

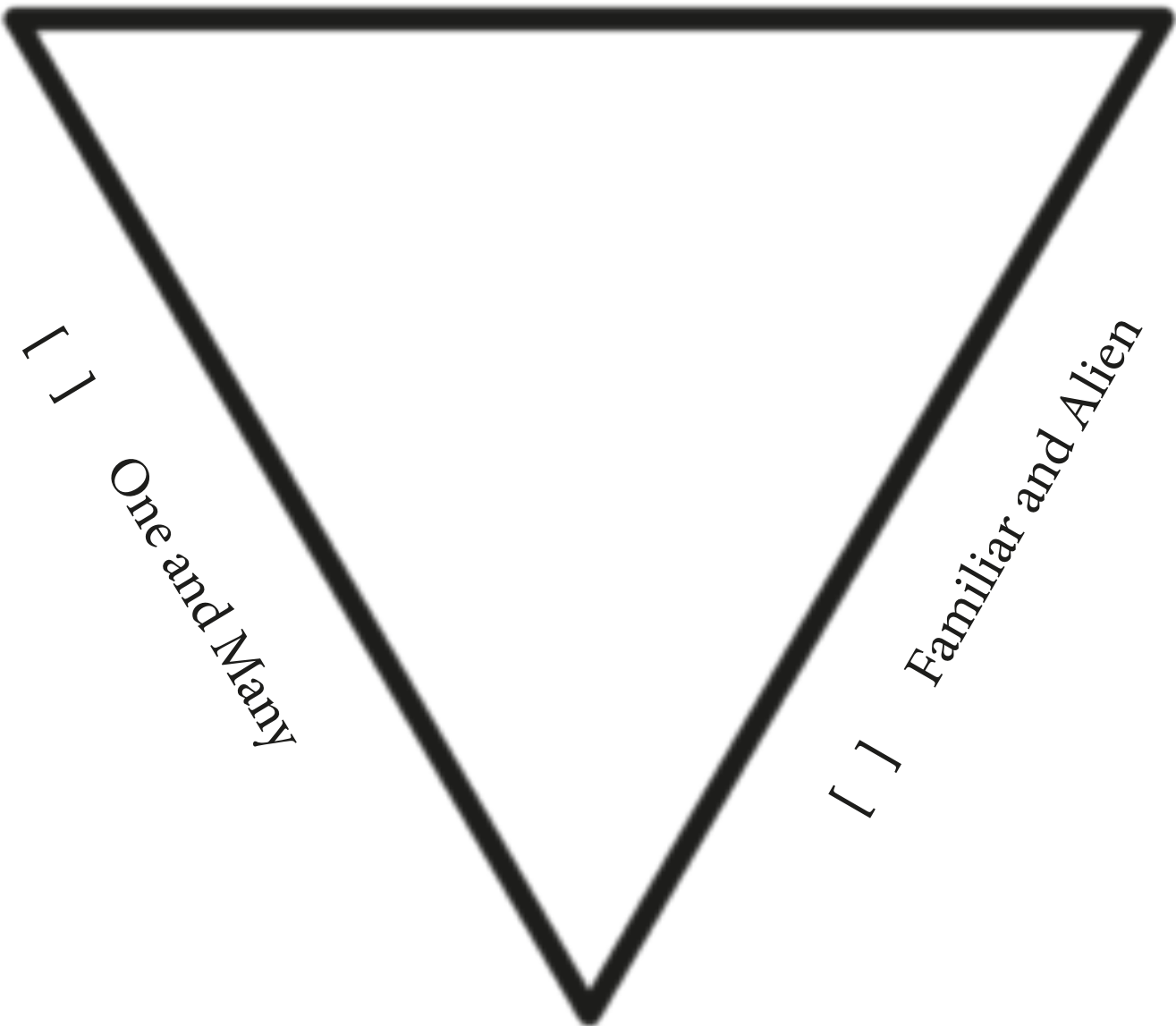
# A Theory of Audience

draft 1.1



# Contents

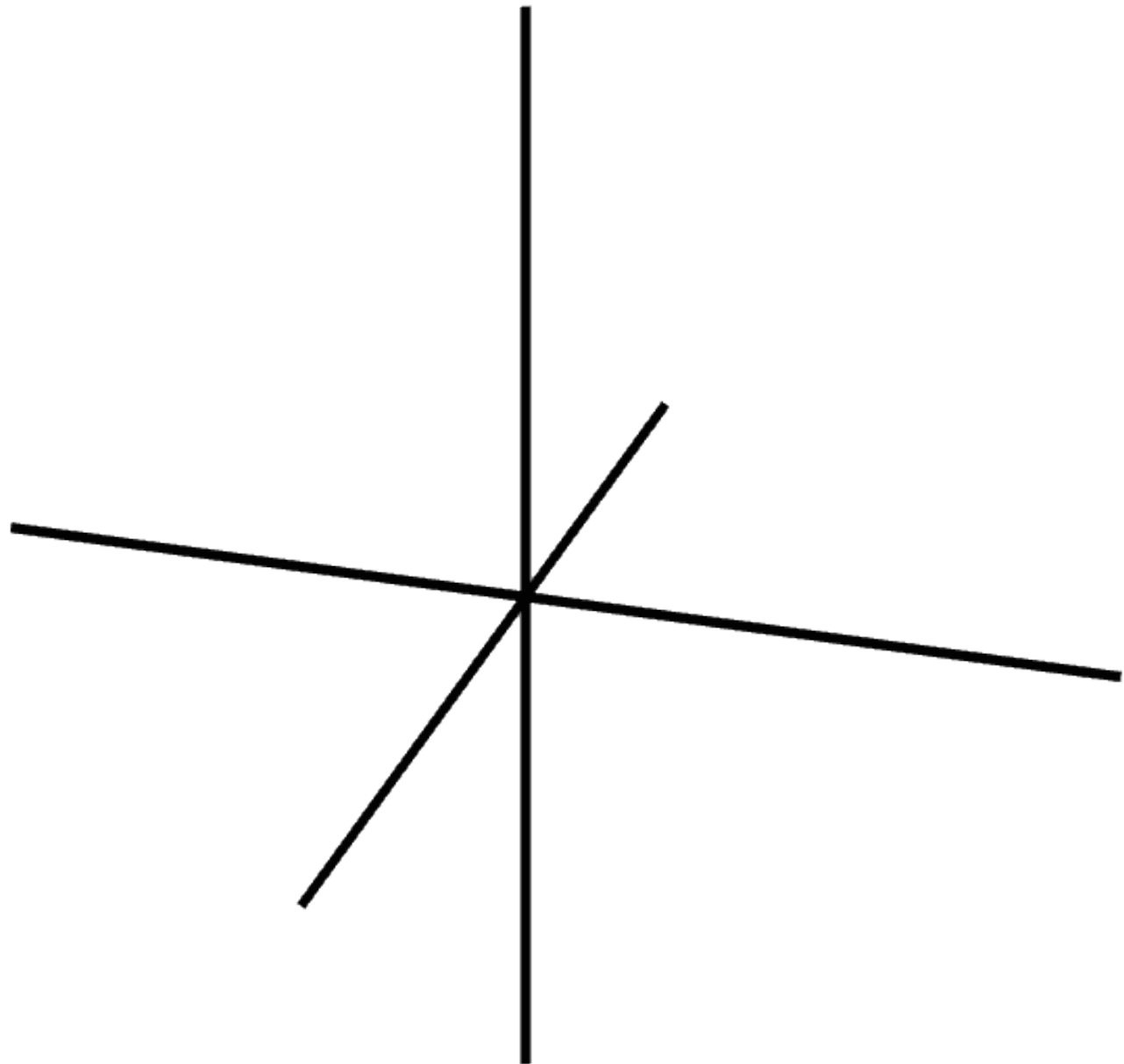
[ ] Outside and Inside



For the implied reader



# Prologue





[ ]<sup>1</sup>

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1

This text happens in the event of reading. The readers, i.e. you, are the audience. I propose that while you read, take notice of your reading and it's context, how something is performed and audience here, and how theory takes form as a live event.



[ ]<sup>2</sup>

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2

When you find yourself in a situation like this — in an audience before an unfolding stage — a set of procedures has taken place. For the audience to appear, specific conditions are needed. Or more precisely, audience is a condition.

[ ]<sup>3</sup>

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3

Audience is a condition which appears when invoked and in the simultaneous tension of three oppositions:  
of outside and inside, of one and many and of familiar and alien.

The audience addressed here is the audience invoked by art works and especially the audience of live and performative arts. The theory will thus respond specifically to that context but hopefully it will also open up some views for understanding audience in a wider sense. It is situated in the context of academic artistic research, while it does question whether audiencing is artistic. Unlike artistic research typically, the research is not primarily concerned with artistic work authored by the researcher (i.e. myself), but with the events instigated by others.

The events of audiencing are the body of the research. This text aims to offer ways to approach audiencing, or to actually audience, as a theoretical endeavour. It functions as a commentary, much like the glosses scribbled in the peripheria of religious texts by medieval theologians. The focal point of research is not the stage (or the page) and the artist (or writing) inhabiting it, but an audience following the events from the margin.

In order for this to actually happen, you need to not only see the words, but also the *paper*, and to attend not only to the text but also to the *reading*.

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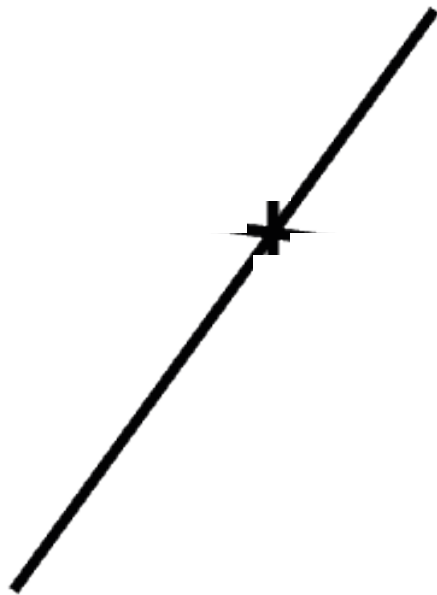
The theory is conceived in practice. The practice consists of

- a) multiple people attending performance events as audience members, invited by the researcher and informed of the questions of the research
- b) these people reflecting on the nature of the audience through writing and dialogue
- c) the researcher composing theory in relation to those reflections
- d) these theoretical compositions attended by audiences (i.e. you) and reflected by them.

All art works referred to in the text have been attended by either the researcher or the researcher and the invited informants. The parts in italics are quoted from their reflections.



# Outside and Inside



*I was maybe more a spectator than a part of the audience. Seperate, isolated, more in relation to the performance than to the situation.<sup>6</sup>*

*We are in parallel rows and face the same direction. We see the faces of the performers, we see them from the front. The rest of the audience members, the likes of us, we see from the back or at most from the side. Our bodies remain anonymous, invisible, unlike the bodies of the performers. We are in the shadow, they are in the light.*<sup>7</sup>

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7

The theatre of Ancient Greece is the reference point towards which the history of Western theatre is usually traced back. It was structured as an open-air building where the audience sat in semicircular rows of *theatron* ("the place of viewing") and watched the events taking place on *skene*.

This system of theatre and scene is a classic spatialisation of the tension between the outside and the inside. The tragedy is acted on stage; the audience views it from the outside. During the 19th century the oppositionality of theatre was further enhanced by directing light on the stage and leaving the auditorium in the shadows. The grid of polar tensions proposed here aim to regard this history (still very much alive in artistic practices) and yet to bypass the dichotomies borne from the modernist paradigms of theatre and performance art, like those of activity vs. passivity, presence vs. absence and spectatorship vs. participation. A polarity is distinguished from a dichotomy. Polarity is a metaphorical model, which can be used to describe dynamic systems; it is configured as a flux between two extremities.

The three polarities, namely outside-inside, one-many and familiar-alien, do not limit the concept of audience to any specific spatial or temporal composition.



*The performance starts without problems, just like this. I have thought beforehand several different options for this encounter. I want this to work out. I am afraid that you have to support this situation too much. I hope that nobody has to carry this moment. I may be pretentious, too aware of everything. I speak everything open so there is no unclarity. I speak everything open: windows, doors, curtains, paintings, furniture, lamps, ceiling, floor, the cloths we wear, the slight tremble moving along my breath, the tongue which wants to lick dried-up lips. We all bow down towards the floor and take off our shoes. I wish that everyone takes off their shoes. When we rise up we feel the earth under our feet. We move the weight to the right foot, the left foot detaches from the ground and prepares to take a step, we walk through the door into the hall. You follow me.*<sup>8</sup>

An untitled performance by Milja Aho, Anna-Mari Karvonen, Anna Mustonen and Emmi Venna started in 2016 by Mustonen talking to the audience in the foyer. Through her words, she literally invited the audience in to the space of the event, into the experience of being the audience. While keeping up the clear division between the one who is speaking and the ones who are listening, the text made participation nonvoluntary as all choices became reactions to the suggestions given by the performer. We, the audience members, stepped in and viewed our in-stepping as a part of the performance.

*I sat myself in the auditorium and was told that I can come and go as I please: visit the toilet, have a cigarette outside or buy a beer at the bar. On stage there was a scaffold, the ground floor of which was covered with a translucent veil. Throughout almost the entire performance, the performers were behind the veil. A live, two-camera video feed of their actions was projected on the wall of the upper floor.*<sup>9</sup>

*Conte D'amour* by Swedish Institutet and Finnish Nya Rampen staged in 2010 the life of the family of Joseph Fritzl, who imprisoned his family to their basement for 25 years; the space covered with the veil represented their living quarters. This veil created a distant interior that was still accessible to the the audience: through sound, through shadows reflected on the veil, through the real-time video image.

Vincent Roumagnac's series of translucent *Backdrops* in 2017-18 go further: if *Conte D'amour*'s fourth wall marks the inside of the stage-basement, Roumagnac's Backdrop exposes the in(or out)side of the backstage through questioning the divide. To me, both become membranes of cellular theatre space, materialisations of the interior-exterior-polarity, although Roumagnac would probably disagree: "[the backdrop operates] as an animated passage, suggesting that there might be nothing outside of the stage anylonger".

*I feel like an outsider. I see people moving in front of me. They ask the audience to move themselves. Still some of the feeling of being out lingers. Next time when I come in the room they are being walked around. I think constantly about the possibility to influence and it makes me feel lousy; I am responsible for the movements of these people. And yet, when I get to be one of the people walking them, I feel like a performer and adjust to that state like a chameleon. The outsidersness is left in the outside. A smile rises on my lips and I get inspired.*<sup>10</sup>

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10

In *Art as Experience* from 1934 the philosopher John Dewey writes that art takes place in the experience of the receiver instead of being situated for example in art objects. He compares art experiences to mountains that rise from the landscape of everyday experiences. In the context of performance Dewey's proposal would mean that the stage is situated within the audience: their minds, bodies, consciousnesses. In my terms, he suggests that there is no outside for the audience.

In *The Society of the Spectacle* from 1967 Guy Debord writes that "spectacle's function in society is the concrete manufacture of alienation". In his view, the modern society forces its members outside of lived reality, into a passive position of consuming representations. For him, when we become the audience of the spectacle, we are robbed of agency. In my terms, he says that there is an opposition between the inside of direct living and the outside of alienated spectatorship, and we, as modern consumers, are imprisoned in the outside.

In *The Emancipated Spectator* from 2009 the philosopher Jacques Rancière refers to the audience as an entity with an agency of its own and that the need of theatremakers to transform their audience from passive observers to active participants is in vain. Spectation is already active and the spectator is emancipated, if that is accepted. In my terms, he proposes that being on the outside is not a problem but the whole idea, or a way of taking part in the inside.

*I step among the audience into the room with a wall-to-wall carpet. We encounter a mirror the size of the wall. Slowly the direction of the light changes and the mirror turns into a window, revealing that the room is actually divided into two almost identical parts. Behind the window ten performers become visible, equaling us, ten audience members. The relationship of the stage and the auditorium is polar and mimetic. It vibrates play, flirt, awkwardness, inclusivity and exclusivity, discomfort, use of power and voyeurism.<sup>11</sup>*

I propose that the polarity and dynamic interplay of outside and inside is necessary for the audience to appear. Dewey's claim that art resides in our experience, Debord's claim that spectatorship is the negation of direct living and Rancière's claim for the agency already inherent in spectators are valuable openings for a study of the nature of the audience condition. What they do not address is the audience as a state of dynamic tension.

*I felt puzzlement, anxiety, confusion, joy and delight.*<sup>12</sup>

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12

A nexus of tension provides an affective position. "Affect is a concrete, felt phenomenon of social atmospheres at work in the shifting "sensorial and affective continuum" shared by performers and audience", writes theatre studies scholar Ana Pais. She defines the impact of the audience as "affective resonance, challenging notions of activity and passivity associated both with participatory projects and the traditional locus of the spectator".

Pais refers to performers, who evaluate the audience based on whether they were "there". The phenomenologist Harri Mäcklin defines an immersive art experience as "going elsewhere". I propose that the affective resonance suggested by Pais takes place in the tensions addressed by this text, like the topologies of the inside and the outside. It is a paradoxical and temporally conditioned topos: moving *inside* may transport you *elsewhere*.

While there often is a spatial and suggestive division between what is performed and who is audiencing, the spectators can magically forget the distance and become immersed in the art work. Typically the experience of an audience member consists of a dynamic play of moving in and out of the sphere conjured into the space by the art work; a dialogue of criticality and enchantment.

*I think the performance was quite depressing since it involved the audience so, that the audience had to direct them, which felt in my opinion very uncomfortable, because right away one thinks, that this has to be done in a certain way or else the others will judge you.*<sup>13</sup>

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13

The works of participatory, immersive, experiential and relational art use the tensions inherent in the audience position as their material. Through audiencing them, we can observe the borderlines, extremities and turning points of the tension grid.

Immersion is literally being inside something; immersive theatre draws on the desire to enter the magical world conjured by the artists and thus override the polarity. Adam Alston has noted that through directing the spectators' gazes towards their own affective experience immersive theatre pieces render its audience into narcissistic spectators. Participatory performance makers in comparison have been criticized for making false promises of giving power to the audiences or politically activating them (these thoughts resonate also in Ranciere's writing referred earlier).

Avant garde (f.ex. International Situationists and Debord) movements have in many cases questioned the borders between art and life and the existence of a divide between in and out. Their target have been the audiences of bourgeois entertainment who would rather stay comfortably outside of any tension.



*On October 24, 1975, a curious event took place at the Krinzinger Gallery in Innsbruck. The Yugoslavian artist Marina Abramovic presented her performance Lips of Thomas. The artist began her performance by shedding all her clothes. She then went to the back wall of the gallery, pinned up a photograph of a man with long hair who resembled the artist, and framed it by drawing a five-pointed star around it. She turned to a table with a white table-cloth close to the wall, on which there was a bottle of red wine, a jar containing two pounds of honey, a crystal glass, a silver spoon, and a whip. She settled into the chair and reached for the jar of honey and the silver spoon. Slowly, she ate the honey until she had emptied the jar. [- -]*

*Afterwards, she lay down on a cross made of blocks of ice, her arms spread out to her sides. An electric radiator hung from the ceiling, facing her stomach. Its heat triggered further bleeding from the star-shaped cuts. Abramovic lay motionless on the ice - she obviously intended to endure her self-torture until the radiator had melted all the ice. After she had held out for 30 minutes without any sign of abandoning the torture, some members of the audience could no longer bear her ordeal. They hastened to the blocks of ice, took hold of the artist, and covered her with coats. Then they removed her from the cross and carried her away. Thus, they put an end to the performance. [- -] This [the artist changing her body but not showing any signs of the inner states induced by that] put the audience in a deeply disturbing and agonizing position that invalidated both the established conventions of theatrical performance and generally human responsiveness to a given situation.<sup>14</sup>*

Theory has traditionally been located in the outside. The theorist, or researcher, has inhabited a position independent of the precarious audience position in the nexus of a tension grid. For example Erika Fischer-Lichte's description of Marina Abramovic's performance gives the appearance of objectivity, it suggests that this is what really happened. Like Abramovic, the audience is observed from the outside, as *them*. But who is the subject of Fischer-Lichte's story? The story-teller seems to have been at the event, but she does not seem to include herself in the audience, which acts in the story as a group of affected subjects, whose affects the story-teller can interpret. An implicit positioning takes place: the point of view from which the author unveils the scene to the reader stays undeclared. This implicit position is the position of the theorist.

*In the first part of the performance my mind was occupied with my car, which I backed into a concrete pig just before the performance. Which choices led to it? How could I have avoided it? Will I get it to the repair shop still today? I was also thinking about my research arrangement and the spectators whom I invited to join me and whether I did everything as I should have with them. It is clear that we were grouped against the stage and the performers. They were virtuosic, they have heaps of skill, which we do not have. Nothing questioned this setting, this eternal polarity, in which the artist with skill is on stage and the spectator with expectancy is in the auditorium.*<sup>15</sup>

This text proposes that a theory of audience is not attainable from an external position, but only from the same disturbing nexus of tensions as the audience position itself. Such attitude takes inspiration from the tradition of phenomenological practice.

A phenomenological approach enables a reflection of the audience position from the audience position. For a phenomenologist, the audience is a phenomenon which appears within a performative event to the participants of that event: to the audience members themselves as well as to the performers. Thus, a theorist of audience takes their place in the auditorium, in the dynamic tension between the outside and the inside, of one and many and of familiar and alien.





# One and Many



— *Even though I sat between two people whom I knew, I felt like I was totally alone.*

— *If you think about it from the performer's perspective, they always talk about "the audience". Like "the audience laughed". Not like "two spectators laughed" or "seven spectators laughed", but "the audience laughed". The reaction of the audience is always one. "Tonight the audience liked me". "What a tough audience".*

— *This audience was produced as univocal. This is the strategy for the publics to appear, that people give feedback and you put it into one word and it is represented as the public talking.*

— *Then it comes the yleisö, when in English it is public and in some other languages it is public and it is funny since it means julkinen.<sup>16</sup>*

— *It is a really funny word, audience, since it's like a singular, although it's like a plural.*<sup>17</sup>

— *The audience became part of the performance. We were all like one.*<sup>18</sup>

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17

*Audience*, on the other hand, brings etymologically into play not only people who are listening, but also an event in which one is listened to (a *hearing*) or to a *reception* of people who are to be heard. The listeners receive the speaker and what they have to say. “Sense transferred by 1855 to ”readers of a book”, by 1946 to ”viewers of television programs”. *Audience-participation* (adj.) is recorded by 1938 in reference to radio.” (etymonline.com)

18

The audience is a singular that presupposes a plurality. It is a state of being simultaneously one individual experiencing the art work, many individuals experiencing an art work together and one collective experiencing the art work as a singular being, *the audience that laughed*. Performatively, it does not as default differentiate into specific individuals unless those individuals are conceived by entering the stage.

Like the tension between outside and inside, also the one between one and many is the clay that participatory, immersive, experiential and relational art works mould. The British theatre scholar Adam Alston compares the participants of immersive and participatory theatre to Narcissus, the mythical character that falls in love with his own reflection and eventually dies due to this self-absorption. Alston suggests that immersive theatre directs the attention of the participant to their own affective experience, rendering the audience into productive and narcissistic participants.

A: *We arrive at the theatre bit by bit: some to sit in the gallery, some to stand on the floor, or the "pit" as it is called in Britain.<sup>19</sup> The theatre is almost round and the earthen floor is surrounded by three gallery levels. Only the galleries have a roof. We are slowly settling into a we, getting used ourselves as a plural being. The direction of the gaze helps, as we all are looking towards the stage...*

B: *I experienced, that I am too dissensual, that I do not want to take part, that I did not experience as a member of the audience desire to take part in the singing experience, which this performance setting produced and through that what kind of audience it suggested.*

A:... *There is a lot of us, and our task is clear, which is why it feels like becoming a we is relatively effortless. We are watching a very known drama, the tragic story of Othello. During the play we shift our positions, especially when standing. We shuffle our feet. We are startled and groan when Rodrigo's neck snaps. We laugh. We clap after songs. We identify with the actors emotions, mourn the death of Desdemona. We applaud wildly after it is over, whistling and shouting.<sup>20</sup>*

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19

In French it would be *parterre*: on the ground. In his text *Parterre* from 1776-77 Jean-François Marmontel writes how the pit is "where the spectator is most uncomfortable, and where the tickets cost the least". He observes how the class of the audience members determines their position (the poor stand in the pit, the rich sit in the gallery), experience and behaviour in the theater.

20

In *Leviathan* from 1651, Thomas Hobbes compares the society to a mythical sea monster and suggests that necessary for it to work is that all its members assign their agency to a sovereign, be it one person, as in a monarchy, or an assembly of people, as in a democracy.

C: *The audience seats itself around the stage. We are in Vienna, at Impulstanz festival, where the latest tides and hottest stars of the European contemporary dance scene are to be found.*

D: *The theatre space is set as an Afgan restaurant at the refugee camp of Calais, northern France. In the middle of the floor there is a catwalk stage, around which there are tables and benches, on which the audience sits. On the balcony there is another auditorium.*

C: *The auditorium consists of one row of chairs surrounfing the stage on three sides and a row of people sitting on cushions in front of it. We look at each other and see several recognizable types: young dance students who work to seem confident, self-aware established choreographers, athletic young men with george michael -style beards, writers with untrained spines, myself with my hungry researcher gaze, a curator who sweats a scent of power and two japanese butoh artists with suspended eyes.*

D: *My seat is by the end of the catwalk. The ticket was 70 pounds. We are a wellbeing, well-dressed and white audience. The performance is well done, it touches me, us. A young couple on the other side of the catwalk look at it with their mouths open and cry in the end.*

C: *All of us working hard to be individual. Performing. But now, as the audience, in order to behold the stage, we need to become something else as well. A we.*

D: *But I am thinking about the strange, or grotesque, power relations, which have also been discussed in relation to this show. It tells the stories of refugees who are live in hideous circumstances on the other side of the Canal and dream of crossing it. Professional actors play their part, the tickets are expensive and the theatre must profit quite well. I am not sure if we are taking part to political theatre about important matters or abusive porn. There are charity boxes in the foyer and people who arrived here recently in small parts but when a Romanian man is begging in front of the main entrance, the security asks him to leave.*

In his phenomenological approach to reading Wolfgang Iser developed the concept of the *implied reader*: "If, then, we are to try and understand the effects caused and the responses elicited by literary works, we must allow for the reader's presence without in any way predetermining his character or his historical situation. We may call him, for want of a better term, the implied reader. He embodies all those predispositions necessary for a literary work to exercise its effect — predispositions laid down, not by an empirical outside reality, but by the text itself. Consequently, the implied reader as a concept has his roots firmly planted in the structure of the text; he is a construct and in no way to be identified with any real reader." (Iser, 1978, 34)

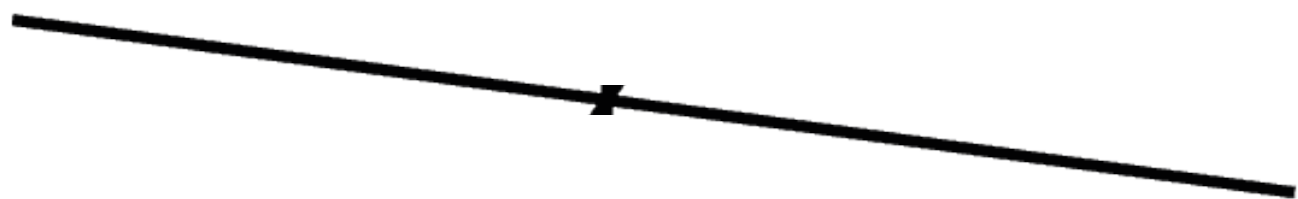
Like the reader implied by a text, the audiences of events are implied. The implied audience would then be the group that would more or less share the moral, cultural etc. properties, which would be in harmony with those of the authors. This implied audience would then haunt the actual audience that arrives at the event site.

Contemporary cultural discourse addresses the way different bodies and identities are represented and staged: *who*, and in what way, gets to be on stage is increasingly recognized and framed as a political choice. In *The Other History of Intercultural Performance* from 1994 and in the documentary film *The Couple in the Cage: A Guatinaui Odyssey* Coco Fusco and Paula Heredia observe the how white audiences received Fusco's and Guillermo Gomez-Pena's work *Two Undiscovered Amerindians Visit the West*. Following Marmontel, Iser and Fusco, we could point out the way audiences are curated, or what kind of bodies and identities are *auditoriumed*. Who gets to be or has to stay in the auditorium and in what way? Who is implied, who can afford it, who has to shut up and who gets to listen?





# Familiar and Alien



[a group of people has gathered in a room]

Let's consider this exposition a transformational event.

[they stand and sit around, some reading the papers on the three tables]

Erika Fischer-Lichte writes:

"performances are characterized by their eventness. The specific mode of experience they allow for is a particular form of liminal experience"

One could say,

that in an audience,

the members are exposed to and confronted with

something alien

while being facilitated by the familiarity<sup>23</sup> with the implied audience member

[the reader takes a look around]

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23

Etymologically, *familiar* can be traced back to the Latin *familia*, "family servants, domestics collectively, the servants in a household", which in turn comes from *famulus*: "servant, slave". Owing to this, familiar is here seen as something the audience masters, the conditions that are their servants.

*Alien* on the other hand comes from the Latin *alienus*, "of or belonging to another, not one's own, foreign, strange", from the root *al-*, "beyond".

What is going on here?

[a breath]

Is something

that was before hidden

becoming exposed?

[...]

Is something

that was before alien

becoming familiar?

[ ]

Are we the hostage of the stage?

Are we in transformation?

I had in the cafeteria with someone who was a fan of Mette and she wanted to tell me about the performance and i didn't want to have any idea of the performance or someone's criticism and Daniela was with us and i was tired. I was remembering that i had seen some of the performance on video on the course with Leena Rouhiainen and i thought fuck i have to stand.

I remember queueing outside and was thinking of Abramovic who puts people to queue. I remember talking to Vincent who wanted to include me and Daniela in the rehearsal of the performance. He didn't take the jacket off and someone told him to put on the chairs. I remember being warm and i had a turtle neck and i remember taking it off and putting down between the first and the second row

I also remember thinking this was not a suitable place for the performance because of the chairs. i remember

Thinking at that time of making theatre how many things were missing from what she was doing at that point i remember laughing when she said if you believe i am god, then you will have a great time or something

And i was thinking how fragmented was the material that she was presenting and at some point i felt the depth was coming from the material she was using as a source but then there wasn't much here

I remember that i was looking at the white pieces of cardboard that on the other side had text or images and that they connected to the people asking for things to put on signs at the demonstration and i remember things that at that it also stayed just at that level and did not go deeper

I remember moving so that i was seen or not seen and looking at the other members of audience and not her

I am working now to separate the memory from the discussions that i had with people after the happening and which were not here

I remember thinking that this was a really good student work and that it should have stayed that way I remember the white walls in the video that i had seen and i was missing the white walls

And i remember thinking this structure is really good to move around it is good for festivals

I remember that i was uncomfortable with my shoes and was contemplating taking them off but did not because we were moving so much

I remember in this corner there was some equipment and that this guy and some lady was inside when we started entering and i thought that maybe they were performers and that they would help with the performance of meat joy

And now that i listen to this music i thought that I didn't remember any of the music.

I remember looking at people's eyes when she was doing her choreography with the chair because i was so bored. Only her hair was interesting to me. And i was looking at people's eyes if there was desire there. And i remember only one guy who was looking at her in a sexual way. Then he became the point of interest to me. I also remember that when she was looking at the lamp that probably it's not hot that they have taken care of that it would not burn. Then with the table the first time i saw her licking a table it was in a movie in the moving in november that they were shown in the warehouse theatre. A movie about choreographers and dancers presenting themselves in five minutes. The setting was almost always a chair and a table and when she came in she started licking the table and when i saw it i thought it was very interesting but now i know it was part of her explorations.

People have talked a lot after that they did not get contact. I think it is not about power or control like people say because power and control are sexual. I remember thinking i had wished more historical examples and that her own work didn't seem so exiting, even to herself. I remember the blue-covered bodies and thinking of a cartoon that i used to look at as a kid which had to do with the body and kind of educating kids on how humans are born and the blood cells were red humans. And when she was asking for men and women for the choir that "oh, now she is in trouble" and i remember thinking that i should say something on the spot. I remember Laura Murtomaa saying after that what if i had come and said that i am a man what would she have done.

I remember thinking that it was so funny that the people in the choir were performers, it was obvious that they were performers and i was thinking there was no general audience for this piece. I remember thinking also about the floor that we were walking with shoes and she was naked and she was naked and how could she crawl on this floor and then have so thin skin. Perhaps skin is not as vulnerable as i think.

I remember there was a woman who was at some point sitting in the first row outside of the singing performance space and i thought physical pain makes us forget all conventions and i thought that it was so brave and i appreciated the alternative. And i thought i could watch the show from the outside and not miss anything. One could see the formations.

And then i was thinking how people could not stand anymore, people want to be comfortable. i remember thinking that when she was reading the email from Carol Schneeman that she did it anyway. Because she clearly said do not use my score, go to old people's home and do something. And then she moved on doing the score. I also felt that people were kind of resistant. There was some... perhaps like being on the street there is someone pushing someone and you want to intervene. I remember i was wearing my white turtleneck and walking around and when she said a woman with white and she was pointing my direction... sometimes spaces command movement. Now when i'm trying to remember i don't even remember what she was wearing when she was wearing clothes.

I remember at first trying to find eye contact with her. At different points when she was looking at the audience. And i thought that she actually was keeping really short bits contact almost as if she wasn't seeing. I remember looking a lot off her hair, the fringe and how it is cut. I don't remember being significantly bored during the performance. I think perhaps because i was looking at the people. I was bored of her performance but not of the whole performance. People's reactions and i remember going really close to a person when i was trying to see what she was doing and the person freaked out

I also remember writing to someone who asked how was the performance. I answered, "as a researcher i enjoyed but otherwise not". I remember thinking that all the other people in the theatre were not so aware of Dionysus and the theatre history and i also thought that you always find something Greek anywhere. I also remember that i said that her performance lacked flesh and the only flesh was present in the choir when the people took over. I remember also thinking how a person that would have sex with her would see the performance. And perhaps all this research has ruined her sexual life. I also felt that it was not letting go or it was not giving the audience as much agency

*The stage affects the audience and the audience affects the stage.*

# THE AUDIENCE MANIFESTO

draft 1

The audience does not manifest.

But an avantgardist ethos will propose, desire, reach for and manifest  
the emancipation of the audience,  
through their transformation enabled by the (non-)art.

Audiencing is then a kind of ritual participation.

In a ritual, the element of surprise is not necessary,  
but the element of transformation is central.

In performance, the element of transformation is not necessary,  
but the element of surprise is central.

The audience member is by default not prepared like the maker is.

The ritual participants are prepared.

Transformation is not demanded from the audience member.

The ritual participant transforms by default.

Audiencing is *ritualesque*

(to borrow Brian Massumi: play fighting is *combatesque*).

Audiencing is *like* or *kind of* taking part in a ritual.

The audience is playing the part of the community.

The audience provides the attention

but will not write a manifesto,

only read it.

*What happened, puzzled me, but soon I got used to it.*<sup>24</sup>



# Invocation

*Well, every performance suggests some kind of place for the audience or an audience relation.*

This is how an audience appears — only when it is called upon. In order to enter the grid of the three lines of tension proposed here, there needs to be a call, sensible to the implied audience members. The call is made by the author and it is called the art work. Thus the audience is dependent on the art work, and secondary to it in terms of procedure.

The audience as a spirit, a monster, a hidden agency suggests an invisible entity which inhabits groups of individuals when summoned. The authors work then as the summoners, the spiritual experts who lure the entity into possessing the people who offer their bodies as it's terrain.

The role of the audience members is thus to submit into being the body for the spirit of audience. This submissive nature of the audience position couples the dormant power reserve residing within the silent bodies that lurk seemingly passively in the twilight of the auditorium.

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