

Hungarian University of Fine Arts  
Doctoral School

Video and Spectacle  
Forms of Appearance of the Video-Image in Hungarian Theatrical Spaces

DLA dissertation theses  
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## The topic of the dissertation

The object of my research is the video-usage of Hungarian theatre performances in Romania between 1993-2011. I have conducted a detailed study of the video-usage of Hungarian performances ranked among the top Romanian theatrical events in the last two decades.

I approached performances from the point of view of scenography and visual dramaturgy. The analyses were based on three interconnections: that of the technical, social and artistic functions of the video arsenal.

During my research I explored the cases of theatrical applications of film and video in Hungarian performances in Romania. As a result I managed to reveal a series of typical technical and aesthetic considerations, the sum of which characterizes theatrical video-technique as well as theatre applying video.

I raised and found answers to questions such as the role of the position and size of the projection and the monitor in scenographic composition, the nature of moving pictures encountered in performances, or the connections between the internal film-elements and certain details or the whole of the composition. Where are the boundaries of film, what is its frame and what is the relationship between the stage and the limits of scenographic space? To what extent did the video shake or enhance the vitality of the theatre, what kind of time- or space-illusions did it enable?

My research proved the initial hypothesis that whenever moving pictures appear in the effect-mechanism of the performances they alter perception and layers of interpretation.

## Theses

### Thesis 1.

Based on my research, I can affirm that in Hungarian theatres in Romania the scarce analogue video-images appearing in the 1990's were replaced after the turn of the century by digital video. The massive usage of video in performances characteristic for today became possible due to digitalization and the appearance of professional video-projectors, large LCD- and plasma-monitors. I have come to the conclusion that it is not the style of the video-image applied, but the style of the performance which defines what elements of a cinematographic genre are adopted or enhanced, as well as the nature of their relationship to the stylistic figures of the film. The conclusion of my survey is that the film sequence used in the performance can only be interpreted within the whole of the staging, and that the majority of video images applied in Hungarian theatrical productions in Romania can only be interpreted and explained as parts of the performance. The results of my research point to the fact that, with the use of technical images, new, more complex systems of sign are created in theatrical spaces and the range of interpretations is enlarged.

### Thesis 2.

My research shows that any kind of moving image may become part of the structure of a performance, from fact-films to documentaries, fiction-, avant-garde or experimental films. These may be appropriated, remade or pastiche scenes.

Amateur or *homemade movies* may not be excluded from the category of ready made and/or appropriated films. Films used in Hungarian performances in Romania do not share common formal, linguistic, or thematic traits, as they are mainly produced for particular productions.

Thesis 3.

I can affirm that the perceptual and interpretational field of the performance is widened to a great extent by the procedure of substituting projected images for the live body of the actors or juxtaposing the projected *image-body* to the actor's body. Bodies, gestures and sounds appearing in the technical images, their space and time complement the live body, gesture, sound, real space and time, sometimes even contradicting them.

Thesis 4.

In spite of the current abundant presence of the phenomenon of the application of projected images on stage, the peculiar experience of the theatre – manifested in typical sensations and energies, radically different from those experienced in cinema halls or in front of the TV – remains unquestionable. The analysis of particular performances showed that according to the positioning of mediatized images by the stage designer and the relationship of actors to them, their handling of the energies emerging from the images, may increase or decrease the to and fro flow of energies between viewers and players.

Thesis 5.

Research shows that Hungarian-Romanian stage directors and stage designers apply film as any other theatrical means of expression, but do not build their performances on its form. Film, similarly to speech, story, sound, light or the actor's body, is organically incorporated in the structure of the performance. It is now in a superposed, then in a juxtaposed relationship with the other elements, but the cinematographic features never fully engulf the theatrical nature of the performance.

Thesis 6.

My analyses prove that the use of different technical devices as theatrical objects also plays an important role in the structuring and dynamizing of the theatrical space. The camera as a theatrical object is often positioned in Hungarian performances in Romania either between play area and sitting area, or on the border of one of them. Most of the time it alludes to the shrinking, blurring or penetrability of the space between the two areas, levitating the visual performance that it is hard to assign it to any space. The use of hidden surveillance cameras has brought new dimensions to the world of theatrical performances.