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HIEROPHANIC ARCHITECTURE:
The Space of Performance

A Thesis in
Architecture

by

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ABSTRACT

Antonin Artaud described theater as a way to penetrate the audience’s subconscious causing a transformation within them through visceral experience of space and performance. He suggested that space should no longer be experienced rationally but rather experienced through action, senses, and emotion. This creates a chasm between the classical description of space and that of a space which is alternative. In this chasm a new description can be provided to describe the space of emotion, senses, and performance. This alternative description of space is Hierophanic architecture; a manifestation of architectural presence, although not tangible, it can be felt. As this presence is manifested, a sacred or numinous quality is associated with said presence. Mircea Eliade suggests that when sacredness is revealed, the space becomes qualitatively different from the space surrounding it. Operating in the threshold between architecture and performance allows for there to be a less descriptive notion of architecture capturing the narrative of performance, creating, not an ideal space, but a space of the ‘other’ able to constantly conform to our bodies and sensations. Hierophanic architecture attempts to transcend both body and matter.
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Dedicated to my Loving Family, Mom, Dad, and Sister,

and to my sweetheart, Jordan.

A special thanks to my God for seeing me through this immensely tiresome two year process. When everyone else around could only see the worst, God saw the best in me. I never would have made it without him.

An acknowledgement is also due to my advisor, Jodi, who blindly believed in my potential. She motivated me to follow my gut and follow my urges, but she also knew when to say NO to my absurd suggestions, and always led me in the right direction, and for that and more I thank you.

I also owe some of my tenacity to the struggles and opposition I encountered with this topic. The greatest words of encouragement came a couple years ago from a dear mentor, Heather Peterson, who revealed to me the following: “Strong work often tends to instigate debate and call forth positions and constituencies, while mediocre work tends to be agreeable. Part of the deal in taking on aberrant or deviant work is to try and be thick skinned about the natural disagreement that it will produce. All of the people I know who have made significant and visionary contributions to culture all have to deal with this pressure, and it is in fact this pressure that is part of what makes the work so relevant.”
“Le monde est grand, mais en nous il est profonde comme la mer.”

R.M. Rilke

(The world is large, but in us it is as deep as the sea)

“Through poems, perhaps more than through recollections, we touch the ultimate poetic of space”

Gaston Bachelard

“Who cares about the function? That is the reduction of architecture to mindless convenience. I build to transcend function.”

Russell Ellis & Dana Cuff
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INTRODUCTION

Architecture is a stage. From its formal qualities to its aesthetic sensibilities, architecture easily lends itself to play and performance. These actions are not necessarily overly dramatic but instead are a play and performance of the banal. Sitting at the dining room table, running up stairs, looking out a balcony, are all intimate happenings that satisfy the function of space, yet during these apparently banal situations, there is always a personal and/or spiritual attachment we create with space, specifically with the spaces in which we live, work, and play. Whether by chance or by force, the body needs to interact with its surroundings in order to feel a sense of belonging and ownership.¹

When inhabiting a space, our imagination builds invisible walls of protection, and sacred coves to hide out in; we experience space in its reality and in its virtuality,

by means of thought and dreams. Most of the recollections we have of space are based on a narrative we have created from our memory and perception. In that mediation between what is imaginative and present, space becomes an object, in which these complex intimate values, can be studied. In connection with theater, a threshold is created where we may begin to demonstrate that space bears the essence of the notion of theater and presence of space.

It is important to decipher what are social and personal phenomena in the experience of theater. In The Theatrical Event David Cole describes the concept of theater as an opportunity to experience imaginative life as physical presence, revealing itself personally and in larger scenarios. He goes on to explain that everything that occurs in theater can be understood through the process of manifestation, particularly a manifestation of the imaginative and the mystical. Suggesting that without the imaginative, the physical cannot be incarnated. Therefore, what the audience experiences is real, lived experience.

Cole describes the affect the actor has on the audience as a means of transmitting raw sensorial impressions that call upon the audiences’ subconscious triggering the spirit and the passion in the individual, causing them to be 'moved' by the action as well as the mise en scène, which is just as communicative. He continues to explain that this condition of being 'moved' can be made present at anytime and any place whenever an action is performed as a ritual, to what he refers to as illud tempus. If this condition is able to be replicated anywhere, it could be made present, or in fact is present in architecture.

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2 Ibid., pg.4-7
4 Considered a language in space and in movement to what pertains to theater, and performance, that can be extended to space and architecture. This definition is as described by Artaud in Theater and Its Double pg. 45.
Figure 1: Bernard Tschumi Manhattan Transcripts showing the way he diagrams urban happenings

Bernard Tschumi goes beyond the familiar patterns of architectural definition by exploring unlikely confrontations. At an urban scale Tschumi suggested, that architecture is a stage, creating a *mise en scène* with actions that take place in space (i.e., function, activity, or program). In the Manhattan Transcripts, he sets forth a concept that is quite relevant to my study, "Architecture is not simply about space and form, but also about event, action and what happens in space." He followed this statement by producing documentation that delved into the complex relationship between space and what happens inside of it, and used theater terminology to refer to it. He compared the program to a script, and the form to a set. These concepts create an assemblage between theater performance and architecture, rendering an alternative dramatic reading of space through their collaboration.

In space, actions are made; objects are moved in a way that alludes to a staged presence. Many times this imaginative space becomes a definitive moment for the collective memory of space; yet it remains imaginative and mystical, rarely entering a palpable realm. In theater, we are able to see this imaginative truth become a present truth; if only for a moment, those undetectable events are made physical and thrust

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the topic from concept into experiment. It is not a new concept to suggest that theater ‘moves’ or that a ‘presence’ is felt in theater, but what enables theater to ‘make presence’? And how then can that presence be felt in architecture? How can we describe it?

Antonin Artaud describes theater as a way to penetrate the audience’s subconscious causing a transformation within them. He advocates for the theater to rely less on the power of spoken language and calls forth a dynamic expression in space, *mise en scène* combined with the power of incantations, in order to impart profound reverberations onto the audience and the performers themselves. Artaud’s appeal is to the metaphysical aspects of theater, not as mere apparitions or shadows, but as a way to create presence. A feeling of tension, lust, temptation, are emotions that can be channeled in order to create a descriptive notion of spatial human experience.7

In a similar way, I believe architecture has the power to move us, change us, and maybe even drive us mad. I provide an example of this later on with Paul Rudolph’s brutalist Lindemann Center in Boston, MA. By finding an architectural expression it could be possible to compel inhabitants to act a particular way in response to architectures’ presence. What are the aspects of space that call forth this presence? Is it an ambiance, a mood, a shape, light, or sound? Is it solely based on form? Is it solely based on intellect?

What our bodies seek is an invitation to act in given environments that can offer choices and possibilities for a multiplicity of experience. No longer proposing that space be experienced rationally but rather is experienced through action, senses and emotion. Bernard Tschumi posits that architecture shall be experienced by action and event, triggering a new perception of space. This coupled with Artaud’s theater suggestions, and Eliade’s description of the manifestation of the sacred will

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lead to the suggestions of an alternative description of performative space.

This revelation of architectural presence will be referred to as hierophanic architecture. The word hierophany originates from the Sacred and Profane by philosopher and historian Mircea Eliade. He defines a hierophany as a manifestation of the sacred, often in inanimate objects used in religious ceremonies and rituals. He gives an example of a sacred tree, or sacred stone, which is said to be a manifestation of an alternative world. In reality, they are just a stone and tree, yet these objects are viewed as being revelations of a completely different order, of a reality that does not belong to our world.⁸ Perhaps the attachments that come with these objects derive from poetic narratives that are brought down from generation to generation.

Regardless, those particular objects impart a sacredness to the individual to which the narrative 'speaks'. A similar sacredness is transmittable in architecture where certain spaces give off a sense of presence.

This concept relates to theater, where a play and or script are able to reach out to individuals that happen to connect with the narrative. This also happens in space where a narrative linked to a space carries a connection that becomes venerated

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through nostalgia and presence placing the audience in the original space and action that took place. This re-creation of ambiance and space suggests a sacred nature, of veneration and reverence apportioned to a location, rendering space a sacred memento. Thus the term hierophany will be re-contextualized into architectural discourse as a means to describe strips of experience in space and to conceptualize presence in space.

Throughout this thesis, I will attempt to demonstrate the efficacy of the concept of hierophanic architecture, as a semiotic approach. As Antonin Artaud believed, that the creation of presence transforms the audience to the point of a visceral experience of space, so to do I believe that architecture has the power to do the same. Architecture is a symbolic projection enabling architecture to be interpretative, in search of meaning, in the definition of the unseen.

In the following chapters we will analyze avant-garde theater as Antonin Artaud defined it in the *Theater of Cruelty* and through his plays, we will examine how Artaud and Eliade develop a sacred understanding of space, and its architectural underpinnings, we will also and hypothesize about how these happenings are able to be understood spatially, and how performance and human experience give rise to a dialogic linkage to space.

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Figure 3: Robert Capa “Landing D-Day” offered a unique glimpse into life as a soldier.

To be called to the front of the line during war was both a privilege and a sacrifice. To stand for what you believe in and the capability of enduring forceful attacks from any form of resistance is what we refer to as a heroic act. Not many
people these days will offer themselves up to be placed on the vanguard of a hostile situation, but the few that take that step often live and are held in high regard. From 1850 to 1950, over a 100-year period, many like-minded individuals did just that. Inspired by the acts of heroism in the war around them, they created a revolutionary cultural movement in theater that constitutes the modern world of performance we know today.

The Avant-Garde movement, typically described as forward against-the-grain thinking, is something that humans have been doing cyclically throughout history. For example, the Scientific Revolution brought innovation in physics, astronomy, biology, and medicine, more notably the invention of a primitive mathematical computer, referred to as a calculator by Blaise Pascal, and the introduction of the corky notion of gravity by Sir Isaac Newton. These and many other revolutions in human culture have been led by thinkers who were pushing the establishment, which led to a better understanding of the world around us. These advancements were possible because those few stood forward and spoke out offering alternative approaches in a particular field, and were able to transpose an idea into a new dimension, creating a cultural evolution.

The Avant-Garde movement was a time of reform and a time of questioning. The world was constantly changing and reacting to imagery involving the industrial revolution, gruesome warfare, social differentiations and an erratic economy. This period represents a time where boundaries were pushed and interrogated, mainly in the avenue of the arts. Avant-Garde contributors reacted by revolutionizing art by questioning the establishment of the museum, questioning the role of the artist as a silent entity, and questioning the role society had in experiencing art. Philosophers of the time suggested that art was the fastest way towards achieving social, political
and economical reform. Art can have a direct affect on society that would then instigate change and revolt against common thought, which is why the artist of this time had to resort to alternative ways of expression in order to get their points across. Accordingly, Avant-Garde work is regarded as experimental, eccentric, unconventional, and unprecedented.

Figure 4: Salvador Dali “Sleep” of 1937 represents the world of dreams and the subconscious and bringing those ambiguous thoughts to art.

The characteristics of avant-garde work in theater and performance art do vary widely but can be commonly described as having:

1. an anti-establishment, provocative, unconventional, often assultive interventionist or performance stance;
2. opposition to culture’s commodification of art;
3. a multimedia texture, drawing for its materials not only upon the lives bodies of the performers but upon media

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images, television monitors, projected images, visual images, film, poetry, autobiographical material, narrative, dance, architecture, and music; (4) an interest in the principles of collage, assemblage, and simultaneity; (5) an interest in using “founyc” as well as “made” materials; (6) heavy reliance upon unusual juxtapositions of incongruous seemingly unrelated images; (7) an interest in the theories of play, including parody, joke, breaking of rules, and whimsical or strident disruption of surfaces; and (8) open-endedness or undecidability of form.

Theater, during the Avant-Garde movement, operated in the abstract and in making juxtapositions in text and in emotions. For example, a chain-smoking fireman, or a mime that speaks, causing these images to seem oxymoronic, yet create a sensible conglomeration. These beginnings revolutionized the aesthetics of theater and performance as we now know it, and the models formed in this period are still being utilized. The artists surge during this time created work in reaction to political upheavals, war, societal shifts, and many more alternating cultural stimuli.

Weaving through the Movement

The shift in thought and aesthetic that arose in the mid 1800’s to the mid 1900’s was of an avant-garde nature, albeit with a political agenda. In essence, it was the beginning of the Modernist movement. As Cardullo described in Theater of the Avant-Garde, modernism is used to denote that period of dramatic innovation in all the arts, from around the end of the nineteenth century, up to World War II and its immediate aftermath, when the sense of a fundamental break with inherited modes of representation and expression became acute. Modernism relies on a distinctive
kind of imagination...”

Social disruption, loss, despondency, historical discontinuity, isolation, moral chaos, and a sense of social fragmentation was what modernism indirectly stood for, giving rise to the quest to infiltrate our private consciousness or one’s dormant, latent being (the sub/unconscious) focusing on the individual and their internal life. The aim of the avant-garde was heavily dependent on inventiveness, unadulterated imagination and originality. It should also be noted that the motive behind most of the art being created was a departure from the chaotic world around them.

Through art, they would be able to reach an enlightened alternative vision of that world, often as experience by the subconscious, integrating external and internal happenings into the work itself. Thus, avant-garde theater was manifested through the extreme need to capture an intense mood through performance, situated in human experience, and human emotion. At the same time, they were also reacting to a loss

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4 Ibid.
of confidence in the current model of theater.

The 1924 Surrealist Manifesto by Andre Breton, which came to define and launch the surrealist movement into action, became a noticeable introduction to avant-garde techniques. Breton had been delving into the Dadaist movement and became interested in the idea of tapping into the subconscious and extrapolating and documenting these experiences. He called it “pure psychic automatism,” an attempt “to express either verbally, in writing, or in some other fashion what really goes on in the mind. Dictation by the mind, unhampered by conscious control and having no aesthetic or moral goals.” From this point forward, artists began to rigorously approach the representations of dreams, of the mystical, and of metaphysical aspects of life.

One of the first views into the internal life of dreams and the subconscious was through playwrights such as the grotesque humorist Luigi Pirandello, and pataphysician Alfred Jarry. They used highly whimsical descriptions of characters and scenery, which addressed issues of their time, symbolically through wealth, gluttony, and social differentiation. Alfred Jarry’s Ubu Roi in 1896 was a significant precursor to the work of Antonin Artaud. Around the 1920’s, Particularly in France, the Surrealist theatrical experiments were rapidly growing.

These artists focused on the retelling of dreams and subconscious thought in theater and performance. August Strindberg’s 1907 feature, A Dream Play, attempts to capture the form of a dream. He explains that the characters split, double, multiply, evaporate, condense, dissolve and merge. But one consciousness rules them all: the dreamer’s; for him there are no secrets, no inconsistencies, no scruples and no laws. He does not judge or acquit, he merely relates; and because a dream is usually

painful rather than pleasant, a tone of melancholy and compassion for all living creatures permeates the rambling narrative.” He went on to criticize other plays that do not dwell on the pain of the characters. He thought that makes a person relate more to the character and to the plot, creating a real believable emotion.

**Artaud’s Desires**

Through Strindberg’s suggestions we can see the Avant-Garde’s preoccupation with the capturing of intense moods, often in reference to isolation, fear, and longing and were becoming an integral part in the creation of this new mode of theater. In a similar fashion Artaud began to work in this same vein. “Artaud caused fear by his dramatization of moods, inner states, and angers and rebellions, which he hoped would be contagious.” In order to animate the current theory, he pushed into a more collaborative engagement between actor and audience, and vice versa.

Artaud wrote two plays, *Jet of Blood* 1927 and *The Cenci* 1935 which after his death, these works became the trigger for a different way of thinking about narrative and performance. Later on in this text, we will analyze the theatrical decisions made and represented in his text, *The Jet of Blood*. In this play Artaud begins to express what he thought to express through narrative and through the actors action. What he wanted to achieve and present was the thought “that through the labyrinth of

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7 Strindberg, A. First Series, The Dream Play, 1912, Scribner Press, NYC. pg 24
gestures, attitudes, and sudden cries, through the gyrations and turns which leave no portion of the stage space unutilized, the sense of a new physical language, based upon signs and no longer upon words. Although these specific movements rely on the actors ability to portray such emotion, he believed that this visceral technique of performance was a way performers should animate the script.

Artaud was aware that “true feeling” is undeniably “untranslatable” and that to “express it is to betray it.” Although he suggested a way in which natural images of feelings could be created. The images would not be obstructed by appearance but rather reveal a significance for the spirit far from a spoken descriptions of feeling. He was an advocate for the limitation of speech in theater, although not entirely. He wanted to redefine its use suggesting that it be used “in a concrete and spatial sense”, he also wanted to “manipulate [speech] like a solid object, one which overturns and disturbs things, in the air first of all, then in an infinitely more mysterious and secret domain but one that admits of extension.” His suggestions of making speech, theatrical emotion, “concrete” is a sounding board in which the concept of hierophanic architecture can be pushed. By creating a dialogue between reality and virtuality, and applying a language capable of describing what occurs in these experiences we will be able to tap into an architecture that is present and responsive. Thus giving rise to Artaud’s idea of a poetry of space, which we will address as sacred sensation of space.

9 Artaud, A. The Theater and Its Double (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press, pg. 54
10 Ibid., pg. 54
11 Ibid., pg. 71
12 Ibid., pg. 72
13 Ibid., pgs. 68-73
Antoine Marie Joseph Artaud was born in Marseilles, France on September 4, 1896. He was a French surrealist who would later become the father of an alternative mode of Theater. Artaud began his life in a very difficult manner. As a child, he suffered from meningitis, a disease that affects the brain and would inevitably lead to death. Instead, he was left with painful after-effects, which led to mental disorders later in his life. Despite his health impairments, Artaud demonstrated great skill as an eloquent writer and thinker at the College du Sacre Coeur in Marseilles. In fact, he became founder and editor-in-chief of a small literary magazine.¹

In 1914, soon to complete his degree in philosophy, Artaud fell ill for no apparent reason. He had been experiencing violent headaches perhaps due to the meningitis. During this time, he displayed rough moods, and isolation, as if depressed. Concerned with his mental stability, his overprotective mother would take Artaud

to visit a variety of psychological experts in search for a solution or treatment that would reduce Artaud’s nervous ailments. It was from this point forward that Artaud would see himself going in and out of mental health centers. The doctors in one center located in Switzerland encouraged Artaud to draw and write as a form of treatment. The doctors realized that he was a talented man. Crippled by his ill nature and nostalgic environment, they sent Artaud to Paris in order for him to fully express his thoughts in a place more conducive to artistic expression.

In Paris around 1920, he began his search for a career, explored his talents, and put his creative skills to good use. Being mostly unsuccessful, he experimented in poetry, acting, writing, and directing. He gravitated towards the dramatic and the expressiveness of theater. He was heavily involved with the performance aspect, specifically the movements of the actor, and how to embody a character. After being exposed to Balinese Theater, he came to an epiphanic conclusion that the current form of theater was not enough to capture a heightened dramatic effect. These thoughts would later lead him to write his Theater Manifestos, Theater and Its Double, where he began to envision a theater that “instead of continuing to rely upon texts,” would put an end to the subjugation of theater through text, in order to “recover the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought.”

In 1931, Antonin Artaud attended a Balinese Theater performance in the Paris Colonial Exposition where he was introduced to a seemingly strange type of performance. The Balinese Theater performances entailed a series of gestures, intonations, objects, and chanting, where spoken word was rarely implemented. What most intrigued him was how the Balinese left behind words and the performance transformed into a relay of signs and symbols, expressed through bodily action, which he found refreshing and uplifting. He continuously reverted back to this type

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2 Artaud, A. *The Theater and Its Double* (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press, pg. 89
Figure 7: Artaud pictured to appear free, and at peace, although he most likely would be feeling an extreme interior anguish.
of performance as a reference to what he envisioned occidental theater would transform to.³

"In spite of the physical and mental torments Artaud experienced, his vision, his imagination, his invention was keener than his contemporaries whose orderly Cartesian ideas were more in harmony with tradition and the times.”⁴ In the words of Bettina Knapp, Antonin Artaud was misunderstood, and was an unclassifiable outcast. Artaud’s work at the time was marginalized. His work was highly experimental, exploratory, and improvisational, which was an unconventional way of working. Theater at the time seemed to be working in a binary system, x and y, right and wrong, and not very often was that system put into question. Upon being introduced to this alternative display of action, Artaud found a way to intrude on that binary and offered up an idiosyncratic approach.

Classic theater, which precedes theater of the Avant-Garde, constituted of traditions that span back to the Shakespearian and Elizabethan eras. Artaud felt that these forms of theater appealed more to a social taste, snobby bourgeoisie, rather than the sense and a broader audience. So much was Artaud’s passion in eradicating that conventional form of theater⁵ he divulges his opinion on the matter stating: “This empiricism, randomness, individualism, and anarchy must cease. Enough of personal poems, benefitting those who create them much more than those who read them. Once and for all, enough of this closed, egoistic, and personal art.”⁶

In his continual evolution and immersion in theater, he must have asked himself, what happens in between? What else exists between x and y? And in that ‘in-between’, in that liminality, Artaud found a space of possibility. That possibility was

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⁵ It was more the theatre rules fostered by the neoclassical ideas that artists from the "turn of the century" wanted to break away from, not Shakespeare's model.
⁶ Artaud, A. The Theater and Its Double (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press. pg. 79
something that society would not be completely comfortable with, which is where the richness of his explorations came into play. Exposing us to the unfamiliarity of immersive experiences within theater, architecture, and performance.  

Artaud had an important point to make. His descriptions of theatrical performance contain an inimitable force. If you wish to understand modern theater and performance, most practitioners suggest Theater of Cruelty, as well as the performances created under such guidance. This type of theater and conceptualization of space is capable of extending into architecture. His concepts reveal to us a type of culture.

As defined by Anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn's culture is a way of “thinking, living, and believing.” In the face of this sort of metaphysical experimentation, with somewhat vague and radical concepts, there is a definable way of thinking in Artaud's work. He gives rise to a feeling of life, a situation or condition of space, and a way of believing that what appears as virtual can also be reality. Artaud's suggestion, detailed later, are visceral and through the synthesis of his work and Mircea Eliade's concept of hierophany, Artaud's work is able to birth an alternative definition of space, and presence of space. In this eclecticism, it is necessary to choose a vein from which to draw sufficient flavor. In Artaud's portrayal of performance as ritual, we begin to define the line between ritual and sacredness and gain a rapport between happenings and the uncanny.

For Artaud, the play (performance) became a weapon with which to immerse the spectator in a personal experience by drawing on the subconscious and by creating a theater that was based on gesture, symbols, and myths. This type of theatrical performance was one that “incites communication through intervention, a

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9 Artaud, A. The Theater and Its Double (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press. pg. 44
direct involvement of spectators...shifting the role of spectator to one of participant.”

Artaud hoped that through this process of instigating the spectator would lead to a society that was more aware.

Figure 8: While he was in the institutional facilities Artaud constantly made drawings, and sketched out the things his mind would produce.

**OF THE TIME: Theater and its Double**

With Artaud’s quixotic and unhinged concepts he radically formulated an avant-garde idea of theater manifested through *The Theater and Its Double* [Theater of Cruelty]. “The Theater of Cruelty proposes to resort to a mass spectacle; to seek in the agitation of tremendous masses, convulsed and hurled against each other...” creating a theater of extreme action. Artaud envisioned a theater that would rattle

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11 In reference to Antonin Artaud’s book, *Theater and Its Double*, in which the Theater of Cruelty Manifestos are written.

your senses, disorient your organs, and brew a passion within the spectator to the point of cataclysmic exultation, reinforcing the idea of theater as extreme action and expression.

Theater is able to evoke a full range of emotions that are triggered through sound, gestures, and signs, all of which are able to communicate to the spectator. Artaud suggested that this language of drama could not be defined by the expressive possibilities of spoken language but rather its possibilities for dynamic expression of space. His chief concern was to create a culture in action, and a presence of mind among the spectators. Artaud wrote that he wanted “the theatrical performance to take on the aspect of a devouring hearth where action, situation, characters, images will reach a degree of implacable incandescence.” He wanted the audience to be fully immersed into the world he was creating in a way that would appear to them as a reality. One way this could be possible would be to alter the physical environments (architecture) surrounding the said audience, in order to impact them with direct visceral sensations. This type of space would consist of walls, floors, and a built environment that is highly responsive and would physically reflect the range of emotions needed to trigger a hierophanic experience. The variations of movement and gyrations the architect would evoke would be as legible as those of an actor.

Artaud wanted the “audience to be plunged in a bath of fire, agitated by the action and encircled by both the spectacular and dynamic movement.” He was intent on having the spectators participate with their nerves, body and soul rather than a response based on taste. Albert Bermel, in his book Artaud’s Theater of Cruelty, identifies three main features of Theater of Cruelty.

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13 Ibid., pgs. 84-93.
14 Ibid., pg. 8.
16 Ibid., pg. 113
17 Bermel, A. (1977). Artaud’s Theatre of Cruelty. NY: Taplinger Publishing CO., INC. pg. 23. It is to be noted that these descriptions are paraphrased.
1. The necessity to bring one's own life, self-reflection into the event.

2. The recalling of individual dreams or collective dreams which give rise to myths and chimeras of all sorts.

3. The content must appeal to the sensorial aspect of man; his nerves and soul. Furthermore, since this theater is aimed toward the general public, the content must not pertain to the intellect but instead infringe on the common anxieties of man.

These same characteristics of the theater can be conjoined to delineate hierophanic architecture’s agenda, by making a hierophanic performance present.18 Many of Artaud’s theatrical descriptions directly inform hierophanic architecture as well.

This type of theater awakens a transcendent experience of life by the poetic state of feeling that it creates, and through performance, if only for a moment, makes you live life more passionately.19 Artaud hoped that through this process the spectator would be able to experience an existential poetic state of being in space. He was an advocate for having theater be a way to purge your emotions and passions by experiencing someone else’s anxiety and passions.

Not only suggesting an environmental approach to theater, Artaud put forth concepts of a ritualized theater, which was derived from his interest in Balinese performances. He used the tools of ritual to conjure distinctive psychophysiological effects on an audience. What Artaud applauded the Balinese theater for was for their ability to “propel their audiences into... a spellbound alertness... a mood one

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18 Making a hierophanic performance present would be necessary not only in the physical dimensions but will have to change emotional and spiritual realms.
19 Ibid., pg. 23.
might sum up by imagining oneself awake during a dream...aware that this it is happening and can virtually stand outside the dream and observe himself in it."20 It is important to note that Artaud's descriptions of Balinese performance were ones that came from his heart, and what how it stimulated him emotionally, physically, and mentally.21

Artaud states that the theater should become a functional device, capable of developing direct communication with the inner workings of our body and brain, heavily dependent on involvement by the audience, enslaving their attention. There must also be a way in which the theater would be able to display the presence of metaphysical events or occurrences. He referred to it as the abstract notions of dreams, passions and chimeras. His aim was to create a real visual image/representation of what is possible in the virtual dimension.22

He supported imparting real life into theater, infusing it with our beliefs and innermost feelings, and labeled those feelings forces or brimstones. He refers to brimstones as magic.23 He described that we need to believe in the things that make

21 Ibid. pg. 25
22 Artaud, A. The Theater and Its Double (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press. pg. 70-93.
23 Ibid., pg. 8.
us live, and delve into the "mysterious depths of ourselves" and uncover that self in order to activate theater. He noticed that many cultures in the early 1900's lacked the ability to permeate our being, and therefore did not affect the spectator's life. Insisting on the idea of a culture-in-action, Artaud advocated for a cultural presence of mind consisting of one being self aware of mind, emotions, passion, and fears and to not keep those sensations suppressed.

Artaud was not concerned with inserting a preoccupation with the mystical and the cosmos in theatrical discourse. He was simply interested in having man dig deeper into themselves, into the meaning of life, and discover profound thoughts and actions that could be interpreted into transcendental experiences. Once again, he called for society to concern itself with the search for presence.

He called upon a culture that was free from restricting conceptions of what culture was. He suggested that during his time the current culture caused the society to fear the display of these magical moments of life, expression. The idea of culture he professed was a culture of protest, that which would stand against restrictions and misconceptions of what life was, of what life out to be, and what life could be. A protest against the separation of culture and life. In essence, he was proclaiming that LIFE=CULTURE, and that culture should be used as a form in which life is exercised and understood.

**REFORM: Expression in Space**

"I am not one of those who believe that civilization has to change in order for theater to change; but I do believe that the theater, utilized in the highest

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24 Ibid., pg. 7.
25 Ibid., pg. 7-10
and most difficult sense possible, has the power to influence the aspect and formation of things."\textsuperscript{27}

For Artaud, \textit{The Theater of Cruelty} was to restore passion in theater and to set off a powerful cultural shift toward reform. He wanted there to be a "sense of violent rigor and extreme condensation of scenic elements that the cruelty on which it is based on will be understood."\textsuperscript{28} It is to be noted that when Artaud refers to cruelty or violence he is not referring to a gruesome attack or to what we associate most literally as violence. He refers to this as an extreme action (extreme performance), and postulates that "everything that acts is a cruelty."\textsuperscript{29} He uses these terms metaphorical expression of the dire need for reform in theater, and to show his passion for it. In order for the audience to understand that this was not an ordinary performance, Artaud’s work called for visceral descriptions of actions. He wanted others to begin to feel and understand the haunting quality associated to his work, a feeling that creeps into you eventually striking you to the core; emotionally, socially, morally, and culturally.

"Theater of cruelty means a theater difficult and cruel for myself first of all. And, on the level of performance, it is not the cruelty we can exercise upon each other by hacking at each other’s bodies, carving up our personal anatomies, or, like Assyrian emperors, sending parcels of human ears, noses, or neatly detached nostrils through the mail, but the much more terrible and necessary cruelty which things can exercise against us. We are not free. And

\textsuperscript{27} Ibid., pg., 79.
\textsuperscript{28} Bentley, E. (1968) \textit{The Theory of the Modern Stage}. Penguin. pg 66.
\textsuperscript{29} Artaud, A. \textit{The Theater and Its Double} (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press. pg.85
the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theater has been created to teach that first of all.\textsuperscript{30}

Artaud knew this creation of space through presence and experience had tremendous power, which he saw manifested through performance. His purpose was to make this presence no longer virtual but, in fact, appear as real. His explorations are crucial in understanding how to create symbolism in space through performance. The Theater and Its Double contains many references to poetics of space; and thus, has the ability to extend these concepts into architectural discourse.

He was able to tap into this realm by noting that theater is “a ritual able to give rise to a numinous or religious experience within the spectator,” and within space.\textsuperscript{31} He achieved this intention by “expanding the spectator’s reality by arousing the explosive and creative forces within man’s unconscious”\textsuperscript{32} and bringing them forth spatially through performances. This converts the spectator into an active participant in creating a space of presence; a hierophanic space.\textsuperscript{33} It is crucial to discover the characteristics of this transformative presence in order to be able to move beyond a static definition of architecture and to create a synthesis between performance and architectural space.

When Artaud described theater it is as if he felt it. He was able to personify, not only the stage aspect of theater but also, its presence, action, and emotion; energy created by what he calls extreme cruel action. Artaud was invested in the idea that “the public thinks first of all with its senses,” he proposed the Theater of Cruelty would “attack the spectator’s sensibility on all sides...instead of making the

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., pg. 79.
\textsuperscript{32} Ibid., pg. xiii
\textsuperscript{33} A presence in space that is foreign, and non-formable, yet it is felt and understood as spatial. The manifestations can derive from lived experience that one then projects onto a space.
stage and auditorium two closed worlds, without possible communication, spreads its visual and sonorous outbursts over the entire mass of spectators.”

**Intimate Immensity**

How can we define the space of presence? What are its characteristics? Can we construct such spaces? What makes presence present? These are questions that are of concern, although the goal is not to answer these questions immaculately.

Figure 10: "The space has four walls", “This space is round” are diagrams to visualize the static descriptions in architecture. (image created by author)

For an attempt to do so would cause the topic to become objective, and this topic, semiotic and existential in nature, will always be in a state of becoming.

By analysing Artaud we are creating a *mise en scène* potentially giving rise to a construction of an alternative way of experiencing and describing architecture. In academia, space is most often exclusively represented by its geometric form

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34 Artaud, A. The Theater and Its Double (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press, pg. 86

and rarely is it characterized as having presence. In an architectural studio, learning environment, you are guided into not describing space in relation to emotion because it is taboo. [Creating a deprivation in the ability to describe architecture in a non static manner] In performance emotive descriptions are the most common mode of describing what has occurred. If you have ever sat in on a review of a performance, you will often hear metaphorical responses. “It’s as if you were floating... as if we were watching you inhabit a different world...you created a sensation...I was moved by how you occupied space.”36 These are spectator descriptions of performances and the effects created by the performers movement, and their use of space as medium.

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36 These descriptions were recorded when participating in a local performance workshop.
They use space as a playing field and acknowledge it as a place where presence, sensations, and uncanny happenings can and will occur. Performers understand space as a thick coagulation of presence rather than a mere mortal construct.

These descriptions necessitate a definition for the manner in which space is expressed, or as Artaud refers to it as “expression in space” that “allows the magical means of art speech to be exercised organically.” In this description of space Artaud means to refer not only for the need of gestures as they relate to body, but he also is interested in creating a visual language, attitude, and gestures to the point that these objects become signs, ridden with meaning. Through “their physiognomies” they would be able to create “a kind of alphabet out of these signs.” All this in the hopes that the metaphysical aspects of performance can be formally depicted as to communicate passion.

Figure 12: Artaud around the mid 1930’s, in France, smoking a cigarette, appearing very slim and sickly.

37 Artaud, A. The Theater and Its Double (M. C. Richards, Trans.) NY: Grove Press. Pg. 89
38 Ibid., pg. 90.
The passion Artaud speaks of here refers to the presence in space created by those who are acting upon it, literally or as spectators, that can be felt based on experience of present or past. This means that in a given space, whether it is a stage, a classroom, or your own home, an experience is collected by the spectator. This experience then molds the way in which the spectator inhabits and acts in the space. Rendering space non-linear. Different experiences begin to shape space, although they are nonphysical they are still felt, they are a manifestation of a liminal, other, sacred type of space that is as architectural as the physical form. This manifestation of space is, in this text, referred to as Hierophanic Architecture, which will be discussed in association with Mircea Eliade in the following chapters.

One can say that this hierophanic space/architecture is a creation of the psyche, which is prone to experience our environment in nonlinear, organic manners. This is present in performance and theater. When a performer is performing they locate themselves in this space of hierophany in which they are able to act as a bystander dreamer, able to be locally and externally aware of their movements and space, simultaneously; “put in a state of deepened and keener perception.”

Artaud gave us basic guidelines that hierophanic architecture should also possess. These sensibilities would then be applied in all types of architecture in order to call out for hierophanic experiences. Having knowledge of how spaces can potentially transform the audiences in profound ways can lead to transcendent architectural experiences. Architecture inherently creates a state of feeling as an enclosure. By harvesting those inherent qualities and practicing the implementation of said guidelines space could be manipulated in a way were a mise en scène is created through form and space planning that could lead to the ability to design existential spaces, thus elevating audiences to a poetic state of being in space.

In order to fully understand the capacity performance and stage can effect

39 Ibid., pg. 91.
the individual as well as the audience, I enrolled in a performance art workshop. In an effort to understand the visceral experiences that can be emitted by space and performance, as Artaud described, I became a performer. This process was immersive and necessary in order to gain insight into common techniques in performance, as a means to collect first hand data. The following chapter is an account of this experience.

"The experience of walking may be seen as a kind of writing on the surface of the ground. It is a trace of movement, which seems to discover a particular place. Fragments of various hypothetical movement patterns generate a geometry that becomes woven into reality in such a way that it is capable of engendering new shapes. These traces occupy the entire space."\(^{40}\)

During a workshop with Professor Charles Garoian entitled, “Body as Cultural Object” in the fall of 2012, I experienced an understanding of visceral performance. He described that when we are engaged with our immediate foreground, our bodies become the background, thus our body becomes a sort of prosthesis, or an extension of ourselves, and once we become aware of our body as background, our body becomes foreground again. What he is trying to have us understand is the transferability of our self onto a foreground where we are holistically, albeit subconsciously, aware of every part of our surrounding whilst reacting and interacting with it. When you realize that your body is simultaneously inside and outside, you are able to abstractly move between these two realms, into a realm of liminality.

Charles introduced four components from which the group was to compose a performance in order to bring them into fruition. The components were as follows:
The verbs were selected from Richard Serra's list of verbs.

Once selected, we had to act out that verb using the space and our bodies. This was the first exercise in the workshop.

I was tense. It would be the first time that I would be involved in making my body explicit, and act in a “performative" manner, especially in front of fifteen strangers. I chose the verb to stretch; since I figurec I would simply stretch like I would before a run, and that, seemed simple. He asked us to repeat our verb over and over and over and over

AGAIN
“Experiment with different ways of interpreting the verb, and Repeat”

His words echoed in the space.

Why are we repeating these banal actions over and over again?

I know how to stretch. How does this become performance?

“Through repetition we can come to a new revelation of what the verb actually means, and how it could mean.”

After about seven minutes of stretching, we changed our verb. This time I chose to roll.

“PICK A VERB THAT IS OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE”

Charles asked us to be a bit more involved and a bit more ambitious with our actions, and he also asked us to close our eyes.

Again, why are we doing this? Why are we closing our eyes?

Nonetheless, this immediately made the atmosphere more intimate, and I was able to fall into the motions of what my verb meant and what I would let it render on to my body. I wanted to be engulfed in the action of performance so I became more invested. Immersed into the action, I began to roll on the floor.

Even as I remember that instant it was absolutely ridiculously hysterical. Why would I roll on the floor? Many would think that it is absolutely unproductive.

On the contrary, it made me enter into a space not seen and heard by anyone but myself. It was a sacred moment, not sacred as in holy. Sacred are revered and deserve veneration. It was space and me. A direct confrontation with myself reflected onto space, and space reflecting back at me. I was creating an eclectic situation that only I was experiencing as such. A unique experience that could not be reproduced, but one that had an everlasting impact.

This is and was a hierophanic experience.
After we completed those exercises, we were asked to find an artifact that was about thirty pounds, or something that had some considerable weight. I was able to find a tree trunk, used for the ceramic oven, which had a very eerie human shape to it (truncated legs and phallus). These artifacts would then help us with the selected task. The task had to be something that we weren’t particularly good at, that we would then try and execute with the aid of the artifact.

I chose a cartwheel, because I never learned how to do one as a child. He then asked us to do something similar to the verb exercise, but instead using the artifact as an aid in the process.

“Try to convince yourself you are capable of this task”

Charles directed us to act out the task as if we were completely capable of doing it. So I went out into the open space and just started doing cartwheels, using the tree trunk as support, as an extension of self. They weren’t necessarily cartwheels but they were serious attempts at competing that task. This was another exercise to get our minds to understand what it means to represent an action. Even if we were not capable of properly doing the action, the struggle emits meaning.

From this point forward we were ready to perform our three minute assemblage performance. The last step was to write a paragraph about a significant experience in our lives.
STORY:

“Death is something we all have to deal with. I’ve personally have never lost a loved one but I have seen loved ones lose their loves. I have attended numerous funerals, and I think they are the most interesting situations one can experience. Seeing, touching, smelling the bodies as they lay... empty... devoid of emotion yet fully expressive. My best friend’s brother passed away a couple years back. I knew him; I had spent time with him, and to see him silent, and uncomfortable was intense. We are mere containers. And in this moment, I realized how frivolous our bodies are without our souls.”

“Now, narrow it down to the essence of the story”

We were to create a collage of words to describe our story. The following are the collages I created as a loose script for the performance:

COLLAGE:

1. Silence Frivolous Emotion Death Love Souls
2. Our frivolous bodies mean nothing without our souls

Vocalizing this collage would enable others and ourselves to see the material out of context, which is how meaning is constructed. The other step was to understand the mood our movements would create. We had to think about what we wanted to exude to the audience, whether it was oppression, anxiety, or joyfulness. Our actions had to be open for interpretation. With these four components we were able to create a loose script and rehearse the movements previously performed.
“Rehearsal is a process not of memorization but of play”

During rehearsal the actor is playing with the ideas of movement and interpreting them. Repetition of the body is not mechanical; it is always revealing something else, exposing the role of the body.

What ensued was a series of rehearsals, and trial runs, before the final performance. We were also taking note of the steps that we were planning on making (yet being open to chance):

-Dance with object, say words
“Our frivolous bodies mean nothing without our souls”
-Cartwheel task deconstructed on the floor with log
Laugh and make a sound of heavy breathing??
-Drag yourself on the floor edge to edge pushing log
After each attempt, the interpretations of the task would change from what was prescribed (task, verb) to what the material was leading me to do.

-Spin with Log; multiple spins; say collage
   - “Our frivolous bodies mean nothing without our souls”
   - Let the slight disorientation due to dizzy happen, let it place you
-Carry Log on shoulders (as a burden)
-Drop Log from above shoulders/back (to indicate freedom)
-Drag log by phallus to corner
-Place on back; Drop

REPEAT

The latter is the actual performance that took place. After rehearsing for ten minutes what came out was something pure and abstract. I experienced that sacred
feeling I described earlier. When you become aware of your body in the foreground as well as moving space into foreground, you are able to move into a realm of liminality, which render your movements and space uncanny.

The following is an ekphrasic recount of my experience during the performance.
I entered the space as if I had never entered it before. I noticed its immensity I was elsewhere. In the space of elsewhere I spun and spun and spun and spun and spun and spun and spun and spun and spun and spun and spun...

suspended in the thickness of a presence of an aura of an ambiance I was creating with my words with my movement with my expression
INHABITING THE PRESENT AS IF IT WAS PAST
AS IF IT WERE FUTURE

a sensation I can only compare to
staring into the

D B S
E L E
E U A
P E

with nothing in sight, yet knowing

SOMETHING IS LOOKING BACK
During this workshop I learned how to create emotions using body and space as medium. My body became space. I was able to inhabit a new realm of space. The existential space where body is made background and space is catapulted to our foreground. Where space is used to transmit and communicate, both to me and to the audience, a transcendental state of being and feeling. It is these same evocations that Artaud wanted to prey upon to jolt the audience, and it is through these triggered sensations that we are able to be transformed by having these hierophanic experiences awaken our insides, if only for a moment.
SPACE AS OTHER:  
A manifestation of space

As a society we are bound to many forms of the built environment, and due to that constant relationship and interaction with space, it is difficult to notice the effect that these spaces have on us: physical, psychological, and spiritual. There are few instances where we are made aware of these behavioral changes that occur in us through architecture. From a very young age, we instinctively teach ourselves how to recognize space as form, but rarely do we recognize the behavioral effects associated with form. Many different architectural movements, specifically the Modernist movement, tenaciously believed that architecture could affect human behavior.

In the early 1900’s, pre-war America, and post-war eras, a large amount of idealistic thoughts debuted through proposed projects by the well known architects of the time. These architects, mainly Le Corbusier, became overly concerned with

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making the world a better place through architecture; and many of them knew they could definitely offer solutions for both housing and community issues. Le Corbusier was a keen believer that architecture had the power to change our behavior, if we chose to conform to it. He also believed “that architecture, beginning at the level of individual units of dwelling, is behavioral; it has the capacity to act upon people and society, to shape their tendencies and moods. The house for Le Corbusier had the potential – and an imperative – to give a human being structure, order, health, and peace of mind.”

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Figure 14: Le Corbusier Unité D’Habitation in Marseilles France late 1960’s.

"Architecture has for its first duty, in this period of renewal, that of bringing about a revision of values, a revision of the constituent elements."

- Le Corbusier

Towards a new architecture (1923)

Many of the parameters Modernists used to design housing and urban proposals were based on the concept of health, a machine for living, sunlight and

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air. Corbusier states that he was, “providing the individual with an orderly, hygienic space of refuge and contemplation: distinctly urban, but also free of the noise, dust, and intermingling of street level habitation.”

Could architecture have such an effect on its inhabitants much like Artaud’s theater would?

There is a need to study experiential space through presence to further understand and discover what and which architectural or phenomenological cues are provoking this alteration in behavior and experience. There is research that has already hypothesized that architecture affects our experience of space most noticeably through prior events and societal values that can and do transforms our perception of space. Gaston Bachelard, O.F. Bollnow, Michel Foucault, Anthony Vidler, Jacques Lacan, Jacques Derrida, Jean Baudrillard, and Henri Lefebvre have conducted such studies.

Most specifically we can take Lefebvre’s concepts of production of space to further explain the concept of hierophanic architecture. Lefebvre describes the application and construction of a “spatial code” which he uses to “expose the actual production of space by bringing the various kinds of space and the modalities of their genesis together.”

He also presents an interesting concept that can be used to understand performance and the presence created, by decoding or reading space, which involves signs or signification. He then suggests that there would be a need to sway from the classical descriptions of Euclidian space in order to describe this new production of space, thus creating a new language in describing this system of space.

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3 Ibid.
4 There are other philosophers who have ventured in such studies that have been omitted in order to narrow scope, but acknowledgement is made that other studies and philosophers of space do exist
6 Ibid., pg. 15-17
Contextualizing Eliade’s Hierophany

Rudolph Otto’s Das Heilige (The Sacred)” was a revolutionary study because his point of view of religion was unique and unconventional for its time. He did not focus on the ideas of God and religion. Instead, he analyzed the religious experience and worked to describe its characteristics. What can be admired about his work is the fact that he did not focus on contributing to the rational and comprehensive ideas of his field, but rather focused on the irrational aspect. Whether intentional or not, this deviant work became an innovation in the study of religious experiences, and the philosophical aspect of religion. Otto understood that God was not just an abstract entity like the philosophers described, but he realized that God was a manifestation of divine power, a non-physical presence.\(^7\)

In an effort to understand this trembling experience, Otto describes that “he finds the feeling of terror before the sacred, before the awe-inspiring mystery, the majesty that emanates an overwhelming superiority of power; he finds religious fear before the fascinating mystery in which perfect fullness of being flowers.”\(^8\) This realm of experience is referred to as numinous. Numen is used to describe the presence of divinity as a spiritual force, particularly in religious settings.\(^9\) Although it is used in reference to a cosmic entity or deity, Otto also suggested that this experience had the tendency to invoke trembling sensations, making it possible for it to be an experience of both mystical divine powers, and also of non-divine presence. “The numinous presents itself as something ‘ganz andere’, an experience like no other, which can be experienced in and outside of what Otto describes as religious

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9 Ibid., pg. 9
experience."

Language alone cannot fully describe the experience, as sacredness represents itself in reality but is comprised of a different order. Mircea Eliaide on the other hand believes that the sacred can be manifested using “natural” realities. He names the act of manifesting the sacred as a “hierophany.” Eliade gives an example of this term through ancient religious practices, where a secular (which he later refers to as profane) object becomes venerated and transforms into a hierophany; a manifestation of sacred or rather an act of manifestation. What is most interesting is that these objects are not worshipped for being a representation of the sacred, but are worshipped because these objects contain the essence of the sacred and are a revelation of virtuality.

By manifesting the sacred any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain in its original form, for it continues to participate in its surrounding ‘cosmic milieu’. The specific example that Eliade gives is that of a stone. He suggested that the stone remains a stone, and nothing separates it from the rest. Eliade goes on to say that when the stone reveals itself as sacred, on a personal level, the stone is catapulted into a supernatural reality. According to him all nature is capable of revealing a cosmic sacredness.

Likewise, Architecture can be catapulted into its own sacred reality by manifesting its essence, its feel, aura, or ambience, and making these present to the audience, albeit virtually. Once revealed, these realities of architecture (hierophanies) will lead to body and sensual awareness of self and of architecture itself.

12 Ibid., pg. 11
13 Going off the notion that cosmic beings cannot be seen on earth but instead take on a natural form.
15 Ibid., pg. 8-16
"The modern Occidental experiences a certain uneasiness before many manifestation of the sacred. He finds it difficult to accept the fact that, for many human beings, the sacred can be manifested in stones or trees... But as we shall see, what is involved is not a veneration of the stone in itself, a cult of the tree in itself. The sacred tree, the sacred stone are not adored as stone or tree; they are worshipped precisely because they are hierophanies, because they show something that is no longer stone or tree but the sacred, the ganz andere. By manifesting the sacred, any object becomes something else, yet it continues to remain itself. A sacred stone remains a stone... nothing distinguishes it from all other stones. But for those whom a stone reveals itself as sacred, its immediate reality is transmuted into a supernatural reality... The cosmos in its entirety can become a hierophany."

What Eliade’s brings attention to here, about this hierophanic object, is what we can employ to make this concept pliable and transpose it into other disciplines. He suggests that anything could have a similar hierophanic revelation, so we will consider the possibility of architecture being able to perform in this manner. The chief concern will be to illustrate this experience of the sacred in architecture and delineate its characteristic in specific circumstances. Because there is a tendency to relate sacredness to religious places or situations, we will separate the idea of

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sacred from a religious standard and refer to ‘sacred’ as a situation that is wholly different (ganz andere) and worth recognition.

Eliade suggests that those who relate themselves with religion or connection to a deity commonly experience even the simplest acts as sacred. He refers to the difference between those who are part of these communions and those that are not as sacred versus profane. He also wants the reader to know that those are two ways to experience the world, one that acknowledges the sacred and is aware of it, and one that is not.17

Eliade reinforces the idea that the religious man has an alternative response to space because they assert their existential and religious references to multiple aspects of life. Most non-religious men divorce themselves from religious presuppositions, not allowing for an ‘enlightened’ perception of space. In contrast to what Eliade suggests, I believe both religious and non-religious men have access to sacred space, and both can experience both types of space, sacred and profane, allowing for an infill of a multiplicity of spatial experiences.18 For the purpose of this exercise, we will explore the possibility that space can become sacred no matter who experiences it. Whether it is a sacred or profane spectator, sacredness can be revealed.

When sacredness is revealed, the space becomes qualitatively different from the space surrounding it. We can experience this phenomenon in theater performances that create an atmosphere of transformation (a poetic transference in space), which is what we refer to as presence, or hierophanic architecture.

We experience profane space, or homogeneous space on a daily basis. We are usually not in tune with our surroundings, deactivating any possibility of the sacred being able to manifest itself. In this homogeneity there are no points of reference, meaning there is no way of becoming attached to the space, until there is a break

17 Ibid., pgs 12-16
18 Ibid., pgs 12-16
in the homogeneity and a hierophanic moment is able to arise; bringing reality into virtuality. Discovering this virtuality of space offers an existential value. Regardless of the spaces function the sacredness of presence in space possesses a transformative power. This zone where transformation occurs is a place of experimentation, exploration, and improvisation, a *limen* in which we can experience an “other” (ganz andere) or for the purpose of exercising the overall concept, sacred space.

**Rhizomatic Symptomatic**

![Diagram](image)

Figure 15: Diagram describing the idea of the rhizome effect in reference to Deleuze. Image: By Author.

This mode of understanding space can be related to the rhizome effect described by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* in 1980. In this book, Deleuze and Guattari refer to the rhizome effect as a process of creating a crisis in knowledge, a limen, a break in standard, and this happens because the rhizome triggers the idea of multiplicity in meaning and representation. Therefore, a particular phenomenon would have different points

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19 In Garolian’s *Performing Pedagogy*, he defines this terms as a threshold, a border, a neutral zone between ideas, cultures, or territories that one must cross in order to get from one side to the other.


21 This section is here to reinforce the idea of a non-linear study, and liminal work via the Rhizome Effect, which is given a brief description.
of entry allowing for a plethora of derivations to occur in a given subject. Figure 15 illustrates the effect; the concept (dashed circle) allows for different points of reference to enter (arrow) the concept, and thus create an array of interpretations; an intermezzo.  

What we benefit in referring to the rhizome effect is how it can be applied to various disciplines. When you operate in a binary system, there are many ways to get to each point but there are no diversions, you are simply going from here to there. In a rhizomatic effect, you would be operating in a free zone, a virtual space where all sorts of associations can be made by creating a generative and emergent place in which to operate in. In a similar way, this is how architectural space should be discussed. Where there could be many different points of reference that are influencing the definition of what space is, giving

![Figure 16: Gordon Matta-Clark was interested in the concept of entropy and ambiguous spaces. Pictured is a house that was split in half from the series “Splitting” in 1974.](image)

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22 Gilles Deleuze, F. G. (1987). A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Pg. 1-10, 25 This term is used as an analogy to describe the rhizome effect; which has no beginning or end it always operates in the middle of things, in the in-between.
rise to an emergent sensibility of space. Rather than focusing on binary oppositions of mind/body, visceral/rational and reality/representation, architecture has the potential to resolve each alternative as being complementary and codependent. Meaning that the frame that divides signified experiences from lived ones in not a static two-dimensional frame but a dynamic threshold that is always influx. This is the site of performance in architecture, a site of surrealist adventure.

The hierophanic experience of sacred architectural space would be that of a heightened reality, the space of other revealed to us, thus creating a unique sensual experience of space. Not being able to experience the same reality twice, these manifestations open a chasm between what is and what has been, constantly launching us into a state of becoming.
In order to experience what Artaud meant by extreme action, and transformation. I will attempt to decipher his play, “Jet of blood” from 1927 by poaching its allegories, metaphors, and chimeras. The format in which it is analyzed is a way to break from standard form and to become further engaged with the piece.

Figure 17: Final Rendering of space planning for Jet of Blood.
JET OF BLOOD
TRANSLATED BY RUBY COHN

CHARACTERS:
A YOUNG MAN
A YOUNG GIRL
A HUGE VOICE
A KNIGHT
A WET-NURSE (SORT OF NANNY)
A PRIEST
A COBBLER (SHOE MAKER)
A BEADLE (SEXTON - CHURCH OFFICER)
A PEDDLER (STREET PEDDLER)
A BAWD (WOMAN IN CHARGE OF BROTHEL)
A JUDGE

PERFORMED LATER BY
PETER BROOK'S
THEATRE OF CRUELTY

Figure 18: Gustave Dore etchings depicting a dark and eerie scene, reminiscent of the scene with the young couple.

YOUNG MAN: I love you and everything is beautiful.

YOUNG GIRL: [With quavering voice]
You love me and everything is beautiful.

YOUNG MAN: [In a lower tone]
I love you and everything is beautiful.

YOUNG GIRL: [In an even lower tone]
You love me and everything is beautiful.

YOUNG MAN: [Leaving her abruptly] I love you.

[Silence] Face me. ACCEPTING DOMINANCE

YOUNG GIRL: [As before standing opposite him] There. ACCEPTING OBEYANCE
Energies are minimal at this time because not many actions have taken place.

AS IF ON HELIUM

YOUNG MAN: [In an exalted high-pitched voice] I love you. I am great, I am lucid, I am full. I am dense.

CLARITY - FROM WHAT? MORE AWARE OF REALITY?

YOUNG GIRL: [In the same high-pitched voice]

We love each other.

YOUNG MAN:

We are intense. Ah, how beautifully the world is built.

CREATION

[Silence. There is a noise as if an immense wheel were turning and moving the air. A hurricane separates them. At the same time, two Stars are seen colliding and from them fall a series of legs of living flesh with feet, hands, scalps, masks, colonnades, porticos, temples, alembics, falling more and more slowly, as if falling in a vacuum. Then three scorpions one after another and finally a frog and a beetle which come to rest with desperate slowness, nauseating slowness] "le mal du ciel" (Cocteau, 311)

PLAGUE

IMAGERY

MAY REFER TO A FORM OF CLEANSING

4 TO BEING FOR THE EXTERIORIZATION OF A DEPTH OF LATENT CRUELTY

CREATION

VIEW OF PERFECTION

IDEALISM

CREATION OF WORLD AND ITS DESICATION

HERE, BY WOMEN

CRUELTY AS MEANS OF MAKING CRUELLY AWARE OF EXISTENCE.

TO REALIZE WE ARE ONLY HUMAN.
YOUNG MAN: [Crying with all his strength]

The sky has gone mad, COUNTERS PREVIOUS
DESTRUCTION VIEW OF PERCEPTION
[He looks at the sky] WORLDLY

Let's hurry away from here.

[He pushes the Young Girl before him]

[Enter a medieval Knight in gigantic armor, followed by a
Wet-Nurse holding her breasts in her hands and puffing
because her breasts are swollen]

KNIGHT: Let go of your tits, Give me my papers.

WITH AUTHOCRATIC MANNERS.

WET-NURSE: [Screaming in high-pitch] Ah! Ah! Ah!

Hysteria

KNIGHT: Damn, what's the matter with you?

CONCERNED

WET-NURSE: Our daughter, there, with him.

REFERENCING TO
. YOUNG-MAN
. YOUNG-GIRL
Figure 19: Henry Fuseli “Falstaff in the laundry basket,” 1792 oil painting in which a gluttonous man is shown with two sensual women wrapping him in rags. The women depicted here have a similar aura as does the wet-nurse, excluding the ‘bust’.

KING: Quiet, there’s no girl there.

WET-NURSE: I’m telling you that they’re screwing.

KING: What the Hell do I care if they’re screwing?

WET-NURSE: Incest.

KING: Midwife.

WET-NURSE: [Plunging her hands deep into her pockets which are as big as her breasts]

Pimp.

[She throws his papers at him]

KING: Let me eat.

[The Wet-Nurse rushes out]

[He gets up and from each paper he takes a huge hunk of Swiss cheese. Suddenly he coughs and chokes]

KING: [With full mouth] Eh. Eh.

Show me your breasts. Show me your breasts. Where did she go?

[He runs out] [The Young Man comes back]

YOUNG MAN: I saw, I knew, I understood. Here on a public street, the priest, the cobbler, the peddler the entrance to the church, the red light of the brothel, the scales of justice. I
can't stand it any longer!

[Luking]

[Like shadows, a Priest, a Cobbler, a Beadle, a Bawd, a Judge, a Peddler, arrive on stage]

EMERGE FROM DARKNESS

As characters come together, their previous energies stay present, indicating the space in which certain actions were made, and were those actions are still active.

YOUNG MAN: I've lost her; give her back to me.

ALL: [In different tones] Who, who, who, who.

YOUNG MAN: My wife.

BEADLE: [Very fat] Your wife, you're kidding!

GLUTTONY

YOUNG MAN: Kidding! Maybe she's yours!

BEADLE: [Tapping his forehead] TO UNDERSTAND

Maybe she is.
[He runs out]

[The Priest Leaves the group and puts his arm around the neck of the Young Man]

PRIEST: [As if confessing someone.] Forcing Confession
To what part of your body do you refer most often?

YOUNG MAN: To God. Surreal Response

[Confused by the reply the Priest immediately shifts to a Swiss accent]

PRIEST: [In Swiss accent] But that isn't done any more. We no longer hear through that ear. You have to ask that of volcanoes and earthquakes. We wallow in the little obscenities of man in the confession-box. That's life.

YOUNG MAN: [Much impressed]
Ah that’s life! Then everything is shot to hell.

PRIEST: [Still with Swiss accent] Of course.

[At this moment night suddenly falls on stage. The earth quakes.] Symbolizes change, abrupt unexpected one.
Figure 21: Henry Fuseli mostly painted scenes that resembled dream-like states, and they would most of the time appear to be eerie, and tended to evoke a sense of worry and of imminent danger. This to me would be a great way to direct the scenery to convey the Bawd’s transparent body.

“There is furious thunder and zig-zags of lightning in every direction through the zig-zags all the characters can be seen running around bumping into each other and falling then getting up and running about like crazy. Then an enormous hand seizes the Bawd by her hair, which bursts into flame and grows huge before our eyes.”

HUGE VOICE: Bitch, look at your body!

[The Bawd’s body is seen to be absolutely naked and hideous beneath her blouse and skirt, which become transparent as glass]

“Let him who is without sin be the first to cast a stone.”

BAWD: Leave me alone, God.

“People who live in glass houses shouldn’t throw stones.”

“resentful blasphemous”
Figure 22: SILENCE (1799-1801) by Henry Fuseli. This image represents in a much more 'poetic' way the way in which the young girls body would be falling and destroyed.
YOUNG MAN: [As if suspended in the air and with the voice of a ventriloquist.] Don't hurt Mommy!

KNIGHT: She-devil!

[He hides his face in horror. A multitude of scorpions crawl out from beneath the Wet-Nurse's dress and swarm between her legs. Her vagina swells up splits and becomes transparent and glistening like a sun. The Young Man and Bawd run off as though lobotomized]

YOUNG GIRL: [Getting up dazed]

The virgin! Ah that's what he was looking for.

PURITY? HONESTY? RETURNING TO THE BAWD?!

ENDED STAGE DIRECTION: CURTAIN.

Figure 23: As the scene comes to an end the wet-nurse, lacking breast, with her vagina swollen and glistening it would be interesting to have the character laying in a redeeming gesture, as is through this suffering she has been cleansed. This painting is by Gustave Dore's 'Andromeda. (1869)'

Disclaimer: Analyzing this play in this manner is no rendering this unconventional work conventionally, I am aware.
As a director positions his actors so must an architect position his spaces.

During the process of selecting a play I wanted to study what Artaud meant by theater, so I could see how he wrote and how he imagined the presence. This play, to be completely honest, is rather confusing and hard to follow. It is a thousand different sensations colliding into one not able to be deciphered at first glance. After digging through it and reading between the lines, the scenes he creates are the strongest visually and emotionally, mostly because the actions we are experiencing are rare and uncanny that it becomes hard to process it holistically.

Each action and direction that is given in theater is highly calculated and highly improvised. You have to be willing to move, often drastically, as the current experience is unfolding. In architecture, we often design for a static condition rather than for emergence. If this reactionary form could be implemented in design more often I believe we could change the way architecture is experience and how we interact as communities and as a society.
HIEROPHANIC ARCHITECTURE

In an effort to concretize the idea of hierophanic architecture, an analysis of a tangible source is conducted in order to illuminate the subject.

The Boston Governmental Service Center (BGSC), completed in 1971, is located in Beacon Hill, Boston, Massachusetts where it stands to be one of many monolithic late-Modernist buildings in the Boston Government Hall. The BGSC, more specifically the Erich Lindemann Mental Health Center, is a controversial brutalist building designed by Paul Rudolph; its heavy use of concrete, and large proportions characterized it as a rough and oppressive building. Most of its exposed walls are made of raw concrete that are spiky and abrasive. The building is laced with ethereal staircases (some leading no where), textured hallways. It is a spatial labyrinth and provokes an uneasy sensation on its inhabitants and whoever might meander among it. According to Rudolph these decisions were made in a way that they would become emotive for those who were mentally ill. Vince Scully, Yale Professor, warned
others that this building “puts demands upon the individual user that not every psyche will be able to meet.” Which in fact this building would be considered to be a “notorious example of architecture’s power to confuse, agitate, and sometimes fatally overwhelm.”

Figure 24: Lindemann Health Center in Boston, MA designed by Architect Paul Rudolph 1962. Pictured here are the curvy uneven stairs.

The Lindemann Center has a dark past. There are a series incidents that have occurred here, acquainting us with how this building has played a significant role in physical assaults, multiple suicides attempted, and one death.²

“The spaces inside reflect Rudolph’s romanticized view of mental illness: eerie, twisting stairways, one of which leads nowhere like an oubliette in a Medieval keep; amorphous passages that never reveal their ends; a chapel that creates a stirring, dismal ambiance through spatial theatrics. On the exterior this atmosphere is communicated through an unwitting architecture parlante—not a symbolic program but a concoction of private motifs—intended to perpetuate the mood at a subconscious level. In short, Rudolph made the building “insane” in order to express the insanity within.”³

This raises a question: Can architecture affect human behavior⁴? What kind of presence is found in this building? What has created such a presence? Is it the materiality? Has the actual forms of the building made such suggestions?

The melodramatic descriptions of this building are compelling. It is also interesting how this building is referred to be a dangerous construction. These happenings are a great source in which to study some of the concepts discussed earlier giving fruit to issues regarding psychology in architecture, spirituality, the uncanny, and the sublime; manifestation of sacred, hierophanic architecture.

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3 Ibid., pg. 1
4 Human Behavior- State of being, behavior that is most outwardly expressed in a variety of ways, ranging from normal to extreme abnormal actions and interactions.
“Architecture is given life and spirit by all the qualities that touch the human sense and the human soul: by light and color, sound and texture, by expansion and compression of space. If the functional nourishes our physical needs, the poetic nourishes our soul. If the former relates to people and objects as machines, the latter relates to living human beings.”

There are very few times in which the built environment is listened to and even less were it is brought into the foreground. But why would there be a reason to listen to an inanimate object such as a building? What level of communication can we tap into that will introduce a revived environment, and give rise to a better understanding of architectural ambience? Buildings communicate most literally through functional elements such as program, space planning, and aesthetics. Yet, we forget other realms of communication that exist, creating a disregard for the invisible spectrum (presence) of communication emanating from our built environment.

The communication that is being referred to here relates to the humans senses of tactility, vision, olfaction, auditory, and gustatory, not necessarily aiming towards invoking only one sense, but instead creating “a concert of perceptions shared among all of the senses.” How can we begin to interpret architecture as language, as a

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5 Karen A. Franck, R. B., Lepori, B (2007). *Architecture from the Inside Out: From the Body, the Senses, the Site, and the Community* (Second ed.). Great Britain: Wiley Academy, pg. 74 ‘Ch. 3 The anism of Architecture.’

6 Communication (both visible and invisible) - William Muschenheim in *Elements of the Art of Architecture* (1964) breaks down form, space, and surface into mass, volume, plane, line, solid, void, proportion, size, scale, light, shadow, harmony, contrast, continuity, balance, enclosure, height, depth, light, extension, texture, pattern, color, ornamentation, and façade in which any of these forms would serve as communication, not excluding metaphysical communication.

means of communicating through many different dimensions and dialects, far from an intellectualization of space and form? How can this be accomplished through a performative atmosphere in space?

The purpose of the analysis of Paul Rudolph’s Lindemann Mental Health Center is to demonstrate that architecture does affect human behavior, whether positively or negatively, and could possibly entice the public to be receptive of their surroundings to understand the behavioral impact that space may arouse. To what extent can a building affect the inhabitant? In this example it has obviously hurt, so would it be able to heal as well? What architectural features elicit a strong reaction for the occupant that may hinder or propel human behavior in a certain direction? What do these materials, forms, and phenomenological conditions say, how can we interpret them directly to the actually ambience that is created? In short, architecture has the power to move us, change us, and maybe even drive us mad, and with the manipulation of architectural features, such as stairs, windows, etc., one could potentially force inhabitants to act a particular way. This study can produce an alternative way to characterize and document materials, forms, and phenomenological happenings.

As detailed by Philip Noble in an article entitled The Architecture of
Madness Buildings can drive you crazy, but can they help restore mental health? In the Metropolis October 1999 edition, the “responses to this environment [were] predictably tragic.” This center housed a large amount of mentally-ill patients. Some say that was the cause of the what happened, but there must have been some sort of presence in that space, not a spirit or a phantasm, but a presence of space, of a collective memory of space. There are plenty of horrific accounts about patients and employees being lost in the building, as well as being assaulted in secluded spaces. 8

Noble writes that “the building has proved to be so insidious that it is possible to hold certain spaces responsible for repeatedly abetting self-destructive acts. A catwalk over the Lindemann’s plaza-level lobby had to be glazed after it invited too many suicide attempts.”9 There had to have been spatial clues that lead to these events. Rudolph designed double height corridors to achieve that fortress like feature of brutalism.

In 1972, a patient wandered off to the highest portion of the building that was a chapel in the ornamental finial. As the patient arrived to the space he encounter what I would describe as hierophanic architecture, a presence of space although virtual that is felt and seen as real. In the empty room lay a heavy concrete plinth, “a concrete slab altar.”10 The scene was set for what the patient translated to be a sacrificial site. The architectural geometric cues where there, and the patient reacted the way the architecture was gesturing him too, leading him to commit the ultimate sacrifice.

How can that architectural communication be interpreted, and documented? Besides formal architectural elements, can buildings communicate through

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10 Ibid. pg. 1
metaphysical (intangible) forms, like energies and cosmos much like theater could? What alternative perspectives did the inhabitants have of the space? Although this specific experience of space is personal, this is an experience many have dealt with. When we attend an event at distinct space and have been there before, we recall what once was. We recall how the space function prior to this new experience, creating a juxtaposition of these two experiences in space, a manifestation of presence.\footnote{Thus Hierophanic Architecture.}

Many of these confrontations of space and presence seen in this center are what Artaud describes as presence and having the virtual enter the real. In order to see the correspondences between Artaud’s descriptions of theater and architecture, I replace the word ‘theater’ or ‘performance’ from Artaud’s descriptions and swap them with the word ‘architecture’ in order to literally give a visual of these two practices being interwoven, as Artaud’s descriptions are clear and pugent.

The following are a few passages taken from Artaud’s Theater and Its Double, and reconstructed for them to refer directly to architecture.

“[Architecture] must give us everything that is in crime, love, war, or madness, if it wants to recover its necessity.” (85)

" We want to make out of [architecture] a believable reality which gives the heart and the senses that kind of concrete bite which all true sensation requires. In the same way that our dreams have an effect upon us and reality has an effect upon our dreams, so we believe that the images of thought can be identified with a dream which will be efficacious to the degree that it can be projected with the necessary violence.” (85)
“The question, then, for [architecture], is to create a metaphysics of speech, gesture, and expression, in order to rescue it from its servitude to psychology and “human interest” (90)

“[Architecture] will never find itself again—i.e., constitute a means of true illusion—except by furnishing the spectator with the truthful precipitations of dreams, in which his taste for crime, his erotic obsessions, his savagery, his chimeras, pour out, on a level not counterfeit and illusionary, but inferior.” (92)

In order for architecture to impact in an Artaudian manner, it must first speak to the audiences. Far from mere sensory effects but rather speak to our lives, our passions, our dreams, love, anger, basic human interests in order to jump from reality to virtuality and penetrate the audiences subconscious.
“Architecture space can have an autonomy and a logic of their own. distortions, ruptures, compressions, fragmentations, and juxtapositions which are inherent in the manipulation of form.”¹ So said Bernard Tschumi, well known Architect and author who revealed to us in *The Manhattan Transcripts* the possibility of juxtaposing architecture in a dynamic and unexpected manner. In a similar way, Antonin Artaud put forward an alternative view of theater that dramatically changed its course, and the way directors’ approach oeuvres. Artaud was reacting to a condition in theater he felt needed to be addressed in any way he could. Being influenced by an Oriental performance company, he looked to ritual in order to evoke a numinous experience in spectators.

Artaud sought to awaken the deepest part of man through visceral reactions to his new language of theater. This language would be able to transmit what is

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virtual, dreams and subconscious imagery, into real and penetrating imagery that would rattle the senses rather than the intellect. He continuously searched for an alternative form of communication in theater in order to enter man's psyche, an effect that traditional theatre was not able to do. What Artaud was ultimately after was a manifestation of presence that could perforate man's hard exterior in order for there to be an internal awareness of senses and of self.

It is vital, as architects, to take these suggestions Artaud had for theater, and flip them towards architecture. Architecture should excite, and inflict sensation into the spectators. There should be a need to elevate the participation between building and spectators in order for man to not be stagnant and blind-conformers to space. It is through personal interactions with space that we can notice the need, and possible yearning for this integration. What our bodies seek is an invitation to act in given environments that offer choices and possibilities for a multiplicity of experience.

A possible approach to creating multiplicity of experience would be to practice architecture in a non-linear fashion, by integrating theatrical and performance methods into the creation of space. Three major modes of application that theater and performance groups follow are (1) experimentation, (2) exploration, and (3) improvisation. These processes requiring a level of openness to fortuity, as well as a commitment.
During a performance, the performer is well rehearsed and well versed in their craft besides this the performer is aware that they are at the will of space and time, and simultaneously reacting to these forces creating push and pull, foreground and background interaction. Here we notice a synthesis between space and the individual. In order to access this synthesis, a liminal space is create, an in-between, which is where possibility arises. The possibility of inhabiting an existential space, where our bodies become background, and architecture becomes foreground.

Operating in this threshold between architecture and performance allows for there to be a less descriptive notion of architecture and have a more freeing narrative sensibility of performance, creating, not an ideal space, but a space of ‘other’ able to constantly conform to our bodies and sensations. The experimentation should occur by understanding our surroundings and being able “to relate to a collective way of feeling, perceiving, and responding.” Using this knowledge we are able to explore these feelings and translate them into gestures, thoughts, and concepts, and through their continual application an alternative response and interaction may arise. Subsequently allowing for improvisation to take place by putting these alternative responses into action into play.

These processes should again relate to the need for architecture to be far from merely functional, but instead act as an item of clothing, or like a prosthetic, constantly in our foreground, continually aware of it, as much as it is aware of us. What is needed in not “architecture of the eye” as Juhani Pallasmaa describes it, where there is a separation between our bodies and building, but the hope is to create architecture that is not detached but instead attempts to reach transcendence through body and matter.3

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2 Franck, K. Lepori, B. (2007). Architecture from the Inside Out: From the Body, the Senses, the Site, and the Community (Second ed.). Great Britain: Wiley Academy. Pg. 76
3 Ibid., pg. 27.
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