

BABEȘ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF THEATRE AND TELEVISION
DOCTORAL SCHOOL THEATRE AND FILM

DEVISED THEATRE.
UTOPIA, TOOL AND POLITICAL THEATRE
Doctoral thesis
summary

Scientific coordinator:

Prof. univ. dr. Miruna RUNCAN

(Daniela GOLOGAN)

PhD Candidate:

GRECEA Monica-Olivia

Cluj-Napoca, 2016

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Chapter 1. The avatars of collective creation

- 1.1 Applied theatre
 - 1.1.2 Curricular integration of applied theatre
 - 1.1.3 Paolo Freire and the critical pedagogy
 - 1.1.4 Augusto Boal and the poetics of the oppressed
 - 1.1.5 The American community theatre model
 - 1.1.6 The taxonomy of applied theatre
 - 1.1.7 Utilitarianism
- 1.2 Esthetics-focused theatre
- 1.3 Ethical and esthetical principles
- 1.4 Conclusions

Chapter 2. Forerunners of devised theatre

- 2.1 The sixties and the democratic ethos
- 2.2 The Living Theatre
 - 2.2.1 Physical theatre
 - 2.2.2 Sustainability
 - 2.2.3 Free Theatre
 - 2.2.4 Experiments. The Connection, The Brig and Paradise Now
 - 2.2.5 Ideology and utopia
- 2.3 Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret
 - 2.3.1 Group theatre and theatre research
 - 2.3.2 The Third Theatre
 - 2.3.3 Community and collectivity
 - 2.3.4 Para-theatre
 - 2.3.5 Barter
- 2.4 Ariane Mnouchkine and Théâtre du Soleil
 - 2.4.1 The body as instrument
 - 2.4.2 Epic gesture
 - 2.4.3 Canonical plays and „écriture de plateau”
 - 2.4.4 Oriental inspiration
 - 2.4.5 Political engagement

- 2.4.6 Workshops at Théâtre du Soleil
- 2.5 Assemblage and dramaturgy
- 2.6 Conclusions

Chapter 3. Case study. Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll

- 3.1 Theatre ensemble
- 3.2 Modus operandi 1. Forced Entertainment
 - 3.2.1 Theatricality and performance
 - 3.2.2 Single idea shows
- 3.3 Modus operandi 2. Rimini Protokoll
- 3.4 The *100% City* project
- 3.5 Mapping. Rhizome(s). Space / Place
- 3.6 Responsibility. Acknowledgement and avoidance
- 3.7 Staging the self
- 3.8 Technology – extension of the performative research
- 3.9 Deconstruction of scenic mechanisms and referentiality
- 3.10 Poetics of the fragment
- 3.11 Addenda. The Romanian landscape
- 3.12 Conclusions

Chapter 4. Devised theatre and political theatre

- 4.1 Valences of political theatre
- 4.2 Leftist ideology and political theatre
- 4.3 The semiotic political theatre
- 4.4 Types of spectators
- 4.5 Scenic presence
- 4.6 Renegotiating conventions
- 4.7 Activism and artivism. Poetics of the relative
- 4.8 Conclusions

Chapter 5. Theoretical and practical openings in the study of devised theatre

- 5.1 Antihierarchy and utopia

- 5.2 Didactic applications of devised theatre
- 5.3 Communication models
- 5.4 Performative theatre
- 5.5 The Practice-as-Research methodology
- 5.6. Practice-as-research application. *A subjective history of fragility*
 - 5.6.1 Conceptual premises
 - 5.6.2 Work process
 - 5.6.3 Conceptual nucleus
 - 5.6.4 Performance, acting, distancing
 - 5.6.5 Scenic device
 - 5.6.6 Conclusions

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNEXES

Keywords: applied theatre, democratic process, political theatre, ideology, hierarchy, form, content, deconstruction, presence, performative theatre, practice-as-research

SUMMARY

In the Romanian theoretical space devised theatre is yet underrepresented, whereas in the international specialized literature collective creation is most of the times treated punctually or exclusively from a historical perspective. We consider this paper will contribute to a contextualized perspective on contemporary performing forms, both for those working in the field and the general audience. We have used both notions of devised theatre and collective creation with the same meaning, since both terms are used in international practice without differences in meaning. According to Deirdre Heddon, British and Australian theatre companies prefer working with the term devised theatre, whereas the American space employs the notion of collective creation in order to designate the same activity.

For a performing arts practitioner devised theatre is a challenging work formula, an alternative to the hierarchical director-actor model one becomes familiar with during the academic formation years or while working in the professional system of state theatres. Currently, devised theatre is juxtaposed mainly to the independent theatre scene in Romania. The last years have known a spectacular development of the independent scene, which translates into having more devised productions. The relationship between devised theatre and the independent theatre system can be explained by the opacity of institutionalized structures regarding an artistic proposal considered risky, as is that of a production created through a devised process, one that offers no guarantee such as a play to act as a starting point for the creative process, but established the concept and working methodology.

Devised theatre is situated on the border between theatre and other performing arts, therefore its analysis must permanently relate to a wide spectrum of performing formulas. Taking this idea further, this paper creates an opening towards interdisciplinarity and intermediality, concepts that are already established in the specialized critical discourse. Collective creation was, in the first theatrical productions using this methodology, situated at the margin of conventional theatrical techniques, as it found its source of inspiration in performance art, body art and the experiments of 60's American avangardes. Therefore, an informed positioning of devised theatre implies an opening towards a variety of influences.

The first chapter of this paper is dedicated to the two main subgenres of devised theatre, applied theatre and esthetics-focused theatre. The first implies using collaborative practices in non-professional environments, with para-esthetical objectives, even though in many cases the finality is the making of an artistic product (a performance). Proeminence of process over product is a precondition of collective creation, but this doesn't mean that applied theatre productions should be labelled as being amateurish or naive solely because they are created outside a professional context. Theoretical support for applied theatre initiatives can be found in the theories of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal on education and the intervention of theatre in the community. They have inspired an artistic practice dedicated to emancipating oppressed communities that Augusto Boal and his exegetes have been using for decades. Esthetics-focused theatre aims for making a performance in professional circumstances, which are different in the case of collective creation, where long rehearsal intervals overrule the 4 to 6 weeks rehearsal

time allotted to a text-based production. As our case studies have shown, this paradigm can suffer alterations, as is the case for the German collective Rimini Protokoll, where performers are not professional actors, but experts in various fields of interest for the production subject.

We have made a distinction between two fundamental categories of devised theatre, in which collective creation / the collective dramaturgy of the performance operates on different levels: towards creating an inclusive, democratical, ethical space, in the case of applied theatre, or towards manipulating and imprinting fluidity and playfulness on theatrical conventions, in the case of esthetics-focused theatre, the type of theatre concerned with making a professional artistic product, where the potential connection to the social or political sphere is secondary to the esthetical objective. We are interested in the definitions of these main directions, contexts and sources of inspiration, but also in the area in which their aims and practices overlap.

A concised definition of devised theatre emphasizes the creative process, which becomes a democratical exploration based mainly on multiple forms of improvisation, according to theorist Monica Prendergast. In other words, devised theatre is not based on a dramatic play and on a vision concerning the text, but on improvisations on different topics that will generate dramatic material. Exploratory processes can take various forms according to the working group. Improvisation is a generic term that designates a multitude of exercises and theatrical formulas used to elaborate the performance scenario.

In his reference work *Applied Theatre. Bewilderment and Beyond*, James Thompson defines applied theatre as a theatre created by people who don't regularly deal with artistic practice, a theatre of adapting to the unknown and that strives to be useful. A specificity of applied theatre in relation to devised theatre in general is the fact that it is not addressed to professionals, but to a group of non-professionals. Coordinated by specialists / professionals in the field of the performing arts, the participants in an applied theatre project will not be initiated in a certain theatrical language, nor will they be turned into professionals, since the purpose of this devised theatre subgenre is not contributing to the popularity of theatre or theatrical education. Applied theatre is used as an interventional instrument inside a group, with an aim that is therapeutical, educational etc. The unknown in the definition given by Thompson is the new, non-professional medium where theatrical methods are applied, medium with its own specificities, according to the project in progress, which demands for a negotiation between what

theatre is and the way in which theatre is applied to a certain situation, for a customization taking into account the specific context of each project.

Our endeavour to offer a concise synthesis of devised theatre formulas does not strive to be exhaustive, but to give a significant image of the multiple nuances it has. The avatars of devised theatre are permanently reconfiguring, and the permeability between disciplines and contexts will certainly contribute to the redefinition of devised theatre subgenres in the 21st century.

We need to underline the fact that devised theatre, originating in extra-theatrical experiments, gradually receives esthetical and para-esthetical authority. Presently devised techniques are used within prestigious institutions in order to test and to improve social and psychological skills, but also with a purely esthetical aim. Collective creation is therefore a valuable educational and therapeutical instrument, that frequently defies being labelled into a specific category and is situated in an area between utilitarianism and esthetics.

Another important assertion is that various collaborative practices are the source of formal innovation in the case of collective creation, both in the case of applied theatre and esthetics-focuses theatre, more than adhering to an ideology or taking an explicit critical stance. The case studies we have chosen will exemplify extremely different devised theatre strategies, derived from a political belief or not, that create innovation by experimenting.

Collaboration is the main asset of devised creation. For both applied theatre and collective creation with esthetical aims the fact that improvisation is a fundamental source of generating the dramatic material implies a risk factor: the making of a final product starts with uncertainty and instability, from a point where there is no scenario, and the only known elements are the concept and the project team. On the other hand, this instability functions as an trump: there are no fixed parameters to create a fixed form inside which the product is manufactured. The unpredictable is an ingredient that devised theatre creativity cultivates and internalizes.

The second chapter of this paper contains a comparative approach of three theatre companies belonging to the pioneers of collective creation in both the American space and the European one. We thought the historical contextualization of devised theatre to be necessary and we analyzed the practice and theoretical discourse of 20th century canonical practitioners that

have used collective creation as a work method before the notion of devised theatre appeared: Julian Beck, Judith Malina and The Living Theatre, Eugenio Barba and Odin Teatret and Ariane Mnouchkine and Théâtre du Soleil. An aspect we considered relevant was underlying the connection between devised theatre *avant la lettre*, as it was practised by the aforementioned collectives, and contemporary devised theatre, but also the potential similarities acknowledged in the artistic trajectories of the canonical practitioners.

We referred to similarities in their discourse regarding collective creation, but also to parallel difficulties in logistics and administration these companies were dealing with. Geographical and cultural distance seem less relevant for the evolution of devised theatre pioneers, who had similar aspirations and were confronted with similar obstacles.

Working exclusively in the esthetics-focused theatre genre, these groups are not initially preoccupied with theorizing a collective work process or with associating it to an *ars poetica*, but reach it through their life philosophy and their artistic practice hygiene, which lead to a certain type of training and to a group-oriented work process. Collective creation is rather seen as an organic, natural option that enables a laboratory-like type of work and theatrical experimenting, an option that continues the legacy of life principles into art.

A discussion about the process of collective creation must be doubled by one about the pragmatic parameters that moulded and still mould the artistic practice of these artists. If Livign Theatre and Théâtre du Soleil work with professionals, the company founded by Eugenio Barba comprises youth that didn't pass the admission exam for the theatre faculty. In all these cases, the artistic trajectory implies tight professional and personal relationships, time and energy investment, and even capital investment.

A structure such as a company benefits from state funding, but investments of or secured by founding members are sometimes necessary. In addition to this, so that a company is sustainable financially, meaning to be able to exist on the long term, the artistic effort must be doubled by a management vision preoccupied both by artistic quality and recurrent rejuvenation of resources. Not always did the artists we discuss here manage to efficiently administer the functioning of the artistic collective. It is obvious that the survival strategies they implemented influenced their subsequent management.

Another relevant aspect is that of the paratheatrical activities developed by some of this practitioners. Artist workshops or ample research and pedagogy projects add a valuable dimension to their artistic practice and are inscribed in the same paradigm of collectivity and sustainability we encountered when looking at applied theatre.

The extension of artistic practice through para-theatrical activities can be considered an anticipation of utilitarian devised theatre, stage that is reached at the peak of artistic maturity, after the consolidation of the work process and the company status. As is the case with community projects focused on changing a mentality, a status quo, facilitating social insertion or stimulating the individual initiative through empowerment, the workshops, conferences or work demonstrations organized by the aforementioned companies are meant to create a dialogue with the communities they are implemented in and to generate change.

Taking into account the specificities of each company we discuss, we can observe the particularities of the collective work process, that crosses geographical spaces and inscribes their practice in a set of common principles. The collective work stage was reached progressively, after a “classical” period of directing texts – canonical, avant-garde texts or plays commissioned and written by long-term collaborators of the company, who elaborated the script especially for the members of the given company or using their rewritten and restructured improvisations.

Collective creation is the consequence, and not the premise, of long term professional relationships, of a solid personal engagement of all group members, as it implies a longer rehearsal time and taking on related professional risks.

The political aim is connected, in the case of these companies, to a reaction to contemporary social issues, and is not an implicit substratum of creative practice. Their theatre is political, but not infused by an ideology, critical without being partisan. Political means, as defined by the practice of The Living Theatre, Odin Teatret or Théâtre du Soleil, inspired by contemporary social matters, critical in regard to injuring fundamental human principles and rights, interested in reacting to these issues and in being contemporary, meaning relevant for the audiences.

Oriental performing arts forms influence greatly the esthetics of these companies. These forms are studied thoroughly during research and immersion travels in the Oriental space,

without being taken over or imported into an Occidental context. We can rather affirm that the fascination for the Orient generates formal artistic research. Masks, meditation, yoga, mantras are some of the elements used in training or for stimulating group creativity. Sometimes, the Oriental elements generate autonomous scenes within a production.

By analyzing the professional trajectory of devised theatre forerunners we can conclude that the notion of collective creation or collaborative practice implies a variety of working formulas, which vary even inside a company. Their evolution is connected to both the company's artistic trajectory, and external, pragmatic factors – such as the need to tour their productions or to play intensively the productions in their repertory – or the co-opting of new collaborators. Collective creation is a process that matures in time, and implies a mutual familiarity of the company members.

For the companies we discussed collective creation was an ideal, a maturity stage in their artistic practice they reached after a conventional stage of text-based productions and the director-actor hierarchy. Ariane Mnouchkine defines the poetic as a new instrument for analyzing the world. We can extend this assertion to the artistic practice of the three companies we have looked at, regarding their collective creation as a prolific, analytical, reactive and critical poetic.

Case studies applied on contemporary creation of companies at the peak of the international theatrical landscape allow us to study thoroughly the complexity of devised theatre: the third chapter is dedicated to the British of Forced Entertainment and the German company Rimini Protokoll. One first observation derived from the comparative analysis of devised theatre forerunners and exponents of the maturity stage of collective creation is connected to the origin, aim and finality of a devised project belonging to these companies, significantly different from the democratic, pacifist and mobilizing tone and the effervescent and transgressive project of the '60s avangardes. The social, economical and political context is a decisive factor for devised theatre, both in the sense that it influences – it stimulates or inhibits – the chance of this type of projects to subsist, to exist or to become permanent, and in what concerns formal interrogation. Devised theatre thrives on the historical moment ethos, which dictates difference of opinions and challenging conflict points to be explored on stage.

Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll are key companies in the contemporary performing arts landscape. We took into account their approach to their own artistic practice, reflected in interviews and published volumes, but also samples of artistic practice, referencing fragments of theatre productions and artistic projects in a wider sense, that question or move beyond the borders of theatre. The binding agent between these two companies' practice, and also the one between these and the forerunners of devised theatre we have discussed previously, is the relationship between form and content. In the analysis of their practice we insisted on the way in which form and content generate and feed each other, trying to reflect on some of the most transgressive and relevant types of contemporary performing arts creations.

Our choice of case studies is justified by the longevity of these companies, explained through their capacity to elaborate and follow a viable working methodology, but also by the contribution they have brought to the redefining of the contemporary theatre production. Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll have created a performative theatre, that can hardly be approached with the instruments of modern theatricality.

The notion of performance is a convenient one for the postmodernis context, according to theorist Elin Diamond, due to its flexibility in navigation through the limits of institutions, race, gender, class and national identity. The companies we have discussed in the third chapter have redefined the approach of a theatre production and the general and specialized audience approach to what the theatre of the 21st century is. Diamond underlines that the study of performing arts doesn't mean to focus on the performance as a complete object, but to become aware of the contested space it is, a space where meaning is generated, blocked and interpreted with multiple variations.

The international specialized vocabulary employs abundantly the term performance, which signals a mutation in esthetics and audience perception. Taking into account the double meaning of the term – performance as representation of a theatre piece and performance as genre that argues with the theatrical canon – we can speak of acknowledging new models of productions that question theatricality and the theatrical conventions.

Nike Imoru remarks that a recurrent use of the term performance is connected to the extension of theatre limits, therefore gradually theatre becomes synonymous with performance, whereas Elin Diamond sees performance as a space dense with cultural meanings and critiques, where concealed or hidden conventions can be explored. The association between performance

and the deconstruction of conventions is the reason for which, as we reinforce later on in the paper, the theatre of companies we discuss as case studies for devised techniques has developed a borderline, hybrid esthetics of transgression.

Without explicitly questioning the inscription of their artistic practice in the theatre of performance genre or being preoccupied with internalizing the conventions of a genre, Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll had and continue to have a major impact on mechanisms of perception and analysis of a theatre production, by creating what one could call performative theatre, a transgressive artistic practice that deconstructs conventions and proposes innovatory forms. Exponents of a prolific wave in contemporary performing arts, these two companies use an original theatrical language to challenge the traditional relationship between performance and maker, as well as that between performance and audience. With no intention of generalizing the artistic practice of these companies, we can make connexions and associations inside their work that allow for a better contextualization and understanding of contemporary collective creation.

Their artistic practice renegotiates the concepts of theatricality, performance, role, interpretation and performer, proposing a research on the mechanisms of theatricality that not only breaks the fourth wall, but stimulates with each project a reevaluation of the relation between performer and audience. We can affirm that the relevance of this artistic collectives resides in their lack of stiffening in a fixed performance formula, in their programmatic reinvention of project – here we include both theatre productions or new media projects – dramaturgy and structure, so that it includes as much as possible new technologies, already integrated in the contemporary audience member mindset and responsible for how he perceives the performance.

If the model of the first theatrical collectives was that of a community organized around essentially leftist principles, we can no longer speak of an utopia of a coherent whole in contemporary collective creation. In the artistic practice of Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll the focus is on deconstructing theatrical conventions – from theatricality, dramatism, dramaturgy to the performer – and creating a performative frame in which individual perception and subjectivity are cultivated. The inclusion of the collective creation audience into the performance is no longer the main aim of the companies discussed in this chapter; the challenging of the audience begins with self-challenging, in the case of Forced Entertainment, or

with the setting up of an unfamiliar context, in which experts-performers are relevant based on their professional expertise in a non-artistic field.

Forced Entertainment's single idea shows and the *100% City* project of Rimini Protokoll are assumed are theatre productions, although numerous elements pertaining to the auctorial intention or construction are situated far from an Aristotelian definition or the dramatic essence of theatre. The companies whose work we address are not preoccupied with a correct or meticulous definition of their practice. They question theatre's defining elements and (re)invent performing arts formulas without crediting their origin, in a post and post-postmodern spirit they celebrate. Connected to the latest technologies, these companies prefer to focus on the experience they create for their audiences, but also on the experience they create for or offer the performers.

The nucleus of contemporary collective practice has a number of coordinates: the fragility of performance conventions, the integration of technology (sometimes to generate paratheatrical projects) and a dramaturgy of connexions and relations that translates in the performance field the social, economical and political mutations of the beginning of the 21st century, an era marked by globalization, mondialization and delocalization, as the '60s and '70s devised productions stimulated audience interaction and audience mobilization as a reaction to social solidarity movements and protest demonstrations. Presently, the utopia and idealism of the devised theatre forerunners seem to be replaced with pragmatism, lucidity and critique. Forced Entertainment and Rimini Protokoll focus on the performance frame and create cognitively and emotionally impacting experiences inside it.

We considered it was appropriate and relevant to connect the subject of our research – devised theatre – with the concept of political theatre and therefore we dedicated the fourth chapter of this paper to a reflection from an esthetic perspective – with a focus on performing arts – on the political and the avatars of political theatre.

In the previous chapters we have used recurrently the syntagm political theatre in relation to the practice of devised theatre forerunners, but also referring to contemporary collective creation formulas. The discourse of contemporary practitioners and theorists present in this paper deal naturally with political theatre. We have found this term associated with the artistic practice of all the devised companies previously discussed, whether in the artists' reflection on the work

process or in the theorists' analysis. The recurrence of this term validates our endeavour, which will outline a central element of devised practice. Considering it is impossible for a performing arts practitioner of the 20th or 21st century to obliterate referring to the political, we see the process of internalizing this notion as being the result of a subjective itinerary, transposed into a singular esthetics. This chapter presents and analyzes the main acceptions and formulas of political theatre in theatre history, afterwards proposing new directions for developments and argumenting their validity by punctual observations on directors or productions.

Why is a reflection on political theatre necessary today? Theorized by Erwin Piscator and Bertold Brecht in the second half of the 20th century, political theatre is an ingrate syntagm, frequently used in the contemporary society, contemporary art discourse and in multiple divergent contexts, in which the political becomes a trendy label, a term that competes with the popularity of the dramatic. Dramatism in sports, social or other manifestations describes their strong load of meaning for certain groups, but also the tension they generate and that accompanies them punctually throughout the process and the impact on certain communities. Similarly, the political becomes an abstract entity more and more summoned verbally and notionally in public, institutional and journalistic discourses, but also in the reviews applied to the performing arts field.

The recurrence of political theatre in these discourses is a reason strong enough to enable us to research the potential interpenetration of political theatre and devised theatre. We consider the dedicated expressions of political theatre (popular theatre, agit-prop theatre, brechtian theatre) when we affirm that a critical and analytical perspective on this term requires an update and recalibration that integrates recent theatrical formulas, the evolution of visual and performing arts of the last decades and, more generally, the sudden changes of technological and informational parameters and their effect on the social and communicational level.

A definition of political theatre must incorporate those theatrical products that – although they do not develop a political or social theme or position themselves as a political work programmatically – use the questioning of theatrical conventions as a form of political subversion. We see consider this proposal to be not a dillution of the concept of political theatre, but a necessary connection to contemporary tendencies, doubled by an analytical effort of integrating the recent theatre theory in the critical vocabulary.

Political theatre has numerous avatars in the contemporary esthetics. The model of social-political theatre, where the social theme is joined by political militancy, is complemented by the community theatre model, political in a formal sense. Community theatre uses democratic processes and is based on collaborative, participatory, inclusive principles. It is a theatre of all, different from the social-political theatre in its modern definition, in its fundamental objective of facilitating dialogue, multiple perspectives and dissensus – not towards an unjust social or political system, but within the working group. While social-political theatre uses the production as a vehicle for a unique perspective, antagonist to a social order seen as wrong, community theatre considers, unlike social-political theatre, that dialogue and the confrontation of different visions on a certain topic are the essence of change. Community theatre wishes to acknowledge the complex aspects of a social issue, and to stimulate community members' actions through critical reflection.

Of all the avatars of political theatre, we think it is important to signal the semiotic political, in devised productions and not only. We consider this conception of political theatre is not only insufficiently taken into account, but also fertile and relevant for the contemporary theatrical vocabulary, where the syntagm political theatre saturates the critical discourse, but in most of the cases refers solely to social-political theatre. With no intention of perpetuating truism – such as every work of art is political or every performance is political – it is necessary to redefine the political outside the margins of the social-political theatre, in order to incorporate the new contemporary theatre formulas. First of all characterized by heterogeneity, these formulas – whether they refer to author theatre or devised theatre – replace linear narrative with various performative forms and styles, many times also heterogeneous, as theorist David Royster remarks.

The semiotic political theatre is a theatre of dissensus, of acknowledging theatricality, representation and performativity, a theatre that is not preoccupied with the most faithful presentation of a social issue, but with rethinking the relation with the spectator, with creating an experience of uncertainty and transformation. Devised theatre is political not only due to a work process that implies the disintegration of the traditional director – actor hierarchy, which is equivalent to a legislative – executive hierarchy, and the democratic distribution of power (acknowledging the utopia of an absolute democratic distribution), but also due to creating

productions that organically integrate all these specificities beyond the subject, productions that pertain to the post and post-postdramatic paradigm and contribute to the outline of what we call performative theatre.

The last chapter of this paper proposes a short recapitulation of research themes and fields that we consider would benefit from employing devised techniques, and that become potential research paths to continue our approach. The applications of collective creation are not limited to vocational training or theatre professionals practice. In this context, the advantage of implementing devised techniques in a work process is their mobility, that enables one to adapt them to various situations and contexts, thus creating a functional structure for developing skills and improving groups dynamics.

The practice-as-research methodology is, in our view, a viable approach for the study of collective creation. When approaching scientific research via artistic practice and modelling artistic practice by theoretical research the distinction between the two activities is blurred. In the case of disciplines such as performing arts, where theoretical research is frequently established on examples of artistic practice, a twofold exploration of the research object can only become an opportunity to delve deeper into it.

With no academic protocol for a practice-as-research approach, we have used the theoretical instruments developed in the first stage of the doctoral research process and applied them in a practical project. Our project was not *a priori* conceptualized in the terms of these instruments and was inscribed in a postdramatic / performative theatre area, even though not to the extremes of these typologies. *A subjective history of fragility* is a devised theatre production with a political tone, although the topic of fragility, explored in relation to a variety of discourses and instances of authority does not produce an explicit manifest, does not incriminate or disclose. Although there is no narrative structure, theatrical or situational conventions and characters or stage personas taken on by actor-performers are noticeable. Performativity is not connected to an extreme physical or corporal character, in the vein of performance art, but to a fluctuating stage presence of the actor-performers, that oscillate between a role – although it might be a caricature or a scheme – and corporality devoid of psychology.

The piece doesn't signal a correct course of action opposed to a blatantly incorrect one, and therefore it belongs to the semiotic political theatre genre due to its choices of dramaturgy, scenic device and relation to the audience, which transform it into a production in which connexions between factors inherent to spectators' life experience will not be transformed into objective, universal data. Audience members have autonomy over a personal, subjective dramaturgy of the piece, whose construction does not end with the last scene, but continues ideally after they exit the performance venue.

A general conclusion regarding the devised work process underlines its potential to mobilize the creative team, because it offers an ideal space to explore personal interests and direction. Devised theatre can offer a satisfaction infinitely more dense than a mere casting in an artistic project, as valuable as the project may be, as it stems from the premise that all participants can express themselves even in positions they are unfamiliar with due to their experience in traditional projects, based on a strict and rigid hierarchy. Devised theatre has already proven its capacity to produce valuable results, which compete with what can be called traditional productions – created inside a director – actor hierarchy and based on a preexisting dramatic text.

We wish to underline the inter- and transdisciplinary character of devised theatre, captured in this paper through a permanent repositioning in relation to the object of the research. The various angles we have used to analyze devised theatre are connected to multiple disciplines, such as theatre, art and cultural history, psychology, philosophy, sociology, education sciences, academic research or contemporary artistic practice. It is manifest that the ascension of devised theatre needs to be connected to a change of paradigm, not only in the field of performing arts, but regarding the ansamble of societal, economical, political mechanisms of the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Collective creation becomes a synecdoche for the paradigm of globalization, of the new technologies, of intelligent systems and of a humanity redefining itself by relating to the accelerated changes of the last decades. It also becomes a site for the rehabilitation of the contemporary human: by confronting otherness and by creating a context in which the individual is connected to the group, to the community, to the society he belongs to and he permanently influences through his behavior and decisions, through his sheer

existence inside these structures, collective creation becomes a tool for connecting, appropriation and negotiating the differences between individuals.

We consider to have captured some of the main specificities of devised theatre and the connection it can make with multiple disciplines outside the cultural or artistic field, therefore bringing value to the contemporary society on many levels, including in fields where these can be quantified and evaluated more easily than through the subjective perception of the spectator. We desire to witness the process of facilitating the entering of devised techniques in the artistic and para-artistic vocabulary in Romania and of creating structures that function as an alternative to the already existing institutions, structures that will allow devised techniques to become more visible and establish a partnership with traditional techniques and tools.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

VOLUMES

Angelaki, Nicky, ed. *Contemporary British Theatre. Breaking New Ground*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print

Auslander, Philip. *From Acting to Performance. Essays in Modernism and Postmodernism*. Routledge, 1997. Print

Barba, Eugenio. *Teatru. Singurătate, meșteșug, revoltă*. Nemira, 2013. Print

Barba, Eugenio. *Pământ de cenușă și diamante*. Ideea europeană, 2010. Print

Barba, Eugenio. *Casa în flăcări. Despre regie și dramaturgie*. Nemira, 2012. Print

Barnett, David. "Performing Dialectics in an Age of Uncertainty, or: Why Post-Brechtian =/ Postdramatic" *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political. International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 47-66. Print.

Duncombe, Stephen and Steve Lambert. "The Art of Activism". *Truth Is Concrete: A Handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics*. Berlin: Sternberg, 2014. 26-35. Print.

Barton, Bruce, ed. *Collective Creation, Collaboration and Devising*. Playwrights Canada Press, 2008. Print

Biner, Pierre. *Le Living Theatre: Histoire sans légende*. Éditions La Cité, 1968. Print

Bishop, Claire. *Artificial Hells. Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Verso, 2012. Print

Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press, 2008. Print

Boal, Augusto. *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*. Routledge, 2006. Print

Boon, Richard, and Jane Plastow, eds. *Theatre as Empowerment. Community Drama on the World Stage*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Print

Borowski, Mateusz and Malgorzata Sugiera. "Political Fictions and Fictionalisations: History as Material for Postdramatic Theatre". *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political. International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 67-86. Print.

Bottoms, Stephen, and Matthew Goulish, eds. *Small Acts of Repair. Performance, Ecology and Goat Island*. Routledge, 2007. Print

Brejzek, Thea. "Experts of the Every-Space." *Rimini Protokoll Close-Up: Lektüren*. Ed. Johannes Birgfeld, Ulrike Garde, Meg Mumford. Wehrhahn Verlag, 2015. 60-72. Print.

Carroll, Jerome, Karen Jürs-Munby, and Steve Giles. "Introduction: Postdramatic Theatre and the Political." *Postdramatic Theatre and the Political. International Perspectives on Contemporary Performance*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. 1-30. Print.

Caubère, Philippe. "Improvisation and the mask: from Arlequin to Abdallah". *Collaborative Theatre. The Théâtre du Soleil Sourcebook*. Routledge, 1999. 75-125. Print

Chaikin, Joseph. *The Presence of the Actor*. New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1996. Print.

Danan, Joseph. *Entre théâtre et performance : La question du texte*. Paris : Actes Sud-Papiers, 2013. Print.

Dapp, Götz. *Mediaclash in Political Theatre. Building on and Continuing Brecht*. Tectum Verlag, 2006. Print

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. University of California Press, 1984. Print

Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. University of Minnesota Press, 1987. Print

Diamond, Elin. "Performance and Cultural Politics". *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*. Ed. Lizbeth Goodman and Jane de Gay. London: Routledge, 2000. 66-69. Print

Dreyse, Miriam, and Florian Malzacher. "Foreword." *Experts of the Everyday. The Theatre of Rimini Protokoll*. Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2008. 1-12. Print.

Etchells, Tim. *Certain Fragments. Contemporary Performance and Forced Entertainment*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2003

Féral, Josette. *Întâlniri cu Ariane Mnouchkine. Înălțând un monument efemerului*. Artspect, 2009. Print

Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Opressed*. Continuum, 2005. Print

Govan, Emma, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington, eds. *Making a performance. Devising Histories and Contemporary Practices*. Routledge, 2007. Print

Hamilton, Margaret. "'Make a map, not a tracing'. Disclosing the Cartographic Aesthetic of Rimini Protokoll". *Rimini Protokoll Close-Up: Lektüren*. Ed. Johannes Birgfeld, Ulrike Garde, Meg Mumford. Wehrhahn Verlag, 2015. 73-98. Print.

Hartley, Jennifer S. *Applied Theatre in Action. A journey*. Trentham Books, 2012. Print

Heathfield, Adrian. "As if Things Got More Real. A Conversation with Tim Etchells". *Not Even a Game Anymore: The Theatre of Forced Entertainment = Das Theater Von Forced Entertainment*. Berlin: Alexander Verlag, 2004. 77-102. Print.

Heddon, Deirdre, and Jane Milling, eds. *Devising Performance: A Critical History*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006. Print

Imoru, Nike. "Introduction to Part Four - Power, politics, and the theatre: political theatres in cross-cultural contexts". *The Routledge Reader in Politics and Performance*. Ed. Lizbeth Goodman and Jane de Gay. London: Routledge, 2000. 109-115. Print

Kiernander, Adrian. *Ariane Mnouchkine and the Théâtre du Soleil*. Cambridge University Press, 1993. Print

Lehmann, Hans-Thies. *Postdramatic Theater*. Routledge, 2006. Print

Malina, Judith, and Julian Beck. *Paradise Now. Collective Creation of the Living Theatre*. New York: Random House, 1971. Print

Mnouchkine, Ariane. *Arta prezentului. Convorbiri cu Fabienne Pascaud*. București : Fundația Culturală “Camil Petrescu”, Revista Teatrul azi (supliment), 2010. Print

Neveux, Olivier. *Politiques du spectateur. Les enjeux du théâtre politique aujourd’hui*. Paris : La Découverte, 2013. Print

Oddey, Alison. *Devising Theatre. A Practical and Theoretical Handbook*. Routledge, 1994. Print

O'Connor, Peter and Michael Anderson. " Critical Departures: research in a postnormal world ". *Applied Theatre: Research. Radical Departures*. Ed. Peter O'Connor and Michael Anderson. Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015. Print

Passeron, René. “Introduction à la poïétique du collectif.” *Recherches poïétiques [3]. La création collective*. Ed. Marie-José Baudinet and René Passeron. Paris: Clancier-Guénaud, 1981. Print

Peters, Sibylle. "Being Many. The Art of Activism”. *Truth Is Concrete: A Handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics*. Berlin: Sternberg, 2014. 129-131. Print.

Picon-Vallin, Béatrice. *Ariane Mnouchkine. Introducere, selecție și prezentare*, București: Fundația Culturală “Camil Petrescu”, Revista “Teatrul Azi” (supliment), 2010. Print

Popovici, Iulia, ed. *Sfârșitul regiei, începutul creației colective în teatrul european*. Cluj-Napoca: Tact, 2015. Print.

Prendergast, Monica and Juliana Saxton, eds. *Applied Theatre. International Case Studies and Challenges for Practice*. Intellect, 2009. Print

Prentki, Tim, and Sheila Preston, eds. *The Applied Theatre Reader*. Routledge, 2009. Print

Prentki, Tim, ed. *Applied Theatre: Development*. Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015. Print

Radosavljević, Duška, ed. *The Contemporary Ensemble. Interviews with theatre-makers*. London: Routledge, 2013. Print

Rancière, Jacques. *Le spectateur émancipé*. La Fabrique éditions, 2008. Print

Read, Alan. *Theatre and Everyday Life. An Ethics of Performance*. Routledge, 2005. Print

Read, Alan. *Theatre, Intimacy & Engagement*. Routledge, 2005. Print

- Roesner, David. *Musicality in Theatre. Music as Model, Method and Metaphor in Theatre-Making*. Ashgate, 2014. Print
- Schweitzer, Pam. *Reminiscence Theatre. Making Theatre from Memories*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007. Print
- Syssoyeva, Kathryn Mederos, and Scott Proudfit, eds. *A History of Collective Creation*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Print
- Tackels, Bruno. *Ariane Knouchkine și Théâtre du Soleil*. Nemira, 2010. Print
- Thompson, James, ed. *Applied Theatre: Bewilderment and Beyond*. Peter Lang, 2003. Print
- Smart, Jackie. "The Feeling of Devising. Emotion and Mind in the Devising Process". *New Dramaturgy. International Perspectives on Theory and Practice*. Ed. Katalin Trencsényi and Bernadette Cochrane. Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2014. 101-112. Print
- Tytell, John. *The Living Theatre. Art, Exile and Outrage*. Methuen Drama, 1997. Print
- van Erven, Eugene, ed. *Community Theatre. Global Perspectives*. Routledge, 2002. Print
- Vassen, Florian. "From Author to Spectator: Collective Creativity as a Theatrical Play of Artists and Spectators". *Collective Creativity: Collaborative Work in the Sciences, Literature and the Arts*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011. 298-312. Print.
- Watson, Ian. *Towards a Third Theatre: Eugenio Barba and the Odin Teatret*. London: Routledge, 1993. Print.
- Williams, David. "Introduction: A Grain of Sand in the Works: Continuity and Change at the Théâtre du Soleil". *Collaborative Theatre. The Théâtre du Soleil Sourcebook*. Routledge, 1999. i-xv. Print
- White, Garreth. *Applied Theatre: Aesthetics*. Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2015. Print
- Whitmore, Jon. *Directing Postmodern Theater. Shaping Signification in Performance*. The University of Michigan Press, 1994. Print

ARTICLES

Arfara, Katia. "Aspects of a New Dramaturgy of the Spectator". *Performance Research. A Journal of the Performing Arts* 14:3 (2009): 112-118

Bishop, Claire. *The Social Turn. Collaboration and its Discontents*. Artforum, 2006, <http://arts.berkeley.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Bishop-Social-Turn.pdf> (11 august 2015)

Gorman, Sarah. "Chronicles of the Indeterminate." *Performance Research. A Journal of the Performing Arts* 10:1 (2005): 82-94

Laera, Margherita. "Reaching Athens Performing participation and community in Rimini Protokoll's Prometheus in Athens". *Performance Research: A Journal of the Performing Arts* 16:4 (2011): 46-51

Naden, Cathy. "Inside Forced Entertainment: The Route to The Travels." *Studies in Theatre and Performance* (2003): 133-38

Monfort, Anne. "Après Le Postdramatique : Narration Et Fiction Entre écriture De Plateau Et Théâtre Néo-dramatique". *Trajectoires. Travaux des jeunes chercheurs du CIERA*. <https://trajectoires.revues.org/392> (4 mai 2016)

Nelson, Robin. "Practice-as-research and the Problem of Knowledge". *Performance Research* 11:4 (2006): 105-116

Popat, Sita. "The online devising process". *Studies in Theatre and Performance* 23:2 (2003): 87-105

Rancière, Jacques. "Aesthetic Separation. Aesthetic Community: Scenes from the Aesthetic Regime of Art". *Art&Research. A Journal of Ideas, Contexts and Methods*. <http://www.artandresearch.org.uk/v2n1/ranciere.html> (15 decembrie 2015)

Ramey, Heather. "Rimini Protokoll's Reality Theatre". *Theatre Forum* 44 (2013): 64

CONFERENCES

Hadley, Bree. "During and Enduring. Forced Entertainment's Bloody Mess and the Manipulation of Time in Performance." Queensland University of Technology. 17 iunie 2008. Guest Lecture

DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS

Marrs, Terrel W. *The Living Theatre: History, Theatrics and Politics*. Diss. Texas Tech U, 1984.
<https://ttu-ir.tdl.org/ttu-ir/handle/2346/13877>. 17 februarie 2016.