

SP::RES

Concept Note - Indeterminazioni (ex-Intermedial Travel) by Apperzezioni

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SPORES is an artistic project that creates “intermedial experiences” at the crossroads of arts and technology, offering unprecedented opportunities for artists, audiences, cultural operators, institutions and technology designers to explore and implement new ways of experiencing live artistic performances both online and offline. **ACTIVITIES** The project comprises three steps: 1) Invent an original methodology for designing intermedial experiences, then train 15 cultural operators and artists to create 4 intermedial shows 2) Produce these 4 intermedial shows based on the SPORES methodology: – Sensible Archive, by Eugenio Barba, founder of Odin Teatret – Delirium, by Ikarus Stage Arts, company from Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium – Intermedial Travel, by Appercezioni – Euforia Carogna, by Antonio Rezza and Flavia Mastrella These 4 shows will be presented in 11 events in Denmark, Albania and Italy. 3) Share results and lessons learnt about intermedial experiences through 20 dissemination events hosted by associated partners comprising universities and cultural institutes (Goethe Institut and Istituto Italiano di Cultura) in France, Denmark, Italy and Albania. **OUTREACH** The 3-fold structure of the project is linked to a progressive outreach of 1) artists, 2) audience 3) stakeholders of the cultural and creative sector.

Partners

Associazione culturale APPERCEZIONI (Italy)

Carraro LAB (Italy)

Universiteti Polis (Albania)

Nordisk Teaterlaboratorium (Denmark)



Indeterminazioni Poetiche

A progressive path to a theatrical metaverse

Experimentation for Apperceptions is in the making; a gradual empowerment that becomes more and more innovative. The focus of innovation is the counterpoint between theatre and metaverse. In the various scheduled performances, the theatre group will carry out a series of experiments of the use of Web 3.0 before, during and after the performance.

First of all, a metaverse dedicated to the performance itself will be created, representing its conception in three-dimensional language, building a real virtual set design that can be walked through by avatars. The metaverse will be developed gradually over the year of experimentation, according to a criterion of successive complexities, so as to progress in the implementation of increasingly advanced functions.

The first version of "Appercezioni"'s metaverse will be implemented at the Goethe institute's show in Rome, March 11, and will be a kind of "digital twin" of the imagery and poetics of the physical show, focusing on various themes, including, the fundamental one of indeterminacy, developed by indulging some aspects of quantum mechanics theory. The metaverse of "Indeterminazioni Poetiche" will thus take the form of a parallel universe, in which imagery and narratives are articulated in a virtual environment that alludes to planets connected to each other by orbits, which can be traversed by avatars.

At this early stage, the most problematic cores of the project are avoided, which will be developed in later stages of the show: the presence of the live audience during the performance, and the actor's use of the live metaverse. The last two features will be studied in the following months, also using more advanced technologies coming soon.

In Rome, " Indeterminazioni Poetiche" focuses the interactive relationship with the audience avatars before and after the performance, while in the large hall of the Goethe Institut the metaverse will be usable projected on large screens, managed live by the director, coordinated with the performance of actress Maria Letizia Gorga. The performance will thus have the metaverse as a language, but also as a theme.

The thematics investigated by the performance are those opened by the contemporary debate on the metaverse.

The announcement of the construction of the Metaverse by the protagonists of the digital industry destines this concept to become the new paradigm of the Internet and social media in the 1920s. After the Web and social, will the Metaverse succeed in imposing itself on the daily lives of billions of people? A number of preliminary and foundational questions may be touched upon in the performance:

What is Metaverse?

How can Metaverse affect human existence?

Will there be one Metaverse, or multiple Metaverses?

What are the ethical and psychological risks of the Metaverse?

Is Metaverse a game or a serious matter?

The anthropological impact of the Web is so deep in the information society that the anticipated shift from Web 2.0 to Web 3.0-the technological context of the Metaverse-requires philosophical reflection and cultural debate.

Definitions of Metaverse

By method, the first question concerns what Metaverse is. Who do we ask to define Metaverse? To those who have stated that they want to build it.

Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook (now Meta): "the Metaverse is a set of virtual spaces that you can explore with other people who are not in the same physical space as you."

Tim Sweeney, CEO of Epic Games: "Clearly, none of us know exactly what the Metaverse will be. There are various suggestions... The Metaverse may be a real-time 3D social media where you don't exchange messages asynchronously, but you find yourself in a virtual world where you can do basically anything. We can thus identify at least two characteristic components of the Metaverse:

1) A virtual, three-dimensional, On Line environment.

2) The simultaneous presence of people meeting virtually.

In other contexts, the Metaverse is referred to as the next dimension of the Internet, 3.0, or even what will happen online beyond the Internet.

To better clarify the idea behind the performance, let us outline a brief history of the Metaverse

The term Metaverse is coined by Neal Stephenson in the science fiction book *Snow Crash* (1992), and refers to a virtual world shared via the Internet, where users introduce themselves and communicate through their avatars.

The most famous Metaverse application is *Second Life*, which started in 2003 and grew to a peak in 2013 with 1 million regular users and in the form of a three-dimensional chat. Based on avatars and 3D environments, it is being phased out. *Second Life's* MUVE (Multi-User Virtual Environment) model has been followed by other Virtual Reality and video game players.

In particular, several video games in the MMORPG (acronym for Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game, literally "massively networked multiplayer role-playing game") category can be associated with the idea of Metaverse.

Starting from 2014, Virtual Reality viewers (which, moreover, in 2020 have not yet garnered mass success), new formats for immersive experience such as 360 video, Facial and environmental tracking and photogrammetry are launched, while with the pandemic we witness the On Line video meeting Boom. In 2021 Facebook announces the development of the Metaverse and changes its name to "Meta." It should be considered that the present and future of the Metaverse is not easily predictable. The ephemeral success of *Second Life* calls us to a critical sense toward existing models of the Metaverse, and requires us to take an open attitude toward further possibilities.

Analyzing *Second Life*, we realize that it is a fake world where users assume false personalities. Falsehood has become a recurring risk in digital communities; just think of the issue of fake news in Social Media, one of the most critical developments in the very platforms that would like to become protagonists of the Metaverse today. The latter thus risks being a fake world where fake users exchange fake news. Where does one draw the line between theatrical fiction and guiltily constructed falsehood? What attracts people to an overtly fake world where identities are blatantly false?

"Semel in anno licet insanire": the anthropological need of carnival in some ways parallels that of theatre. The Latin motto "once a year it is licit to do insanity" manifests an ambiguous wisdom: it recalls on the one hand the human need to escape from reality, and on the other hand the need to limit this escape into madness to limited moments. The theatrical performance, as opposed to everyday life, is itself a kind of "carnival," in which actors dress up and impersonate someone: in practice, they become "avatars." The "falsity" of the metaverse in theatre is not a problem; on the contrary, it is the very essence of theatrical fiction.

The ritualization of madness has historically taken the forms of carnival, but also that of the Greek *Dionysia* or Roman *saturnalia*. We also find similar forms in other ancient civilizations, studied by historian of religion Mircea Eliade as ceremonies of purification and regeneration. Masquerade, mistaken identity and gender, and abandonment to normally unacceptable behaviour are a common element of the various forms of carnival and spectacle.

The first version of the Metaverse, *Second Life*, can be interpreted as a permanent virtual carnival. Its gradual failure could be related to a healthy reaction of users, who enacted the motto "a good game is

short-lived," recognizing in this form of the Metaverse a form of exaggeration and reversal of the sensible proportions between normality and insanity.

Metaverse as exhibitions, performances and artwork

The Metaverse is undoubtedly a creative opportunity for artists. Even in Second Life there were numerous realizations of exhibitions, installations and virtual artworks. In this context, ethical, social and psychological issues are definitely limited: the figure of art emblematically clarifies the purely intellectual and creative function of the developed environment.

Therefore, we should expect an important development of the Metaverse in art. In this documentary, a visual synthesis of the Metaverses that have so far appeared in the limelight of the digital ecosystem is made.

Utopia and Dystopia: how the future world conditions the present.

The "operational myth" is an imaginary narrative that succeeds in operationally conditioning the development of society and culture. An example of parallel worlds capable of becoming operative myths is that of utopias, ideal models of reality. The classical dimension of utopia is the future: man imagines a better world as an evolution of the present one. Historically, utopia originated in Renaissance philosophy with Tommaso Moro and was developed in later centuries by utopian socialism, to the point of generating the construction of ideal cities in various places around the world. We can also consider Marx's vision of Communism as utopian, and no one can deny the impact of this utopia in the dramatic history of the 20th century, through revolutions and totalitarian regimes engaged in the construction and imposition of an ideal world that has remained virtual.

The Metaverse can certainly take the form of an ideal city, where people can abandon the limitations and miseries of real existence, and rise to ideal identities and living conditions.

It is also fair to consider the genre of dystopias, anti-utopian visions of the future, such as the one imagined by Orwell in "1984." The Metaverse is at the center of the film "Ready Player One," which arrived in theatres in 2018, directed by Steven Spielberg. In a world now torn apart by social and environmental degradation, the "Oasis" Metaverse offers the virtual possibility of an escape from dystopian reality.

Just as in the company's DNA, "Indeterminazioni Poetiche" is an anthropological account of contemporary society, recounting its peaks and troughs, its enthusiasms and perplexities, and it does so by confronting itself in a profound way with the different arts that make it up, a game that both empowers and questions.

It starts with the Goethe Institut enhancing the show with augmented realities, projecting on screens that cover entire walls but also on curtains and surfaces that modify the original space making it become other through a metamorphic transformation. And the metaverse is presented, with actress Maria Letizia Gorga a kind of Cicerone who will accompany the audience to explore the creation of an "other world" where they can take refuge: the world of Poetry.

A refuge also seems to be the one created by Paola Favoino with her photos that report us to a pre-war world in Ukraine (projected images of a young family in Kiev) and today's letters from the devastated city. "The birds cannot cross the border" depicts the absurdity not only of war but of all the artificial borders that man creates and through which he establishes who is in and who is out. A reversal of things that should make us reflect on the destructive power of man (the birds on the ground and the empty trees). The images communicate with their surroundings: acting, music, dance, lights, voices-an ensemble of elements that while not losing their uniqueness interact with each other through new technologies.

Flavia Mastrella's creations come to life with the 360° technique and drag the viewer into new spaces to discover, *worlds* built with the concept of the infinitely small, that of nuclei, electrons, orbits.

Because this elaboration that Roberto Carraro and Federica Altieri built is inspired by the greatest scientific revolution of all time: quantum physics formulated by the young German scientist Werner Heisenberg in 1925 on the island of Helgoland in the North Sea. But from the island they land in the

metaverse to expand this profound journey between art and science through poetic language. In this first stage it will be a simple crossing that the audience can continue to develop, through an app developed ad hoc, generating material that will be used for the next performance.

The virtual environment alludes to quantum mechanics by developing into a kind of universe, with planets interconnected through large walkways that simulate orbits. The worlds are created by Flavia Mastrella using a 360-degree video camera.

Magrelli's poems will be suspended in the scenic space, forming a peripatetic reading path.

In this way, spectators can "enter" the performance, walk through its thematic. And discover it in a completely different mode than the traditional performance.

And again, from the habitats of augmented reality and metaverse we naturally pass to the interviews of Antonio Rezza and Flavia Mastrella made in Bastoggi, forgotten place of the eternal city (because with the contribution of new technologies we will also tell the places that host us Rome- Tresigallo-Copenhagen transforming from time to time texts and contents). And from this place through various filming techniques (from the classic camera to the smartphone, from digital cameras to 360° cameras) we will call a city seen from the "bottom" an antitopia, a city that denies itself and in so doing reverses not only the course of history but the meanings that have shaped this history. Of this reversal, something must have remained to tear at the fragile appendages of the former Eternal City, to erode its edges, to corrupt its forms, to liquefy its logic. It is like a scar that separates the real world from its equally concrete counterpart: the world below, the city equal and opposite to what it appears to us. The end becomes the beginning, the inside becomes the outside, the full becomes the empty, the below becomes the above; it is not so much a round city as an inverted city, leading us toward non-Euclidean geometries. It is a world from below, dark, plebeian.

What characters, what attitudes this world below, this barely intuitable monster pushing to overthrow the world above, will take on, remains to be seen:

It could take the form of a festal liberation from the constraints of official reality; or it could take the dogmas of official reality and carry them all the way to the breaking point, radicalizing its most violent, obtuse, barbaric and self-destructive aspects. We can say that the ultimate mission always remains the same: to disintegrate the order of the square city and replace it with the disorder of its circular nemesis. But whether this will be done through celebration or revenge, by the joyous carnival that subverts everything or by the bloodbath that spares nothing, we cannot know because we are facing the illogical, the twisted.

What is certain is that in the reversal of Square Rome there is not so much the overturning of the City that never was by the murderous hand of Romolo but the hunch that that non-city still exists in the wings of Elsewhere and is ready to re-emerge whenever the square that dominates the world above hints at cracking. And all this will be realized with stylistically provocative interviews as well, with acrobatic editing that will generate videos that are innovative both in form and in the way of viewing.

There will be 3 days of open rehearsals where the research elaborated over these months will be explained to the audience.

In Tresigallo, a place unknown to Italians themselves, a unique metaphysical city. **Visiting Tresigallo it jumps out at how much behind the stone was an idea, albeit a liberticidal and oppressive one. The fascist regime knew how to skillfully develop its narrative even with the layout of the streets and the shape of the buildings in its cities.** To resurrect these places is also to think that the cities of our future will also manage to put behind the stone the ideas, the right ones, of sustainability, welcome, environmental protection, solidarity, sharing, individual rights and freedom." Born in the Fascist period, which became an emblem of a dark period. The event will see the presence of the German Embassy in Italy, today in fact Tresigallo is a city of art and hospitality.

Videos will be developed to tell the story of this place in a new way by creating a virtual tour that will make this place known that has remained in the shadows for too long.

Augmented reality will be diminished while the sphere of the metaverse will be enhanced with the preparation, thanks to a training course, of the audience that will go through various spaces (the square, the cinema, the library) until they arrive in the "Sogni" / "Dreams" building; and this time they will live the dream for real.

In Denmark the show will be prepared at NTL (former Odin Teatret) always with open rehearsals to land in the Italian Cultural Institute where for each room (3 in all) the different techniques developed in the previous stages will be tested. An in-person and online conference will be held in the beautiful garden of the institute.

The experimentation will close at the Ex Cartiera Latina place immersed in the Appia Antica Regional Park; among the few surviving industrial settlements in the city of Rome, it is a unique and exceptional structure due to its strategic location close to the Aurelian Walls, lapped along its entire length by the Almone River. Here the metaverse will be structured within external walls, outdoors, amidst rare smells and sounds.

The most advanced technology merges with nature, where augmented reality will be accompanied by the sound of the river...etc etc.

Indeterminazioni poetiche is, in conclusion, an opus about the imponderable facets of human beings within the universe. A century ago, the studies that led to quantum mechanics resonate today in a work of art that seeks to tap into all representable worlds. Thus, there is the emotional hemisphere, interlaced with the intellectual, but also theater fused in the reality of the spectators, and real theater mixed with the metaverse. Not only the means but also the contents boast enormous variation, which is meant to etheticize the new means of representation of quantum mechanics.

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