

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION**  
**UNIVERSITY OF ARTS FROM TÂRGU MUREŞ**  
**PhD SCHOOL**

**SCIENTIFIC PhD THESIS IN THE FIELD OF THEATRE  
AND PERFORMING ARTS**

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**ESSENTIALIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION IN  
CONTEMPORARY SCENOGRAPHY**

**Functional, relational and adaptive mechanisms of the  
creative process**

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# SUMMARY

## I. Introduction

### 1. Argument

Through this work, we have proposed, on the one hand, an update in the approach to scenographic art in the context of the spectacular arts of contemporary reality.

On the other hand, through the transdisciplinary methodology contained in our very field of discussion, scenography, we will generate an innovative meaning and at the same time, by revealing new perspectives, correlated with the empirical approach, we support the transformative-evolutionary character of theatrical and scenographic art expressly .

The main motivation that has led to the present research was the crisis situation felt more and more acutely and in many aspects, in society, in the theatre and in the educational framework alike, which culminated in the pandemic and post-pandemic period. This aspect has led me to focus all my attention and energy towards finding optimal solutions that could change direction, perception, leading to balance and evolution - initially for myself, by assuming this responsibility, and through me, for the others.

At the same time, I consider that art, theatre, but especially scenography - located at the confluence of all these arts that also involves a visual component, which contains and includes them all in a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary sense, has, as proved by over time, a unifying, balancing, fusional and restructuring potential through which it can become a way of knowledge and transformation. Thus the regaining of values becomes possible precisely by finding the Essence and recognizing the Truth and the essential values, through knowledge, as a result of a conscious creative process and an integrative systemic vision. Through the courage and power of visionary creators to change outdated paradigms with new perspectives, they have generated the reconnection of society to the constantly updated essential values of each present. The transformative power of creativity is amplified and this phenomenon becomes possible by expanding and embracing a holistic, transdisciplinary vision that leads to the unification of knowledge.

We can only express what we are. Consequently, a coherent internal environment expresses/communicates a coherent message. A creator/educator who approaches the expanded vision of the unity of knowledge will naturally create a fertile and coherent environment/field of creation.

Creativity is the emergent fluid that connects all perspectives, forms of knowledge in the whole of the unified knowledge that we propose. However, creativity is not enough without an expanded consciousness and implicitly a responsible approach in relation to creation and its impact on others. And in any educational context (direct or indirect), people need more than receiving informational flow or aesthetic pleasure.

From this holistic perspective, scenography and theatre are primarily forms of (self-)knowledge and (self-)becoming. Consequently, the creative process becomes what we will consider a *perlaboration process*.

Thus, we will demonstrate the need for a conscious, responsible, supportive and loving creative process of life and people, which, through essentialization and personalization, generates an authentic spectacular product with a powerful transformative impact. The essentialization is of the whole and the personalization of the part, of a point of view, of a perspective - with its specific angle of perception.

Scenography has the ability to capture life as a reflection, as a limitless dream, experienced as real as possible, to manifest in the created stage space the unlimited possibilities of the unconscious, of the unified quantum field, of the unified Essence, through what one might call *superlanguage*, rather than language, and this is the image and the experiential environment it creates.

At the same time, what fuses together all the aspects of scenographic knowledge is also what connects, on a macro level - art, science and spirituality, and this link is again, *creativity*.

## **2. The function of scenography in contemporary theatre. The scenographer, from the position of subordinate to that of co-creator. Social, ideological and artistic context**

Scenography, as indicated by the etymological structure of the notion (cf. Gr. *Skenographia/ skene* – stage, *graphein* – to write, to graph, to draw), refers to stage graphics, i.e. everything that takes shape at the level of image on a stage, which we will call, in an extended sense, a *spectacular* or *performative space*, to support the intention of this thesis.

Starting from a strictly decorative, illustrative initial function, represented two-dimensionally as a painted background, it has gained its spatiality over time, both through three-dimensionality (under external relation) and through the depth of the meanings it expresses (under relation to internal resources, of essential, intrinsic content). Finally, through a process of essentialization and personalization it has become an autonomous art, through its uniqueness (authenticity) and its *transdisciplinary* character. In relation to *complementarity*, it comes with a considerable contribution of originality and at the same time with a structuring function, having environmental value for the other spectacular components. This mutation of the function, from an external (decorative) to an internal one, a leap in the *generative essence*, makes the scenography a living, complex organism, an *immersive art*.

The scenographer, a researcher of life and human nature, is constantly concerned with discovering, deepening and suggesting the structures and mental and affective paths of the characters, he/ she facilitates a deep understanding of them through the costume-character and through the resonances with his/ her characteristic environment, the space. At the same time, he/ she supports the direct involvement of the viewer, by appealing to affectivity, associations of ideas, images, moods and, as we will see, even more deeply than that, precisely by the ability to create forms containing the essence beyond those of obvious reality and of universally recognized, learned concepts; by creating an experiential environment/context, novel, containing and comprehensive. Scenography becomes a *meta-art* and a *connective art* at the same time. Its detachment from the decorative and respectively descriptive/narrative register gradually becomes a *spatial* and *non-linear art*.

Through this work, I want to highlight the need for a holistic approach to the spectacular phenomenon as an integral and integrative system, in which each part integrates the essence, energy and information of the whole and through resonance and fusion with all the others, creates it, unitary and indestructible. Also, the whole of the spectacular system is always more

than the sum of the parts, of the contribution of each creator/participant, it is a structure, an entity in itself, a vast, encompassing and containing consciousness, by its very essence. Its uniqueness encompasses without canceling/excluding the uniqueness of each creator involved and without being confused with any of them (be it playwright, director, choreographer, etc.), as a result of an assumed collective and conscious creative process.

We will study the inner creative path of the visual artist, in relation to the ensemble and the other co-creators, calling on the transdisciplinary methodology, addressing several perspectives such as: theatrical, psycho-emotional, neuroscience, spiritual knowledge and the quantum perspective.

We will try to generate a new definition, in the context of the contemporary theatrical phenomenon. Starting from the premise of the change of relationship, from subordination, to the role of creator, from a heteronomous art, to the posture of autonomous art, in the tendency of the European theatre towards *a collective creation*.

For a clearer perception of what scenography represents today, I bring to attention the process of transformation, update and upgrade of the scenographer's status, starting from this perceptual, conceptual level, from a socio-historical, ideological and artistic perspective.

### 2.1 *The evolution of the status of scenographer and theatre through the stage image - scenography in Europe*

Scenography has distant origins and is closely related to the history of theatre and other forms of performance, starting even with the shamanic rituals, mysteries and other rituals and spectacular forms of ancient civilizations.

The status of the scenographer as a profession, as a distinct and recognized authority, took shape gradually in the history of the theatre, only in a much shorter, faster and recent course. There is no exact date when this status was officially established.

After an ambiguous course regarding its status, it was only in the 20th century that scenography became a recognized and distinct profession in the theatre industry. Scenographers began working as permanent members of production teams and being regularly employed in theatres. However, some important stages in this evolution can be identified.

Therefore, in the 19th century, along with the scientific evolution, "real people" replaced the romantic, "abstract" characters. Implicitly, this also generated a transformation at the level

of space, of the settings - "the environments in which the characters are born, live and die" - as a result of a need for grounding, anchoring in reality, in the truth.

E. Zola pays more attention to the scenography, in Naturalism in the theatre, without calling it that, but only highlighting the importance, as well as the needs of the setting, in relation to the characters or the spectacular ensemble. Naturalism was only a passing stage, which generated evolution through the reactions it generated in creators who found in it an argument for change.

The transformation of the European theatrical paradigm and the transition to modernity were generated by two great influences: On the one hand, with Richard Wagner's dream of creating a "total art" or "common work of art" (after Denis Bablet's translation) – a "Gesamtkunstwerk". Wagner wanted to harmoniously integrate the various arts, such as music, drama, poetry, dance and scenography, into a unified and coherent performance form, a total fusion of the arts, as the "art of the future".

Once directing begins to manifest itself and be recognized as a distinct and necessary art in the spectacular structure, against the background of the entry into consciousness of the "total work of art", the preoccupation with the plastic form also naturally appears, especially as the necessity of differentiating the character from art of the theatre and not of life, which naturalism created.

The Symbolists, though fascinated by the image, to the detriment of literature, believe that: "The setting must be a mere ornamental fiction which completes the illusion by analogies of colors and lines, with drama." (Pierre Quillard) The scenography is still attached to the decorative, but the naturalistic relation to the reality of life is replaced by the symbolic one, of the subconscious, of the dream. The scenographer is more of a *painter scenographer*. He created the costumes especially for the show, in harmony with the setting, represented by several suggestive elements.

Appia together with Craig have the great merit of the change of paradigm, of spectacular report. They are the first transformative creators of the 20th century. Thus, the central role of the playwright is taken over by the director (a versatile one), who, together with the visual regime, become the defining attributes of the modern show.

Appia succeeds in redefining the stage space, creating plastic spatiality, and at the same time the relationship to what we can now call scenographic/spectacular space - through the



novelty of three-dimensionality (plasticization), through the power to create spaces-atmospheres that light proves, together with music and also through movement. The great innovation in scenography, in addition to the interpretive value and creating spatiality of light (in complementary relation with shadow), is spatial rhythmicity. He is the first to bring to the stage only mobile structures that can be recombined, adapted to new concepts, - practicable, ramps (inclined planes) steps - that have a potential for modulation and remodulation.

In this way, for the first time, a theatre creator with a global vision and impact is taking shape, by applying the transdisciplinary methodology starting from the vision and pose of the scenographer. For now, however, we cannot speak of a scenographic status assumed as such.

Craig is, however, the first to understand that in its etymology, the performance is the art that addresses the sight, and starting from this foundation, its goal becomes the re-theatricalization of the theatre by restoring the correct relationship between the text and the spectacular visual unfolding. Craig's great innovation is the hinged flanks (screens), very mobile, which allowed fluid changes during the show, but he also had many others. He thus had a great influence in the subsequent evolution of stage creation and scenotechnics.

Both Appia and Craig expressed their genius through scenographic design.

Starting from this idea of the visionary artists who have had a considerable influence on the theatre, we will also mention Kandinsky.

Another teacher of the Bauhaus school, along with Kandinsky, is the abstractionist painter Oskar Schlemmer, who dreamed of the fusion of arts (the same Wagnerian dream) - he created costume-set installations - "Architecture in motion" - Triadic ballet.

Also related to the Bauhaus movement, only from America, another complex and innovative creator emerged - Alwin Nikolais, the "father of multimedia dance".

We will also remember the painter and writer Oscar Kokoschka, who generated the first expressionist drama. He was the first to extract the theatre from its attachment to the text, to express itself eminently through visual language.

The next scenographer-director, with a transdisciplinary structure, who, through his extremely complex personality and vision, left a strong mark on the history of the theatre, was Tadeusz Kantor.

After *Cricot 2* and "Theatre Zero", "Theatre of Death", which Kantor founded in 1975, is the crowning of his entire experience of knowledge through theatre. This is also reflected in the predilection themes of this peak stage - death in relation to life, transcendence, memory or codes deeply inscribed in its implicit variant and also the spatio-temporal relativity within the experience. From a deeper perspective, I consider the "Theatre of Death" to be rather what I call the *theatre of knowledge*.

In his approach, Kantor was a promoter of the ideological freedom of the artist and supported the necessity of experimentation in artistic development.

He remains a parent of deep, emotional and impactful inner expression through the transformative means of imagery, which accesses the unconscious layers of memory and expands perception and consciousness at the same time.

The next transformative stop in the direction we are following, is represented by scenographer-director Robert Wilson, a landmark that returns often throughout the work and already enters the category of contemporary creatures.

Wilson is a master alchemist of space-time and time-space of light and essence in full continuous manifestation on all its levels through the fundamental language of image and sound.

The art practiced by Wilson is simply and perhaps a theatre of knowledge, generating transformation, both for the creators and for the spectators.

## 2.2 *The evolution of the status of scenographer and theater through the scenic image - scenography in the context of Romanian theater*

We note that no further than the 19th century, both in the theatrical manifestation from us and from other European countries, we can speak of a scenography of "set painters".

We still cannot discuss about a creative identity, a personalization, a shaping of the Romanian scenographic personality.

Only in the first part of the 20th century, until World War I, we can notice a movement, a necessary birth of Romanian scenographic creation, with an "increased demand for scenographers" that comes on the one hand from a "hunger for visual " ever-increasing audience, but also from the new necessity that the theatre performance implies.

The evolution of the Romanian scenography followed a rather difficult path in those turbulent times. Only in the post-war period, starting from 1944, a first personality can be distinguished as the opener of new perspectives, Ion Sava.

In addition to his huge transformative contribution, Ion Sava also has another great merit, even if indirectly, in the evolution of Romanian scenography, that of having been Liviu Ciulei's professor and mentor. As we will confirm through this work, Ciulei realizes the essence of scenographic and theatrical creation and he is the one who achieved the paradigm shift, in terms of the Romanian scenography and of the entire Romanian and even international theatrical system.

## **II. The scenographer – integral creator of the transformative theatre**

### **1. Creative neuro-mechanisms. The image, the shortcut to the emotional structures, to the imagination - the way to the essence. Creative resorts of knowledge and self-knowledge (through scenography)**

The visual impact is very important and perhaps the most powerful. The audience's first contact with the performance is visual, before the word, even the sound, there is the image. Images generate emotions, memories, activate other senses and imagination. But for this effect, it needs to have consistency, to contain that informational spectrum that resonates in the viewer, triggering his own mechanisms and implicitly emotional reactions. In the specifics of the theatre, they need to contain the essence of the dramaturgy, the directorial intention and the fundamental structures of the characters, in varying degrees of subtlety and abstraction, depending on the context, the intention, without redundantly duplicating or diminishing the other forms of spectacular expression, in a relationship of complementarity.

In this sense, the director Robert Wilson supporting the idea that when we focus on hearing words, we no longer manage to see at a deep level, stated in an interview with Cătălin Ștefănescu, within the FITS.

### **2. The paradigm shift in scenographic creation: from the outside - forms and concepts, to the inside - the generating source of the creative essence**

People look for complicity, resonance, a confirmation of personal values, truths in the theatre.

Theatre *essentializes, personalizes*, expresses individual, resonant and essential energies at the same time, and through a type of translational movement, the waves amplify, generate resonance through specific means, through emotional appeal, awareness and reaction in relation to inner or outer truths.

### **3. Purpose, internal motivation and truth in the creative process**

Truths are sometimes hard to assume, express and even receive. It is only here that art gives its measure, in the way it approaches and expresses that truth, in order to reach its intended goal, its finality.

In order to fulfill its purpose, it is desirable that the scenographic images contain the message of the whole and reveal their meanings gradually, along with the dramaturgical unfolding, thus becoming a living, functional organism within the organism - mother, the show, with its specificity of living art, through all its mechanisms.

The non-appropriation of the message by each of the participants in that artistic act, determined by the inefficiency of external motivations or the lack of motivation, in the case of the imposition of a theme, even misunderstanding, etc., creates an imbalance, a decompensation effect. From spectators - who receive an ambiguous, erroneous message, which misses its purpose, to artists - generally narcissistic and histrionic personalities who, in such situations, are strongly affected - from frustration, anguish, to the loss of meaning; everyone suffers.

That is why the European theatre tends towards a *collective creation*, where each creator can take on their chosen context, offer their full creative input, complementary and converging with the other members of the artistic team and establish the perfect consensus in a stronger common message and more coherently, it seems to be the best option.

### **4. Vectors and adaptive functional systems**

In this interactive relationship, time is a determining factor in the process of creation as well as in essentialization.

In the three-dimensional, spatio-temporal reality, time is linear (time axis - past, present, future), and each action towards reaching an objective in our attention requires time - the time required to cover the distance from the initial point (intention), to the destination point, final (goal achievement/award).

The experience of "time dilation" happens at the level of the experience of finding "real time", of the continuous present, which is resorted to in performance art, in Wilson's theatre, in immersive theatre or in another sense, with performers like Marina Abramović - in states of expansion of consciousness.

Time-space has the infinite dimension of the single field of infinite potential, *the essential field*, in which everything simply exists.

The broad temporal unfolding finds its meaning and value in the stage of preparation for the meeting with the public. In this whole process of symbiotic creative interconnection, of searches, of documentation, of creative laboratory, of structuring ideas into a coherence of the transmitted message and the actual realization of the scenic ensemble, time acquires a vital importance (worthy of being compared to the gestation period, preparatory to the birth of a healthy child). In this way, the audience can benefit from that compressed, productive time with a high density of essence of ideas and emotions, of coherence and value.

*Space* is the determining vector of spectacular creation and scenographic visual creation in particular. It determines both the type of relationship with the public, the quality and quantity of time given to it, as well as the way of approach and operation, in order to become an integrated and integrative support.

Just as *the flesh of the character* and the human material of the actor cannot be dissociated, neither can the spectacular ensemble be conceived without reference to the host space. However, the mobile (itinerant) character of the theatre cannot be ignored either, thus, it is desirable that the decor be designed with a margin of adaptability to other spaces, temporary hosts in tour or festival conditions, without destroying its identity or the force of the message.

Moreover, there is no such thing as an ideal theatre, but only one suitable for the performative context. However, the scenographer's challenge is precisely the ability to redefine that space, so that he manages to take the viewer out of any pre-existing context, relationship and, together with the actors and the whole crew, guide him, focus his entire attention and perception on the performative event.

Obviously, there is also a connection at the level of audience perception and quality. Their relationship to a place undoubtedly influences their perception of the performative act presented in that place, on the one hand, and on the other hand, each place attracts a certain type of audience, with certain expectations, which are difficult to divert, to be educated by an "accidental" experience.

The scenographer's expression in relation to space implies a ranking of the real, a distinction between the aspects it carries.

An exacerbated concreteness inhibits creativity, imagination. Therefore, *essentialization* also becomes a gateway to productive and involved communication with the viewer, giving him the chance to come up with his own imaginative input. The perception of a reality is an individual experience, therefore in a direct and honest approach, we must give each spectator the chance to live his own experience, in the context of the performative event we offer.

But if we start from the reality of our inner universe, keeping a permanent relationship with our inner sensations, in order to then transpose those deep emotions into images, symbols, into an accepted and assumed convention, we will manage to express, paradoxically, much more natural, authentic, and the impact on the viewer will be stronger, because he will receive and experience on the same level. We do not experience at the intellectual level, but at the level of body, emotion and energy. The load of meaning of a gesture, an object or images makes them stronger, bigger than any "big" or "much". An atom (particle, photon) contains all the information in the (quantum) field. One does not need to represent the entire field to access the information.

Scenography par excellence involves syntheses of the visual arts, of several sciences, technologies to create the "great supporting synthesis", transdisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity are sine qua non conditions. The phenomenon of *essentialization* is an integral, even defining part of the scenography, in an indestructible containment report.

At the same time, the misunderstood "essentialization" can lead to a "poor" simplification, which loses its meaning or takes on meanings foreign to its intention.

The elimination of the scenography from the spectacular structure makes the latter lose its purpose, its finality, reducing it to the status of reading at most, which makes sense only as a stage preceding the show, without being able to substitute it.

Nor is the call for compromise without a deep and assumed evaluation no less dangerous, even harmful to the success of the performative event. Compromise can have devastating effects on creative thinking, or it can become a driving force in the creative process.

The scenographer's approach starts from a deep analysis of the dramatic text (if it exists), for a good understanding of the social and historical context, the characterological structures of the characters and the relationships between them. The informational baggage constituted by extracting the essence from the text is developed through discussions with the director, to find out his own thoughts and spectacular intentions, completing them, in a productive exchange of ideas.

The next important step involves knowing the actors and the host space, without which the spectacular idea would not find its meaning, and assimilating their characteristic features.

Taking into account the type of theatrical experience we are referring to and the value of the theatre's uniqueness, differences in approach and novel situations may appear under this report of the method.

Contemporary scenography is far from being tributary to the text, with the function of illustrating it faithfully or ideally, now it is "the result of a semiological conception of staging", a productive, visual, three-dimensional interpretation of the dramatic text, in close connection with the other components and spectacular practices. Even more so in the immersive forms of spectacular manifestation, in which the scenographic space becomes the field of inclusion, of immersion, which animates and contains the spectator, as a support of his pose as a co-creator. It is a creative system of knowledge (part of a larger system of knowledge), which can only be approached, understood and integrated experientially, in a systemic relationship.

The scenographer is a very good designer, painter, sculptor, architect, keen observer, vigilant like a detective, researcher, "engineer", connoisseur of technological means and practices, which also involves notions of mathematics and physics; to be truly productive and fulfill their purpose. Thus, he presents himself as a "universal artist", with a fertilizing practicality. This is how it can be explained that many of the creators who transformed theatrical paradigms over time are first and foremost set designers and then directors (Appia, Craig, Kantor, Wilson, etc.).

The first visual representations that summarize the entire creative process from the "laboratory" stage are the sketches. These, compressing the scenographic concept, are the

concrete landmark from which the entire spectacular ensemble develops. The visual representation, the mapping of the scenographer's mental field, but also of the spectacular field through extinction, appealing to the most subtle, sensitive and complex structures of the being, triggers the perception, cognition and creative mechanisms, facilitates understanding, inspires future actions.

Few of the other people, whether they are artists but of a non-visual nature, such as directors, actors, composers, etc., possess perceptual capacities such as simultaneous vision, so the stage designer, through his sketches (sometimes even a 3D representation, virtual or through mock-up) creates a mental movie of the show, a "storyboard" for everyone, facilitating their access to that vision, that simultaneous perception of the whole and the details, which brings clarity, understanding and consensus.

The deepest connection between all visual, emotional, psychic, conscious or unconscious mechanisms is achieved by the scenographer through drawing and color, in sketches. By drawing, he connects with his interior, with all the informational baggage accumulated, directly, he searches, drawing, finds answers, drawing, connects with the outside world, drawing. His intimate and personal sign and expression, his language, the scenographer achieves through this symbolic system of communication, the connection, the mediation between his inner and outer world.

Creativity is an eminently internal process, an energetic and informational flow with external effects. The maximum potential is reached precisely by creating coherence, fluidity uninterrupted by external factors, until the final stages of implementation, at least. That is why it is indicated to use one's own potential and resources, as well as their awareness and development through an experiential process. Relying only on an artificial intelligence, external to you, which does not allow connectivity and a real activation of your own potential, in connection with others, only generates an illusion of genuine creativity and an impairment of the processes of essentialization and personalization, which the approach scenographically imposes them.

The excessive technological approach, even if it can fascinate in the first phase, through novelty (the fascination of the original) presents a very high risk of losing the depth, the emotional charge, the fragility and the ineffable theatricality, which only the human touch can bring. Of course, it cannot be totally excluded from the scene and from the creative process, as



long as there is a measure, as a result of a conscious and responsible approach, so that you have it and it does not have you, definitively.

We develop every stage of the scenographer's creative process, with all the creative mechanisms it entails.

An artist can demonstrate a deep knowledge of human nature without a very extensive previous psycho-social study, for example. This can be explained, from a psychological perspective, by the fact that the human soul/Self/Consciousness knows a much wider development than the conscious mind can comprehend and that through the "umbilical cord" represented by the collective unconscious (via the bridge of the subconscious), the individual is indestructibly bound to his (human) race and its entire evolution.

By taking the risk of vulnerability by leaving the comfort zone, the safety of things already known and generally accepted, he gains a deep self-knowledge and the ability to reinvent himself, as well as the ability to connect and reconnect with people, with the contemporary world, whose theme goes through a permanent process of transformation and diversification.

The way an artist's creation makes us feel, what moods it generates in us, reveals his inner world, but it can also tell us a lot about our own world, our own depths. Likewise, if we ourselves, in the pose of artists, we carefully examine our own creations, we can discover, bring to light and understand our own processes, unconscious experiences, which we have the chance to integrate and expand our creative horizons accordingly, by freeing ourselves from the constraints of limiting beliefs.

The more we access the unconscious area, the more we expand our horizons and enrich ourselves, we improve the life experience and even more so the creative one. That is why the experience of art, regardless of the pose (creator or spectator), can open precisely this fantastic perspective.

Theatre, without a clear intention, a goal, a meaningful, authentic and assumed message, no longer finds its purpose.

The next important step, after establishing a *clear intention*, valid both for the artist - when he creates his work, and for the viewer - when he perceives it, is *a relaxed, contemplative openness*, free of qualms or expectations, beyond concrete, everyday concerns, just to allow ourselves to immerse ourselves in that state, attentive, receptive to the emotions, thoughts and

sensations in the body that arise, to then follow our emotional reactions to the theme or the work.

But it is precisely the incessant search for truth through art that has opened multiple paths, some leading to the essence, others leading us away in a labyrinth, depending on the influences of the social-historical context or the purpose and attention of each seeker. But regardless of path or context, the essence remains there, in constant transformation, aligned with the Universe to which it belongs, at the core of all things.

From the psychological view, we will change the perspective to that of the neurosciences.

### **5. Creativity – The creative process from the perspective of neuroscience. Adaptive stages/references/resources – The 7 stages of the creative process**

There are views according to which creativity is strictly related to the right hemisphere of the brain (which, although outdated, still partially retains its veracity and applicability). Now, however, neuroscience has demonstrated and has become a unanimously accepted concept, that the creative process, one of the most complex, involves the whole brain, not only on the horizontal axis (left - right), but also on the vertical one; through a highly developed network of connections and even generates new circuits.

#### *The 7 stages of the conscious creative process*

- *Theme and intention* (clear but open, free of attachment) (beta)

Documentation, investigation. Triggering the creative engines (beta – alpha)

The first essential step involves finding, defining and conceptualizing the theme, the creative challenge. In other words, we set a clear *intention*, we set our purpose - why we chose that theme/piece and what we are aiming for, what we want to communicate, convey through it.

- *Flow state*; coherence – creativity (alpha)

The second phase is about our active involvement, "triggering the creative engines", investigating, accumulating ideas, information, data that could help us in the process, maybe

even discover new tracks. The brain begins to vibrate on the Alfa/Alpha frequency (8-13Hz), conducive to reverie, creativity, visualization exercises

- *Creative trance* (alpha, tetha, delta) – *creative perlaboration*

Starting with the third stage we start to really dig into the process. How does this happen? We relax the mind. Which is correlated not only with inspiration, but also with coherence, which begins to set in, and not just with well-being, but even with healing (balancing, homeostasis).

As we move deeper into creative trance, our brainwave frequency drops, entering Teta/Theta (4-8Hz), the state of increased presence and coherence. We access the deeper levels of the subconscious, the unconscious, which confers multiple benefits, both creative and therapeutic. We access, recognize and integrate deep truths - in a conscious creative process.

We are matter, energy and information. We create, capture and emit, pass on and matter (visible forms), but essentially all energy and information, through thoughts, emotions, words and actions. The energy circulates, it connects us through resonance waves, together with the information load, it is in permanent transformation, which makes possible and even justifies the transformations that can take place both in the creator and in the viewer (the connection created on the same frequency ensures a flow / continuous transfer, coherent, pregnant and impregnating, transformative, generating and responding, reciprocity). The more coherent, stronger, deeper the information flow and load, the greater the impact. Either they can overcome the resistances or they can provoke equally strong reactions from them, it is certain that, in any case, the most hidden aspects of the unconscious are awakened and come into the light of consciousness.

- *Creative revelation* – enlightenment, state of genius (gamma)

Neural studies show us that moments of *creative insight* (creative revelation, "aha!" moments) are moments of sudden enlightenment. On the EEG (electroencephalogram) one can see, during a creative interval, the appearance of Gamma wave activity (intense) projected for 300 milliseconds, before we become aware of the "big idea".

Gamma activity indicates the emergence of that new neural network between distant neurons, that novel association, and thus, the valuable new idea enters our consciousness. Physiologically, the cells of the right hemisphere gathered more information through their long branches and connections with the other parts of the brain and created new forms of

organization, new connections. In general, Gamma state indicators are: pleasure, joy, excitement.

- *Activation* – concretization of the concept (alpha – beta)

After the fabulous foray through all the filters of being, in which the artist experiences creativity (artistic trance), comes the last stage, Activation (Implementing), which re-anchors us in reality. The stage where an idea will either flourish or dissipate, perish.

Thus, in this stage, the ideas materialize coherently, first in our mind - the mental puzzle, the mental film is completed, and then they are transposed into the final sketches - of the concept, of the presentation, to make the concept visible to others, to be processed and implemented.

- *Materialization/Implementation* – interconnectivity (beta)

Starting with this stage, the process becomes eminently relational, collective, involving on the one hand the creative team, but also the entire production system and stage technicians, until the realization of the entire spectacular, at the premiere. So both the initial intention and the ultimate goal are of the whole, of the macro-system, with which we are indestructibly interconnected. That is why, in order to fulfill them, the vision also needs to be a systemic, holistic, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary one and not an individual one, which would truncate the whole by its smallness.

Each of these stages is equally necessary for a genuine and complete creative process with a meaningful finality, correlated with the intention and purpose initially established in the beginning stage of the process.

In the creative process, we work with 3 categories/stages of imagination. We launch ourselves into the creative dimension, into the field of all possibilities, using *pure imagination* for an unlimited openness to perceive and imagine anything, even the impossible. Then we resort to *creative imagination* to find ways, solutions, those novel ideas to turn the impossible into the possible and choose the ones relevant to us and the context. And in the last stage, the *innovative imagination* intervenes, in which we corroborate what we have imagined, with the data and the real, existing possibilities in order to develop and implement the optimal solution, with maximum potential for productivity and revelatory meaning.

## 6. Neurochemistry and the alchemy of creativity

Another answer/motivation for understanding, knowing and integrating the creative process as a whole is the ability to differentiate and keep the edge, the balance between *genius artist*, *madman* (psychotic, schizophrenic) or *drugged artist* - often correlated with "loser". That answer is *dopamine*.

However, dopamine is not the only neurotransmitter that makes our brain work, not even in the case of artists. There are hormones of happiness (*happy chemicals*) such as - dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin and endorphins - and hormones of survival - cortisol and adrenaline. A harmonious functioning of the entire neurochemical system creates our sense of meaning, balance, fulfillment, happiness.

Following a thorough research of all the mechanisms that participate in and constitute the creative process, I found that it is cyclical, complex, manifesting itself through the alternation between critical/analytical and creative thinking - imagination, intuition, emotion, inspiration; between convergent and divergent thinking, involves most brain structures and more, all neurochemical circuits and all brainwave frequencies.

I also understood that without awareness, balancing and taking responsibility for the entire internal system/mechanism, we either end up in the realm of rigidity, of the blockages generated by the lines of code that were written in the implicit realm of the Unconscious – which inhibits our creativity; or we lose ourselves in the sphere/bubble of fantasy, mechanical imagination, incoherence and meaninglessness, psychotic even.

## 7. Art with heart

The theatrical phenomenon functions as the integral mental system, in which the internal theatrical system (represented through the transbrain, as an embedded and relational system, with the environment and with others) is made whole by relating to the spectators in this larger environment. They are all aspects of the same reality: the continuous flow of energy and information. Hence the need for consistency.

*Transbrain* - refers to the fact that what we call the brain, is actually a complex system with a triple, interconnected structure - cranial brain, heart brain and enteric brain.

In the transdisciplinary spirit of this work, we will thus also investigate the "brain from the heart" and the relevance of the heart in establishing coherence and influence on creation, communication/relationship with others.

Electromagnetic fields/morphic fields and heart *magnetism* become keystones in establishing the coherent internal creative environment and in all stages of conscious creation and then in the inclusive broadcast of the message to the viewers.

The 3 aspects of magnetism: presence, power (encompassing, attraction, creation, communication/relationship) and warmth.

Returning to our senses, to our *essence*, to our nature, anchors us in existence, rehabilitates our perception and understanding, which indestructibly reconnects us to our creation as well. We return to the essence, by restoring the relations (connection) with the whole, with the primordial elements, with the earth - with the past, with the roots; with the sky - the Source, the future, and when they meet, with the present - through nature and human experience, both in the pose of creation and in that of (co-)creator. Awakening, rediscovering the senses and the self, the essence, leads to the restoration of balance, transforms chaos into coherence.

Connected to our essence, in coherence, with the fundamental senses awake, the space we build becomes an authentic transmutation of inner space, through the coherent flow that connects heart, brain, eyes (inner and outer gaze) and hand, in the purest process of *personalization*, under the aspect of uniqueness in the Unit.

The magnetism (of the heart) plays an essential role in this *personalization* process, with a double meaning: both in relation to the inner space and source creation, and in relation to how we emit, what we emit and the impact we generate outside.

What I want to emphasize here is that *personalization* is a large, complex process, indestructibly linked to our essence, to the *process of essentialization*, and both belong to a deep dimension that transcends the ego (with which personalization in particular might be undesirably associated, up to a certain level of understanding).

Both processes have as their source the Whole, the great complexity. Therefore they contain the Intrinsic Whole, they are whole (complete), full of meaning and therefore create the feeling of being full, of fulfillment.

## **8. Art with light**

Theatre intrinsically involves the presence of light, be it visible (spectacular) light or essential light (which the artist accesses in gamma frequency states - of creative insights, at least). Both forms are absolutely necessary, for the theatre to exist, and for the spectator to benefit from a unique, intense, integrative and transformative experience.

In the spectacular field, light is essential, as much as for life, but it cannot tell a story in itself without the presence of matter, just as the latter could not enter our perception without light. The story can only be communicated and perceived through the presence of both, in a directed dance between visible and invisible, essential and non-essential, frequency (wave) and vibration (particle), light and matter, in time and space, so that in the end, each viewer to remain under the impression of the created states, in their own version of the story experienced internally, at all levels, in the whole system.

### **9. Creative flow**

In this process, the first rule is the presence, the transfer from a mind of the past (which runs permanently on the basis of landmarks fixed in the past - on memory), to an awake, open, adaptable mind in relation to the present landmarks, which constantly creates through what it captures through conscious attention, in a state of observation, which it ritually integrates until it becomes them. At the same time, it accepts and adapts to the permanent change, in permanent *update* and *upgrade* processes, of the landmarks of reality and Truth, in contact/connection with the wider reality and consciousness that contain it, and it containing them as well. In this way, the vision of the whole, the potential energy of creation is huge, and the power to impact our reality and others accordingly.

The main effect of these aspects on the creative process is that of generating the *state of flow*. In this state of total absorption like that of *creative trance*, an altered state of consciousness in which time loses its measure and relevance, the mind functions at its maximum without a perception of effort, without fatigue or different thoughts, sensations without genuine relevance.

All we experience in this state is happiness (euphoria) and an amplified presence, where the attention is totally captured by the process, which is perfectly attuned to the changing conditions of the present, the context.

In Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's view, this complexity of optimal flow experience is generated through two fundamental psychological processes: *differentiation* and *integration*. What is revealing to us is that the two notions are perfectly congruent with what we have chosen

to call *personalization* and *essentialization*, approached in a similar context, the optimal state of flow, perfectly overlapping with our concept of *conscious creative flow*.

The beauty of complexity is given precisely by the harmonization and perfect systemic functioning of the whole and the parts.

We can thus consider that the optimal experiences of conscious creation, through the processes of essentialization and personalization, generate our state of balance, coherence, integrative fulfillment, both in the pose of theatre/art creator, and in our general human quality through which we are in this reality. Conscious creation thus becomes a form of knowledge, of inner education, with infinite potentialities of evolution and transformation.

## **10. Essential terminology and conclusions of the conscious creation process in the unity of knowledge**

*Personalization*/differentiation mainly relates to our identity, which includes body and mind (more or less split or integrated), which also implies boundaries.

*Reality* is determined by the state of consciousness of a consciousness – which makes all experience possible. We thus relate to consciousness as the fundamental reality.

*Consciousness* is the sum of all knowledge and all experiences, realized through the trinity of body-mind-spirit. That is why it opens up a multidimensional universe (with infinite potential), which we can experience, live.

*The fundamental reality* is that field of pure consciousness, of infinite potential, responsible for creativity, synchronicity, unpredictable, paradoxical and perpetual transformation. It is therefore also the source of intentions and attention. Because of the indestructible interconnectedness of these experiences, when a change occurs in one, it ripples through all aspects. Thus, if you change the perspective, the way of thinking, the perception also changes, implicitly the thoughts, emotions, creativity, images, sounds, imagination.

*Physical reality* is a perceptual interpretation of human consciousness, therefore, the level of expansion of consciousness also determines the perceptual expansion, in direct proportional relationship.

*Perceptual/evident reality* is determined by the information we capture through the senses – sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and then it is processed, rewritten (reinterpreted) by the brain, which generates its limitation. Thus, we only experience our own perceptions and



interpretations of them. What lies outside our consciousness does not exist for us. Mind, emotions are appearances, altered forms of consciousness.

Attachment to any form, phenomenon, experience, way of thinking, knowing, or even identification with them, limits us.

Only by returning to the Essence, to the Source of knowledge, experiences and phenomena do we become free. That posture allows us a clear, detached, holistic and coherent perception.

The source of thought is the source of every perception, every sensation or feeling. The brain is itself a perceptual experience, another created form, a conceptual landmark. What is a perceptual experience cannot be its source, nor can it generate consciousness.

Vital essence/life force energy animates pure consciousness, designates its activity. It is a subtle energy that encompasses the entire chain of our experiences and activity on all levels.

If we realize that beyond the narratives/mental movies we are infinite consciousness, we will also hold *the key to infinite creativity*. This can be accessed in a conscious creative process, whereby we transcend all the filters and narratives in our minds (what we tell ourselves and experience), to create the story we want to consciously create.

In other words, it is necessary to detach from memory, from past experiences, which already no longer exist, in order to create the present, in relation to the full potential of the present and what is relevant here and now. Otherwise, through everything we experience now, we recreate, "recycle" the past as an illusion of the present. And there is nothing we can do to overcome the "bubble" of our self-evident reality. This narrows our scope of impact on viewers, without an update, a connection to the present time, and reporting to a collective, larger, unifying consciousness that includes others.

*Creativity* implies the creation of a new context, new meanings. Creativity is not an algorithm, but the destruction/interruption of any algorithm. It represents the processes of transformation, discovery, change. *Conscious creation* involves sine qua non transcending thoughts, emotions, any limiting filters and getting to their source to generate something different, new. In this endeavor, unbiased, nonjudgmental *observation* is the royal road to Essence.

The capacity for present, unbiased observation is related to the focus of our attention, to what we can perceive, grasp now. Where there is attention, there is creative energy. If the mind is in the past and not present, we do not grasp anything. We will keep repeating the same stories over and over and over again by our brains.

## **II. PERSPECTIVE AND FORMS OF EXPRESSION OF SPECTACULAR CREATIVITY IN CONTEMPORARY THEATRE**

### **1. Surrealism in scenography – free and liberating creative force. The super-reality/superconscious or quantum field; surrealism and the quantum character of creativity – generator of new forms of spectacular art**

In the holistic vision of our thesis, we cannot direct attention to the forms of expression of spectacular art without starting from one of the main generating sources of this type of open, complex, transdisciplinary relationship, which still makes its presence felt in many spectacular visions - surrealism.

Through the connections and the adoption of new discoveries, such as psychoanalysis (Freud), Theory of Relativity (Einstein), quantum physics, on the one hand, as well as empirical knowledge (mysticism, alchemy, metaphysics), their transdisciplinary vision and the influence they have on all art forms.

The relationship between art and physics, for example, gives us the degree of coherence in terms of perception and understanding of the world in which we exist. Any imbalance in this ratio would result in either rigidity and inner emptiness or chaos.

The revolution of the Surrealists, precisely due to their transdisciplinary character, opened doors to new forms of complex and innovative artistic perception and expression, thus determining, directly or through influence, the new types of language and relationship, both in the visual arts and in the theater. Surrealist language still represents an effective way in which unified knowledge, as an effect of transdisciplinarity, can be accessible to the public, to viewers through the fundamental language of images.

Through the creation of artists such as Giorgio de Chirico, M. C. Escher, Max Ernst, Rene Magritte, then Salvador Dali - with whom we already enter the spectacular universe and culminating with Antonin Artaud, we create a broad, comprehensive vision of what the freedom of infinite creativity means, which the unity of knowledge through the transdisciplinary approach confers and which surrealism brought to the consciousness of art and theatre creators.

The narrative non-linearity of the stage action is the characteristic of the new dramaturgy proposed by the surrealists. By juxtaposing the most diverse environments, layers of reality, it achieves a closeness to the film universe through a filmic theater structure. The dream becomes the drama itself - that intensely experienced lucid dream, real, contrary to the symbolist dream state.

## **2. Collective creation – generator of new spectacular forms – Theatre installation/theatrical installation**

Installation in art refers to a form of artistic expression that involves the creation of an environment or a three-dimensional space in a gallery, museum or public place, and which fusionally combines several environments, several apparently distinct elements, but which linked by essence, only together can they communicate the full message. It is a form of contemporary art that differs from traditional art in that it is not limited to a static work, but engages the viewer in an interactive and immersive experience. The work of art undergoes a transmutation from a two-dimensional "picture frame" to a three-dimensional, inclusive frame that absorbs the viewer, for whom the work becomes an experience.

The viewer can be involved through incursion and close research of the environment, being constantly surprised by what he discovers along the way, or he can be asked to act to such an extent that the experience becomes a happening. It may thus involve complex, multisensory stimulation.

The installation has a systemic quality, thus, each part, element contains the essence of the message of the whole, and the whole includes the meaning of each part, without missing any. And this gives it wholeness, even though it is more than the sum of its parts.

The art of the installation generates a consistent change of relationship, from the visual perception of the forms from the outside, to an extended and complex perception, through which we experience the forms from within them, facilitating our access to a deeper understanding of its essence and through resonance, to become aware of aspects of one's essence.

We can consider the installation a "holistic experience" as expressed by the Surrealists, who created a first form of art thus expressed, on the occasion of the International Exhibition of Surrealists (1938), at the Gallery of Fine Arts, in Paris. We therefore notice a synchronization between art and theatre regarding spatialization.

After other gropings of this kind of artistic experience, from 1958, Allan Kaprow authenticates this style through his works, which replaced painting with "the creation of the pictorial event". To the same prolific artist we also owe the concepts of ambient theatre and happening - all being forms of interactive spatial artistic expression that can interfere until total fusion and forms related to the genre called performance art. The installation still retains its identity.

The term "theatrical installation" can be used differently by different creators, and such projects can vary according to the specific vision and concept of each artist or performance team. We will bring to your attention some examples of theatrical installations that were made by artists and theatre companies in different contexts and periods:

"The Encounter" - the creation of the British director Simon McBurney and the theatre company Complicite.

"Sleep No More" - one of the productions of this kind that has experienced unprecedented success, through the total experience it generates in the viewer. An interactive theatrical installation made by the theatre company Punchdrunk, in 2011 and co-directed by Felix Barrett and Maxine Doyle (who is also the show's choreographer).

"Tree" - A collaboration between director Kwame Kwei-Armah and South African songwriter and singer Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

"Theatrum Mundi" - An international project of theatrical installations initiated by director Romeo Castellucci.

And Katie Mitchell has created and directed various theatrical installations in her career. "Five Truths" - This theatrical installation presents the madness and death of Ophelia from five different perspectives, by some essential directors of the theatre of the 20th century: C. Stanislavski, A. Artaud, B. Brecht and Peter Brook.

Bernard Dort celebrates through the new reform that the "installation-spectacle" brings by gaining freedom from the text, from the tutelary, often tyrannical and destructive authority of the director. The spectacular space is an environment that communicates its own message,

its own story, engaging the spectators in an unmediated process, experience triggering the state of presence, of active awareness and implicitly of real knowledge and self-knowledge.

### **3. Environmental theatre**

Between the "pictorial event" - installation, happening and ambient theatre, the steps are very small, sometimes this interval is lost. Schechner refers to Ambient Theatre as a form of performance that, implicitly, "is organically defined by action"<sup>1</sup> and by a permanent active and interconnected exchange of stimuli.

In the idea of merging the arts, theatre man Richard Schechner met with composer Paul Epstein and painter Franklin Adams to give birth to a new form of theatrical art. This is just one more proof that the theatre is a meeting place for the unique, so that the future can be created from that present experience.

The space benefits from great freedom and also offers great experiential freedom, an equitable situation that generates the difference in ratio. Consequently, perspective, connectivity, complicity and interactive experience are the benefits transferred to viewers in this form of spectacular experience.

### **4. Immersive theatre – the Spectator, in his capacity as co-creator; "spectator-space dyad" - the center/essence of immersive theatre - ambient theatre**

I believe that this transmutation is due to the healing (as Patrice Pavis also declared) and transformative character of this approach, after the alienating excess of technology and multimedia. As previously stated, it is purification by returning "home" to the essence of our being, and by extension, to the connections between us, to the space between us, to our human family. It represents a return to our real experiences, to our authentic experiences generated naturally through direct interaction.

The total, fusional, responsible involvement from both sides (artists and spectators) in the spectacular context generates the state of catharsis.

Set design is the main means of communication/interaction with the viewer. Together they become the center of the spectacular ensemble/event.

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<sup>1</sup> Schnechner, Richard, Performance, translated by Ioana Ieronim, Bucharest, Unitext publishing house 2009, p. 200

The scenography now gains its full spatiality and becomes fully encompassing and containing. As Andreea Iacob also notes in her book, the stage space becomes 3D again, it brings us back to the physical space, the set regains its materiality and through direct interaction with the viewer, it calls for a thorough approach, down to the smallest details, it becomes filmic rather than theatrical. The space totally absorbs the viewer, placing them at the center of attention and action. Immersive performance is a return to direct and full experience, not only sensory, but even bodily/physical, which requires an anchoring in the present, in the here and now – generating transformation<sup>2</sup>. The spectator is not only included, but also actively participates in the artistic act, becomes co-creator and implicitly, master of his own experience of (self) knowledge. Therefore, we consider *immersive theatre* to be a peak representative of *theatre-knowledge*.

Punchdrunk - a UK immersive theatre company; Third Rail Projects - a theatre company in New York; Rimini Protokoll - a theatre company from Germany are companies that approach this form of total theatrical expression.

## **5. Non-linear theatre and Meta-theatre**

### *Spectacular/scenographic non-linearity*

All these forms of contemporary theatrical expression that I have brought up for debate have one more essential common quality – non-linearity. And this feature affirms an essential truth, that the art of the theatre has left the intellectualized area and reached another, a much deeper level of understanding. Theatre now stands at the level of knowledge and at the same time of conscious creation.

The non-linearity in the artistic expression that actually represents a mirroring of the creative thinking, which is transferred to the performance as such in the absence of the constraint of a linear narrative structure of a text. They have their logic and coherence, but under a spherical relationship, as in the construction of mental maps, they represent the natural order of things (in the Universe). That's why it gives freedom to both creators and active viewers. A non-linear spectacular creation has the force to generate the authentic context of life itself in the performance space. This quality allows the viewer to be surprised, encompassed, included.

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<sup>2</sup> Andreea Iacob, *From technological to immersive: towards a theatre of the spectator and the space*, Cluj-Napoca, Școala Ardeleană Publishing House; Bucharest: Eikon, 2020, p.356

In the situation of non-literality, the scenography can be conceptual, performative or mixed, depending on the intention and the goal that the spectacular ensemble pursues. Conceptual scenography describes an approach to set design that emphasizes ideas, concepts, and symbols rather than realism or technical detail. Rather than creating a realistic physical setting or environment, conceptual set design aims to communicate a theme, emotion, or idea through visual elements.

In independent forms such as installations or performance art, the concept belongs entirely to him, and the scenographer's attention is focused on himself, as the conscious source of the emitted message, on the viewer and on the space between one and the other, which in this case contains the creation, and the creation contains it.

It seems to be a necessity of our times. As a result of the development of technology, the overflow of stimuli and information that unfolds at a dizzying pace, it becomes very difficult for the human brain to process all this in the way it was predominantly used, the linear one. At the same time, the call to the processing mode of creative thinking generates an opening to new horizons such as knowledge of the Universe, quantum physics, spirituality and implicitly, personal development.

Director Robert Lepage noted this aspect, which he also correlated with the acceptance of a different kind of cinematic language, declaring to the *New Yorker* (December 28, 1992) that: "Now People have a new language, and it's not linear."<sup>3</sup>

*Societas Raffaello Sanzio* - Italian theatre company led by Romeo Castellucci, often explores non-linear structures.

Ariane Mnouchkine, director and founder of the famous theatre *Le Théâtre du Soleil* in Paris, is known for her holistic, non-linear theatrical approach that integrates dance, music, scenography and acting techniques to create spectacular and complex performances. In 1970 she initiated collective creation and, in this way, she systematically approaches the creative process.

Richard Foreman, founder of *Ontological-Hysterical Theatre* (1968) is another American theatre director and scenographer, known for using non-linear scenography and unconventional elements in his productions. In his approach he vehemently rejects the idea of

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Lepage, Maria Şevţova, Christopher Innes, *Directors directing: dialogues about theatre*, translated by Edith Negulici, Bucharest, "Camil Petrescu" Foundation, Teatrul Azi Cheiron Publishing House, 2010, p.110

linearity/continuity, to the point of imposing "an uninterrupted mobility of subject, purpose and perspective"<sup>4</sup>. They remain as the foundation "which are believed to be the real, but hidden bases of our existence." So his only benchmark is reconnecting to Essence.

'The Gods Are Pounding My Head!'(2005) AKA Lumberjack Messiah, Ontological Theatre, New York, is a show that explores the theme of identity and self in a fragmented and dislocated manner. Foreman uses unusual sets and lighting and creates an intense, immersive and transformative theatrical environment..

"Panic! (How to Be Happy!)" (2003), which premiered at the Ontological Theatre, New York, is a labyrinthine and enigmatic performance that investigates the nature of reality and human consciousness.

The unmediated character of the theatre through the new "uses of the play space that refuse to simply subordinate themselves"<sup>5</sup>, allows "reflexivity". Thus we arrive at "that form of *meta-theatre* in which a play meditates on its own processes that it represents"<sup>6</sup>. The creator becomes that observant witness to the viewer's experience. This claims the importance of "intense theatre presence" which becomes an intrinsic necessity, from all perspectives - of both creators and spectators, who implicitly become more aware of themselves and the spectacular experience alike.

In this kind of theatrical context, scenography itself becomes a meta-art, as a space, a generative environment, sustaining and witnessing the experience.

## **6. Spectacular constellations/spectacular systems**

To bring more clarity to the spectacular evolution, in time and space, we will create the overview of dynamic successions, by means of graphics, which we will call *Spectacular Systemic Constellations*.

### 1. Totalitarian systems – Spectacular subjective realities

#### *a. The playwright, as the epicenter of scenic creation*

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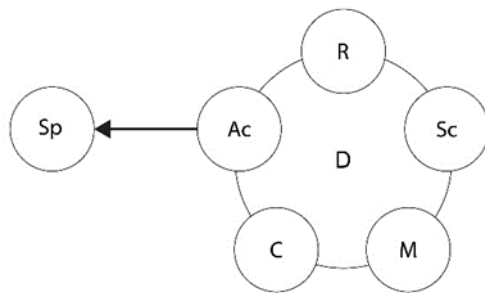
<sup>4</sup> Connor, Steven, *Postmodern culture: an introduction to contemporary theories*, translated by Mihaela Oniga, Bucharest, Meridian publishing house, 1999, pp.192-193.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem., p.186

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem., p.186



The playwright has the status of unique authority, thus imposing his own truth, as unique and to which others must obey. This is a relationship of total subordination, in which the playwright generates the text and wants it to be illustrated on stage as faithfully as possible, putting others in the pose of performers, without the chance to assert their own creativity. As a result, the performances become cumbersome, descriptive, monotonous, immobile and "flat", devoid of expressiveness. (Naturalism). Also, the spectacular system has a manipulative, unidirectional character.

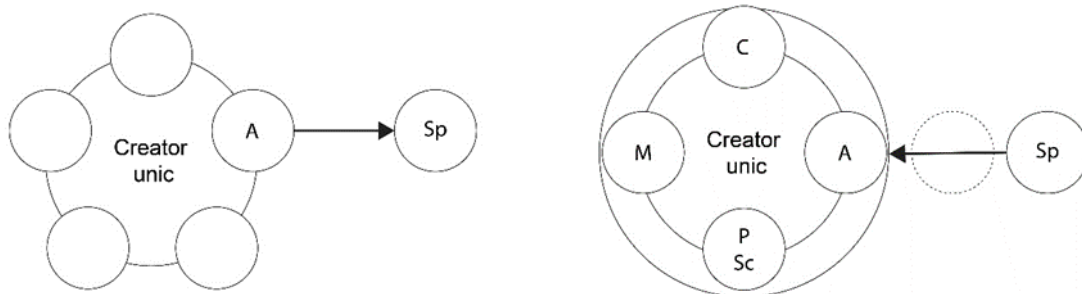


Subjective truth

Sp – spectator; A(c) – actor; D – playwright; C – composer; M – movement; Sc – scenographer (painter, in the presented case); the big circle - the spectacular ensemble

The viewer remains outside the reference system - information is transmitted to him, without the possibility of a real experience - distance from the subject.

*b. Establishing directorial authority – total creator*



unique – extended vision

Unique Creator – Subjective Truth. Creator

Starting with A. Appia and then confirmed and theorized by Craig, the new reform is asserted by the establishment of the directorial regime, which "arrogates all its attributions" and which will have long echoes in the way of reporting in the theatre system of the 20th century, with various nuances.

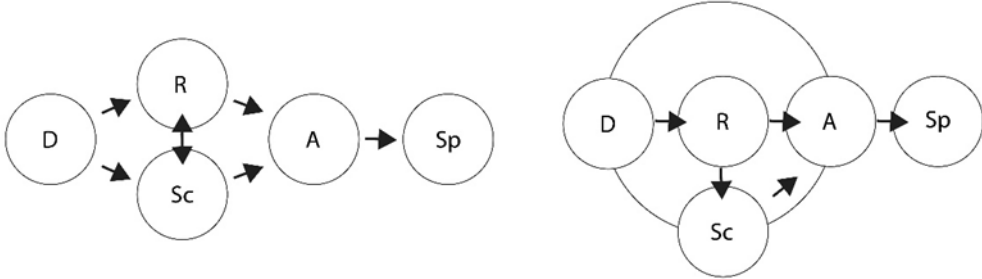
Forms of the "total spectacle", modeled after Wagner, taken up by both A. Appia and G. Craig. They assumed the status of total creator, generator of a total and "finished" show. Such spectacular dynamics, which we still find today, risk producing self-sufficiency, which blocks creative flow and evolution, keeping the creator, captive in his own bubble, self-evident reality.

From these first two constellation structures, two others will be born, as a next step.

2. Convention theatre, with its linear structure

It has a more anchored, more analytical, "more down-to-earth" approach, while preserving the "individual-conflictual" character.

D – playwright, R – director; A – actor; Sp – spectator – represents the pillar, the main direction, Sc – scenographer, to which musicians (M) or choreographers (C) can be added, who represent the adjacent/secondary pillar



The starting point is the text, but the director is the system generator. His main mobile, the center of focus is the actor and his training in the integration of the method imposed by the director, with the aim of conveying the director's creed/concept to the viewer as faithfully and

convincingly as possible, as a unique way of approaching and interpreting the dramaturgical text.

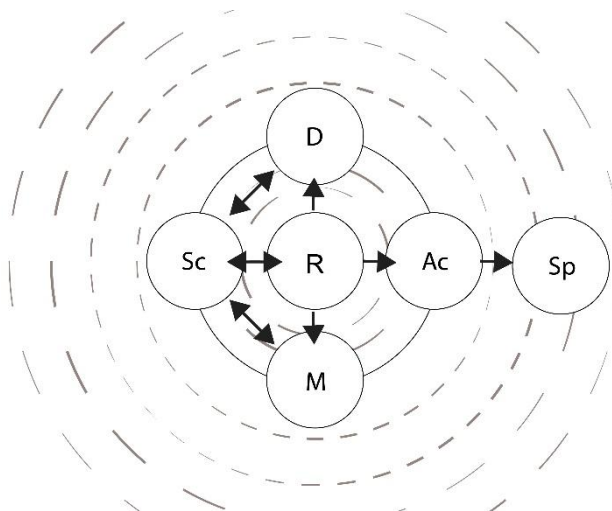
In the dynamics of this system, there is a coherent energy-informational impulse, an inertia, but altered by the environments it passes through - by the frictions of each micro-system (artist), by the perceptual filters, which affect the accuracy of the initial intention, precisely through the fact that it is imposed from the outside, processing, integration, and mode of expression, involves a degree of relativity (the "cordless telephone" principle).

### 3. The constellation of metaphysical vision

Another approach is that of the metaphysical vision, of relating vertically to something greater and investigating the essence behind the forms. Intuited and expressed by Artaud, it is then researched and implemented by Brook, Grotowski and Kantor, each in their own way.

This obliges the director to expand the horizon of knowledge and perception, so that, through his own openness and his own potential, he creates an exploratory field open to others as well, in relation to the essential void/divinity, generating the connection with the entire creative potential, through presence. As a result, the entire spectacular field activates the potential for expansion, thus including the viewer.

So, many of the barriers are already abolished, and in a more responsible approach, the way to *conscious creation* and shared, transformative experience is opened, on the way to the *unity of knowledge*, respectively of *theatre-knowledge*.



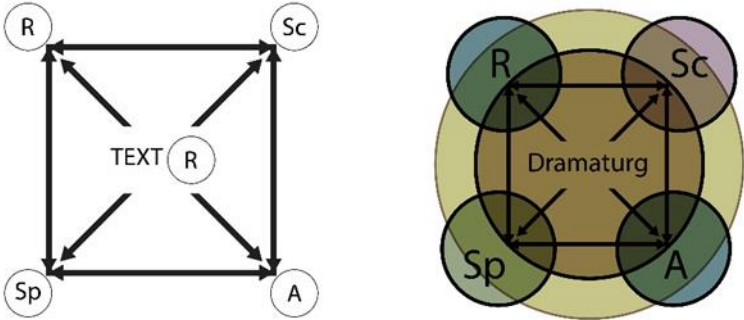
The objectification of truth

The first central circle (larger) represents the director, still in the pose of generator, still imposing a method, but the spectacular field (second circle) - which includes all creators, contains the potential for expansion.

4. The collaborative constellation

The next structure that is taking shape and which is widely applied, is a hybrid form between the convention theatre (sometimes bearing the imprint of the metaphysical variant) and the free forms of collective creation that will follow, which we will call a *collaborative structure*. This generally has a basic formula of the director and set designer meeting the actors and then the audience. We will represent the basic structure to understand its dynamics.

Collaborative (Pre-Collective) Creation – Common Truth



This structure announces the "democratization of creation." Creators meet and create teams, based on shared creed/truth, and the show is a result of their democratic collaboration, a shared "adventure of knowledge".

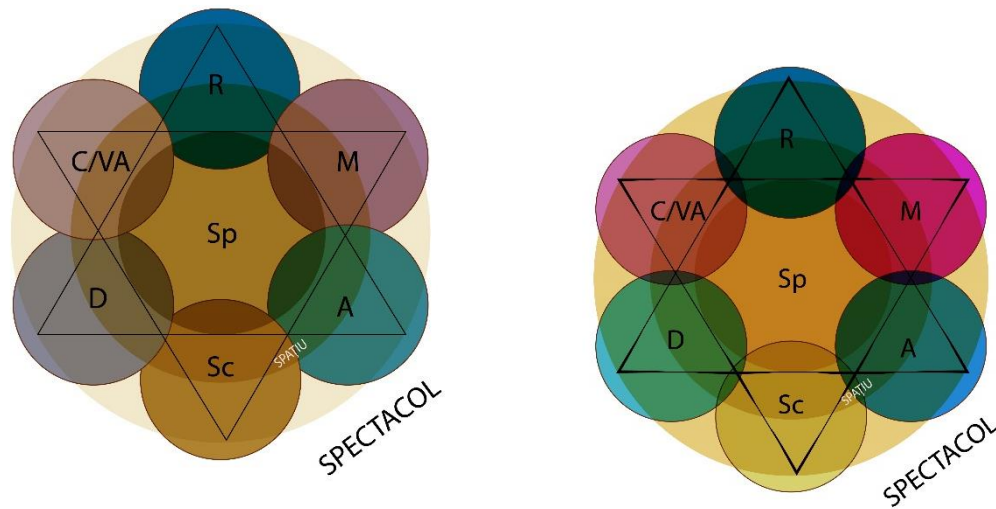
This marks the becoming process of the spectacular integrative structure and collective creation.

5. *The constellation of the holistic approach – The integral performance – the immersive, non-linear, multidimensional and multidirectional theatre – the pinnacle of theatrical creation*

We come back to the present, literally and figuratively. We return to become conscious co-creators together. This updated form of spectacular creation, the holistic one, calls for the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach and becomes a full-fledged *collective creation*, as we were able to see in the previous sub-chapter.

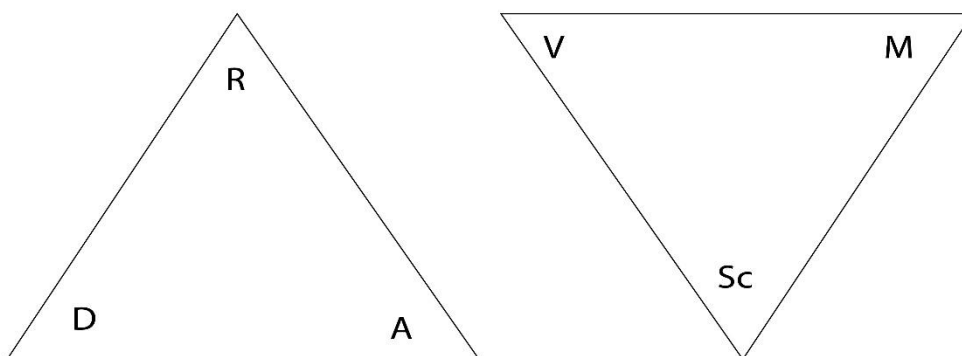
The focus turns to the essence within us and through this we connect and transfer our attention to the viewer and the space between us which becomes the very creation, carrier and container of this essence that unites us indestructibly and implicitly, carrier of its infinite potential. The space between us and within us is both the spectacular space and our inner space (of creators and spectators).

In this case, we have a continuous systemic relationship to something (a system) larger, more comprehensive. It is the spectacular one, as a reference system in creation that also includes the spectators, and there are always the others, more and more extensive, up to the Universal one. Theatrical creation leaves the individual-conflict area, to adopt a specific "collective-community", *collective-extended*, *essentialized* and *personalized* at the same time.



The constellation of the holistic theater – *the theatre of knowledge*

The optimal constellation of the holistic theatre is this complete system, which includes the entire range of forms of expression, interdisciplinary, interconnected. It thus becomes an absolute, balanced, permanently balancing and flexible system. The interconnected, fusional creative forces generate a continuous creative flow with ample spherical (360°) expansive potential. A kaleidoscopic structure of transformative potential, where each part is a vector, a perfect active structure (equilateral triangle) and each interconnectedly amplifying the potential of the whole.



Connection with heaven – through Logos (D+R+A), Conex. with the earth – matter, vibration, magnetism (Sc+V/C+M), D – the playwright, R – the director, A – the actor, Sc – scenography, V – video artist, C – choreography (stage movement), M – ambience sound, music, Sp - the viewer.

The triangle with the tip pointing up represents the vertical connection with the sky/Universe/Divinity – the spiritual part. That is why I associated this triangle with the Logos - the word, and that is why it contains those who are directly connected with it: the playwright, the director and the actor.

In the downward-pointing triangle, we have those connected with the senses through creation, namely: the musician, the choreographer/video artist and the scenographer. At the bottom, being at the same time the one who establishes the connection with matter, with the earth, he is more practical, more anchored and anchors through his creation - the scenographer. In addition, the latter creates the basis, the containing medium for everything else.

The two triangles are interconnected, and the 6 personalized micro-systems are vectors and sources of potential for the whole. The seventh micro-system is the center.

The perfection of this constellation is also anchored and enhanced by the sacredness of this geometry. Only a *conscious creator* can generate such structures, which vectorially amplify the spectacular potential, harmonizing them in perfect balance, conferring the maximum freedom of expansion through creation, multidirectional, but all these creative forces, indestructibly interconnected and supported by this fluid, emerging structure.

## **7. Conclusions**

The conscious, responsible, intra- and interconnected act of creation with the entire spectacular system becomes a transformative, evolutionary vehicle.

### **III. ESSENTIALIZATION AND PERSONALIZATION – REPRESENTATION METHODS / TECHNIQUES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF VISUAL PERCEPTION AND CONSCIOUS CREATION**

#### **A. Visual perception**

We will begin by investigating the *visual perception* and its contextual environment, in order to reveal the meanings of the proposed methods. The visual sense is the main means by which we perceive external and internal reality - being also the specific language of non-conscious structures.

Because we cannot perceive nor express more than we are as an emanation of the internal environment, than our own obvious reality, we deduce that they always reflect the truth of this world, this inner reality, without the possibility of intervention, of control.

Our relationship to the world is often expressed by how we "see" the world and refers to our perceptual filters as the "glasses", the "lenses" through which we experience it.

As we evolve as a complex being, we also expand our perception/vision. This perceptual expansion and the ability to capture/receive both the whole and the parts, from a visual perspective, corresponds empirically to what I described in a previous chapter as simultaneous (binocular) vision, more common in the case of visual artists, which, however, can be developed in almost any human in the fullness of physiological and cognitive functions, which in our case can be a potential creative partner, respectively a spectator.

In general, we tend to overuse focused gaze from the fovea area through the photoreceptor cells – cones, *central vision*. It is indestructibly connected with *the angle of vision*. It is still a superficial, selective, limiting view that only allows us to take stock of what is brought to our attention.

For the development of visual perception and simultaneous vision, it is necessary to know and consciously experience the entire visual apparatus, both modes of vision, so we will advance our research to the second capacity, that of *peripheral vision*.

Peripheral vision refers to the ability of the eyes to perceive objects and information outside the visual angle. It is the extended area around the central point of our vision and relates to the *visual field*. It influences how we perceive shapes and contours. It is very useful in drawing, in art.

For a clearer and deeper view of these aspects, Daniel J. Siegel also proposes the relaxed but vigilant perspective of the observer, by changing the flow of the mind, in relation to the three structures of the brain.

In different cultures, the peripheral gaze is considered the "all-encompassing gaze".



The global image, the perception of forms in relation to space is definitely obtained through the active use of both types of vision, of the entire integrated system.

In a linear, focused perception, where attention is directed in one direction, it causes everything else (360°) to go unnoticed, unenhanced and much is lost.

The capacity of unitary perception, that of seeing the whole and the parts alike, generates *vision*—that characteristic of the awake observer, aware of himself and of what he experiences.

As all our theatrical, existential or any kind of experience can only be in a relational, connective form, then the searches, the methods by which we support these processes are, as a result, based on the creation of connections, whether *neural*, *systemic connections* between parts - integrative associations or *interpersonal connections*.

Perception based on the functioning of the right hemisphere guides us to what is beyond the words ("between the lines and beyond the text"), beyond concepts, forms, "to reveal to us the connections that shape the whole."<sup>7</sup>

Jung believed that the integration of the two concepts he developed, the animus (masculine principle - Yang) and anima (feminine principle - Yin) is an important process in personal development and in achieving a state of psychological balance.

By looking at our dual nature through the lens of two complementary and interdependent forces that coexist and change in a dynamic relationship, we can understand that opposites are not separate but part of a whole, and that balance and harmony can be achieved by recognizing and the integration of these complementary energies into our lives – the principle of the included third. We can also have a more extensive perspective on our tendency to polarized perception, to separate, although in essence it is just one whole, the same energy – tendencies that bear the imprint and filters of our psyche and our dual processing mode.

Our need to choose is also implicitly due to this aspect - free will.

Conscious, responsible choices in the creative process presuppose a knowledge of the source, of one's own nature that generates the creative act, with its particularities. Creation involves a conscious pendulum between the zones of "obscurity" and "precision", "distinction". From the same internal, unupdated environment, we will never succeed in generating something

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<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p.185

new, innovative. This is why it is essential that the creative process begins with the assessment, "sanitization" and updating of *the inner creative space*.

### **B. Preconditions for the conscious process of essentialization and personalization within methods**

As I presented previously, the mind is that emergent system of energy and information flow, present in us and outside of us – relationally and spatially, that energy-informational field that contains us and we contain it, which we can call *the mental field*. At the same time, from this perspective, we deduce that the mind is the bearer or container of the essence. Thus, the conscious process of its integration represents the *essentialization* process.

*The enteric brain* is the sensory, intuitive one, where impulses take place, it is the reservoir of vital energy, in that area the combustions in the body that produce energy take place, it is the sexual, creative, vital energy.

*The heart brain*, about which I have written more previously, is responsible for the affective register, creativity, imagination, magnetism in establishing connections and communication, the relevance of the senses, capture and inclusion (also due to magnetism) and intuition.

*The cerebral brain*, the encephalon, whose functions we have presented quite a lot in relation to our topic of study, corresponds mainly to the cognitive register, the intellect, the analytical area, but last but not least, the spirit and the vertical connection.

The mind creates the imprints, generating meanings, which through mindsight (the ability to observe the mind) we can reassess and shape, transform or integrate. Through this observing sense we expand perception, gain self-knowledge and the ability to regulate all levels of the mind, better communication and relating, as well as knowledge and regulation of the "neural mediating mechanisms" in the brain, aspects that constitute the foundations of our life and manifestation creative. Thus, before any endeavor, it is necessary to create a relaxed, connective, safe, containing, inclusive environment - *a field of creation*, of practice.

The most important aspect is to establish the connection with ourselves, with others and with the space between us. This also involves a detachment from the environment we come from, with all the burden it entails, to create space to connect with present experience.

Then we induce a relaxed, alpha-type state that supports creativity - through story and breathing exercises, mindfulness, which connects us with the present context.

The next important step is – establishing the clear intention, the purpose for which each has come.

We will practice the "mandarin technique" (from *photoreading* and NLP), which induces our state of relaxed attention. The smile is the way to creativity, to openness to new experiences.

## **C. Methodology**

### **1. Spherical, radial (non-linear) approach – Integral mental system**

#### 1.1. Mind map

Let us start from the fact that, in the prefrontal lobe of our brain, neurons are activated in the form of patterns that generate the formation of mental (neuronal) representations, which are actually maps of the world, based on which images are formed, at the level mental.

This area of the prefrontal cortex enables our temporal perceptions and representations, thus being able to process past experiences, represent present aspects or project the future. This is where the visual representation of the mind is generated, "mindsight maps" (called by him "mindsight maps"), a topic we are now developing. Siegel brings up three very interesting notions. The map that allows us to analyze internally is the "me-map", then the map that allows us to know the other, the "you-map", to which we add a "we-map", as a representation of our relationship<sup>8</sup>.

*Mind mapping* as a method of mapping thoughts, as a tool for holistic thinking (considered the most powerful thinking tool in the world), using the whole brain (both hemispheres) was created by Tony Buzan in 1960 as a result of his research in neuroscience.

The idea started from the structure of a neuron, with its multiple ramifications, which depart from the center of the cell, forming connections and carrying on information and energy that begin to take on new forms and meanings.

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<sup>8</sup> Daniel J. Siegel, *Mindsight: a new science of personal transformation*, translated by Mugur Butuza, Bucharest, Herald Publishing House, 2021, pp. 30-31

*The mind map* can also be approached as *a systemic constellation*. Psychotherapist Mark Wolynn uses the term "Core Language Map" in his therapeutic method of healing transgenerational trauma. This approach also applies to creating the spectacular map/constellation.

It thus uses the primal, fundamentally human visual language and way of processing through imagination and association in relation to a location that gives meaning. In this radial structure, the branches are positioned in a certain logic, the universal logic, it develops in a clockwise, dextrogyrate - but depending on the intention, theme, it can also be developed in a left-handed direction, the sense of rotation of the earth, of the essential movement - and they all have a common root, in the core theme - therefore they are easy to "photograph", memorize, integrate. Its structure is radiant, because our creative thinking is also radiant and the infinite radiations can be divided into infinity.

In this way, we can explore an idea in depth, through its multitude of ramifications. The way this structure allows us to generate new ideas through the creative freedom it gives us, through expansion, through the limitlessness of the mind mirrored on the page, being able to occupy any empty space and find new associations and create connections between branches as well, which we identify quickly accessing the *essentialized* overview, leads us to a genuine and high *personalization* in the development of the concept, of the core idea.

Non-linear organic flow, like neural structures, activates and develops our creative thinking, imagination and inventiveness, while the linear approach limits our ability to access and integrate the information flow, inhibits creativity. Also, the symbol images, the color used in both the symbol images and the variously colored branches, but which also connects the interrelated concepts, inspires us, produces harmony, aesthetic pleasure and empowers us creatively. Through words/concepts, organization, we activate the left hemisphere, and through color, line and organic structure, symbols and spatiality, we activate the right one. Color is also a stimulus for (visual) memory. We will memorize it much easier than a linear and monotonous list. "Visual information is processed by the brain 60,000 times faster than text."<sup>9</sup>

As we will see, we integrated the mind map into the neurographic art method. It will become a tool for working with the subconscious within a neurographic algorithm. At the same

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<sup>9</sup> Tony, Buzan, *The Art of Mastering the Mind Map*, translated by Carmen Dragomir, Bucharest, Didactica Publishing House, 2019, p. 40.

time, through a fusional process, through resonance and compatibility at the level of essential/fundamental constitutive principles, it becomes the very algorithm itself.

### 1.2. Neurographic art

Neurographics is a Meta-modern psychotherapeutic method according to the 21st century, a psychotechnology created by Pavel Mikhailovichi Piskarev – architect, Doctor of Psychology and professor, founder of the Institute of Psychology of Creativity. It is a method based on theoretical foundations of psychology, philosophy, sociology and neurosciences, scientific foundations expressed and enhanced through the language of art. Piskarev is of the principle that "the miracle of art creates the miracle of life." This method represents a complex of techniques that facilitate the integrative connection of man with himself, with the immediate environment and with the world, supported at the same time by concepts created by him such as: Integrative Theory of human knowledge, "Metamodern", "Pyramid of Development", "Personality with multiple roles", "Aesthetic Intelligence", the NeuroGestalt program or other aspects taken from other established sciences, environments and therapeutic methods (Gestalt, Systemic Constellations, NLP, Jungian psychoanalysis, etc.). Neurographics "celebrate life" and it is a way we transform, recreate the world with the help of a marker and colors; we wake up inspired. It is a practice of accompanying and supporting creative and life projects, through the development of aesthetic intelligence.

It operates on the basis of ten laws, relates to and acts on all levels of consciousness (physical, emotional, mental, soulful – in relation to spirit/Essence, Source).

Neurographics has 4 active principles:

#### *Active I - theme*

The word (Logos) – refers, first of all, to the concept of Neuro-graphics (graphics of neural structures), and then, the core theme that becomes the intention, the goal, the fulfilled objective.

Through neurographics, we change our thought patterns and the behaviors they generate by changing neural pathways. We train the neuroplasticity of the brain, at the same time we release tension, transform, integrate and harmonize, by means of specific algorithms.

#### *Active II - the line*

*The neurographic line* - has bionic qualities, found in nature (lightning, the outline of the mountains, the outline of the clouds, waves, etc. - in the macro; and in the micro - in organic, cellular, neuronal structures - nervous system, respectively circulatory system and lymphatic system). It is a psychomodelling tool.

In addition to the neurographic line, we use three basic geometric shapes, with which we can create any composition, approach any theme, represent any situation or purpose. We make an uplifting systemic constellation of any context or intention. These are the circle, triangle and square.

#### *Active III - rounding*

"Rounding" or "conjugation" (see Appendix 4) represents a unique graphic model of Piskarev, which involves rounding the corners formed by intersecting lines and everything that could create the sensation of sharp, incisive, broken, conflicting. Rounding is always done in the form of a smile (convex) which will be perpetuated, transmitted through the line.

#### *Active IV - The basic algorithm*

This is the basis of all neurographic algorithms. This algorithm has 8 basic rules/steps:

1. *Theme (core mental map - symptoms)*
2. *Composition (throwing or geometric figures)* - this algorithm is the only one in which it is done by throwing/catharsis.
3. *Rounding* - we modulate and shape lines, shapes, intersections and through these we develop brain plasticity, rewrite lines of code, programs, create new connections, through conscious attention, observation, self-reflection
4. a. *Figure and background*
  - b. *Archetypes/Integration* - through color
1. *Field Lines/ Composition Lines of Force*
2. *Fixation figure/ seal*
3. *Stylization/Essentialization* - final touches
4. *Theme 2 - Perspective* - the final destination
5. 20 words in 2 minutes - resulting in *the Treasures/Transformation Mind Map*

The method is developed on the basis of the principle of creation, from Hermetic metaphysics, but Piskarev builds vertically, on a pyramidal concept - the "Pyramid of Development" - corresponding to Maslow's "Pyramid of Needs"

As in Hermetic metaphysics, Piskarev relates in two ways:

- I. from simple to complex - the *normal creation* process - from the source/essence to all things;
- II. from complex to simple - the *reverse creation* process - from all things we return to the Source, to the Essence.

Respecting the neurographic principles and guided by the 8 stages of the Basic Algorithm, we created a series of algorithms that support the conscious creative process of the theatrical approach, but once this metamodern method is integrated, the creative adaptability and the potential of generating new specific algorithms are infinite.

Algorithms of conscious creation with applicability in the spectacular sphere:

- I. The algorithm of finding ideas/solutions
- II. The spectacular algorithm
- III. The characters algorithm
- IV. The character algorithm
- V. The scenic space algorithm
- VI. The sketch algorithm (of Concept Space)
- VII. Character/Costume Sketch Algorithm

### 1.3. The mental puzzle – The Kaleidoscope Method

We will continue our approach by explaining the previously used metaphor of the "mental puzzle", discovering its meanings in the theatrical scenographic context and seeing how it is applied and especially how it becomes a creative method in the scenographic process.

*The mental puzzle* is a concept taken from neuroscience and is a metaphor we use to describe the creative process of the scenographer. It is also a metaphor to express, in a systemic view, the relationship between the parts and the whole.

The scenographer's *mental puzzle* involves, as we have seen, the technical aspects, such as managing space and materials, as well as the artistic aspects, such as expressing a certain concept or emotion/state through visual means. He must constantly access these mental resources like the "image organizer" to find innovative ways to solve any challenges, creating a unique and valuable scenographic ensemble.

The mental puzzle, in scenographic creation, can have many meanings, depending on the context and perspective. Moreover, it is itself a tool of *insight*.

*The kaleidoscope method* is a creative technique that can be used in the process of generating ideas and exploring artistic possibilities. This method is based on the principle of the optical kaleidoscope, which involves the creation of symmetrical, harmonious and varied patterns with a radial arrangement - like the creative thinking system - by means of reflectors and mirrors. Thus, we still refer to a form of creating a harmonious whole by integrating the parts, but also to the perpetual transformation of chaos into coherence. In the second hypostasis, the reciprocal is also valid, generating transformation, which, in its turn, also involves destruction, to then be the rebirth in a new creative cycle towards a new form of coherence, towards a new whole harmonic, perfect structure.

In the creative context, *the kaleidoscope method* is applied by offering a free and exploratory approach to find new perspectives and ideas in a non-linear way. Here's how the kaleidoscope method works:

*Collecting elements or ideas:* First, a variety of elements (ex: samples of materials), ideas or sources of inspiration relevant to the creative project are collected. These can be images, symbols, keywords, objects, colors, texts or anything else that could stimulate imagination and creativity.

*Reflection and reorganization:* Next, *the kaleidoscope principle* is applied to create multiple versions and combinations of the collected elements. This stage involves thinking in unexpected ways and reorganizing elements in new and surprising ways.

*Exploration and evaluation:* As patterns and combinations are formed, each resulting variation is explored and examined. It is observed how the elements fit and interact with each other, and each variation can offer new ideas and perspectives.



*Selection and development:* Finally, certain patterns or combinations are selected that are considered more interesting, meaningful, suitable in the creative ensemble. These can then be developed and integrated into the final concept or design.

The kaleidoscope method stimulates creative, divergent and unconventional thinking, allowing the exploration of unexpected ideas and possibilities, and can be applied to the scenographic creative process in multiple ways.

#### 1.4. The installation

In this chapter, I will approach the installation from the perspective in which it becomes a method of systemic work, applied both in the process of spectacular creation and in creative development workshops, and in the next chapter we will demonstrate its applicability in empirical research, through case studies.

From my perspective, the installation is essentially a form of systemic constellation. Therefore, it became my natural mode of three-dimensional artistic expression. Through installations, we bring to light the deepest parts of our psyche. In the installation, these representations have their own organization, mirroring our inner dynamics and thus giving us the opportunity for *insight*. Once they become visible and we can look at them from a different perspective, not just feel them as impulses, as inner turmoil, we can become aware of them, process them, integrate them. And by extension, anyone who enters this field immersively, as an active spectator, will resonantly (up to the archetypal level) benefit from the same transformational process. And in order to keep the overall vision of the proposed methods, we can associate the installation with the mental map of the character or his environment, or even include both. In creative development workshops, when I work with people who do not have drawing skills, I use mind mapping to help them organize their ideas and make them visible. The process can then continue with the practical experiential part, working with materials, volumes and colors, which is the really consistent part of the process. Once included in the creative field, without realizing it at first, people are amazed at what their inner system generates through their hands and have incredible processes of awareness - which they may not be able to process immediately, but once triggered, the integration process runs its course.

I resort to this form of expression with the belief in its effectiveness, with creative pleasure and with the joy of discovering a way of total expression, which also has a great potential for self-knowledge, transformative. An inclusive, immersive method where we and the audience meet, merge into and through our common *essence*; both in a spectacular context

- on stage, in an unconventional or outdoor space, as well as in workshops or the exhibition space.

## **2. The linear (analytical) approach**

### 2.1. The mental film - storyboard - mise en scène

If, up to this stage, the scenographer approaches the spherical or spiral perspective, specific to creative thinking, as a result of the previous steps, the things, the concepts begin to settle and, while maintaining their fluidity, are organized in a coherent manner in relation to the mise en scène, it generates what we call a coherent *mental film*.

Essentially, it refers to the scenographer's ability to visualize and bring the set space to life in his mind. A capacity that unfolds continuously, throughout the entire creative process, first in a non-linear form, and then crystallizes, becoming a linear, narrative form ready to be exposed to others.

\*Note: Here linearity takes on the meaning of the coherence and order in which the images follow each other and not their intrinsic structure or that of the spectacular ensemble, which can be non-linear.

It is necessary for the scenographer to also have regional thinking, because he thinks the whole concept in relation to the mise en scene. Precisely this type of reporting, supported by the perspective specific to the spherical and spiral approach - which is why we support through these methods, the exercise of the capacity for perspective, through perceptual expansion and spherical thinking - determines the coherence of the concept in relation to the whole and the parts. As well as generating a guidance system for the entire team, a set designer's coherent mental picture is crucial for communicating with other members of the artistic and technical team, including the director, lighting, technicians and set builders. Through it, the set designer can articulate his artistic vision and collaborate with other team members to bring that vision to life on stage.

An effective way to make one's inner film visible to others, and especially to the stage director, but also to the technical director, is the storyboard.

## **D. Conclusions. Perspective – interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity**

This interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary methodological approach not only creates connective bridges with other forms of knowledge and self-knowledge and opens new creative perspectives, but transforms us into "whole people" and "whole creators", which exercises our intra-connectivity and inter-connectivity through the systemic perception of the Whole. This aspect becomes essential in the pose of the stage designer, whose creation has a connective and integrative quality par excellence, in the context of the theater, an eminently relational field.

## **V. SCENEGRAPHIC INSTALLATION ON AND OFF THE STAGE, AS AN EXPRESSION OF THE INTEGRATIVE SYSTEMIC APPROACH – GENERATOR OF THE IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCE**

### **1. Experiential Spectacular/Performative Realities**

*Myth Show. A history of mistrust*

"Myth Show - A history of distrust" by Daniel Chirilă, Director: David Schwartz, Piatra Neamț Youth Theatre, 2022

The show is a collective creation, an installation, interactive, immersive, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary show. The director and the playwright carried out a thorough research from a historical and political point of view, the actors brought their contribution with the part of personal history, and I included in the image the research part of the inner mechanisms, of the way in which reality and history are constructed through our perceptions, through our psycho-emotional structures, and we have mapped these mental structures. The visual environment that I created does not represent forms, but the process of becoming forms, whether thought forms, emotion forms or spatial forms, realities, everything in continuous movement and transformation, interconnected.

It is a non-linear, systemic constellation-type show whose parts/aspects correspond to aspects of our psyche.

The two characters, the hosts of the show, Myth – represent imagination, emotion, myth; Math - represents science, the concrete, logic, they are apparently the representation of the contradiction between the two aspects of our mind, of the conflicting state, in essence, they form the Whole through complementarity.

The set is a living performative installation subject to perpetual change. It contains fluid structures built on the principle of domino pieces and the form itself is born by overlapping these translucent layers (multiple layers, lamellas), which give them fluidity and fragility through the potentiality of destruction, of destruction.

*Black comedy*

"Black Comedy", by Peter Shaffer, directed by Cristian Ban, Piatra Neamț Youth Theater, 2015-2016

Many people are curious about what is in the mind of an artist.

In this spectacular context, I took advantage of the situation that the play proposes, of a blackout, and as a result, the action takes place mostly "in the dark", to create a metaphor and a challenge at the same time. This refers to making contact with the work of a visual artist, beyond the external forms, through the inability of physical vision (closing the physical eyes) and accessing the "mind's eye" and other senses, in a state of presence generated by an atypical situation, that takes us out of our comfort zone. This becomes the way to explore the inner richness and thus we invited both actors and spectators to make a foray into the subconscious and even deeper areas of the Unconscious of the artist.

The characters wake up in a world where they do not find familiar landmarks and, like in a lucid dream, they tactilely experience these surreal elements and according to their own imagination, their own awakened depths, their own mental filters, hidden needs and desires, they recreate one's unique perceived reality, one's own mental film, in relation to these new and unusual landmarks. One accesses completely other levels of one's own being, difficult to impossible to repeat under the conditions that the immediate reality can offer. The decor-installation becomes, through the immersive experience it generates, an initiatory journey of (self) knowledge, through art.

It's a type of psychoanalytic foray, essentially.

*The woman of the sea*

"The Woman of the Sea" by Henrik Ibsen, Director: Radu Afrim, National Theater "Vasile Alecsandri" Iasi, 2014

The Woman of the Sea is a spectacle of inner realities, of "inner seas". (Appendix 9)  
In my view, an installation complex of these worlds and the permanent oscillation between the

inner and outer reality and the fusions between them. Only through a systemic structure can the complexity of the human system be contained. Any other structure of the space would have been far too little, too much, or unnecessary. These challenging themes require a careful process of *essentialization* and *personalization*, a perfect balancing of energies and visual message—extremely deep and revealing.

Therefore, starting from the reality of his own kitchen, the character experiences his experiences by projecting state-images, sensation-images, in micro or macro, infinite spaces and exacerbated mini-details, thought forms that become images, projections onto reality on the inner screen. Boundaries are difficult to establish, where one reality begins, where the other ends and begins. They just become, fusionally.

The scenic images, whether it is a huge wall on which at least 100 hair dryers generate the breeze, through the hair and through the dresses, like a sea of soldiers, whether the character is running, swimming freely among floating buoys, or that in the middle of the kitchen appears a huge boulder, a nest of secret loves, and moving octopuses invade the kitchen space in the hypnotic rhythm of his experiences, while the lights of his super-identity come on like in a cabaret show, all this spectacular scenographic ensemble brings us a truth: we realize that this reality is mostly just a mental movie, an illusion. Even immediate reality is largely this inner universe and could never be totally detached to be outside of it as we tend to believe.

*The memory of water*

"MEMORY OF WATER", by Shelagh Stephenson, directed by Erwin Simsensohn, Bucharest National Theatre (2016)

An experience that was desired and proved to be immersive for many of the spectators, those who were brave enough to let themselves be carried away in the great unknown, yet so familiar.

From my perspective, a progressive journey into the depths of the subconscious, through which the characters discover, become aware, process to the point of integration the traumas from their own experiences or transgenerationally inherited. The three girls are reunited with each other and themselves on the occasion of their mother's death. Everything is revealed gradually, in a perfect systemic (family) constellation, which also validates the appearance (representation) of the mother, the relationship with her (from another dimension), which in this way can edify, can bring to light profound aspects not understood at the level aware. As in

"Hamlet", which Bert Hellinger himself, the creator of the family constellations, constellationed, only here the female, maternal line is revealed and revealed, with what flows from it, as effects in the present lives of the daughters, but how can it not the limit, the whole system is revealed.

Thus, I created a connection between water, subconscious, memory, feminine and many other aspects, by connecting deeply, beyond words, with the story, which attracted me very much, being in my own process of awareness and integration.

#### *Animation theatre*

The animation theatre has opened up an infinite potential for me to research and discover multiple ways in which I can convey important, complex messages, bring knowledge and understanding to children, of any level of perception and understanding, through appropriate, adapted language, without underestimating their capacities for absorbing and integrating information, otherwise much more developed, more active in children than in adults.

In *The Fairy Tale of the Princess Quick-Quick*, based on the text by Emil Brumaru and Veronica Niculescu, realized in 2014, at the "Luceafărul" Theatre in Iași, directed by Ion Ciubotaru, I needed to find visual solutions for many complex, philosophical concepts, erotic even, to create a coherent story, accessible to children of all ages (including adults), about the hero's journey and its fulfillment through relationship and initiation. Thus, it was necessary to grasp, to access every level of perception, resonance and understanding. This was only possible through a systemic vision, through which I first generated an inner foray to find all these levels in my own system (not even having my own child at the time), which required me to undertake a *process of conscious creation* – the gradual foundation of my entire creative experience and my very path of knowledge and evolution. This systemic, holistic approach was supported by surrealist means (as almost always) that materialized both through the set-installation and the costumes-installation, all interconnected, contained and containing in a whole, coherent system.

The entire space thus became an evolutionary game platform, a mobile system in the form of a huge 3D puzzle, in an inclined, ascending plane. It constantly transforms, reorganizes itself into different relief structures, along with the becoming of the hero, creating his environment, the initiatory path that continuously reveals to him new story-situations that needed to be experienced and transcended. All these "parts", component parts, fit together coherently as the main character, *the Dwarf*, fulfilled himself through experience - knowledge. The top, the center and the next level at the same time was represented by the palace of *the*

*Princess Quick-Quick*, which she was to initiate and together create the yin-yang balance. The palace is represented by a transparent, magical pyramidal structure with multiple meanings and functions.

The *Enchanted Flute* project based on Emanuel Schikaneder's libretto, directed by Toma Hogeia, from the "Toma Caragiu" Theatre/Imaginario Ploiești (2018), was another opportunity for me to carry out a deep research in the same transdisciplinary sense of unified knowledge.

The challenge was all the greater as I set out to express the entire Universe, in a very limited space. (Appendix 13)

Thus, in order to create several simultaneous planes of reality and quantum leaps between them, we resorted to mirror planes that, on the one hand, mirror, amplify or multiply, and, on the other hand, become portals that open to other dimensions. I also resorted to multiple perspective and light effects (from autonomous or controlled sources), a whole complex system-installation, in permanent transformation and becoming, without being able to be very mobile at the same time (for technical reasons). In such an ensemble, every detail, no matter how small, every measure, everything has a decisive importance in the functionality of the entire scenic mechanism.

The characters discover their mirrors in the initiatory path, in the whole environment or in the other characters, and through this they find themselves, find their resources, become through the inner journey with themselves, reflected and relational outside, in the environment and in others.

Theatre has perhaps the greatest potential for the expression of creative freedom and at the same time the context of the experience of knowledge through and with people, relationally and interconnected. And even more so, the theatre of animation, the theatre that addresses children and young people, where the openness and curiosity for knowledge and development, for evolution are much wider.

## **2. The transformational workshop – development of creative thinking and development through connective creativity (through the neuro-creative and systemic language of scenographic/performative installations)**

The installation represents my way of thinking and artistic expression and consequently, the way I perceive scenographic art and its meaning - systemic, integrative, non-

linear, intra and inter-connective, immersive, essentialized and personalized at the same time and always pursuing a transformative purpose - evolutionary.

Certainly, this is reflected in any artistic endeavour, both on and off the stage. Aspect that remains valid in the workshops for *the development of creative thinking* or *connective development through creativity*.

In these workshops I work with teenagers who are sometimes familiar with the language of art, coming from specialized high schools, sometimes they have no education in this sense. Everyone benefits from this process equally. As in the case of working with students, who can be from scenography, but also from other specializations such as acting. That is why it is necessary to adapt the process and find some creative solutions/methods that can be approached with anyone who considers such a transformative experience necessary.

Regardless of the methods used in the first stage of the process, they will still materialize through vision and spatial expression in the language of installations, so that the process is complete, and the students understand the applicability of the method in three-dimensional reality and activate their spatial perception and thinking.

Like the other methods, it is also based on systemic, integrative work. The plant can be approached as a constellation of its own system, which also gives it therapeutic value. This is supported by intention, starting from challenging, precisely targeted themes chosen as a pretext for incursion into one's own inner universe and processing, awareness, release and balance through the joy of play, the aesthetic pleasure that art offers.

If among the spectators at the final exhibition there are also parents or teachers of the creators, they can understand and learn many new and important things about children. But the real meaning lies in the fact that those children realize many things about themselves and the relevance of this process in their lives, which often changes their perspective on things and even their direction.

### **3. The immersive exhibition space – Expo-scenography**

Scenography is an art of performance, it is a living art, the art that encompasses, that unites that produces immersion. It would be unfair to detach it from this emergent flow of life and transmute it into the freezing of a gallery or a museum. Without a spectacular context, the scenography loses its meaning. Without the story enlivened by interaction, by the human presence, the space, the set elements become a repository for the energetic imprints that once



lived it, and the costumes without actors cannot overcome the inexpressive sadness of the trauma of abandonment that the costumes in the theater warehouses emanate. The sketches are the only ones that might give you at least an aesthetic pleasure in this context, but they also cannot tell the story to the end, they only give you a perspective, depriving you of everything else.

The solution I found for the Expo-scenography, in 2005, held at the Apollo Gallery, Bucharest - from the desire to create a whole full of life, was to activate my regional thinking (necessary for a scenographer both in working on the stage , as well as outside of it) and create an immersive and living performative installation.

We invited the actors who played in the shows, to carry their characters through the space, in relation to the performance installations (elements that recreated their original environment, in an original context) and at the same time with the spectators, keeping the character of the character throughout the interaction, even if it was based on improvisation.

In the end, the exhibition became a performative event, a theatrical installation that offered viewers a unique experience, at least for that moment, complex, immersive and interconnected, having the opportunity to experience the performances from the inside, in direct relationship with the characters. The sketches and set elements - with which they could also interact, completed the spectacular stories, in the mental puzzle of the spectators, in the body - through direct experience and in the soul - through the relationship with the characters.

We honored the complexity of scenographic art and thus transformed the entire exhibition space into a space of memorable and transformative spectacular experience.

#### **4. Costume-set installations – living statues (street show)**

The installation, a fundamental systemic concept, from the scenographic perspective is not limited to creating a complex space-environment that includes people, be they characters or spectators.

A costume can become a complex environment that constitutes the entire structure, story of the character. Thus, a costume can also be approached systemically, it can be approached as a true narrative structure that permanently reveals the story of the character under the diversity of its aspects.

I will dwell on a recent experience, together with the students of the University of Theatrical Arts from Târgu Mureș, which I consider representative in this context.

The project was initiated by Mihai Mălaimare in several art/theatre universities and has as its theme, *the living statues* in the street performance, and as a pretext, as a starting point, the work of William Shakespeare.

We chose to represent scenes, respectively characters from "Macbeth" and "The Merry Wives of Windsor". For "Macbeth", I thus chose metal (raw) - iron/steel, which allows for more states/forms and an intrinsic alchemical process, and for "The Merry Wives of Windsor", I chose wood, as materiality.

The costumes are made from a mix of old materials (from the costume shed) and various unconventional materials, then integrated harmoniously and coherently into the whole story through the patina and the very narrative coherence of the costume.

These story-installations can recreate spectacular scenarios depending on the intention and the context in which they arrive, precisely through the flexibility and essential potential they contain, as well as through the evocative force of unified knowledge that encompasses several levels.

Containing *the unity of knowledge*, they became not only eloquent, but a real source of (self-)knowledge, both for artists/students and spectators, as a result of a conscious, connective and integrative creative process, in which students from different departments felt the need to join.

## **VI. Conclusions**

First of all, I want to begin the end of the approach by specifying that, as long as I consider scenography a path of knowledge in permanent updating - through reevaluation, questioning, and connection with the Source, with the creative Essence, in which the creative potential and evolutionary transformative are infinite and in constant motion, change – this research can only have an open, permanently updating character. Thus, it is far from being able to consider it a finished research.

The main objective of this research remains to bring to the collective artistic consciousness the need *to unify knowledge*, through a *creative, transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary perspective*. And this aspect in itself imposes a conscious creative process and a holistic, systemic approach.

Scenography, containing sine qua non all these characteristics, becomes a *meta-art*, which has the potential to create the containing and comprehensive framework for the unification of knowledge and at the same time to become *the path of knowledge*, under the conditions of a conscious and responsible process.

That is why, if I were to summarize the entire approach in a single concept, it would be called: *Sceno-graphic/-y of creative consciousness*.

It is important to remember that it is not what and how much we do, but how we do it - in relation to what we are and what we are becoming. The first two poses refer to external forms whose value is given by *the quality of the intention* and *the quality of the content* that we obtain through an authentic, conscious and consequently *transformative* process.

So what matters is what we become through the process of our creation. And by what we become, let us encompass and imprint the entire reference system, in the same transformative-evolutionary sense.

Through this research I was able to realize that as scenography was recognized as an essential art in the spectacular context, and scenographers were thus given freedom of expression, this art began to manifest its potential with increasing innovative and reforming influence of the spectacular arts.

Finally, through its transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary structure it proved its character as a meta-art and, at the same time, a meta-method of knowledge, education, evolution and transformation.

Through its connective and integrative capabilities, through its non-linear character, based on the fundamental language of the image, it managed to bring the audience closer and encompass, bringing them into the middle of attention and spectacular events, in a direct and immersive experience. A real process of knowledge and self-knowledge that not only impresses, but also transforms.

If I were to make a comparison between the basic spectacular structures and our triple brain (the transbrain), I would associate the director – with the cranial brain, the scenographer – with the heart brain, and the actor – with the enteric brain. All these structures have an essential role and the good functioning of the entire spectacular system depends on their coherence. Of course, we could also assume that they can all be supported by the dramatic structure, like a backbone, while the viewer enhances and fuses them by himself, giving

relevance, life, like the oxygen molecule, supported by space, by the emergent fluid, magnetic that the heart, the essential center of the scenographer, generates.

The enteric brain generates the combustions and life force of the system, animates it, while the director - the cranial brain - centralizes, analyzes and organizes, rationally controls the smooth functioning and makes things happen, implements the new system in harmony with all other functions.

As I have already specified, through its structure, scenography requires a holistic approach, itself being a transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary, complex structure, therefore an adequate training of the scenographer in this sense is essential. The approach involves many aspects related to formal/external knowledge, which, however, will never be able to be integrated to fulfill its purpose and finality, without having as a support an education and a knowledge that starts from the inside, essentially, towards the unified and unifying essence, micro and macrosystemic, in a process of creative elaboration of the being.

Also, the systemic vision, as well as the principles of creativity, claim that any evolution is possible only relationally, connectively.

Scenography contains a considerable potential generating new disciplines and a high degree of influence on other disciplines.

The transdisciplinary methodology, through the bridges it creates, facilitates our access to *the unity of knowledge/unitary knowledge*. Unity, once realized in the plane of the researched/known object, is also reflected in the plane of the observant subject, of the one who knows (Basarab Nicolescu). This approach moves us away from a linear, binary, fragmented thinking (which divides and analyzes in detail, risking missing the whole) and opens the way to unitary, broad and inclusive complexity - *the essential Unity*.

*The unity of knowledge* (globalized knowledge) is a necessity for a declining system/society. It becomes the unique solution as long as the other solutions prove ineffective.

So, in the end, in the spirit of the theme of this work, I will essentialize, in what follows, the message addressed to every student, every reader who dares to become a conscious creator. This guide to the steps in the creative process can be applied to any manifestation endeavour.

I will thus point out all the keystones of this process of becoming through the creative act, which I consider important to be remembered - which I will call - *the Path of the 10 steps* ("the 10 commandments").

1. *Intention*
2. *Motivation*
3. *Attention*
4. *Mindfulness*
5. *Freedom*
6. *Courage and confidence*
7. *Relaxation and release of the mind*
8. *Observation and research*
9. *Essence and space-time*

Form (essentialized) is the result of the personalization process of essence. At the same time, the form realizes, integrates its essence, through the process of essentialization.

So, I urge you to draw, search, observe, and do not stop at the first idea that excites you, with which you feel comfortable. This certainly has its source in the obvious, limited reality. Look as far as you can, gather ideas even when they seem unrelated, at least not an obvious one at the moment. But if they have entered your field, they most likely have a meaning and connection that you are yet to discover. Then go through each idea and search, develop it further. Be curious about where you are going or where you are ending up. The truth is always in what we have not yet discovered. The truth is this very infinite potential. It is in everything we have already achieved and what we have not yet recognized. It is important not to stop at the ideas that are at hand or even worse, that we take over already thought by others. All this will not be able to create something authentic, something new, innovative. Only the process connected to the essence has this revelatory capacity.

That is why creativity requires perseverance, passion, appetite for play and knowledge, It requires education, and an inner one, beyond the formal one with which we are familiar, a holistic education.

We cannot create from fear, from anger, from blockages, but we cannot reject them either. They all just need to be integrated.

Creativity involves the state of flow, being centered aligned with ourselves, within and aligned with the whole, with the rhythm of life, with the rhythms of the Universe in which we exist. And this tendency can be found in the visions and experiences of great creators, as meanings such as balancing, innovative, transforming and unifying, which art carries.

I will thus close the circle or sphere of this work by returning to what might be called in terms of *the unity of knowledge*, the "root master"/initial:

“So do as I say. Practice with pencil on paper, both at a small and a large scale; practice with the colors on the canvas, to convince yourself that what I'm telling you is true.”<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 51



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