

By Pinelopi Spanou

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space
χώρος
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space
The scenographic space
of a moving costume
costume
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Introduction

A letter to ~~the reader~~

Dear last year self,

I read your Black Book¹, and you look quite confused, but I see where you are going. You have tried to record everything and that is okay, because I identify what elements are still in your work today. I can recognize your first foundations, theory, and interests. You seem to be reading a lot of different things, from fashion theory to books for dancers and political books, in an effort to move from the past- architecture- to a new page- costume design, getting as much information as possible.

This journey took you right to “La Ronde”², perhaps intuitively in the beginning. From a theatrical text that was inextricably linked to the hypocrisy and taboos of its era in Vienna, you have transferred it to the modern city, using the taboos and problems we overlook in our daily lives as your canvas. Last year you studied site-specific theater for the first time, and today you have already attended and created some of these performances. As in architecture, so in performance, you questioned the space and you began an exploration of what space is, what space does, and what kind of potential relationship space has with the body. The constant communication and interaction between body and space, in other words, the experience that is created is an essential element of both art and architecture.

At this point, let me inform you that strange things happened during the spring semester, so please do not think that I am talking to you nonsense.

During the great pandemic of covid-19 the loss of physical space (closing of the school) and hosting our creative activity in the same enclosed specific space (our apartments), resulted in the first look back and a first purposeful study of the relevant bibliography for the site-specific art and performance. So, within these conditions you created the Research Portfolio³ with a concern of the dipole of the existing quarantine space, between physical space and the virtual world in real life and performance.

Unfortunately, you had to stay in for a few months, and at the same time try to find a way to continue performance as a multisensory experience, but for many reasons it was not covered by the new reality. I have some good news from the future, we have returned to our spaces, but the distances have changed. One would say that our personal space has expanded and there is greater awareness of boundaries and interaction with other bodies.

And after we went out in the city again, the theater also went out in the city and expanded its boundaries.

1. Black Book was the last assignment of Theory 1, at the end of the fall semester of 2019, where I have gathered the work, theory, and interests of the semester, an agent of my professional identity at this particular moment.

2. La Ronde was a controversial play that is written by Arthur Schnitzler in 1897. During the fall semester, I created a modern adaptation of the theme as a context-specific version in Athens.

The “La Ronde” project you have dreamed of realizing, now seems more realistic than ever. However, it is time for you to move on and that is the reason I am writing to you, not further but deeper. What is the thread that connects your previous projects and what thread connects to what is coming? What are the types of spaces that will connect and complete the scenographic costume? And how will the costume become the only space? How will the performer connect with the audience, and how will the audience rediscover their city, participate, and surrender themselves, think, feel, and reflect? How will an experience from my point of view make sense for people with different histories and knowledge?

Since performance serves to frame the tension between body and space, how does space reach an exactitude with a body that is experiencing it? This exactitude does not refer to a finished completeness; instead, it refers to a temporary integration. If you can not understand this, think of architecture without the existence of a moving body, it is essentially an expression of absence and incompleteness. A work of art or architecture is no longer a spectacle. It has become a space which interacts with the body in experience.

I think I gave you a lot of information from the future, and some shocking spoilers, but mostly some thoughts for reflection. This is the starting point of Theory 3. Wish me a good and purposeful journey.

Keep Ithaka⁴ always in your mind.

Arriving there is what you are destined for.

But do not hurry the journey at all.

Better if it lasts for years,

so you are old by the time you reach the island,

wealthy with all you have gained on the way,

not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.

Best,

Peny

3. Research Portfolio is the final assignment of Theory 2, where I have been studying performative space, and the relationship between site, costume and text. Further information in https://issuu.com/penyspn/docs/research_portfolio_for_issue

4. Ithaka is a poem written by Constantine Cavafy, where he is making an allusion of the legendary journey of Odysseus to the journey of every human through life and suggesting that each person is looking for their own Ithaca, their personal final destination.

Space and event

Ideal space, real space, space of events, moments of shock



In the above introduction, the foundations and the basis of this paper were set, as it was an attempt to reflect on the journey until today. The recording, that took place within the framework of Theory in the Black Book and the Research Portfolio, and the later critical reading of both, resulted in identifying a mirror of past-self. Through its prism, it is possible to measure the distance or proximity to that particular time version of it.

Space and event is the main theme that has been raised and will be studied further in this paper, in relation to the performative space and within an interdisciplinary approach, composing elements from architecture, design, art, dance, and drama. Defining space is clearly a complex issue and raises questions as to whether it is a fixed condition or a changing formulation. Historians and theorists have referred to space as a three-dimensional lump of matter.

Bernard Tschumi, studying about the ideal space (the product of mental processes) and real space (the product of social praxis), in his book *Architecture and Disjunction*, proposes an architecture based on movement, action, and moments of shock, as he emphasizes that there is no space without event. “Our work argues that architecture- its social relevance and formal invention- cannot be dissociated from the events that happen in it”. (Bernard Tschumi, 1996, p.139).

Michel Foucault expanded the use of the term event in a manner that went beyond the single action or activity and spoke of “events of thought.” For Foucault, an event is not simply a logical sequence of words or actions but rather “the moment of erosion, collapse, questioning, or problematization of the very assumptions of the setting within which a drama may take place-occasioning the chance or possibility of another, different setting.” (Bernard Tschumi, 1996, p.156). Based on this, Tschumi proposes that the future of architecture should focus on such events.

The inseparable relationship between space and event can someone also find in the texts of the other side, the theorists of theater. Peter Brook, in the introduction to his book *The Empty Space*, defines theater in relation to space, states that “theater occurs whenever someone crosses neutral space and is watched by another person”. (Peter Brook, 1968, p.2). This definition raises some problems such as the difficulty of determining neutral space, if that exists in the end, but it is useful in its firm commitment to deconstructing the basic and necessary elements of a theatrical act. Antonin Artaud, expands the term event even further, using it as a necessary tool in the theater, and turning it into violent disruptions to the audience by placing them into the center of the action, compelling them to absorb the performance on an instinctive level. “The problem is to make space speak, to feed and furnish it; like mines in a wall of rock which all of a sudden turns into geysers and bouquets of stones”. (Antonin Artaud, 1958, p.98).

Body and space

Body and performance, body and architecture, body as a space



In the dipole of space and event, the intermediate connecting element is the body. It is the tool that someone has for experiencing and perceiving the world. Body and space are considered separately, but bringing the two together in a performance reveals their interdependence. Performance serves to frame the tension between body and space. Tschumi states that the body disturbs the order of space, and space violates and ruins the body. By violence, he does not mean the brutality that destroys physical or emotional integrity but a metaphor for the intensity of a relationship between individuals and their surrounding spaces. (Bernard Tschumi, 1996, p.122).

How body and space affect each other in architecture and performance has been a fundamental question. Space is not considered as a static object anymore, nor is architecture as a static condition or a set of buildings. It is lived, felt and experienced. Juhani Pallasmaa writes "An architecture work is not experienced as a collection of isolated visual pictures, but in its fully embodied material and spiritual presence." In particular, experience seems to be a key element in art and architecture. Eyes, ears, nose, skin, tongue, skeleton and muscles are part of this multisensory experience. "I confront the city with my body; my legs measure the length of the facade and the width of the square; my gaze unconsciously projects my body onto the

facade of the cathedral, where it roams over the mouldings and contours, sensing the size of recesses and projections. I experience myself in the city, and the city exists through my embodied experience. The city and my body supplement and define each other. I dwell in the city and the city dwells in me." (Juhani Pallasmaa, 1996, p.40).

Therefore, the body is related and interacts with space, but at the same time, one cannot overlook the fact that it constitutes a space too, and includes itself in the surrounding entity through perception. As Merleau Ponty writes the body is not a subject or object, it is the actant. After all, the world is all around me, not in front of me. (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, 1964, p.178).

City as event-space

Place of places, polymorphia¹, linear and cyclical rhythms



When someone refers to space and especially to architecture, it is often connected with the environment in which the person has grown up and has been associated. My own experiences and background to space and event are directly associated with the city. It is a place of places. It is not homogenous, nor is it static. It is polymorphic, and it consists of an endless variety of connections and interactions between people and objects that operate simultaneously across a multitude of times in both physical and digital locations. Performance designer Dorita Hannah describes the city as the place where multiple shifting moments by fragile bodies on the move occur (Dorita Hannah, 2008, p.1). Therefore the space of the city through the eyes of the performance is more an active becoming than a passive being.

Is the city chaotic or has a rhythm? It is a fact that being in a metropolis with a very fast pace of life, high population density and plethora of activities, one can perceive it as absolute chaos. This is mainly because the receiver is exposed to multiple messages and at the same time, moves within the city. However, if someone stands for a while and becomes a distant observer, the “noises distinguish themselves, the flows separate out, rhythms respond to one another” (Henri Lefebvre, 2004, p.28).

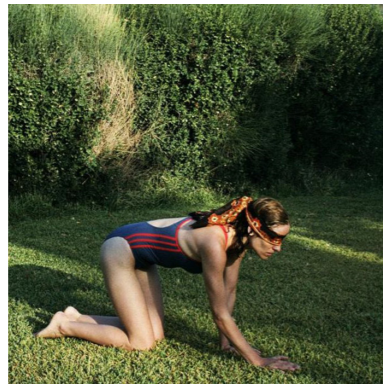
Lefebvre believed that the movement of occupants inside and outside the city derives from two main types of rhythm, the cyclical and the linear each of which is bound to time and space. “Everything

is cyclical repetition through linear repetitions”. (Henri Lefebvre, 2004, p.8). The circular movement includes elements of nature, such as day and night, and also reoccurring social patterns, such as the daily working hours, the regular movement of school children as well as other schedules in repetition daily or seasonal. Linear rhythms refer to human activity, such as the journey from one place to another and are sometimes predictable while at other times, they are more random or less patterned. The human body, the medium by which one understands the city, is also polyrhythmic. The organs that give evidence of rhythms are the lungs and the heart. This assemblage of beats allows the city to be read as an orchestral performance.

1. In Greek, poly means “many” and morph means “shape” or “form” (from the Greek morphe), therefore Polymorphia can be understood as “many shapes or forms.”

City; utopian or dystopian space

Dogtooth, construction of realities, dystopia



As an attempt to relate to practice the polyrhythm of the city and to consider myself an observer of the society in which I live, I have used an example of a city from the fictional world. By placing this society next to reality, the question arises as to whether one of them expresses objective truth and the other lies.

In the movie “Dogtooth” a couple lives in a fenced compound with their children. The children have no knowledge of the outside world; their parents say they will be ready to leave once they lose a dogtooth. Parents construct an entirely new reality for their children with the support of language, and the words of the outside world have the meaning they give them. An example of the false definitions that parents teach their children is when the word “sea” is explained as a “leather armchair” in their living room. The children accept this reality as the absolute truth and follow the rhythms of their own constructed city. In the same way humans, through the process of habitualization, accept the polyrhythm of the city as objective truth because others have created it prior to our existence, they follow it and become part of it.

The Social Construction of Reality argues that “any action that is repeated frequently becomes cast into a pattern, which can then be performed again in the future in the same manner and with the same economical effort” (Berger & Luckmann, 1996, p. 70). In the film, reality begins to fade when the daughter manages to watch some films from the outside world, so she

begins to question and finally breaks her shackles. Thus, it is reasonable to relate the experience of today’s city with the children’s perspective and question if its rhythms are fragile and what is the element that could break a circular rhythm or transform it. If the humans are captive to these rhythms or they work as a well-tempered instrument within them.

Is the juxtaposition of an imaginary world, as the one created by Yorgos Lanthimos, with the multi-rhythmic city, a motivation to question, step back for a while and reconsider how far or close to dystopia it is, and what is the way out of it?

Why (not) site-specific

During my first projects as a costume designer, the space matter of the performances in which I was designing a concept has not been questioned as it was beyond my competence within the traditional form of hierarchy in the theater production. However, this changed, at the time I have been challenged to design a concept from scratch for the play "La Ronde". When a designer has the freedom to think out of the box, the elements that could be taken for granted before, are becoming question marks. The city's expression revealed a lot more truth than I expected and the play was a way to look at the space differently, identify some issues, discuss, and share them with other people. The dilemma is not about whether one should place a specific theater play inside or outside the theatrical building, but rather what the creation of performances in the city has to offer. Both of the movements existed a long time ago and will continue to exist with different tensions in each era depending on the needs. And even if the need of the time is to be outside in the city, its use as a canvas for a theatrical or dance act is not limited to this. It is time to stand between utopia and dystopia and pick a side. To take back our spaces. Reactive city, reactive inhabitants. "This is not solely for expediency but to challenge the notion that the auditorium is a neutral vessel of representation, and see it rather as the spatial machine of a dominant discourse which distances spectators from the spectacle and literally "keeps them in their place" in the dark, sitting in rows,

discouraging eye contact and interaction." (Mike Pearson, 1997, p. 89).

Redirecting the attention from a specific spatial unit, the stage, to a broader in some cases endless environment where its truth is unhidden and unpredictable, a dynamic relationship between audience, space and performance is created. The art historian Claire Bishop states that "This traffic of reskilling between the white cube and the black box is more complicated than simply switching the context of performance". (Claire Bishop, 2011). Therefore, when someone is not drawing on a white canvas, one should be aware of the complexity of the color palette that lies beneath the work. It is not only the city that affects the work, but also the work affects the city.

Taking as the foundation of a context-specific performance the dynamic request to redefine the relationship between human and city, I approach spatial acts as an ephemeral urban design or ephemeral architecture, with the challenge of understanding how people think about their city, what they expect from it, and how the place can become more familiar to them as it invites them to rediscover it. It brings creativity back to society as a real dynamic forum for thinking and imagining how we want the world to be.



Zero costume

Close your eyes and think of a performance that could be described in words as remarkable, majestic, exceptional, gripping, imaginative, or powerful.

One you have seen or one you have imagined.

Take away the costumes, all at once. Does it feel the same?

Even the neutral bodysuit of the dancers is not neutral. It paints the body with color, form and movement.

Even if the performers remain naked, if the costumes are thrown into the fire, into the Lethe¹ water, nudity is a costume too, translated into a society where we are not living naked as far as clothes still exist.

As much as you are trying to strip the performance bare, as much as you wish the costumes to disappear, they will be your shadow.

Zero is considered to be a number and it is mirroring everything else.

1. In Greek mythology, Lethe was one of the five rivers of the underworld of Hades. All those who drank from it experienced complete forgetfulness. Lethe was also the name of the Greek spirit of forgetfulness and oblivion, with whom the river was often identified.



Costume; the temporal space of a moving body

Bauhaus, form and color, spatial body-object

As mentioned in a previous chapter on the dipole of space and event, the connecting element is the body. It is the body in immediate contact with a second skin, the costume. The costume can not be separated from the body, hence are recognized as one entity. Bauhaus theories state that “the history of theater is the history of the transfiguration of the human form. The materials involved in this transfiguration are form and color, the materials of the painter and sculptor”. (Oskar Schlemmer, 1961, p.2).

The human body can be considered as the center of the scene while moving with specific laws associated with functions such as heartbeat, circulation, the activities of the brain and nervous system and creates an imaginary space. “Invisibly involved with all these laws is human as a dancer. He obeys the laws of the body as well as the law of space; he follows his sense of himself as well as his sense of embracing space”. (Oskar Schlemmer, 1961, p.25).

The transfiguration with form and color, the metamorphosis of the human body is made by the costume. Costume is both an act of revelation and concealment, expressing the body’s identity or misleading its nature, it stresses its conformity to organic or mechanical laws or invalidates this conformity. It introduces, encourages

and intensifies specific new movements. As Raman Schlemmer writes, the costumes become ambulatory architectures.

Through the process of dressing and undressing, (not) moving and (not) performing it is clear that the costume is at the same time an ephemeral physical space in direct interaction with the surrounding space and the performer’s body, and an imaginary space with invisible boundaries. A spatial body-object, a living organism, and at the same time active and activating agent.

A gigantic costume that is hanging from a ceiling and is spread to the river, producing metallic sounds from the tiny crystals of the translucent fabric, moving continually as the percussion playing more and more intensely, is enough to understand and experience its multisensory nature in space.



Figures 1,2. Photos taken from the dance film “Angels among us” by Tendai Malvine Makurumbandi, September 2020, costumes designed by Ida-Marie Højris and Peny Spanou

Types of spatial relations through costume

As a method of understanding the spatiality of the costume, it can be useful to identify the types of spatial relations in the work of other artists and create a tool for further development. At this point, I would like to emphasize that this is a personal interpretation and reflection and that the following costumes could possibly belong to one, two or all of the following categories.

The costumes of this chapter are considered as an extension of the body that intersects with the surrounding space. Their form, color and scale suggest a spatial entity with potential inhabitation. In addition, they often state the blurred line between scenography, installation and costumes, confounding the audience in the process of identifying the boundaries. Therefore the understanding of them does not necessarily lead to the limited definition of garments.

	costume
	costume
	costume
bauhaus	costume
	costume
living shell	costume
	costume
	costume
shared	costume
	costume
expanded	costume
installation	costume
	costume
	costume
sociopolitical	costume
site-specific	costume
	costume
	costume



Figure 3. The wire costume, 1922, Oskar Schlemmer.

the bauhaus costume

The outrageous costumes of Bauhaus parties and performances, with exaggerated headdresses and masks, are considered the beginning of many experimental costumes to this day and are therefore the first type of spatial body-objects. They were designed by matching geometric forms with analogous parts of the human body, sometimes the result of improvisation and others performed at stage acts. Line, shape and color was the main focus, monstrously tall forms which created noise and are not reminiscent of the ballet costumes we had seen before on stage. The costume materials required a new way of moving in the stage, with arhythmic, animated steps, intercut with stillness, or a spinning motion. "Radically abstract yet deeply humane, intensely simplified yet subtly complex, hide the natural contour of the individual body and make each dancer appear as though the body was a prototype." (Beau Rhee, 2007, p.14). The spatiality of the costumes also appears in the idea that there is a distinction between the space that is close to the body and the space that is further away from it. Thus, apart from the imaginary space created through the body in motion, the physical space around the body is not empty but constitutes a strong interaction with the body.



Figure 4. Linear costume, 1920, Oskar Schlemmer.



Figures 5,6. Cocoon, 2019, Susan Marshall.

the living shell costume

It has certainly been influenced by the Bauhaus movement, as it is experimenting on the space around the human body, and on the possibility of inhabiting this space, through geometric shapes.

These shapes are sometimes defined forms and some other times are flexible and easily reshapable, allowing the performer to design the costume with the movement. It hosts the human body, covers and protects it as a shell, an architectural container.



Figure 7. Alice in Wonderland, 2020, Susan Marshall.



Figure 8. Sehkanal from the series '1. Werksatz', 1963–69, Franz Erhard Walther.

the shared costume

This is often an oversized garment that functions as a connecting element between two or more performers. This particular costume can not be identified as a second body of only one person but instead, it examines the relationship between those who come in close contact with it, expanding and multiplying the possibilities in which the dancers could interact with each other.



Figure 9. Sehkanal from the series '1. Werksatz', 1963–69, Franz Erhard Walther.

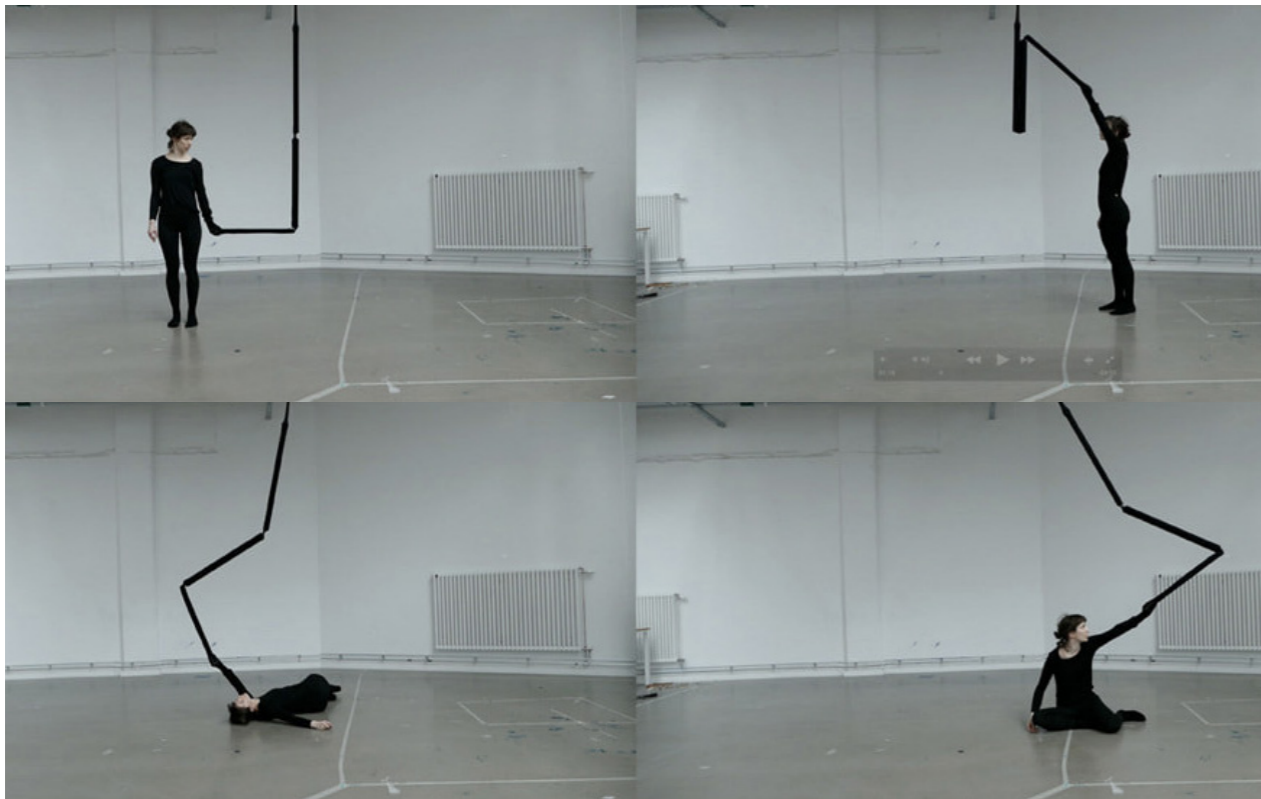


Figure 10. Body (dress?) Space (room?), 2015, Linnea Bågander

the installation form costume

The relationship of this costume with the space is connected with the time notion as its presence in the performative space starts long before the event. Therefore, the boundaries between the terms costume and scenography tend to slip, and is often recognized by the audience as an installation before the performer enters the space and interacts with it. Although it acquires a dynamic entity in space along with the human body, it sometimes remains in space, the same shape, or in a completely different form after the performer leaves. It is both autonomous and dependent.



Figure 11. Inside/ Outside, 2018, Linnea Bågander



Figure 12. Wall dress, 2002, Nelly Agassi.

the expanding costume

The physical space of this costume is increasing, expanding or restricting movement due to its different scale compared to a regular garment. It seems that it comes into existence from the human body, which is the center of the action and organically extends the performative space. It can often become an immersive element of the audience experience of the performance.



Figure 13. Borrowed Scenery, 2004, Nelly Agassi.



Figure 14. The issue, 2018, Fruzsina Nagy.

the sociopolitical costume

The difference between the spatial qualities of this type and the previous ones is that the concern of the physical relationship with space is becoming the concern of the perception space, as it invites the spectator to participate in a travel to the imaginary world.

Depending on the level of participation of the individual and the cultural and social background that carries, it is a costume that intends to raise reflections and encourage discussions on important social issues.

It is radical, immersive, intense and in some cases exaggerated provocative, and it aims to incite the viewer, who is often sitting comfortably in the theater auditorium.



Figure 15. The issue, 2018, Fruzsina Nagy.



Figure 16. The hunt er/ed, 2019, Paravan.

the site-specific costume

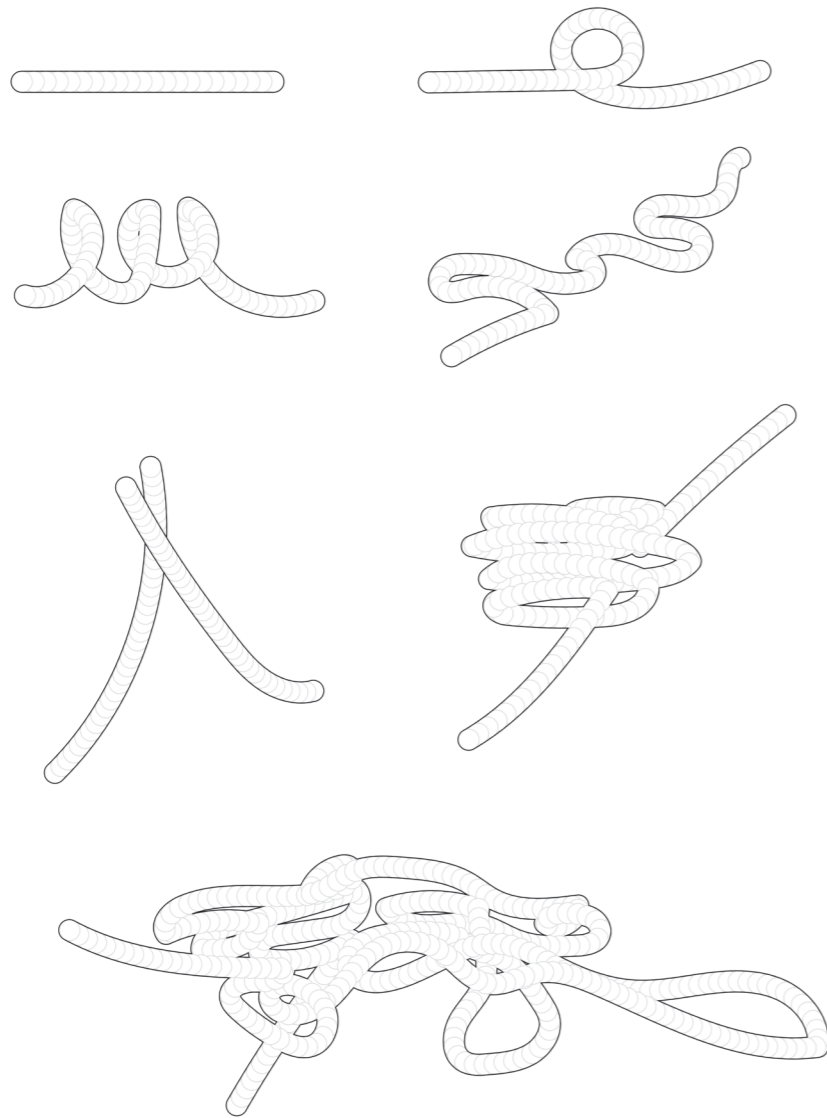
As stated in the previous examples, a costume could generate spatial relationships with the human body, the space of a theatrical stage, a gallery, a room, or create itself a space, imaginary and physical. In the last type of these relationships, the new element is the positioning of the event in the city and more broadly in an already existing complex and unpredictable system.

Thus, it requires careful studies and understanding of the site with which it interacts and presents itself. This unique relationship is impossible to be simply transferred by shifting the location.



Figure 17. Morphomen, 2019, Zsófia Bérczi.

Drawing with lines



Returning to the reality of contemporary theater or dance, it is worth mentioning some aspects of the process of designing costumes in a production. Although the inseparable relationship between body and costume has been emphasized through this paper, it has been the case in many times that the design process and the moving or acting expression of a performer are two parallel worlds that meet only in the final stage of their creation.

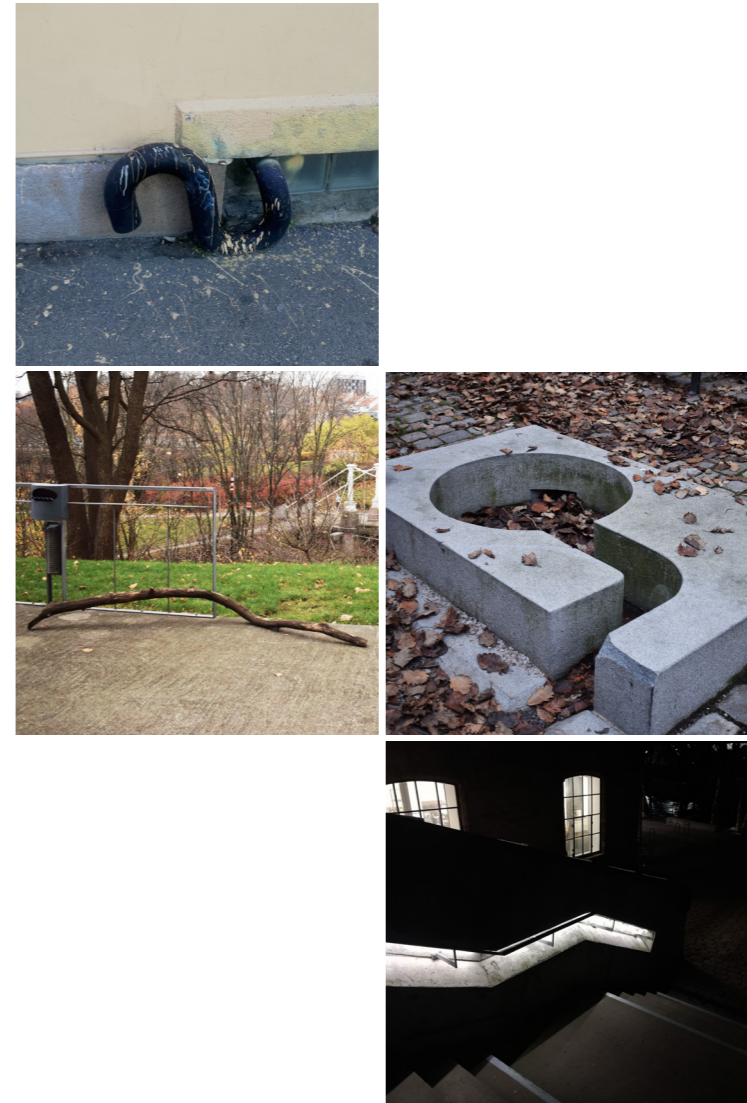
But what if the costume and the choreographic material are in a constant dialogue from the beginning until the end? This year's practice started with a collaboration with the dancer Anu Laiho¹, in order to explore the above question, as we share a common research background on space. This series of experiments is the starting point for the upcoming practice of the next term.

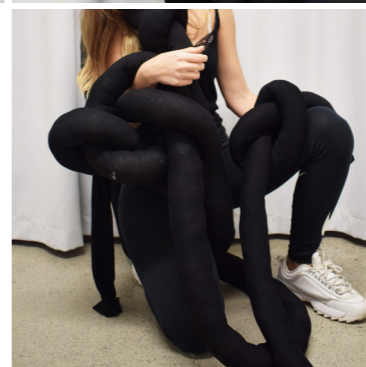
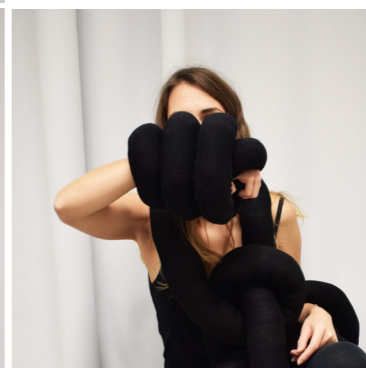
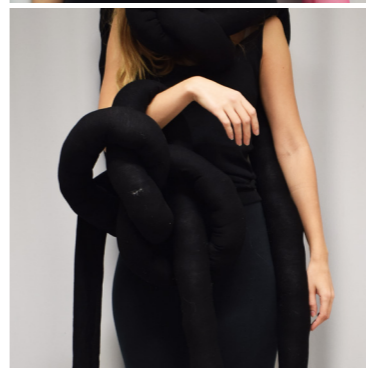
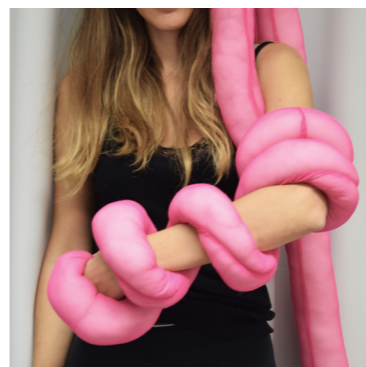
Through a period of material experimentations and workshops, where I was using myself as the performative body, a series of soft cylindrical tubes in several colors were created. What I had in my palette were form and color and their variations. There was something strangely intriguing about the shapes as it was inviting me for further development.

Therefore, these forms were developed during the spatial experiments with Anu Laiho, as they functioned as more of a tool than a costume, and one can understand it when paralleling it with the act of drawing. We are drawing with lines on paper- points, lines, curves- so that it becomes a shape, a form, a plan, a solid.

With this linear three-dimensional element- as it appears in the sketch on the left page- one is able to design a multiplicity of forms in the three-dimensional space in a dialogue with the performer. Its flexibility and variability make it possible to expand in the surroundings, extending the dancer's body while it could become so dense that the body seems to disappear. It can interrelate with elements of nature such as trees, river, soil but also become a contrast to them. It can be as specific as the dancer wishes, who can equally become the designer through the movement and experience.

1. Anu Laiho is a Finnish dance artist and dance teacher, and is currently doing her MA in Dance at Oslo National Academy of the Arts. As a dance artist she is interested in the connection of sound, movement and space. She explores the sensations of the body in relation and in communication with the surrounding world. <https://www.anulaiho.com/>





The Choreography of a costume in Oslo

It is exactly this inexplicable feeling that space creates with the special conditions of each moment, spatial and temporal, when you are texting your friend “it is very beautiful outside, with the sunlight falling on the skin while I am walking between the opera house and the waterfront”, this is what performances in the city are aiming to offer when all of its elements are balanced together.

Space, body and costume was the triangle that we have chosen to explore through the dance experiments, and we have created a common vocabulary (figure 18) from which we could derive words for describing materials and spaces. In the research process, the performing body and costume are utilized as active, dynamic and responsive to understand the spaces in Oslo through the dance movement. Considering the costume as a sketch in the city landscape, the movements attend to follow, disrupt or interrupt the linear or circular city rhythms and find a connection with the surroundings and the body.

During the identification of different qualities of spaces, some spots and journeys were selected and are presented on the map of the right page (figure 19). The selection is based on the intention of reactivating space through performance and is also linked with the background and the stories that someone carries in a mental archive as an artist.

A hidden elevated concrete platform, a dark space under a bridge, a vast unknown circular space, a triangular open space always

empty, a pedestrian street with a chaotic nightlife and neglected theatricality during the day. The common element of the spaces is their defined shape, but undefined use or potential. They are often concrete and not characterized by an attractiveness, warmth or familiarity; instead, they have been recognized by the absence of people, the neglect, the dereliction. Most of them are not designed spaces; rather, they occur because of the other designs and actions. One could describe it as a Wasteland.

Thus, these areas raise some thoughts regarding the potential of finding a new reality by reusing them by different bodies and stories through spatial interventions.

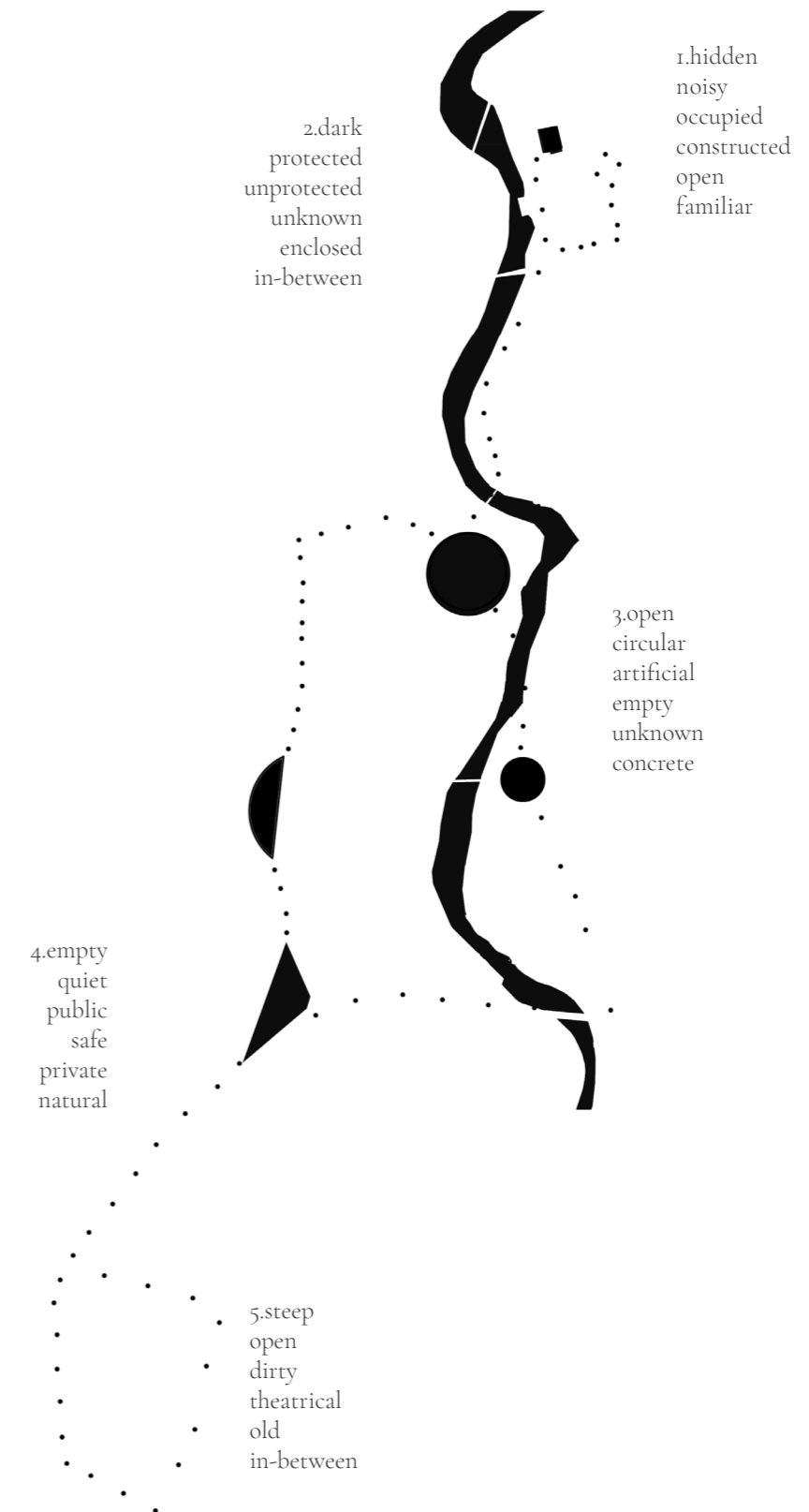


Figure 19. On this page, the map of the selected locations of Oslo is presented and is accompanied by some words for each of these five stations.

Offsiteness

Bertie Ferdman wrote in her book *Off Sites: Contemporary Performance beyond Site-Specific* that site is never whole; it is always incomplete. This offsiteness is carried everywhere. It is imagined. It is real. It is embodied. There is always another place to go before and after the performance. A place to compare, think, imagine, dream, when someone is sitting in the current space. My practice in the selected areas of Oslo is built on the carrying of the offsiteness, as I am an immigrant to a new city where I have no memories from before.

I constantly explore and experience the spatial and temporal qualities of the city in comparison with another city that I have as a reference. And I carry the offsiteness of Oslo when I am experiencing other cities. A very simple example derives from everyday reflections; that today is an autumn day with a lot of rain. I walk down the river and go to school. I imagine it as a warm sunny day for someone walking down in the area of Sepolia of Athens, where there are many concrete, high and gray facades. This is a comparison between a real space that I experience in real-time and an imaginary picture I have about a specific location. It might not be sunny or as concrete as I remember because cities are not static. This is only an imaginary site that exists in my mind.

Repetition

Therefore I come as a viewer who has been introduced to a new place. This practice differs from the concept of the project “La Ronde”, where I used Athens as the canvas of the performance. Since I have not developed any feelings or memories of the sites from before, my research is mostly based on the information that is revealed at the current moment without knowing the stories that have existed before. Consequently, as part of the research, repetition is the main tool for the association with space. I visit the places once a day, observe, record, and take pictures in order to move from the obvious elements to the more detailed ones.

While I study their history as an observer, I also record the changes in the weather, the foreign bodies which appear out of nowhere, the artistic works hidden in bushes and trees, and the rhythms of the people who are making each day look different. The objects, the physical effects of the performativity of the city, are those that can often offer a journey from reality, to the imaginary stories that have happened two minutes ago.

The exploration of constrasts

Indoor _ Outdoor

Journey _ Stations

november the 23rd

The first experimental attempt took place in a room of KHiO. Studio 10, floor 4th. I had never been to the space before, while it was a very familiar place for Anu because of her practice. Obviously, there are many spaces in the university that remain unknown to the design department. To get familiar with the space of our work, we decided to follow a ritual of closing our eyes and introduce the space to each other as it has been perceived from both sides. Our perception of the space was some cases common and in some other opposite, as when I was feeling tiny in the very tall space while Anu considered it a relatively limited rehearsal space mostly when it is filled with many bodies at the same time.

Experiment 01

I spread the piles of the tubes on the floor, in the center of the space, the center of its gravity and extend them to the sides of the room. I asked Anu to enter the space as she feels and connects with the costume in the way that her movement creates the costume, or the forms determine her movements. Pause. Before entering the space and if no one knows what will happen, the question arises if someone reads it as a costume or as an installation. In the first exploration many different forms and creatures were born, an organic process where the dancer emerged from the pile. She was lying on the floor and it was difficult to distinguish the different parts of her body and the tentacles that were moving together.

I tied the tubes around Anu's body, giving different emphasis to the various body parts. It was quite hard to attach these forms very tightly to the body since they are quite large and uncontrollable. The result was not as organic as before; it was a strange foreign body that was worn on the top of the human body. These elements were limiting the movement because of the effort to keep them in their original position. From a moving landscape, it became more of a body-based experience in the space. Controlled and uncontrollable.

Experiment 02



Figure 20. A photo of Anu Laiho exploring the pile of tubes during the first experiment in Studio 10, KhiO. November 23, 2020



Figures 21,22. Details of the costume of the first experiment in Studio 10, KhiO. November 23, 2020

Experiment 01





Figure 23. A photo of the first interaction with the costume landscape in Studio 10, KhiO. November 23, 2020



Figures 24,25. Photos of Anu Laiho during the first experiment in Studio 10, KhiO. November 23, 2020





Figure 26. A photo of Anu Laiho during the second experiment in Studio 10, KhiO. November 23, 2020



Figure 27. The last scene of the second experiment in Studio 10, KhiO. November 23, 2020

november the 27th

The second experiment with Anu took place on one of the outer spaces of the map. On the concrete platform outside Khio. The time was about 15.30, so that means we were between day and night. The experiments were performed with various shades of lighting. It was one of the first coldest days of winter when hoar had covered the grass. We followed the same ritual: closed eyes and sharing the perception of the surrounding area. Not only what we could see but also what we could hear, smell, feel. We both described that the strongest element of the site was the sound of the waterfall, one almost had to shout to communicate, but this might have protected the place from the sound of the roadway. With a very low volume in relation to the waterfall, some classical music could be heard from the second floor. The platform was empty, and the bench we were sitting on was bitterly cold. The metal bench was the most uncomfortable bench ever seated, Anu said, and I realized it was more of a skeleton than a real bench. The light was lustrous, some of the first artificial lights were already on, adding color to the dark image of nature. The trees without leaves seemed as if they were just their shadows. This space is located between a designed world and the unpredictable flow of the river presence.

Experiment 01

In the first phase, we started with an attached costume on the body. The costume is the same; space varies. I tied the tubes to different body parts, adding unbalanced weight. These tubes suddenly seemed very short compared to the previous time.

Anu's body was divided into pieces, trying to follow the different tension and interact with it. It was more like the parts of the body were hypnotizing her and making her follow them. Soon this situation was reversed, and her whole body was freed from the constraints and moved with the tube that was in complete control of her.

In the second part, the piles of the tubes were placed as part of the landscape, in the center of the concrete platform. The first very obvious conclusion for me was about the scale of the costume. The costume almost disappeared into the endless space between the river and the huge facade of the building. Anu was merged with it, and the costume was expanding its form through her movement. This time most of the movement was happening on the floor, it was slower and sometimes harmoniously balanced with the sound of the waterfall. Her movement in space separated them by color, as if someone was deconstructing the form into the very basic elements. Despite the lack of physical boundaries, the spatial act was limited to the strains of the platform, raising the question of if we still carry the principles of enclosed spaces in our minds.

Experiment 02



Figure 28. A photo of Anu Laiho during the first experiment of the second day, on the concrete platform, outside KhiO. November 27, 2020

Figures 29,30. Photos on the concrete platform, outside KhiO. November 27, 2020





Figure 31. A photo of Anu Laiho during the second experiment, on the concrete platform, outside KhiO. November 27, 2020



Figure 32. Facing the river when the sun goes down, part of the second experiment. November 27, 2020



Figure 33. A photo of Anu Laiho connecting with the costume during the second experiment, on the concrete platform, outside KhiO. November 27, 2020



Figures 34,35. Photos of the last part of the second experiment, on the concrete platform, outside KhiO. November 27, 2020



december the 5th

The third day of experiments took place between the concrete platform of the map and the bridge, studying the journey and the narrative in contrast to the more static focus on a particular scene or object while trying to connect with the place through costume. The time was 14.00, and it was Saturday, which means a large gathering of people in the area. Slower but denser city rhythms, since it is a season when daylight hours are precious, and the river is an important location of recreation and relaxation. The elevated platform appeared like a stage, with an accidental audience around, whose presence made Anu experience it more like a performance than an experiment.

Experiment 01

This time the costume was more attached to her body, which made her feel safer having a core that she could move with. From the center of the platform to the edge and to the metal bench and then rolled towards the river and the bridge. The long costume traveled with her, leaving traces of the journey behind. She was softening the lines of the city through her moving body in costume. The ground was wet, and the grass an unknown place that she had to explore further. She let gravity lead her down the hill, while the costume protected her body from the moist and rough concrete pathway. Her body followed the architecture of the landscape, as she chose the safe walking path to move. During the rolling, a variety of forms and creatures were created, human and non-human, recognizable body parts and completely abstract.

In the second part, Anu chose a specific scene of the previous narrative to focus on. It was the metal bench that was placed on the grass and faced the river. Her body was trying to experience its sides, having the weight of the costume on which she could lay and lean, while she had to find a way to balance it. She expressed that performing outside the familiar studio space, without its soft floor and mirrors, was a constant negotiation with the existing conditions, an act of trust. She was more aware of the next move and what was possible to try as the materials were not made for it. In contrast to a “prototype of space” which is for her the studio, through the polyrhythm of the city and the reality of the space, it is possible to create and explore new movements.

Experiment 02



Figure 36. A photo of Anu Laiho during the third day of experiments, at the start of the journey, outside KhiO. December 05, 2020

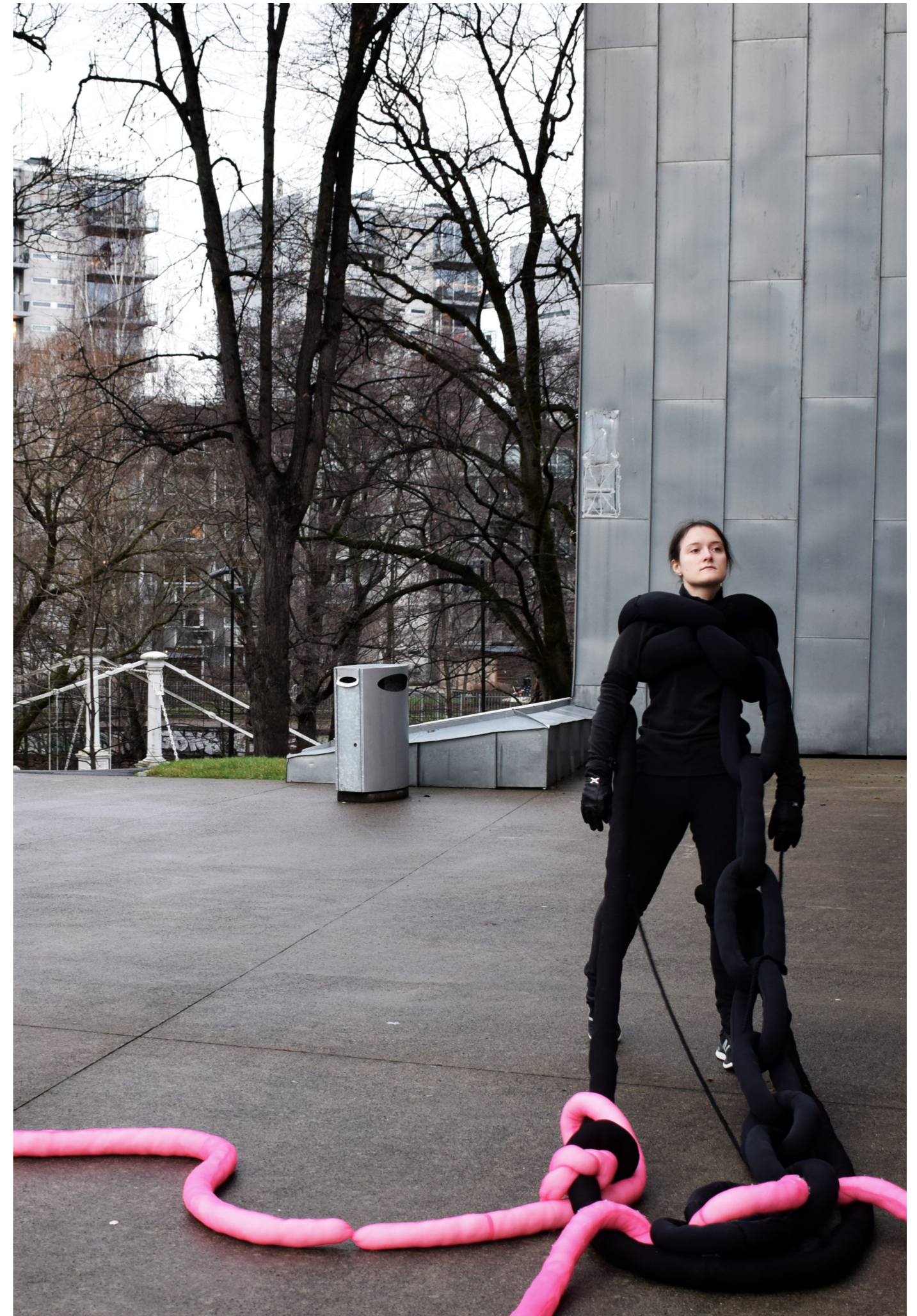


Figure 37. A photo of the first moments of the experiment on journeys, on the concrete platform, outside KhiO. December 05, 2020



Figure 38. Photo of Anu Laiho moving with the long tubes during the first experiment. December 05, 2020



Figure 39. One of the creatures rolling down to the river during the third day of experiments, outside KhiO. December 05, 2020



Figures 40,41. Rolling down by gravity, Creatures and forms made by movement during the first experiment. December 05, 2020





Figure 42. A photo of Anu Laiho during the third day of experiments, exploring the focus on a specific object of the previous narrative, outside KhiO. December 05, 2020

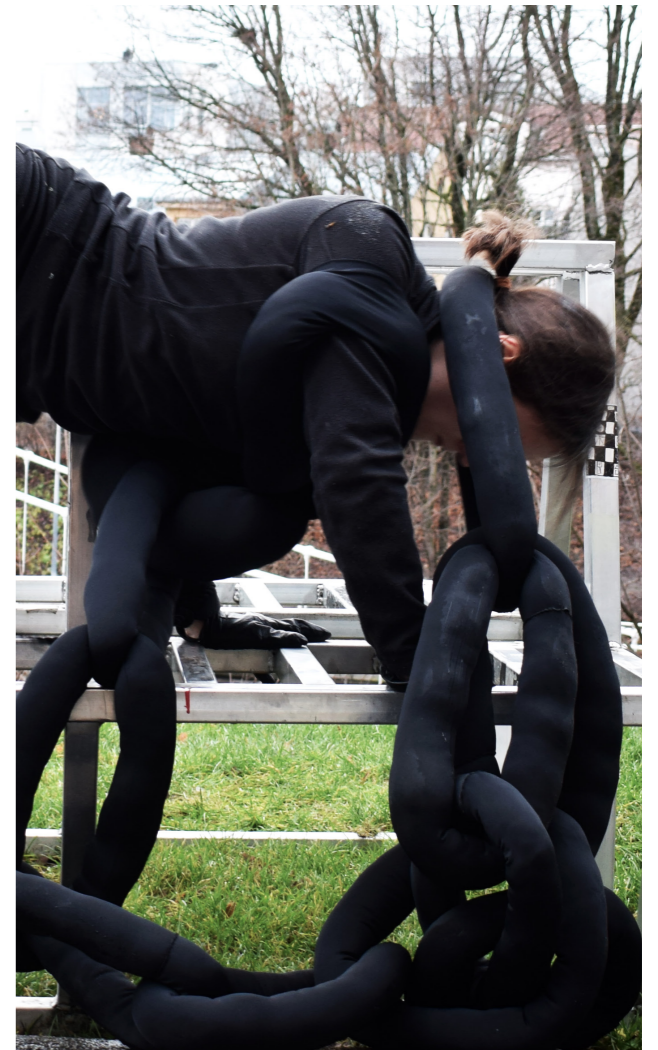


Figure 43. A detail of the exploration of movement around the metal bench outside KhiO. December 05, 2020



Figures 44,45. Photos of the experimentation with Anu Laiho through the spatial body-object, outside KhiO. December 05, 2020

Figures 46,47. Photos of Anu Laiho exploring the focus on a specific object of the previous narrative, outside KhiO. December 05, 2020



From form to symbol

From the point of view of designing, perceiving, and living in a society full of associations, a costume can not stand only as a form.

Although at the first phase of the design seemed as an abstract structure and a medium of communication with the performer, after placing the costumed body in the polymorphic city and in front of the eyes of an audience with different backgrounds and stories, the forms, movements and colors create associations, as people recall memories to relate themselves with the performance.

An example is the parallelism of the spatial costume with worms, intestines, octopus, Medusa, pipes, cables, human body parts and organs. Without trying neither to reject nor to accept these associations as my own way of seeing the forms, I wonder what will happen if the color, shape and size change. One, two, three or more bodies get involved in it, or the spectators themselves. To produce a new space. What kind of imaginary world is been created through the costume and what is its relation to today's reality, the fragile new relationship between distance and contact?



Heterotopia and Theatricality, neither here nor there



1. Heterotopia is a concept elaborated by philosopher Michel Foucault. In 1967 Foucault gave a lecture with the title *Of Other Spaces* (Des Espace Autre) and published by the French journal *Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* in October, 1984.

2. Stavros Stavridis is an architect, activist, and professor at the School of Architecture, National Technical University of Athens. He has published numerous articles on spatial theory and urban struggles as the *Suspended Spaces of Alterity*, 2010 and *Towards the City of Thresholds*, 2010.

In this last chapter of the paper, the passage from the above spatial experiments to the first ideas of the performative space that will be created in the next term is attempted, with the main element being the costume of a moving body.

A previous chapter examined the modern city as the in-between dialogue with utopia and dystopia and the imaginary city of Lanthimos as the dystopian mirror of reality.

Between utopia and dystopia, one can find Michel Foucault's heterotopia¹, as places of the "other", of the different, of the abnormal, where social relations are differentiated from the dominant. Some examples that he uses are a prison, a clinic, a cemetery, a motel, a garden, a celebration, a festival. Heterotopia is defined in terms of its difference from the dominant way of organizing space and is more of a movement, a passage to the other, than a crystallized situation.

It is a complex and multidimensional concept, which has been studied by philosophers, architects, urban planners, artists. The role of this idea in relation to the spatial interventions that I intend to create in the city comes to complete the study of the space and free the performative aspect from a one-dimensional connection with either the real or the imaginary.

It is worth mentioning here the term threshold as a metaphor, used by Stavros Stavridis², which tries to prove that heterotopias are not the realized "different", but the potential passages to it. The art of becoming different, not as the art of deception but as the art of seeking new forms of subjectivity. A theatricality that does not generate identities but trials, denials rather than affirmations of roles and incomplete compositions.

In this journey to heterotopias, the main question of whether the costume can be the vehicle for this travel in search of a co-passenger, a symbol, a moment of shock. And who is the co-passenger who can make it possible?

Mentioning films where this dynamic transit has been achieved- e.g. the *Dogtooth*, the *Lobster* and especially the *Killing of the sacred deer of Yorgos Lanthimos*- I believe that fiction could possibly play the role of the co-passenger as it is a mask through which one can mirror reality, and thus the costume can alter from a form to a symbol. A symbol, a character, a powerful message that can activate heterotopias and roles on the complex canvas of the city. Color, shape and scale, movement, are the elements that will be worked in this direction in order to realize this journey.

As it happens in the above films through scenario and scenography, in this case, the costume will play the role of the uncanny, with the idea of contrasting the everyday use of the space as well as the "regular" garment, as it is coming from another world, and creates a plethora of new ones, reflecting uncomfortable truths and dark possibilities of directions. Its scenographic scale could make this possible, emphasizing its function as a space that can generate performances without the need of other scenographic additional elements, and figure as potent and dynamic body-object-events.

Therefore, it is clear that all the previous exploration is only the beginning of the practical search of the mask that will energize the everyday environment, and will move beyond it, where one could be able to leave the city rhythms behind and transfer to ephemeral our-topias, which will be neither here nor there.

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The images are listed according to the chronological order in which they appear in this paper.

