all performers and their inhabitation of the performance space. In *Quixote,* Dulcineia, dressed in a white nightgown and with white make-up staggered on stage. After her, the musicians still tuning their instruments wheeled themselves on. Little by little, men and women all dressed in white gowns carrying different kinds of walking aids started to move into the scene. As the music begun, two black dressed singers standing on the tall cubic set gave voice to all characters and with that controlled their movement. On the stage floor below, the performers used crutches and wheel chairs to extend their limbs or to smooth the flow of their movement.

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[8] 'The aesthetic body is (...) a body that is defined by a history of codes, and costumes are permeated by this history (...) After all, clothes that are rarely seen in everyday life can be utterly familiar in stage performance. Furthermore, the aesthetic body can function as part of the design of a production, communicating atmosphere, creating spectacle and sometimes working as a substitute for the set. (...) Aesthetic costuming can also work to render actors scenic objects, a tendency particularly true of the early twentieth-century theatre.' Aoife Monks. *The Actor in Costume.* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.21.

[9] detailed in the previous section.

The height of a crutch made a jump wider and the speed of a wheel chair on the revolving floor made a charge on an enemy faster.

Dulcineia e Teresa and Sancho Pança, *Quixote*. Photo by Ana Teixeira and O Bando.

The extension of a performer's limbs by a crutch makes him puppet-like, changing his natural centre of gravity, his points of connection with the floor and other performers

and consequently the range of movement.[10] The performer is as much conditioned by the crutch as the prop is by the performer. His gestuality is restricted by the addition of this extra steel leg. Nevertheless, the enhanced human body, both super-human and grotesque, exposes the madness, and senselessness, of these characters searching for the illusive D. Quixote.

Another example of manipulation of the scenographic by restricting movement can be found in O Bando's *Ainda Não é o Fim*. In this show, performers were asked to wear horses' harnesses, especially designed to fit their heads. The harnesses were introduced early in rehearsal and adapted to each performer and his movements. A leather artist experimented with different models until movement and object were found to work well together. One of the rehearsal exercises[11] asked performers to move as a group, responding to each other's impulses. With the introduction of the harnesses, they understood their range of movement was limited, and that they were all similarly restrained. These objects materialised a connection between performers. Working in pairs, one handled the reins while the other submitted to them. Reins and harness connected the performers' bodies, linking gesture and motion, while the riding costumes assumed a straight posture. Three pairs of performers revolved around a triangular platform stage. At each vertex, violence within each pair escalated, the harness pulled tighter and tighter, making them shout in despair and pain, until submission of one to the other was complete — only to start the process again, and again. Cyclic symbolic deaths were made visually apparent and constantly present by the scenographic. Even though only one of the two was effectively subjugated, the plastic and visual violence of the props extended to all performers. The leather straps which restricted their faces established a pattern of gesture and a common visuality and placed all characters in the same world of tamed action.

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[10] As it happens with marionettes: 'part of the delight of the marionette dancer is its ability to defy gravity and to demonstrate a capacity to do things that the human performer cannot. John McCormick. *The Victorian Marionette Theatre*. (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2004), p.169.

[11] described in Part II Chapter 2 and in the annex Case Studies Notes, *Ainda Não é o Fim*.

Sara de Castro and Guilherme Noronha, *Ainda Não é o Fim*. On the left, rehearsal photo by Filipa Malva and on the right performance photo by O Bando.

As a whole, the scenographic conditioned interaction, creating a single, multi-membered body, always grimacing, always tense, always restricted. As Reynolds explains, when

> the negotiation between the performers' bodies and scenographic materials is intensified to the extreme, it creates a body which is larger than its presence. Expanded by the scenographic, it effects change in the performance space and triggers the 'scenographic body'.[12]

The influence of costume or object on a performer's behaviour changes his interaction with the performance space by, on the one side, conditioning his bearing,

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[12] James Reynolds. "Acting with Puppets and Objects Representation and perception in Robert Lepage's The Far Side of the Moon'. *Performance Research,* vol. 12, no. 4, 2007, p.132–142.

trajectory and points of contact with the stage[13], and, on the other, visually and gesturally merging the performers' bodies with the scenographic. This incorporation of movement and plasticity creates a body whose action is as relevant to the scenography as is to the *mise-en-scène*. And that is *performed scenography*.

In both instances (1 and 2), the performers' bodies go through the process of performative enhancement while manipulating marionettes and costume/objects. These materials extend their movements beyond its conventional range of physical influence, modifying the appearance of weight, size and shape, and acquiring spatial-plastic qualities associated with the scenographic. This process, restrictive or conducive of movement, enhances the presence of the performer and of his actions, drawing attention to the symbiosis of scenographic material and body. It is in the process of transition between one action and the next, one space and the next, one body and another, that scenography can be seen to be performed. In the next section, I will look at the moments of transition in performance and how these can be controlled and expanded.

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[13] In fact, 'costume often constitutes a kind of traveling scenography, a set reduced to a human scale that moves with the actor.' Patrice Pavis. *Analysing Performance: Theatre, Dance, and Film*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), p.177.

Section 3

Transitioning: Material, Light and Sound.

The third part of *performed* scenography, *Transitioning,* explores the moments and sequences of transformation in performance which reorder the relationships between scenography and performers. These moments, when done in sight of the audience, can make the time of performance apparent, by showing a progression of action in the performance space. Change to scenography can be operated by performers, by light and by sound. It is in transition that the passage of time is experienced and it is another way to perform scenography. Transition structures space and time of performance, marking its rhythm.[1] It is a tool of the mise-en-scène. Transition of scenographic materials imprints movement and intention onto the performance space, expanding its physical boundaries to include its past and its future, that is, it makes time performative. In the previous two sections I looked at how inhabitation and manipulation of scenographic materials, through interaction with performers, changed the performance space. Here I explore the moment of transition, either the physical rearrangement of scenographic materials or the change shaped by light and sound. I use examples of scenographic metamorphosis, either made in real time or pre-programmed, focusing on how scenography can be seen as performative as opposed to representative. I shall look at scenography as a body of materials built for performance.

Even though the capacity for transformation of scenography is also present in inhabitation and in manipulation, the event of transition focuses on the evolution of

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[1] I use Patrice Pavis' concept of rhythm as seen in *Analysing Performance: Theatre, Dance, and Film*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), p.158.

scenographic materials over space and time. What is more, it focus on the *in between:*[2] on the instant between two scenes, or two positions of a chair in space, or between a performer's gesture and the jolt of a platform, or the slow shading of a net by a coloured light, or even the steadily motion of a puppet responding to the first beat of an accordion. Scenographic transition is more than a logistical tool of theatrical transformation, it as the potential for dramaturgical change.[3] The component of *performed scenography* that analyses and exposes time of performance is produced by the speed of performative action which is 'the speed of the actor's body, which means simply that everything that passes in theatre must be *actable*, as opposed to merely speakable.'[4]

An example of transition operated by performers is the work of O Bando with scenic contraptions. 'Scenic contraptions' or 'stage machines'[5] incorporate a succession of clues which provided context for each scene in a performance. They

> are not replicas of a reality where a determined action (or actions) occurs. One can say that only the *sculptoric* effect that those mechanisms can create when in rest has the effect of (...) a stage setting. Once in action, quite the contrary happens: the machines become tools of an expression that attacks, that instead of substituting reality, fights it. Paradoxically, the first objective of that fight is to slow reality down. (...) The stage machines are also the result of

[2] 'we might trace the audience's experience of the production by looking at how meaning happens *in between* the costume and the actor's gestures, or in between the costumed actor and the lights, and so on.' Aoife Monks. *The Actor in Costume*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.6.

[3] 'transformative aspects are easily neglected when scenography is separated from actors and dramaturgy, but when pursuing a close examination of scenography, the potential for transformation seems to be one of its principal aspects. This particular feature, transformability, is furthermore essential when it comes to the dramaturgic function of scenography.' Magdalena Holdar. 'Scenography in Action: Space, Time and Movement in Theatre Productions by Ingmar Bergman' (PhD Thesis, Stockholm University, 2003. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.113.

[4] Bert O. States. *The Pleasure of the Play*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 75-76.

[5] my translation of 'máquinas de cena'. Even though O Bando's publications translate it to 'stage machines', I would like to distinguish it from Christopher Baugh's concept of a stage as a machine which is defined by the interaction of performance and architectural spaces, as opposed to a single piece of scenography placed on a performance space, a scenic contraption.

the conglomeration or of the composition of objects that, when exposed or inactive, resemble *still natures.* They bring with them the image of weapons in rest and they get us closer to the anatomic contemplation of time, of the signs and objectives which freeze it.[6]

Scenic contraptions allow performers to directly exert change on the scenographic and their actions to be connected with scenographic transformation affecting time and space of performance. Having a single object on stage, congregating traces of action and reaction, accumulating functions, allows the memory of those transformations to be present throughout performance, and time and space to be multiple and simultaneous. As Mendes Ribeiro explains:

> another characteristic of these contraptions is the multiplicity and mobility. It consists of the effect of reversibility, that is, the possibility of organisation of space around immobile objects or, inversely, in the dislocation of actors around static objects provoking a reaction of readjustment in the space of performance, in accordance with the needs for action. There is, in this case, a permanent rearrangement of the scene by performers.[7]

In *Quixote,* as in *Afonso Henriques[8],* action revolved around a scenic contraption. In this adaptation, an *opera buffa,* we are told of the journey of Dulcineia to find her lost love, D. Quixote. The fast paced choreography and pitched high voices were in contrast with the monolithic steel set. This steel scenic contraption was embed in a revolving floor, against the bareback wall of the stage. Behind it we could see the stairwell to the dressing rooms, the doors to the workshop and old painted flats from past productions. Its austere look and click-wise rotating movement marked transition between scenes. Whenever the

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[6]António Pinto Ribeiro, 'Stage Machines, War Machines' in *O Bando : máquinas de cena = scene machines.* (Porto: Campo de Letras, 2005), page 13.

[7] 'Arquitectura e Espaço Cénico: um Percurso Biográfico' (PhD Thesis, University of Coimbra, 2008. Unpublished. Used by courtesy of the author), p.281.

[8] discussed in Part II, Chapter 2.

singers seating above the set withdrew from sight, musicians and performers revolved the cube to reveal a new side. By the end of the opera, they had explored all sides of the cube and they had unlocked it, split it into two exposing its interior.
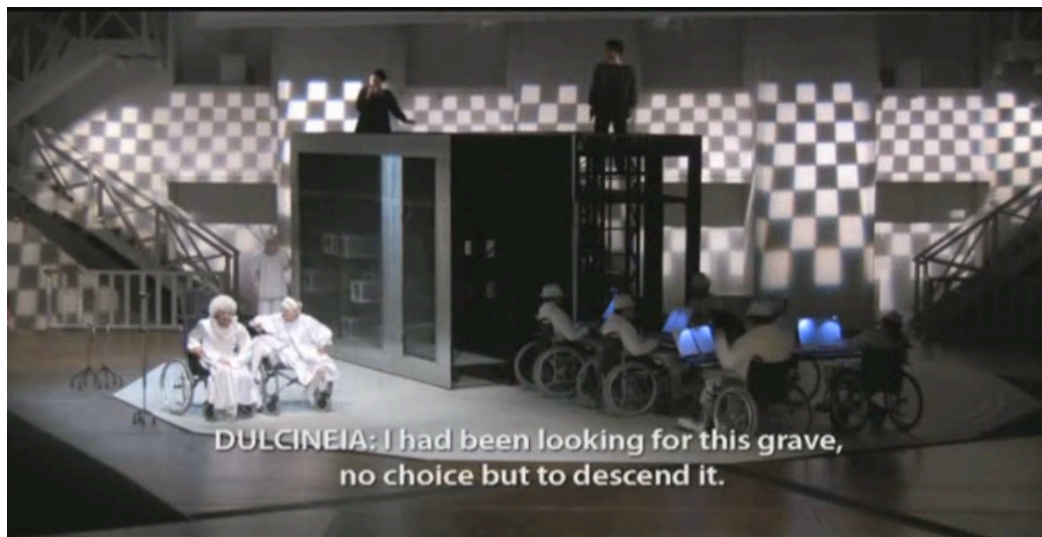
Quixote. Photo frames from online trailer by O Bando.[9]

Scenic contraptions work are centripetal objects. They focus the action on them. When moved they generate ripples of motion accelerating time and modifying surrounding space. Although they inform each stage of performance, it is in transition

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[9] https://vimeo.com/46097874, accessed May 2015.

that they achieve their full scenographic potential since it is in that moment that they absorb the performer's direct action and respond with a mechanical reaction. Over the time of performance, the accumulation of transitions allows us to perceive an evolution which is grounded on both the performers' multiple actions upon the scenography and on the contraptions' mechanical response. These are set in plain view and are a constant visual manifestation of transition. Even though it is through the performers' intervention that the scenic contraption achieves motion, either from a physical impulse or a musical cue, once in motion, the contraption must finish its mechanical purpose. Consequently, once put into motion it stops only when its mechanisms come to a halt. We can then say that scenic contraptions reflect the performers' movements, but they also oppose it. In this tension, happening in the instant of transition, scenography is an act of performance shared between the performer and the scenographic elements.

In *Quixote,* transition is marked by the symbiosis between body and steel. In the first few scenes, transition is initiated by a musician's note, followed by a light brush on the steel walls. As the performance evolves, and the choreography becomes fast paced and urgent, the performers' physical relationship with the steel cube changes. In the palace scene, Dulcineia and Teresa Pança's hostess convinced them to partake of a meal before they were allowed to see D. Quixote. The large steel cube was split in half and opened to reveal two tall doorways and several small drawers. The actors slid their hands through them and pulled them out to use them as steps, benches, and a table for the palace meal.

The palace meal and the island*, Quixote.* Photos by Ana Teixeira and O Bando.

The dinner table was set high above the stage floor making a scene for a balancing meal. The anxious tone of the narrative was clearly shown by their interaction with the scenic contraption: enhancing their speech, they used the steel steps to climb higher than the previous performer, or to make the opponent loose their balance. Opening and closing parts of the contraption, using it as extensions of their movements, pressing their feet, arms and legs against it, performers created a plastic bond with the steel. Later in performance, we saw the last side of this scenic contraption: a forest of rusty steel pillars and beams. Performers pressed against it. It was difficult to distinguish their bodies from the contraptions' components and the white ethereal costumes and make-up design made them look as ghosts going in and out of fortified walls. Behind the thick steel grid, they could hardly move their body. When two actors' crossed paths, they had to jump over and twist around the complex steel shapes. They became integral to the contraption, part of its mechanics. When they moved, the contraption moved, operating a transition in which performance was drawn from the symbiosis of body and scenography. The integration of performer and scenography physically connected two sides of performance into a single body in transition.

How and when scenography transforms itself and the surrounding components of performance, can become central to its aesthetics, as we have seen with O Bando's scenic

contraptions. In *Quixote,* a scenic contraption was modified by the performers' intervention provoking a transition of fictional place and performance in space and time. This transformation was also marked by a development in sound and music. Similarly in *Ainda Não o Fim,* progression over the performance space was always set in motion by the brass band playing live. The performers' cyclical shift across the textured platforms, built in a triangular layout, was initiated by the musicians.

Palmela's Big Band, on the left, and flower bucket set at the platform vertice, on the right. in *Ainda Não é o Fim...* Photo by O Bando.

At the sound of the brass, two performers commenced preparing a ritual: a rope was pulled lifting a guillotine. As it fell, a trap door was opened and a bucket carrying flowers was brought out from under it. Death and burial of each killed son, this transition of scenographic materials obeyed the music, even though it was finished in silence. After each ritual, a performer abandoned the stage moving to a platform behind the audience's seats. The music marked every beginning and, as these moments were repeated over the course of performance, they happened more and more often. The ritual transformed the time of performance by imposing the accelerated repetition of a set of actions. Music was used to signal transition of scenography and these transitions indicated an evolution in fictional and performative time as indicated by the increasingly lesser number of performers on stage. The moments of transition were indicated by a ritual repetition of scenographic transformation, which was triggered by sound and applied by action and gesture. The introduction of music for the transformation of the scenographic imprints this change with a specific tone and pace, visually amplifying the performers' movements and their intentionality. Music also has the ability to prolong the instant of transition as well as to make it recognisable when repeated over the time of performance. By association with gesture and action, music or sound allow performers to explore a single movement over a longer period of time, expanding the moment when scenography is in transformation. As a consequence, its metamorphosis becomes apparent and recognisable as meaningful to the performance, as opposed to a simple logistical scene switch.

In Teatro de Marionetas do Porto's performances, music and sound introduced each character and its specific movement patterns, signalling transition between manipulation techniques as well as scenes.

Cabaret Molotov. Photo by Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

In *Cabaret Molotov,* the musician moved across the stage emphasising the music cue by interacting with the marionettes and performers. Music marked the coming to life of marionettes and the rhythm by which performers manipulated them, as well as the overall rhythm of performance. Transition between scenes and between character appearances was initiated by the music, its speed and tone indicated a change in movement and gesture, a change in technique and expression. As we have seen in previous chapters, the use of live music and sound effects is a common feature of TMP. They use it as a stand-in for a narrator or a commentator, often improvising through the action. The musician establishes the rhythm of the scenes, working in direct and simultaneous

collaboration with the puppeteers. As Schechter describes 'the radicalism of the puppet theatre is further evident in its employment of music as music, as sound production in its own right, operating in its own sphere, parallel to and not governed by the visual theatre.'[10]
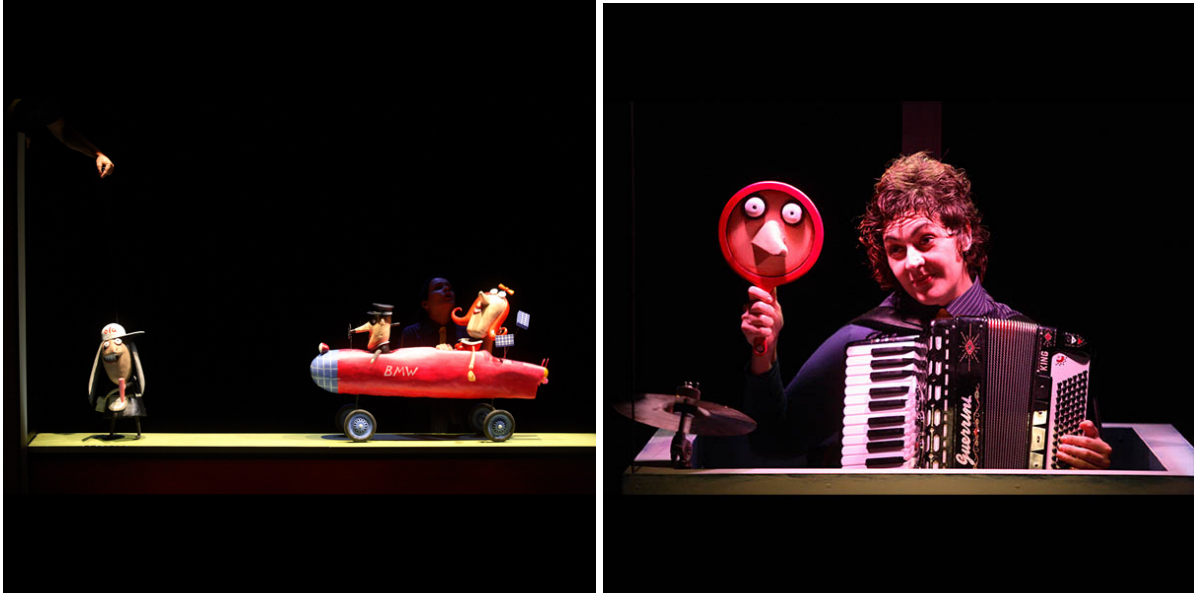
Cinderela. Photo by Susana Neves, printed with permission from Teatro Marionetas do Porto

The specificity of the use of music in marionette theatre is evident in the way it structured action in *Cinderela*. The musician on stage responded to the manipulation in real time, enhancing by intonation and pitch the characters' expressions. The narrative was composed of a subtle interaction between performers, marionette and music. Music was constructed in parallel with the visuality of each scene. In the multiple scenes when Cinderella was trying to get to the ball, the fictional distances between her home and the palace, as well as the velocity of the car carrying her, were conveyed by tone, rhythm and speed of the accordion playing and the repetition in puppet manipulation. In fact, the puppet was almost stationary: moving backward and forward within less than a meter, but it fictionally travelled long distances and different routes. Spatial transition between

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[10] *Popular Theatre: a Sourcebook*. (London: Routledge, 2003), p.45.

different fictional places was suggested by the subtle interaction of manipulation — gesture and movement— and sound. This connection amplifies space as

> the 'material' and 'palpable' gives way to a 'sonorous' world through the reverberation of the sound. This concept of sound carries the image into time and space simultaneously and importantly moves beyond the visual into discursive realms of the sensorium, opening up the relations between the visual and auditory aspects of the image.[11]

The repetition of this interaction signalled multiple transitions. Even though it was at each fictional place that the narrative evolved, it was the moment of transition when music picked up the pace and the marionette fluttered that the fictional geography of the performance was activated. Contrary to *Ainda Não é o Fim* where music allowed performers a ritual deceleration, a fictional pause, for scenographic transition, here music transitioned from time to time and space to space by accelerating the performers and the marionettes' movements. This pause, 'the gap that opens up in the action during each scene is without doubt an invitation to the audience to imagine something, and it is inevitable under the circumstances that an audience will take the music to be the inspiration for its daydreams.'[12]

In the previous examples, transition was operated by intervention of performer, of music or sound, and their association. In *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*, transition of scenographic materials, and in particular a large fishing net, resulted from the combination of off stage operation and lighting.[13]

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[11] Alan Read. *Theatre and Everyday Life: An Ethics of Performance*. (Oxford: Routledge, 1995), p.84.

[12] William Gruber. *Offstage Space, Narrative, and the Theatre of the Imagination*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.72.

[13] see Part II, Chapter 3 for a synopsis and description of this performance.

Technical rehearsal (on the left) and performance photos *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima*. Photos by Filipa Malva and Ana Mendes.

The fishing net object was characterised by an unstable shape, pliable to the performers' intentions only through careful manipulation. Its colour and texture were easily changed by lighting. It took intense manipulation and discipline to learn how to control it instead of being controlled by it. Rehearsals held in a small room did not allow performers to fully understand its possibilities until we moved to the main stage. Similarly, it was only on stage that we realised the potential dialogue between their manipulation and off stage intervention. Nevertheless, it was this flexibility, and the fact that it could be either small enough to fit in a basket or big enough to fill the stage, that made it possible to completely transform the performance space. Even though its original function (an open-meshed material used for holding, catching or entrapping something like fish) was used in performance, the method by which it functioned, and the way it interacted with performers and objects, varied. Rehearsals revealed the possibility to use the net as an active background to action. The dialogue produced between performers' actions and its shape, texture and colour, amplified the scenes' significance, introducing meaningful links between performers' and scenography's movements. As the fishing net enveloped the whole performance space, it could be operated from different positions by the performers and by stage hands. The net was hanged from the theatre grid by seven double pulleys using fishing cables or ropes. Alongside two performers, five stage hands transformed the net's shape, and consequently its texture and colour, into five different fixed positions. In between these positions, which corresponded to five fictional places described by the performers' storytelling, there were various transitional or moving arrangements. It would have been possible to use many more pulleys and ropes and the difficulty rested on the selection of those position, and respective travelling, which were the most relevant for each scene. Transition was performed slowly and steadily, almost imperceptibly to the naked eye, made visible by transformations in lighting and in shape. Contrary to the direct physical manipulation of the net by performers, which marked sections of performance

directly connected with the fictional characters' survival to the storm, these transitions spoke to the characters' tales and memories, evoking distant and imaginary places. The net's slow pace transformation allowed them to introduce a fiction within a fiction, and to take their time in the visual construction of an alternative setting to that of the shipwreck. Lighting controlled the colour, as well as the extension of the net visible to both performers and spectators. Its transition working with the net's movements, created a continuous fluctuation of texture on stage, alternating the exposure or the concealment of those operating the mechanics of the scenography. Lighting hitting the net highlighted some sections while shading others, morphing the scenography.[14] This developed a dialogue between what performers' described and what stage-hands and lighting revealed. This tension of action and scenography, similar to that used in O Bando's scenic contraptions or in the use of live music in TMP, established a feeling of performance length, uninterrupted, scenographic transition which is characteristic of *performed scenography.*

Up to this point I have argued that scenography can be performed by inhabitation, manipulation and transition. Even though the examples described are specific to each method, it is implicit that they can overlap over the course of performance. In the next section, I look at one final aspect of *performed* scenography, evoking, and present examples of how all four actions can work together to generate a meaningful dramaturgy.

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[14] 'Scenography can also contract through the handling of light. A single spotlight might reduce the activated area, thereby concentrating the visual focus to a small part of stage space. When light narrows the visual field to a single point, contraction ceases to be a material fact on the same level as, for example, a platform on the stage. It then becomes a movement comparable to (and conditioned by) expansion, confirming the idea of perpetually morphing scenography' in Magdalena Holdar. 'Scenography in Action: Space, Time and Movement in Theatre Productions by Ingmar Bergman', 2005, http://su.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2:193739, (accessed February 2013), p.48.

Section 4

Evoking: Context, Function and Form.

The final section of *performed scenography* chapter, *Evoking*, describes how scenographic materials can create connections between what is seen, felt and heard on stage and what is beyond the space of performance. It analyses examples of the use of everyday objects in performance and how they can add to a fiction. Here I look at how the stage prop, and the found object, can provide us with examples of the everyday being transformed by performative imagination.

Alan Read in the introduction to *Theatre and Everyday Life* speaks about the co-existence between the everyday and the imagination. He quotes Peter Brook saying that the conventional polarity between these concepts is 'both unhealthy and untrue' and adds that 'if there is coexistence between the imagination and the everyday it is time to discuss that dialetic'.[1] Objects used in performance are one aspect of scenographic research which is largely underdeveloped. Even though they are part of almost all performances and often, along with costumes, the only scenographic element on stage. As Darwin Reid Payne explains,

> the relationship of the stage property to the performer's role is the most overlooked element of directing, acting, and scenography. (...) Properties can be, and often are, the impetus of a thought that cannot be expressed in words, the embodiment of an emotion that cannot be described but can only be demonstrated. Properties are, to be more precise, often "the point" of the scene to which no word or combination of words (...) can add. Moreover, a property can precipitate a major turning point in the development of a plot line or can begin a wholly new direction in a play.[2]

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[1] *Theatre and Everyday Life: an Ethics of Performance*. (London: Routledge, 1993), p.14.

[2] *The Scenographic Imagination*. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1993), p.122.

It is the relationship between performer and object that can indicate a 'new direction in a play'. Even though objects suggest simply by being on stage, it is the interaction with the performer that creates meaning. At times objects can amplify movement, as we have seen in the example of *Quixote*[3]. Other times the performer's movement activates the object beyond its original purpose. It is this back and forth, the performing of scenography, that expands the performance's fictional space. What is interesting about objects is precisely the process by which they can be used and modified by performers. In this regard, everyday objects are especially meaningful as they ask performers to establish a link between the quotidian and the fictional.

Theatrical properties can be purposely built for performance or be ready-made. The first is carefully designed to suit the production; the latter is an everyday object reused for performance. Once we choose to start with an everyday object, we instantly have a multi-layered prop — the first layer being its original design purpose which has the ability to connect our recognition with our imagination. At one specific moment in rehearsal, performers acknowledge its possibility to become something else and this link of imagination allows us to go further in the rehearsal process. Read tells us that

> theatre poaches on everyday life for its content, relationships, humour, surprise, shock, intimacy and voyeurism. It takes for its forms unities of time and place, domestic settings, landscapes and speech patterns that are often identifiable because they are drawn from everyday life, and are celebrated precisely because they are somehow true to that world. [4]

In devising a rehearsal process, objects are chosen by director, scenographer and performers as a way to provoke change and gather ideas related to the task or narrative at hand. In devising,

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[3] section 2 of this chapter.

[4] *Theatre and Everyday Life: an Ethics of Performance.* (London: Routledge, 1993), p.51.

where there may be only a minimal fictional content and where there is no preexistent text to be interpreted and made meaningful, objects have have an even more powerful part to play. The physical presence of the object, its role in defining the performance space and the opportunities it provides to the performers to display different physical skills can be as important as its connotational levels of meaning.[5]

They are often material brainstorming clues, hinting at some intuitive meaning brought out by physical action. Therefore the intention of whoever chose the objects is, more times than not, overlooked or transformed by the performers' interventions. It is then important to notice that objects are always points of compromise between the whole creative team as well as between their own functional and aesthetic qualities and their newly found theatrical condition.

These 'scenographic discoveries', as Pamela Howard puts it, have the ability to imaginatively transform what we assume to be ordinary or commonplace into what can almost be seen as a stroke of (theatrical) magic. It is the fact that it happens before our eyes that makes it fascinating, 'conveying a belief to the audience that two small chairs could stand for a whole neighbourhood'.[6] Differently from magic, it is not the appearing and disappearing that makes it interesting but the fact that an unexpected link has been offered between the scenographic and the dramaturgic. A link which is as suggestive as it is open. Its purpose is to create a possible bridge between fragments of the performance and between the performance and its context. Even if this bridge opens onto a whole different field of meaning.

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[5] Gay McAuley. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.186.

[6] Pamela Howard. *What is Scenography?* (Oxon: Routledge, 2009), pp.102-103.

For Patrice Pavis, 'recycled found objects are borrowed from external reality and used in an aesthetic way within a new environment'.[7] Along with their role in performance, this author considers the original materiality of the objects and the spectators' aesthetic experience in relation to them, dividing them into three categories: visual, olfactory and auditory. He also considers how their grouping or interaction can form a system which functions as a marker for the performance's rhythm: 'in the same way as space, the object frequently comes to represent an integrative system, a focal point or parameter for the rest of the performance; the spectator appreciates it as reference point, a marker between two moments or spaces.'[8]

The performer's experience with everyday or 'recycled found' objects in rehearsal is more complex, as they have to balance their individual with their collective experience of the objects' materiality and that of the narrative being developed, establishing a dialogue which will serve the performance. The experience of everyday objects in rehearsal comes from the connection between an everyday object and its human user. The connection is built through the observation and manipulation of an object's aesthetic and functional qualities. In rehearsal, performers observe, handle and eventually change everyday objects by applying gesture, action and dialogue to that object's original characteristics. Form, colour and texture, are material qualities that enable us to relate to an object and identify it as useful for a particular action or function, or as simply aesthetically pleasing. Function or design purpose, the sound produced by the object and the socio-cultural context it belongs to (for which community and profession it was made for and how it is used) are non-material qualities. They are integral to the object, providing additional information to the performer who can choose to use it as a pretext for the development of the rehearsal.

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[7] *Analysing Performance: Theatre, Dance, and Film*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2003), pp.186-191.

[8] Ibidem.

An object's socio-cultural context is altered the moment the object is brought into rehearsal. Even though performers will associate it with a specific original context, all objects become theatrical once introduced into a presentational space (be it a conventional theatre or not). As Aoife Monks puts it:

> while empirical thinking might have suggested that that the observable qualities of objects are somehow a means to the true, unfortunately the observable qualities of objects invariably become "untrue" when put onstage, are rendered theatrical simply through their inclusion in the frame of the playing area. The artificiality and untruthfulness of theatre may well lead to insight into another set of truths, truths that can only be found in theatre and art generally, but the notion that real objects could preserve their reality when in performance was unsustainable.[9]

Stage properties, or props, are all theatrical, either from their conception or from the moment they are used in a theatrical context. Purposely built props are objects that are by nature made theatrical and as such belong only to a performance context. Even though all objects used in performance carry that memory with them during and after it, built props have no previous context but that of the rehearsal. Differently, toys are a second type of property. As they already belong to a playing context, their aesthetic and functional qualities are defined by the playing itself. As there is no set way to play with a particular toy, it is this act of playing that is of interest to both performers and spectators. Finally, everyday objects are objects made theatrical by the intervention of the performers and the simple fact that they are used in a presentational space. They create a link between the meaning attached to their original context and that developed in performance. They are able to evoke multiple contexts and functions presenting multiple routes of

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[9] *The Actor in Costume.* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p.63.

performativity.[10] In fact, it is often their pre-performance context that suggests meaningful directions to the performers. It is the constant tension between its origin and its newly revealed theatrical condition that offer the performers ways to re-position the narrative. Taking one or more of the material and non-material characteristics listed above as motivation, the performers research the object within the universe proposed by the performance. Their intentions can change with rehearsal time or through the interaction with other performers or members of the creative team. As such the object development into a property is ever evolving until (sometimes while) the performance is presented to an audience.

The process of applying imagination to the everyday can be, as already mentioned, made by gesture, action or dialogue changing the understanding of the objects' original characteristics. The performer, through gesture

> liberates the object from its material function or even replaces the object, creates the idea of the object disconnected from its material reality; the theatre is, thus, able to sunder signifier from signified, showing both as well as the gesture that connects/disconnects the two. (...) A different prop can produce a different gesture that can lead to a different characterization emerging.[11]

We can find various examples of this exploration in *Cinderela* and in *Capuchinho Vermelho XXX* (by Teatro de Marionetas do Porto). In *Cinderela*, when Shirley becomes the fairy godmother, in addition to her plastic googly eyes, she carries a wand. This prop is

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[10] McAuley explains how 'the object is able to function in this way because it is both real and, subject to the theatre's law of denegation, not real. It is double real in that it is first, a real presence in the presentational space and, second, in that it connects actors and spectators to the real world beyond the theatre through its action force and all the connotations deriving from its referential functions.' in *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.181.

[11] Gay McAuley. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.198.

an example of the use of everyday objects as props or as puppets. Here, a cooking hand blender was the fairy godmother's wand. As an object, which exists in most Western kitchens since the 1950s under the commercial name Magic Wand, is easily recognizable. It is a ready-made scenographic material.
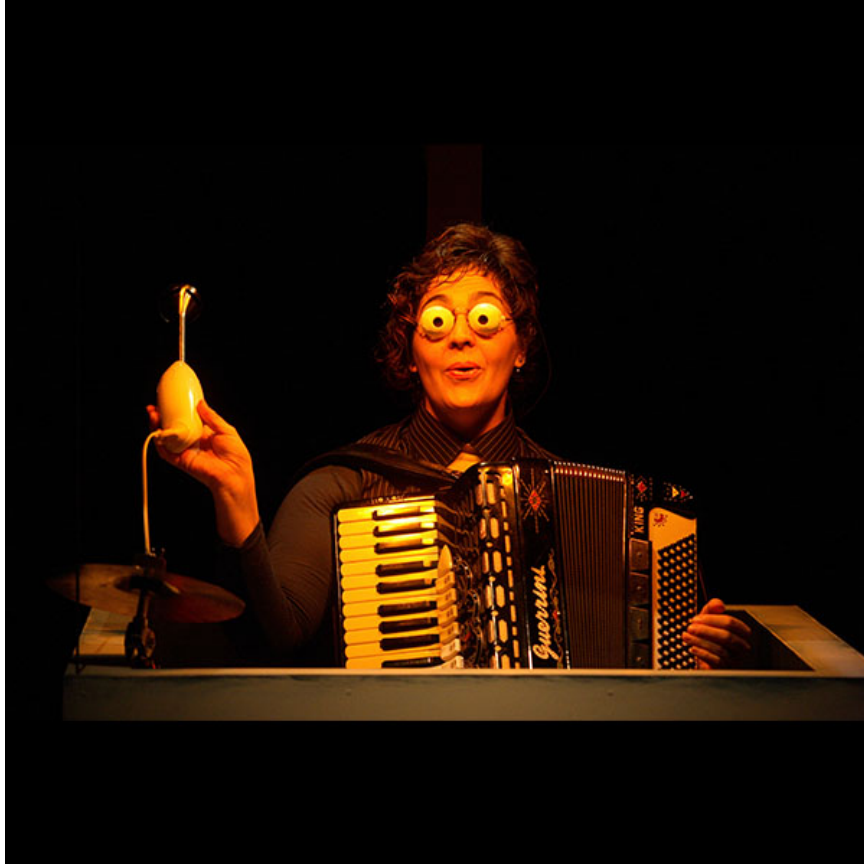
Cinderela. Photo by Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

In another show, *Capuchinho Vermelho XXX,* re-staged in 2011, Teatro das Marionetas do Porto expands their use of the everyday object. As with the wand in *Cinderela*, a bag of groceries is used to perform the well known *Little Red Riding Hood* story.

Capuchinho Vermelho XXX. Photo by Teatro Marionetas do Porto.

In this unusual culinary show the performer transforms lettuce into a woodland, a red cocktail napkin into a hooded cape and a chicken into the wolf. The recognition of an object expands our understanding of the performance space by including information from the objects' original context, a supermarket or a kitchen, in the creation of a fictional narrative. By paralleling cooking with the tale of Red Riding Hood, TMP incorporated

the violence of cutting and slicing into the storytelling, enhancing anxiety throughout the fiction and playing with the inevitability of its end: the wolf's feeding on Red Riding. Both in *Cinderela* and in *Capuchinho Vermelho XXX,* the scenography considers this tension, balancing between our recognition of the everyday uses of an object and its meaning in performance.

Now, it is important to analyze how rehearsals can draw forth possibilities for everyday objects to be used in performance. The Practice-as-Research project *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima* explored four ways by which the performers' actions change an object's and employ it as an evocation of a specific everyday context bringing it into the fictional fold of a performance. The first change a performer can bring about to an object is a change in function (1): using an object in a way other than its original purpose, yet introducing no change to its material qualities. The second, is a change in the sound associated with the object (2), originated from the object itself, from the performer or from an external source. This can be accompanied by a change in function: a sound can introduce a new function or vice-versa. The third is a change in the perception of an object's scale (3). Scale is given primarily by an object's size in relationship with the human body but also with other objects and the space their are in. In order for us to dissociated the object from its original scale, the performer needs to suggest a new spacial relationship, without changing the object's materiality or his own body mass. The fourth, is a change to the balance between an object's material and non-material qualities (4). That is, a performer chooses to take advantage of the aesthetic properties of an object, its form, much further that its functional qualities, to the point the object loses part of its identity and becomes difficult to identify as an everyday object. The object becomes characterized and identifiable solely by its shape, colour and/or texture, and of course by its interaction with the performance. In this case, it is often the process of transformation that becomes apparent as the everyday is slowly erased from view. All of these are of course

interconnected, as much as the object's original qualities. Once one is experimented and changed, others may appear interesting to the performers. Their addition and overlapping over the course of a performance can transform the object to the point they become inseparable from the action transforming it.[12] It is through trial and error, in rehearsal, that the choice of keeping these groups of action in performance is made. It depends on the object's original properties and on character development, which can be either relevant or not to the overall performance, and even accidental:

> The activity of rehearsal is (...) often determined by attempting different possibilities that combine and displace the usual function of an object, character or spoken text without a predetermined outcome in mind. This allows for associative and unlikely connections to be incorporated into each new show, often stumbled across accidentally. The animated relationship between performer and object often guides this early exploration.[13]

Pequena História Trágico-Marítima involved the recording and analyzing of different stages of a scenography from concept to performance and its connections with the elaboration of the dramaturgy. This production started from the premise that two fishermen were shipwreck just off shore Nazaré (a small fishing village in Portugal) and, while they were looking for a way to survive, they told each other stories of past adventures. The scenography led the devising process and the text was introduced much later in the creative process. Each everyday object was subjected to a series of operations, all interconnected either sequentially and/or simultaneously. They were introduced into

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[12] Gay McAuley takes it further when she says that 'if the function of the object has been transformed, while the object is nevertheless still present in its original form, yet another level of potential meaning can emerge as earlier meanings leave a trace in the later functions that may be introduced. If the gap between two different functions attributed to the same object is very wide, or if a given object undergoes frequent transformation, then it is the transformation process itself that will be foregrounded.' *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), p.184.

[13] Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender. *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes*. (Machester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p.93.

the rehearsal room by the scenographer using a set of criteria developed by the director, performers and herself during their initial discussions of the storyline. Objects needed to be easily available within households. They could not contribute to an obvious salvation or rescue. They could be allusive to the Portuguese 1970's or 1980's, they could have a clear relationship with Nazaré's specific geography and history, which would necessarily include an opposition between the rural and the industrial. And finally, they should express hunger, thirst, real memory and imagined memory, physical and psychological reactions to their castaway condition. Of all of the objects performers worked with, I analyze the use of three: a funnel, a suitcase, and an old professional fishing net. They all offer examples of multiple types of everyday-imaginary connections at different stages in performance.
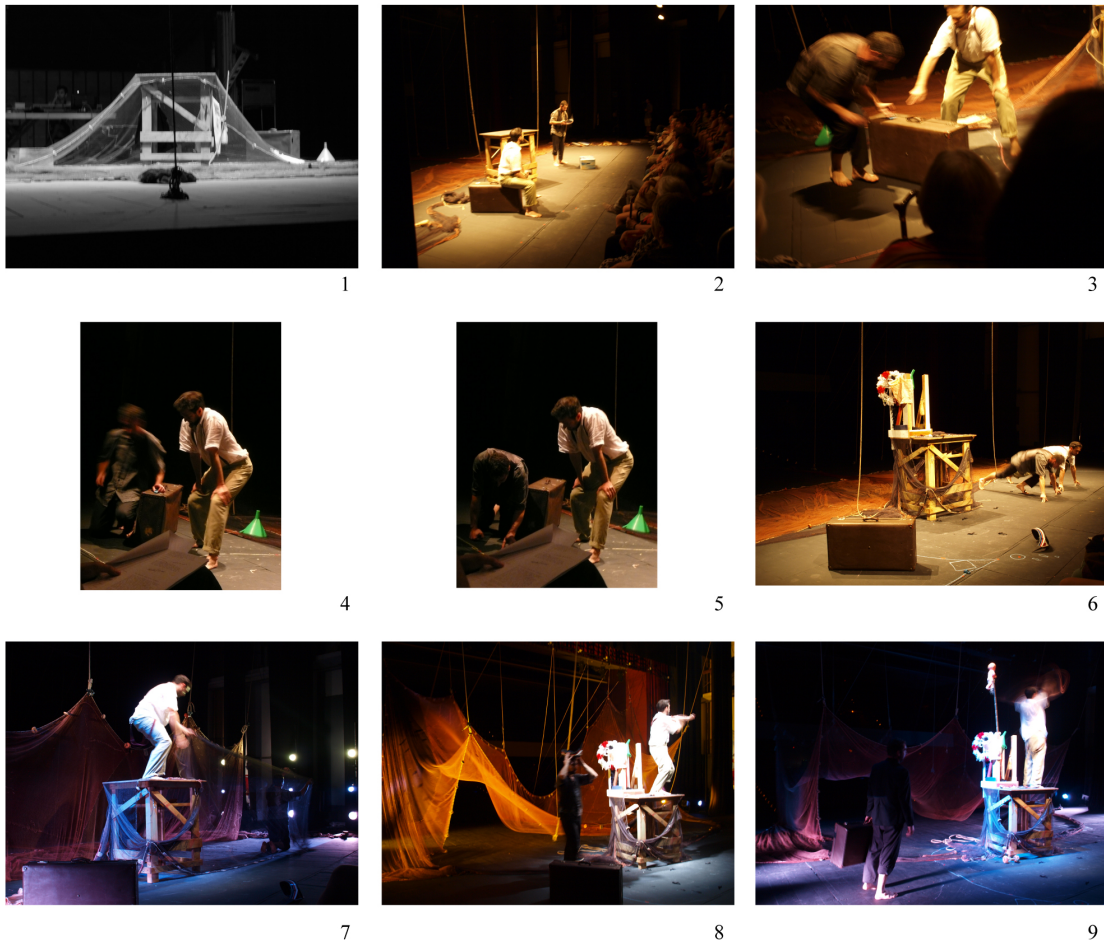
Table **a**

In black and white, rehearsal photos. In colour, performance photos. *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima,*

2012. Photos by Filipa Malva.

The first object I would like to look at is the funnel (table **a**) as an example of change in function and in sound, by manipulation of action and voice. After an initial observation, performers experimented with the possibility of changing its function by

using it as a megaphone (a1), as binoculars (a2) or as a hearing aid (a4). In spite of the fact that all of these could be valid as actions, only one responded to this particular rehearsal requirement: to find an active way to survive. As binoculars or as a hearing aid, the object presented the characters with a passive method for salvation — enabling them to watch and hear but not to communicate. Their choice came from a recognition of the possibilities of its form/shape and also from their character's need to call for help. As soon as they added voice to the action, the object's function became more apparent since they now had two steps to explore: one, the gesture of putting it to their mouths, and the other, their amplified voices. Later in rehearsal (a7), we introduced external sound to this action: three music tracks apparently foreign to the context of the performance and to the object itself. As the performer raised it to call for help, the music was activated as a response. The performer's confusion and his inability to use his own voice through the funnel (and the desperation of his call was important to the dramaturgy), deemed this experiment inadequate. Nonetheless, the suggestion that the funnel could be used to introduce a voice independent from the character's voices, to work as a portal or mediator between their fiction and a sub-fiction, was later recovered. The other performer used the funnel to introduce a distorted, from the beyond, kind of voice (a10), staging a dialogue with Holy Mary, a devotion of the first character.

Finally, the use of the funnel evoked two other aspects. Firstly, its primary function as a tool for pouring and bottling liquid, wine or water, for example, connecting it with the thirst the fishermen felt. Secondly, by giving it another function, since it was used to summon up a salvation, a faith, and every feeling which it awakens, creating a connection between the uselessness of the object's original function and its usefulness in its secondary, imaginary, function. A link between contexts which expanded the fictional context of performance.

Table **b**

In black and white, rehearsal photos. In colour, performance photos. *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima,* 2012. Photos by Filipa Malva.

The second object, the suitcase (table **b**), was added late in rehearsal as a contextual prop, that is, as an object whose theatrical purpose was mainly to offer context on the character wielding it. In this case, the suitcase was a clear sign of travel. As the performer brought it on stage, in the first scene, there was a recognizable difference between his past and that of the other performer. After this scene (b2), the performer abandoned the suitcase stage-left, where he had first set it down. Later in rehearsal, as the performers drew a chalk map on the stage floor, the suitcase became an obstacle (b3). Their

movement from stage right to left, drawing Nazaré's shore line while they explained the intricate relationship between the fishing banks and the village's main reference points (tavern, church, sanctuary, market, etc), took them to where the shipwreck had happened —a promontory and cliff crowned by the town's lighthouse. Instead of moving the suitcase, performers chose to use it as the promontory itself, adding it as a tridimensional feature to their map. The small toy car that 'drove them' across the map climbed over the suitcase and down towards the beach, changing our perception of its scale from a handheld everyday object —made for travel— to a geographical characteristic of Nazaré (b4 and b5) —the place where the performers travelled to. As the action continued, the suitcase remained on stage (much like the toy car and the model boat), providing a constant reference to their shipwreck's close but impossible distance from the safe shore (b6). The fact that action was concentrated around a table from where the performers could not escape, a shipwreck in the middle of a raging ocean, and that, simultaneously, action could be placed in relation to their rescue, gave a sense of urgency and frustration to the performance that otherwise would have been lost (b7). In the final scene, the suitcase was picked up by the other performer (b9). The performer who seemed to have arrived home, carries it off-stage, breaking up the drawn map and abandoning the action. The suitcase changes hands and there is also a change in roles: the traveller becomes the resident and vice-versa. The perception of scale of this everyday object was changed by gesture and action as a way to relocate performance and in doing so, evoked two simultaneous ideas: travel and geography. They are two sides of the same concept, they congregate to stress the fluidity of the performance as well as of the fiction. Two fishermen who make a living away from home, one who endures travel for the sake of survival, another who revels in it designing his memories around imaginary tales of travel and adventure. Both on the verge of loosing their lives a few meters from home. The suitcase was both the carrier of those memories and souvenirs, of hope and of experience, and the

safe haven of shore. Its constant presence on stage kept this 'double meaning' alive throughout performance, the evocation continually in tension with their actions for survival.

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Table **c**

In black and white, rehearsal photos. In colour, performance photos. *Pequena História Trágico-Marítima,* 2012. Photos by Filipa Malva.

The third everyday object, a fishing net (table c) already described in *Transitioning*[14], is a good example of a manipulation which not only altered the object's functions but also enhanced the object's aesthetic qualities over its functional characteristics. For the better part of rehearsals, performers used a smaller net as a substitute for the vast second-hand fishing net that was later added. This smaller net allowed them to explore shape, function and movement, incorporating knowledge from its original context (research within the fishing community) with our fictional purposes (4). This type of net asks for methodical and accurate manipulation: it is as easy to become entangled in it as it is to lose track of what it grabs off the stage floor (1). First, performers played with the idea of being trapped inside it (1). In this case the net took the shape of the performers' body, becoming alive with movement. The aesthetic fascination of this interaction was balanced by the knowledge that this was a dangerous situation for the performer. This manipulation, as well as the idea of using the net as a single fishing line (2, 3 and 4), was later incorporated into performance as a way to rescue both objects and performers from the 'waters' surrounding the shipwreck (11). This process allowed various areas of the presentational space to be connected. Performers could activate multiple sectors of the stage even when they were physically confined to the shipwreck/table. Even though the object's full original function (fishing) was obviously impossible to reproduce on stage, the gestures associated with it were suggested and re-worked.

Another possibility was to use the net as background and physical support for a small model boat (5). This boat was part of the few purposely built props brought into rehearsal very early on. It was a small scale replica of a Nazaré's fishing boat. Once balanced on the outstretched net, it looked like it was sailing along. The change in the perception of the object's scale transformed the net into an ocean, and its texture and unpredictability of movement took the suggestion further (8). The performers tried to

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[14] section 3 of this chapter.

control its shape and direction in an effort to keep the boat gliding upright, using this balancing act to demonstrate the delicate equilibrium between their livelihood and their survival. Again, the scene was staged using one end of the fishing net, while the remaining mesh laid all around the stage (12). Rehearsal also revealed the net's ability to serve as an aesthetically active background to action (6). As we have seen in the previous section, the net's aesthetic qualities were manipulated and enhanced to the point it became, for an instant, a textural element in the scenographic composition (9). The visual and spatial amplification in association with the performers' gestures, actions and dialogue created a simultaneous evocation of the survival context of the performance as well as of the multiple spaces it took place in. The net was, simultaneously, object and place. It structured both space and time, organizing the presentational space, subsequently influencing the performers' movements in most scenes, and offering numerous expansions of the fictional space. Every time the fictional space was extended past the presentational, a new line of dramaturgy emerged, opening the performance to different narratives, some simultaneous.[15] Even if the net was paramount in the conception of the performance space, all objects discussed demonstrated an object's ability to articulate space. An object or a group of objects can suggest and indicate a change in the fictional space and a re-positioning of the narrative within it. They do so, firstly, by being objects and as such having integral qualities, and secondly, by being activated by performers. The combination of the two aspects make for powerful spacial shifts in the rehearsal process and later in performance. The process by which everyday objects engage performative imagination can be varied and complex, but it invariably creates an interdependence between scenography

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[15] 'in some plays the presentational space gives us a single fictional place; in others multiple places are presented, either alternating or succeeding one another or simultaneously present in different parts of the stage space' in Gay McAuley. *Space in Performance: Making Meaning in the Theatre*. (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2004), p.30.

and action which enhances reality both on and off stage. A fishing net evoked a specific professional activity through action and various geographies through formal transformation such as scale and light. By combination of action and scenography, it was a mesh, a fishing net, a life-line, an ocean, a cinema, mountains and even a woman. It was *performed* scenography.

I have argued that scenography can be performed by inhabitation, by manipulation, in transition and through evocation. These processes can overlap over the course of rehearsals and performance generating a bond between scenographic materials and its operators, performers, director, scenographer, sound designer and light designer. It is fundamental to understand that for scenography to be intertwined with action, be it performative, be it lighting, or sound, it must base its creative process on a cooperation of means and ideas which starts in rehearsal and is highly dependent on the conditions and methods of practice. Action informs the composition of scenographic materials, its choice and its design, as they inform action. Scenography is the subject of time and space. In order to flourish in the environment of action which is performance, it must be able to grow alongside it. Without space and time for these connections to arise, be selected and developed, in rehearsal, and for a discussion to happen between the scenographer and other creatives, these links will either never exist or will not reach their full performative potential. Processes of communication need to be established or consolidated. Time and space of and for rehearsal are dependent on the companies' financial and logistical conditions, as well as on assumptions of audience, authority and authorship developed over the course of their practice. The first are imposed as outside conditions, the later are fabricated by the internal prioritising of the practitioners. They all interfere with the creative process of the scenographer. *Performed scenography* characterises Portuguese scenography in theatre for children, and it results from its qualities of practice, as described in the analysed examples.

CONCLUSION

This research provides a thorough review of scenographic practice within Portuguese theatre for children, an insight into each scenographers' and companies' methods in rehearsal and their effects in the performance. It furthers methodological approaches to art research and raises questions into conventional definitions of scenography and space of performance. In addition, it questions the scenographers' role in theatrical production, redefining assumed conventions of collaboration and describing their contemporary *play set,* that is, their instruments for creating contemporary scenography.

By addressing the creative process of the scenographer and in particular of those scenographers working on performances for a children's audience, I was able to place the scenographer's understanding of her audience within her creative process, linking her use of memory and autobiography with scenographic imagination and processes of collaboration. I argue that this has produced a scenography which is inhabitable, manipulated, and evocative, working through transition of time, space and action. I argue that performed scenography derives from an explicit intention to create a scenography in constant interaction with the performers' actions as well as a consequence of the scenographic imagination produced by conditions and processes of collaboration specific to the theatre companies analysed. What is more, I argue that the specificity of the scenographic processes found within these companies' creative processes derive from their own analysis of their spectators and their intention to generate a theatre which, even though it can be pragmatically classified as theatre for children, connects with all audiences.

Initial research questions focused on the relationship between the scenographers' creative process and their spectators. As research developed, interviews and rehearsal

analysis showed that scenographers and theatre companies investigated used their knowledge and experience with a children's audience as loose guidelines. They all work from memories of childhood even though they agree there is no specific process to designing for an young audience. This has led me to focus the research on their use of memory and imagination in and beyond rehearsals and how these can be modified or negotiated in collaborative processes and conditions. I have found that the age of the spectators is important to their methods insofar as it creates a feeling of freedom and experimentation through action which allows scenography to go further than its illustrative or background function. Arguably, there is a connection between the scenographers awareness of her and others childhood memories and its assimilation into the rehearsal process which generates action through inhabitation, manipulation and evocation as the central issue in creations for children. The feeling of appropriation of scenographic materials derives from performers and scenographer's memory of learned behaviour as children: when materials could hold as many impressions and functions as those provided by imagination. Consequently, scenography is performed, experimented on and fulfilled in transition or rather in discovery. It is in rehearsal that this creative process is developed to its maximum potential since scenographic materials are used to develop action and vice-versa.

The general survey carried out has allowed me to pinpoint common aspects of very different performances, serving as the foundation for production analysis. In itself, the survey contributes to the recognition of the work of multiple theatre companies and in particular to the work of scenographers, typically forgotten by Portuguese scholarly reflection.

A step further was also the production analysis part of this research which gives an insight into each scenographer's creative process. By drawing attention to the scenographers' interactions in rehearsal, alongside his communications pre and post

production, the research focuses on how scenography is slowly created, through compromise and discussion as well as imagination. In addition, it develops awareness for the importance of looking at rehearsals as a complementary performance analysis tool.

Another aspect of this research which has proven to be fundamental is what concerns conditions of collaboration and processes of communication. The notion of a steady and consequent creative process, where one stage follows another, always progressing, always adding to a clairvoyant initial imagination burst, has proven to be as uninteresting as unrealistic. In fact, these two components of scenographic collaboration, communication and conditions of practice, are great contributors to its final outcome. They inflict change to the process with serious consequences to the scenography, but they can also induce imagination, creating resourceful solutions to unplanned incidents. Curiously it is absence and accident in communication, what is not planned but a consequence of a sustained work on the medium, which sometimes furthers the imagination.

Authority and authorship are also put into question in this research, as they condition the work of the scenographer greatly, particularly in rehearsal processes where scenography finds its place in performance through action. In these cases, close collaboration and the presence and willing interaction between performers and scenographer is essential. Research found that theatre companies, which were able to have a scenographer present for the majority of rehearsals tended to develop space of performance and scenographic materials from trial and error in action, introducing and redesigning trial objects and stage markings as rehearsals progressed. Scenography developed through discussion and became difficult to distinguish it from the mise-en-scène. As a consequence, authority in rehearsal resulted blurred and authorship came to be shared. Scenography is an art of compromise, enhanced by collaboration, and

if I were to play the devil's advocate, the first argument I would make against our status as artists is that we are compromised because we have to sacrifice our personal visions for the greater good of the production. Luckily, this argument doesn't add up: a collaborative process is not a zero sum game.[1]

This dissertation looked to further scholarship on scenographic practice by better understanding its concepts and by applying contemporary methodologies in its research. In the first instance, it explored multiple bibliographic sources both from scenographers and other theatre practitioners, registering various aspects of space in performance and extending its limits past the conventional visual-plastic aspects of scenography. The examples found and discussed are evidence of the expansion of the definition of what is scenographic in contemporary theatre, and consequently of the expansion of the scenographer's field of practice. The use of sound and music, as well as everyday objects, are eloquent examples of this. In the second instance, I have found that the employment of practice-as-research methods were paramount in grasping the multiple stages of the creative process.

This dissertation makes a case for the use of practice-as-research as a legitimate methodological procedure in researching theatre and in particular its creative process. It recognises the specifics of the practitioners' consciousness in rehearsal and their ability to reflect in action as a unique contribution to the development of their work. Within practice-as-research, I have identified the possibility of several stages of registry, action and reflection, in spiral shape routine, which served the production of performance. It allowed for the introduction of results from earlier rehearsals into performance, slowly expanding its findings, as opposed to a linear routine of testing that would mandate the elimination or inclusion of partial findings. The confrontation of these two processes of practice-as-

[1] Paul Burgess. 'Response to Mark Lawson's Article', *Blue Pages: Journal for the Society of British Theatre Designers* (October 2012).

research is worth further developing in later studies, since it produces different insights and finds different purposes in art research. Their association and alternation, may be a possibility.

In fact, another aspect of contemporary scenography that finds echo in this research is the introduction of research mechanisms as performance. The fact that scenographers, and theatre practitioners in general, are becoming aware of their own creative processes allows them to be able to reflect on that practice and ultimately to use it as part of performance. This research has found that the use of drawing, conventionally a tool for the development or the presentation of an idea, is now in tune with the progress of rehearsals and it is used simultaneously as a projection of a concept, a medium for discussion, and, finally, as part of scenography. The collective involvement that drawing allows, its speed and possibilities of aesthetic and dramaturgical expression, is paramount to its use as both performative and reflexive. And its use in performance is still being studied.

Finally, this thesis has showed there is still much to research on the Portuguese theatrical context. The lack of primary sources on both Portuguese theatre history and on Portuguese scenography requires an urgent development of these areas. Many of the theatre companies mentioned in the general preview, their processes and their collaborators, have not been studied. Moreover, I have not focused on performances directed at an adult public, which are the vast majority of productions premiered every year in Portugal. It would be interesting to look at their scenography, comparing and contrasting its creative processes of scenography with those described in this dissertation.

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