

STAGING MOVEMENT

Exchanges between Architecture and Dance
in the work of Appia, Dalcroze, and the Halprins

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Movement on the ground	7
<i>‘Festspiel’</i> utopia into architecture	17
From domestic to urban stages	27
Annexe	39

STAGING MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Movement is an intrinsic characteristic of life. But precisely because it is constantly changing, it does not serve as a design tool in architecture. When, if architecture exists, it is in function of the human body, and movement is a fundamental means of relating body and space. The paper claims the primitive, simple, and direct dimension of movement, thus tending to the hypothesis that formal and non-formal stages rising from the ground and reminiscent of first Greek theatres encourage movement performance, this through the writings and projects of two couples of choreographers and designers: Jaques-Dalcroze and Adolphe Appia, Anna and Lawrence Halprin.

The collaboration between Appia and Dalcroze, which began in 1906 and was extremely prolific until the beginning of the first world conflict, consisted mainly in the elaboration of spaces designed and constructed for the evolutions of rhythmic gymnastics. Both trained initially as musicians at the Geneva Conservatory and both deeply influenced by Nietzschean thought, consider movement of the body as a means to expand music into space and regain the lost Dionysian unity between audience and performers. The spaces originally designed by Appia in 1909-10 into *Espaces Rythmiques* then realised in the construction of the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze in 1910-11, are conceived as '*Festspielhaus*' where all kinds of emotions and movements are manifested outside the stage itself towards a '*Totaltheatre*'.

After pursuing two different fields of study, one in dance, the other in horticulture, Anna and Lawrence met at Harvard in 1939 and began a collaboration in landscape and movement choreography that would endure for the rest of their lives. Both influenced by Moholy-Nagy's manifesto '*The New Vision*' and Jungian approach, they understand movement as a collective process for releasing emotions and creating communities, as well as a means to reproduce the experience of primitive nature in landscape. First on domestic scale in the Dance Deck, then on urban scale in the Forecourt Fountain, Lawrence realised non-formal stages for movement exploration of the ordinary that leave the choice to the audience to either assist or participate in the performance of daily life, thus enabling each individual to be participant as responsible for his own movement.

In the beginning the text describes how choreography in the late 19th and early 20th century is inspired by the ordinariness of everyday movement, and how in theatre and landscape the ground of stage is abstracted into horizontal lines. Later four case studies reveal how Appia's utopia of a diffuse theatre going beyond the stage into the city is realised in Lawrence's design for Forecourt Fountain, passing through the drawings of an endless horizontal stage - *Espaces Rythmiques* - , a formal indoor theatre - the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze - , and a non-formal outdoor stage - the Dance Deck.

STAGING MOVEMENT



Fred Bourrier, Dalcroze giving lessons to children, Emile-Jaques Dalcroze, 156.
Ernest Braun, Anna Halprin with children, 1945, *Experience as Dance*, 139.

Movement as a Ritual

At the turn of the 20th century, domestic experience is no longer separated from artistic expression. The body represents the place where life and art coincide. From Isadora Duncan's research of naturalness in body movement, to Laban's conception of the body as a continuum of space in motion, movement constitutes the origin of the stage itself.¹ Since the body is conceived as the fulcrum where personal experiences generate artistic expressions, dancers perform ordinary movements on stage as a way to enhance the creative dimension of the body. As *any* body can move, movement represents a personal experience that dancers and spectators can share in the space of modern theatre. For Jaques-Dalcroze as for Anna Halprin, body movement is at the origins of their research in dance and choreography.

Observing his music students at the Geneva Conservatory, Dalcroze developed rhythmic gymnastics as an instrument to fully express music vibrations and elementary emotions through movement. These body exercises consisted in gestures which engage the body in its rhythmic unity, *eurythmy*, in order to correct irregularities in the nervous system causing discrepancies between hearing and expressing music.² These exercises were particularly efficient with children, as they don't mentally anticipate actions or process movement consciously, and just react to music; but were also productive with orchestras as a way to unify breathing and movements of musicians, in Alger in particular where Dalcroze intuited for the first time of using gestures to interpret each musical beat.³ Influenced by the teachings of Mathis Lussy in Paris, who was the first studying the interaction between body, mind, and musical emotions, Dalcroze integrated in his movement education *musical nuances*, according to which each movement develops through a moment of preparation - *anacrouse* - , realisation - *crouse* - , and result - *metacrouse*. The moment of anacrouse is particularly essential as a way to stimulate the nervous system before the musical pulsation.⁴

For Dalcroze as for Anna Halprin, movement is not conceived as a result, but as a process of releasing emotions, with or without music. Indeed, even if the origins of rhythmic gymnastics lie in musical expression, music is no longer necessary for body movement when the latter has absorbed all the rhythms within itself.⁵ In this sense, the body can express emotions in its immediate rhythm, without being influenced by an over-imposed music. For both Dalcroze and Anna, movement is a personal experience that cannot be copied from the exterior but can only be felt from the interior. As movement is the direct expression of elementary emotions, it can be experienced only within an immediate and simple attitude, without rational prejudices and external judgments.⁶ And finally, for Dalcroze as for Anna, movement begins with walking as a way to connect to the inner rhythm of breath and engage the body in its unity.⁷ Since life is breathing, which is a rhythm in itself, dance is the expression of breathing, dance is '*Breath made visible*.'⁸

Beyond considering movement as a means to externalise emotions, Anna found in movement a way to transform the body, and, with this, the story hidden within it. To access *transformational* dance, one has not just to act on the body but especially listen to the stories the body tells.

1 Odenthal, Johannes. 'Danced Space: Conflicts of modern dance theatre,' *Daidalos* 44 (June 1992): 38.

2 Jaques-Dalcroze, Emile. *Le rythme, la musique et l'éducation* (Genève: Édition Foetisch, 1965), 6.

3 Berchtold Alfred, 'Emile Jaques-Dalcroze et son temps' in *Emile Jaques-Dalcroze: L'homme le compositeur le créateur de la rythmique* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1965): 40.

4 Jaques-Dalcroze, Emile. *Souvenirs et notes critiques* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Victor Attinger, 1942), 144.

5 Jaques-Dalcroze, Emile. *Le rythme, la musique et l'éducation*, 131.

6 Halprin, Anna and Kaplan, Rachel. *Making Dances That Matter. Resources for Community Creativity* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2019), 8.

7 as Paul Valéry translates in poetic language: '*Elle commence, vois-tu bien ? par une marche toute divine : c'est une simple marche circulaire... Elle commence par le suprême de son art; elle marche avec naturel sur le sommet qu'elle a atteint*'. Valéry, Paul. *L'Âme et la danse* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), 121.

8 see '*Breath made visible*', a film-documentary realised by Ruedi Gerber on Anna Halprin's work.

STAGING MOVEMENT



Peter Larson, Anna and students on the dance deck, Kentfield, 1970,
and Michael Alexander, Lunch, San Francisco, 1968, *Experience as Dance*, 248.

According to Anna, the body represents a map which contains personal experiences and gives access to subconscious areas, except that we forgot how to read it.

When movement is immediate, liberated from preconceived gestures, is not only a means of expressing emotions but it also gives access to them. Using her experience of teaching dance to children as a starting point, Anna worked with *visualisation* processes based on drawing images generated by emotions in movement, then observing the visualisation, feeling the movement again, and finally dancing the visualisation; in a back-and-forth between immediate movement and mediate visualisation.⁹ Drawings, as reflections of emotions, are tools for interpreting the messages that the body tries to tell, combined with dance they are means of transforming life experience, linking the conscious and the unconscious, acting as means of self-healing.

Ritual begins with paying attention to the expressive quality of movement, transforming the automatic character of it into intentional. Any ordinary movement can be performed as a ritual, if one brings his consciousness inside the act of movement: deep breathing can be a ritual, such as setting the table, or sweeping the floor, and so on.¹⁰ Ordinary movements, in relation to an intention, transform in artistic expression as long as they are performed in such a real and direct way that they don't need interpretation. A way to attend this degree of consciousness is by using constraints, *task* or *scores* in choreographic terminology, which oblige the body to move in a more focused and intentional way, and then observe the influence those tasks have on the body in motion.¹¹ The act of performance is at any time a balance between the freedom of movement explorations and the structure of scores. The attention to the kinetic aspect of movement Anna developed, is mostly related to her anatomy knowledge she deepened with her mentor professor Margaret H'Doubler at the Wisconsin University. This scientific approach to the body led her to consider movements as a collection of kinesthetic, rhythmic and anatomical experiences, governed by the biological system of the body.¹² Through this objective vision and conscious practice of movement, Anna returned the first everyday object, the body, to its domestic dimension.

The effort of defamiliarization of ordinary movements later extended inside the theatre. By using simple, repetitive, clear movements, Anna presented the body on stage in a range of actions that belong to domestic space, but appear on public stage.¹³ This act of displacement of a familiar content inside an estranged context is proper to defamiliarization, which originally derives from a literary process adopted by formalist russian avant gardes.¹⁴

The vision of the domestic body inside the public theatre provokes a feeling of estrangement, which allows one to move from the automatic perception of the body to a new point of view. Notably in 1962, Anna realised in collaboration with Judson Dance Theatre in San Francisco, '*The Five-Legged Stool*', a work of dance-theatre presenting a series of imaginaries where performers had to confront themselves with everyday objects and situations. Or again in 1964, '*Parades and Changes*', considered as an icon of post-modern dance, is in reality a theatre exercise in defamiliarization in which the domestic task of undressing and dressing is performed.¹⁵ In the late 60s, Anna's concerns turned to social issues,

9 Halprin, Anna and Kaplan, Rachel. *Making Dances That Matter*, 19-21.

10 Ibid., 15.

11 Bennahum Ninotchka, Perron Wendy, and Robertson Bruce. *Radical bodies, Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955-72* (Santa Barbara: Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, 2017), 71.

12 a notion Moholy-Nagy addressed in his writing-manifesto '*The New Vision*', which, together with his design courses at Harvard, strongly influenced Anna's work. *The New Vision* (New York: George Wittenborn, 1947), 15.

13 Bennahum Ninotchka, Perron Wendy, and Robertson Bruce, *Radical bodies*, 21.

14 see the process of '*semantic displacement*' in Viktor Shklovsky, '*L'art comme procédé*' in *Théorie de la littérature* (Paris: Seuil, 1965), 77, or '*estrangement*' in Viktor Shklovsky, *La marche du cheval* (Paris: Éditions Champ Libre, 1973), 7.

15 Gragg, Randy. Ross, Janice. Beardsley, John. and Seubert, Susan. *Where the revolution began. Lawrence and Anna Halprin and the Reinvention of Public Space* (Washington DC: Spacemaker Press, 2009), 19.

STAGING MOVEMENT



Michael Alexander, *Lunch*, San Francisco, 1968, *Experience as Dance*, 248.
Buck O'Kelly, *Citydance*, 1976, *Radical bodies*, 19,

16 Metta, Annalisa. and Di Donato, Benedetta. *Anna e Lawrence Halprin. Paesaggi e coreografie del quotidiano* (Melfi: Casa Editrice Libria, 2014), 93.

17 Wasserman Judith. 'A World in Motion: The Creative Synergy of Lawrence and Anna Halprin,' *Landscape Journal* 31, n.1-2 (2012): 44.

18 Gragg, Randy. Ross, Janice. Beardsley, John. and Seubert, Susan. *Where the revolution began*, 20.

19 Baugh, Christopher. 'Richard Wagner, Georg Fuchs, Adolphe Appia, and Edward Gordon Craig' in *The Routledge companion to scenography* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 373.

20 Appia, Adolphe. *La mise en scène du drame Wagnérien* (Paris: Léon Chailley, 1895), 14.

21 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *La nascita della tragedia* (Milano: Adelphi, 1977), 106.

22 Ibid., 50.

23 'On ne doit voir son corps qu'en mouvement. (...) Toute elle devient danse et se consacre au mouvement total !' Valéry, Paul. *L'Âme et la danse* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1945), 125.

including participation. Particularly in 1968, she staged a series of ten performances, 'Ten Myths', each one presenting an urban myth that performers and spectators had to explore, at the same time negotiating and interacting with a temporary environment.¹⁶

After her first explorations on stage, Anna encouraged creative participation also in urban space, with the idea that body and collectivity interact in the creation of art. The first 'Experience in Environment' occurred in summer 1966, in which dancers and designers interacted with space in non visual ways with the aim of deepening their body and spatial awareness in urban environments.¹⁷ In addition to exploring movement perception, the experiments attempted to demonstrate how environments affect movement and how movement in return affects environments. The following experiment took place in fall 1968, showing how walking in urban space, the ordinary movement par excellence, can represent a radical dance and a political gesture.¹⁸ Each of those performances show dance as an horizontal art, merging domestic and public space, through which any body can participate - young or old, able or disabled, train or untrained - and through which movement becomes an aesthetic experience.

Abstraction of the Ground

In the late 19th and early 20th century, the problem of representation of the city in the theatre, that of reunification of actors and spectators, as well as that of value of the performance, are raised; problems to which Adolphe Appia responds in writing *Die Musik und die Inszenierung* in 1899, which is considered as the beginning of the modern period in theatre.¹⁹ The latter, but even more so the publication that precedes it, is intended as a reaction to Wagner's reform of the drama, which, from Appia's perspective, differs from spoken drama in that its life is fixed by the drama itself.²⁰ To understand this new form of drama which considers music to be the only one among the arts that is *non-representational* since it does not *represent* an image but *is* the image itself, it is necessary to trace the origins of Greek tragedy so influential in that period of reflection on modern theatre and on the thinking of Wagner, Fuchs, and Appia, first interpreted in the writing of Nietzsche on the *Birth of Tragedy* in 1872.²¹

The first Greek theatres originate in the chorus, a flat horizontal ground from which the steps of the audience later developed. This ground initially responded to the utilitarian need to level the steep topography into terraces, thus abstracting it into horizontal lines, and only after assumed theatrical and religious significance. Indeed the origins of Greek tragedy were born in the Dionysian chorus and not on the Apollonian stage, originally conceived only as a vision of the reality that is instead enclosed in the chorus and expressed through the music and movement of satyrs.²² The scene is originally just a vision, which is revealed in the unique reality of the chorus through music, language and movement.²³ In the chorus of dancing satyrs, the audience finds itself, since it recognises in it the concrete existence of the Dionysian myth; feeling annihilated by the presence of the satyrs, it sees itself transformed in front of it and then acts as if it had really entered another body. The annulment of the



Fred Boissonas, Rehearsals for 'Orpheus and Eurydice' by C.W. Gluck,
Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, 1913, Bibliothèque de Genève.

24 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *La nascita della tragedia*, 60.

25 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *La nascita della tragedia*, 26.

26 Mungen, Anno. 'Entering the musical picture: Richard Wagner and 19th-century multimedia entertainments,' *Music in Art* 26, n.1-2 (2001): 123.

27 Appia, Adolphe. *La musique et la mise en scène: 1892-1897* (Bern: Theater Kultur-Verlag, 1963).

28 Gragg, Randy. Ross, Janice. Beardsley, John. and Seubert, Susan. *Where the revolution began*, 18.

individual by the entry into a strange nature is at the base of the drama.²⁴ At the origin of the tragedy, therefore, there is no difference between audience and chorus, indeed there is no audience at all, since the spectator does not understand the drama as a work of art that he contemplates individually on the Apollonian stage, but rather he bodily experiences the Dionysian myth in a choral and collective form. In this sense man is no longer an artist, he is the work of art itself.²⁵ For this reason, music stands above all the arts, for Wagner, Appia, as other interpreters of Nietzsche, since it generates the tragic myth.

From Sophocles' optimistic dialectic onwards, the Apollonian scene became dominant over the Dionysian chorus, limiting its role to the point that the music appears only to be coordinated to the drama of actors. Both Wagner and Appia attempt through their writings and stagings to return to music its original subordinating role in the drama. The sense of unity and immersion in the Greek tragedy - given not only by the inclusion of the audience in the chorus, but also by the form of the theatre itself consisting of concentric broad steps that enclose the chorus and stand on a platform from which to contemplate the scene - is invested by both Wagner and later Appia through three-dimensional abstract landscapes that arise from the horizontal line of the stage, and replace scenes of the city represented on flat vertical canvases.²⁶

In Appia, the abstraction of landscape in horizontal lines takes the form in stage settings of platforms, ramps, and low walls, rhythmically united by steps. Differently from Wagner, the abstraction of stage stems from the desire to highlight the mobile and plastic human body, contrasting it with simple, rigid planes. According to Appia, thanks to the aesthetic and physical contrast between the organicity, mobility and suppleness of the human body, and the abstraction, rigidity and resistance of the stage settings, the body animates the space, which can consequently interact and relate to the body, precisely as it resists it; all this thanks to a complex system of direct and diffuse lights, which allow body and space to be revealed in their plasticity.²⁷ Indeed, Appia overpassed Fuchs's early intuitions in emphasising the plasticity of the body and the fundamental role of light, conceiving the scenographic elements as subordinated to the body, himself stylised by music, and a functional system of lights that would form the basis of modern theatre lighting from then on.

Like Appia in theatre, Lawrence Halprin in landscape design abstracts the ground into horizontal lines that are put at the service of the movement of bodies. Only this abstraction comes from another aesthetical and intellectual context. In fact, the principle that nature serves as a constructional model for form derives from Bauhaus pictorial teaching, and more largely from high modernist art. Lawrence Halprin entered a master of landscape architecture at Harvard in 1939, when the university was under the direction of Walter Gropius, and majorly influenced by already emerging european architects such as Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and Moholy-Nagy. Mainly immersed in the group of architecture rather than landscape students, Lawrence was mostly shaped by the Bauhaus teaching in which abstraction of form was applied to architectural design although it is fundamentally a pictorial process.²⁸ In an article appeared time later in 1988, Lawrence clearly explained the process of abstraction of 'Nature Into Landscape Into Art'.



Lawrence Halprin, Possible wall for Portland fountain, 1968, Notebooks, 284.

Though critical of adopting compositional elements directly from modern painting, which was very popular in the Bay Area of San Francisco around the 40s, Lawrence considered landscape as a *representation* of reality, more similar to painting, scenery, or theatre. If nature *is*, landscape *represents* reflections of images, values, and needs. In order to transmute the biological experience of nature into made landscapes, abstraction of form should manifest the inherent qualities of nature, its dynamism, power and constant movement, and evolve an aesthetic out of it in which the degree of abstraction has a fundamental role, as in any art form. The idea that landscape should relate to a biologically natural experience, is dominant in the teaching of Moholy-Nagy, who largely influenced Lawrence's studies in Harvard. Since nature is about process before being form, it is in the process of form-making that landscape design finds its origins, into the '*ecology of form*'.²⁹ In this way form appears not as a result, but as a process made visible in landscape through abstraction, and moreover through transitions, sequences, and variations in movement quality of space, as if the feeling of being in nature could be experienced in urban landscapes. Made landscapes don't relate to the *appearance* of nature but to the *experience* of it.

The abstraction of nature in landscape was firstly put into practice by Lawrence, when, just graduated, he collaborated with Thomas Church, his most significant mentor. As a part of the 'California school', Church promoted an active engagement with the landscape in a climate that enables year-round outdoor activity. This condition enabled the firm to develop the concept of '*garden room*', as a way to enlarge people's domestic life through their garden.³⁰ Notably in the project for Donnell Garden in Sonoma County completed in 1948, the intention of enlarging horizontally the indoor domestic space into an outdoor garden is visible, and can be at the origins of the spatial ambiguity characteristic of Lawrence's design. At the time of their collaboration, gardens reduced to simple planes of sweeping lines, in which the movement of the body represents a choreographic principle on its own, developed years later on urban scale. In an article published inside *Impulse* in 1949, gardens are compared to stage sets for the dance of life, in which movement is enticed through steps and climbing features.³¹

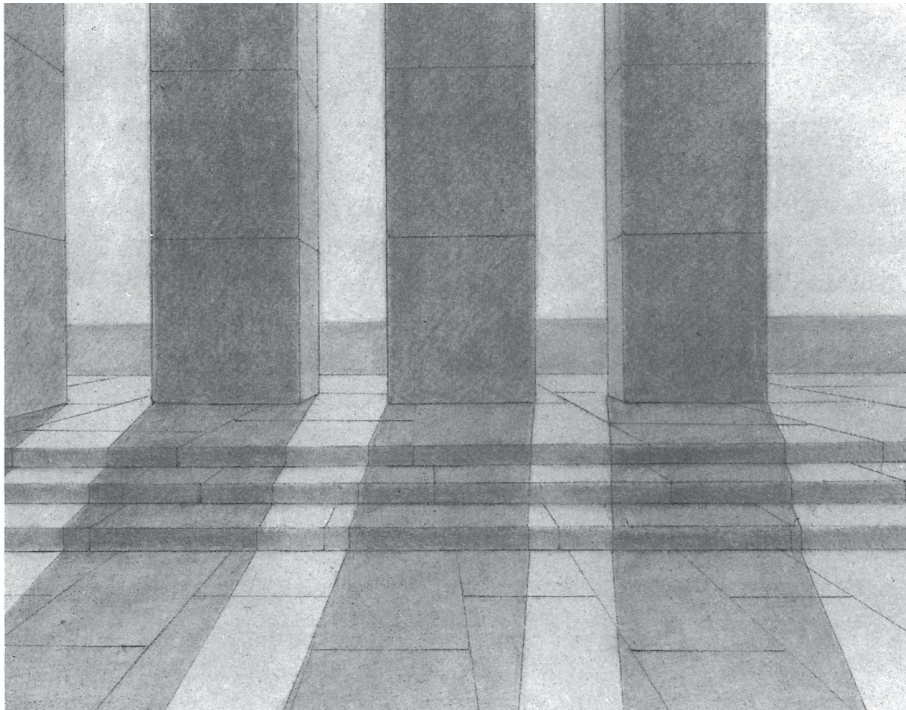
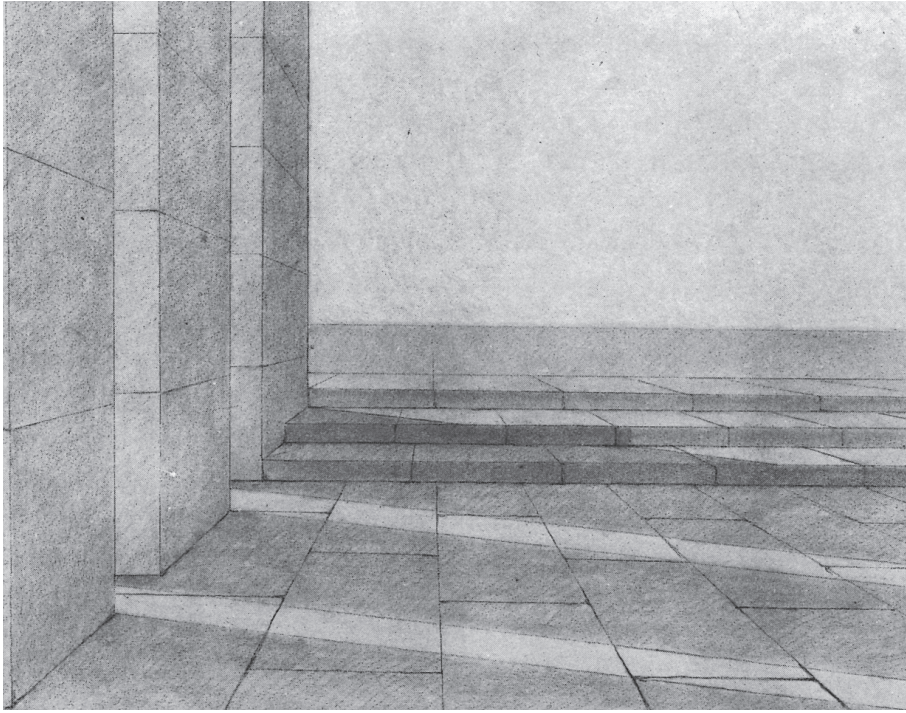
Whether in the field of theatre or landscape, Appia and Lawrence operate the scenography and choreography of bodies through abstraction. If, in the history of architecture, abstraction was easily associated with alienation, here, on the contrary, it serves the body as a means to move precisely from the alienating and automatic relation to space into a more intentional and ritualistic one.

29 Halprin, Lawrence. 'Nature Into Landscape Into Art,' *Eksisticks* 55 n.333 (november 1988): 351.

30 a concept which became very popular in magazines such as 'Sunset: Homes for Western Living' and which Church articulated in his writing *Gardens Are for People*, (New York: Reinhold, 1955).

31 Halprin, Lawrence. 'The Choreography of Gardens' *Impulse* (1949): 32-33.

STAGING MOVEMENT



Adolphe Appia, 'Terrace with three pillars', 'The three pillars',
in *Espaces Rythmiques*, 1909, Heinrich Tessenow, 18.

Utopian Stage: Espaces Rythmiques

In the spring of 1906, almost ten years after his last major publication in the history of modern theatre, Adolphe Appia attended the first public demonstration of rhythmic gymnastics lessons given by Jaques-Dalcroze. While the Geneva milieu reacted negatively and with derision to this new pedagogy, Appia saw in it the confirmation of his first intuitions about the movement of the body as a unifying element in staging, which he had already foreseen in 1899 and articulated in his writing *Die Musik und die Inszenierung*.³² In the latter, he presents 'musical gymnastics', in the highest sense of the term, as a bodily exercise that makes it possible to obey the life of musical text and invest the rhythmic life of human body in its unity.³³ Exalted by the potential he saw in this practice, he shortly afterwards wrote a letter to Dalcroze, in which he shared with him the idea that rhythmic gymnastics could spread music into space, as well as rendering music something that concerned the whole body, in a search for the lost unity. From then on, Appia became the voice of rhythmic gymnastics taught by Dalcroze, which he practised himself, and which he published in articles for the *Journal de Genève* and further theorised in writings.³⁴

A long and prolific collaboration between Appia and Dalcroze began, documented by an epistolary correspondence of which only the letters of the latter remain, but which enables to retrace their exchanges.³⁵ The esteem and recognition shared by these two artists is readable in the dedications at the beginning of their two fundamental writings, which trace the influence of rhythmic gymnastics in theatre and life more largely.³⁶ Only between 1909 and 1910 Appia persistently produced around twenty drawings of spaces for rhythmic evolutions of the body, the renowned *Espaces Rythmiques*. This series of evolutions brings together all the principles of his previous writings, but above all those that would be presented in his last work, the clearest and most totalising he produced in 1921, *L'œuvre d'art vivant*. In this work, in fact, the drawings of the rhythmic spaces are implicitly described. The space is made up of a limited number of lines, essentially the horizontal and the vertical. First of all, the horizontal, which expresses the gravity of the body; then the vertical, which corresponds to the standing of the body and accompanies it. These two lines sometimes meet in the staircase, which acts as an obstacle as well as an accomplice for the body, encouraging it to engage in movement as a unit. Nevertheless, for Appia, the horizontal line remains the most important, because it is from this line that the floor structure of the stage setting rises. The plan, the architecture of rhythmic evolution, must express the principle of gravity as simply and clearly as possible, measured on the scale of the body and intended for the mobility of that body. If architecture, as a modification of natural forms, disregards the proportions of the human body and the movement of life, it modifies nature in an arbitrary and futile manner.³⁷ As already evoked in his previous writings, the simple plane composed of flat, rigid platforms, stairs and low walls, resists the suppleness of the body, stimulating its movement and enhancing its aesthetic value.

Appia likely sees the attenuation of the simple plan, in other words the softening of spaces and furniture, as the cause of the flattening of

32 as he himself reveals in the preface to the drawings within *L'œuvre d'art vivant* (Genève: Édition Atar, 1921).

33 Appia, Adolphe. *La musique et la mise en scène*, 43.

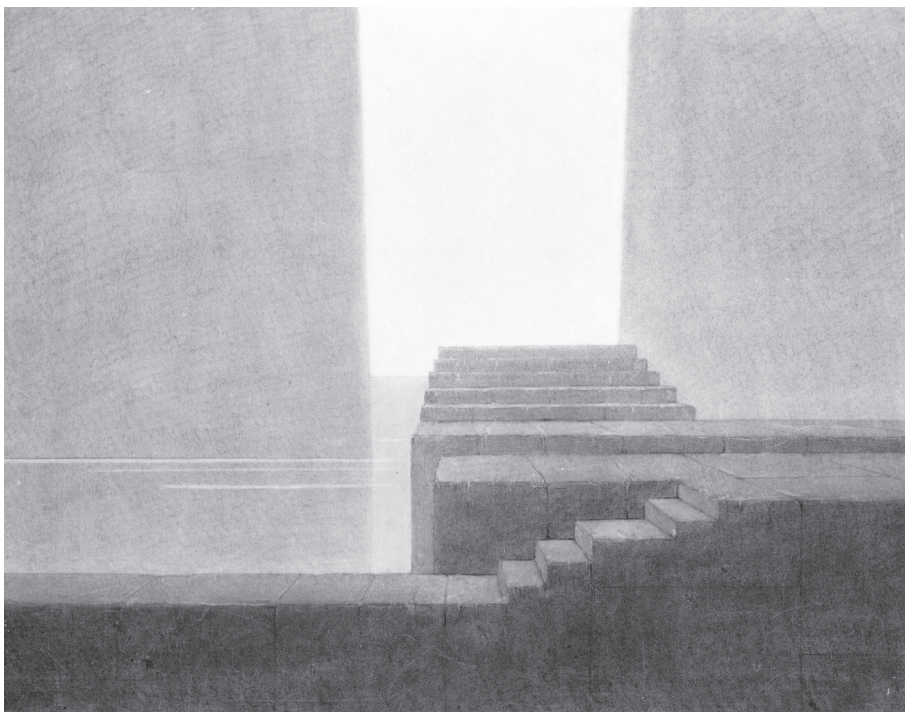
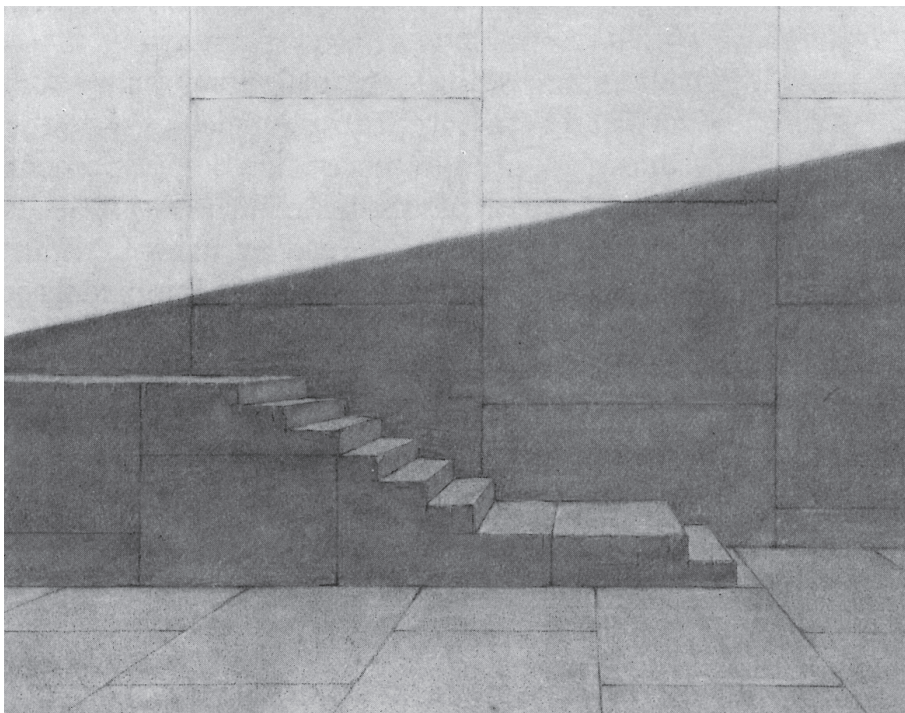
34 the first of which is 'L'origine et les débuts de la gymnastique rythmique' *Les Feuilles*, n.11 (1911).

35 see the correspondence reconstruction in Stadler, Edmond. 'Jaques-Dalcroze et Adolphe Appia' in *Emile Jaques-Dalcroze: L'homme le compositeur le créateur de la rythmique* (Neuchâtel: Éditions de la Baconnière, 1965): 417-455.

36 'À Emile Jaques Dalcroze, l'ami fidèle auquel je dois d'avoir une patrie esthétique' in Appia, Adolphe. *L'œuvre d'art vivant* (Genève: Édition Atar, 1921). 'À mon ami Adolphe Appia' in Jaques-Dalcroze, Emile. *Le rythme, la musique et l'éducation* (Genève: Édition Foetisch, 1965).

37 Appia, Adolphe. *L'œuvre d'art vivant*, 39.

STAGING MOVEMENT



Adolphe Appia, 'Moonlight', 'The diver',
in *Espaces Rythmiques*, 1909, Heinrich Tessenow, 18.

38 note the relation between the design of *Espaces Rythmiques* and the practice of rhythmic gymnastics of Dalcroze, which finds its origins in walking, Adolphe. *L'œuvre d'art vivant*, 40-43.

39 see the influence on Appia of the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the union of the arts in which the process of combination counts more than the result, already presented in the thought of Wagner. Baugh, Christopher. 'Richard Wagner, Georg Fuchs, Adolphe Appia, and Edward Gordon Craig', 365.

40 Hollinshead, Mary. 'Monumental Steps and the Shaping of Ceremony' in *The Architecture of the Sacred: Space, Ritual, and Experience from Classical Greece to Byzantium* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 46.

41 see again the process of 'estrangement' in Viktor Shklovsky, *La marche du cheval*, in which the work of art reveals itself since the knight's displacement to a new point of view.

42 Appia, Adolphe. *L'œuvre d'art vivant*, 72.

43 originated from the Nietzschean concept of the body in Greek tragedy as a work of art. Nietzsche, Friedrich. *La nascita della tragedia*, 26.

44 Appia, Adolphe. *L'œuvre d'art vivant*, 105-106.

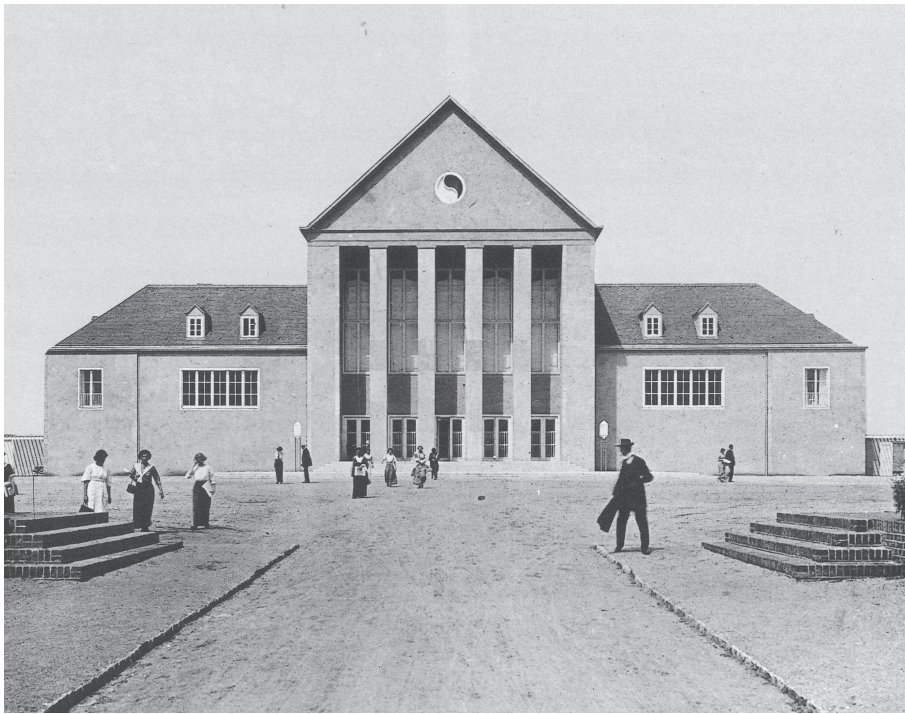
body movement expression. In describing a naked body seated on a velvet fauteuil, he explains the incongruity of this body in relation to the shape and surface of the object. But by imagining this same naked body seated on a rigid floor, it regains all its aesthetic value precisely because of the contrast between the mobility of the body and the immobility of the floor, which gives birth to a sensation of expressive life. The floor of the platforms of rhythmic spaces waits for the foot to resist it, and by its rigidity draws the whole organism into the will of walking.³⁸

In *Espaces Rythmiques* as in *L'œuvre d'art vivant* Appia presented for the first time the idea of what bodily movement represents, that is life in art. The variable elements of musical sounds combine to produce the phenomenon of rhythm, which can be linked to space through movement. Indeed, the body carries movement, which is the sign of life. Movement is therefore the guiding principle that regulates the union between music, body and space, converging the various art forms on a given point.³⁹ The spaces designed by Appia are rhythmic in that, through their composition, the alternation of full and empty spaces, and the presence of steps that act as a transition between one platform and another, they punctuate the cadence of space and body movement. The steps in particular, as well as forcing the engagement of the entire body in movement, are a device that influences its gait; through their cadence, sequence and organisation, translate a sense of order and discipline, and theatricalise movements.⁴⁰ These abstract scenes, although intended for the body, are fundamentally empty spaces, awaiting the new order that each drama imposes on them. Since each dramatic work reveals its own life to the dramaturg,⁴¹ the staging spaces must be designed for continuous changes. For this reason, Appia conceived the stage settings as mobile volumes that can compose an innumerable number of scenes.

One critical question that Appia raises in his latest writing is the incongruity between the works of art originating in the figurative arts such as painting, sculpture and architecture which are immobile, and the representation of life by these works of art which is mobile. The answer to this question is embedded, in his view, in the human body itself, which is *the living work of art*.⁴² The body is the only creator of dramatic art, since it is both actor and spectator of the drama.⁴³ The fact that the drama does not need spectators to occur explains the ambiguity of *Espaces Rythmiques*, which despite being staged for the purpose of being performed, exist even without spectators. The ambiguity of these spaces also results from the very principle of horizontality which lies at the core of Appia's stagings: since no vertical limit suggests the existence of an interior and an exterior, these spaces could represent stagings as well as outdoor spaces.

Already in his first work in 1895, Appia depicted the imaginary of 'Festspielhaus' as a free space able to accommodate the manifestations of artistic and social life, not only on the stage but also in the entire city, as if the theatre diffused beyond its institution. Since the body contains and represents the dramatic work, its expression includes public and domestic life, and is fundamentally a personal attitude that can be manifested anywhere in the city.⁴⁴ It is in the neutrality of the *Espaces Rythmiques*, which retreat to reveal the dramatic expression of the body, that Manfredo Tafuri sees an affinity with the 'metaphorical theatres' of Mies

STAGING MOVEMENT



Institute Jaques-Dalcroze, Hellerau, during the 'Festspiele', 1913,
Heinrich Tessenow, 27-30.

45 Tafuri, Manfredo. 'La scena come 'città virtuale.' Da Fuchs al Totaltheater' in *La sfera e il labirinto* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1980), 135.

van der Rohe, and in particular with the Barcelona Pavilion.⁴⁵ Both are horizontal spaces, with no distinction between inside and outside, spaces that are intended to be neutral and silent, waiting for the body to animate them; both, spaces of absence of actors, spectators, and performance itself; *metaphorical* in the sense that the performance takes place outside the theatre within and through the bodies of passers-by, who are actors and spectators at the same time, in the desire to extend its limits beyond even these spaces, in the utopia of a 'Totaltheater'.

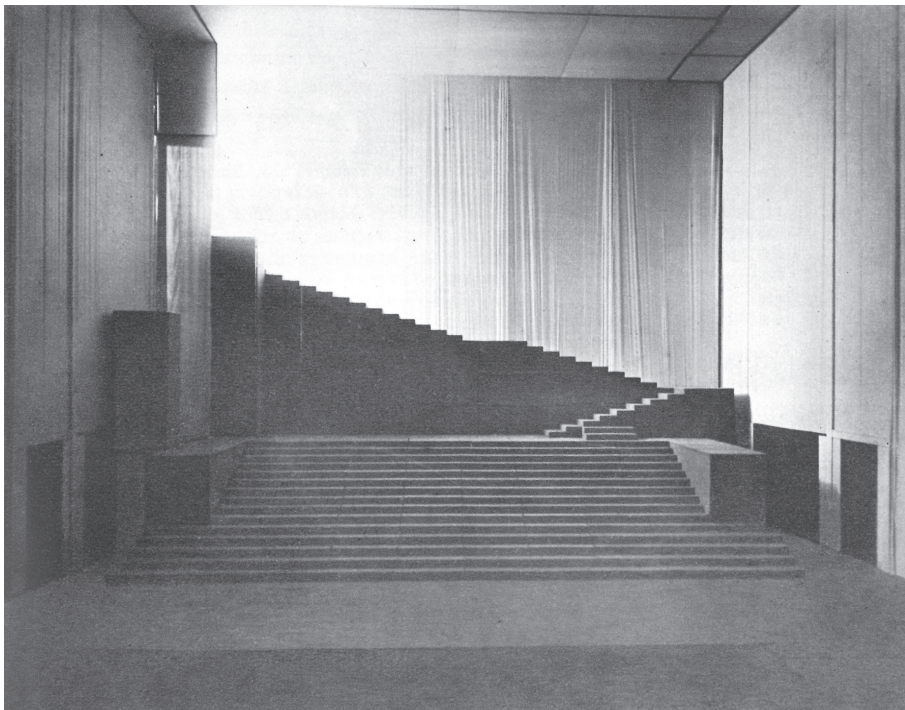
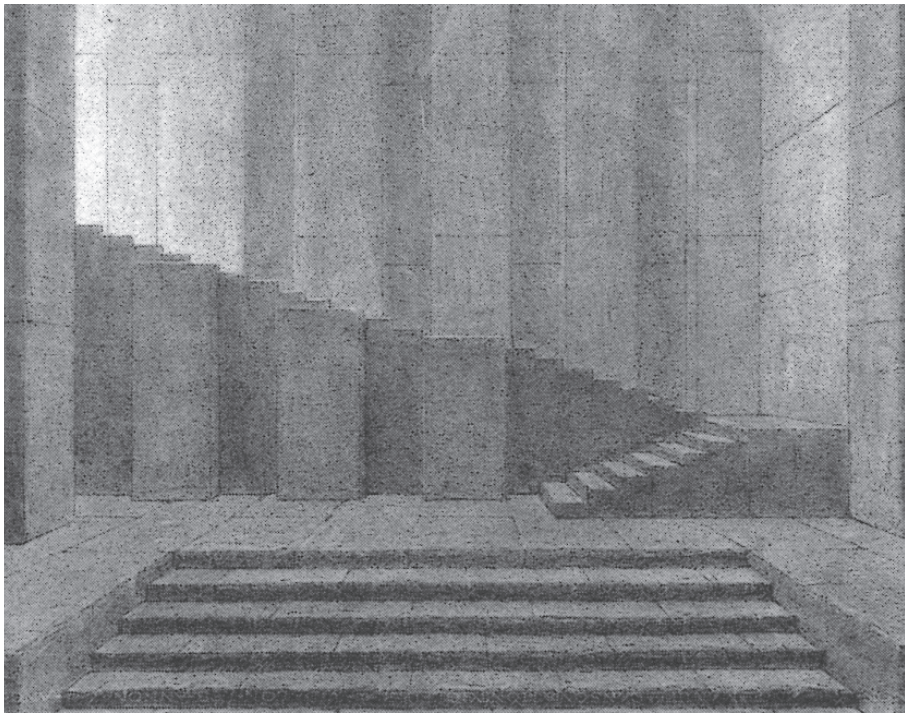
Indoor Hall: Institut Jaques-Dalcroze

The architectural response to the rhythmic spaces designed by Appia has its origins in the history of the first German garden-city in Hellerau. In October 1909, Wolf Dohrn, the first secretary of the Werkbund based in Dresden-Hellerau, attended a demonstration of rhythmic gymnastics performed in Dresden, and proposed to Dalcroze to dispose of a purpose-built location for the teaching of his method in Hellerau. Rhythmic gymnastics, initially conceived as an instrument for the renovation of musical didactics, would extend its pedagogical objectives to the entire personality of the individual, towards a project of total reform of artistic education. Rhythm would not only punctuate the time of dance, but also that of work, rest, festivity, up to the entire human life of the garden-city, in the aim of a general rhythmisation of the new community.⁴⁶ The attitude of denying any specificity in the sense of totalisation is typical of the reform cultures between the 19th and 20th century. In fact, at that time Hellerau was confronted with the themes of the crisis of the city and its reform, adopting the socialisation instances of the Howardian project of garden-city, already diffused in Germany since 1902. The garden-city offers a life outside the city, in which the balance between manual activity and intellectual exercise is exalted, through the planning of sports facilities, places for restoration of art, and a house for the people representing the new community. The garden-city becomes the place for the reformation of German culture, administered precisely by the same group of artists and intellectuals who founded the Werkbund organisation in 1907. Nevertheless, the main protagonist of the displacement of Dalcroze's school to Hellerau is Wolf Dohrn. It was the latter whom Le Corbusier met in order to further his *Étude sur le mouvement d'art décoratif en Allemagne*, in which he described the garden-city as a city created from scratch by the major German artists; a city founded on the principle of absence of speculative actions, whereby workers are the masters of society since the diversion of capital returns to those who produce it, thus rendering Hellerau a 'collectivist manifestation'.⁴⁷

46 De Michelis, Marco. *Heinrich Tessenow (1876-1950)* (Firenze: Electa, 1997), 20.

47 it is interesting to note that his brother, the musician Albert Jeanneret, was at that time working for Dalcroze's orchestra in Hellerau. Le Corbusier. *Étude sur le mouvement d'art décoratif en Allemagne* (Da Capo Press: New York, 1968), 50.

The idea of music becoming an inseparable component of everyday life, a totalizing element combining art and work, posed the problem of constructing a space dedicated to expressing the influence that music, and more specifically rhythm, can have on domestic activities. This space was conceived as a performance hall, an educational centre where students, artists and teachers meet, where rhythmic gymnastics festivals are held every year in the summer and announced all over the world. The imagery of 'Festspiele,' as of majestic festivals that include the



Adolphe Appia, scene for II act of 'Orpheus and Eurydice' of Gluck,
'Festspiele' in Hellerau, 1912, Heinrich Tessenow, 23-31.

48 in the second preface to Appia, Adolphe. *La musique et la mise en scène: 1892-1897*.

49 De Michelis, Marco. *Heinrich Tessenow (1876-1950)*, 29.

50 Baugh, Christopher. ‘Richard Wagner, Georg Fuchs, Adolphe Appia, and Edward Gordon Craig’, 377.

51 Appia, Adolphe. *La musique et la mise en scène: 1892-1897*, 72.

52 Appia, Adolphe. ‘L’homme est la mesure de toute chose’ in *Oeuvres complètes* (Berne: Fondation de la Collection suisse du théâtre, 1983), vol. IV, 221.

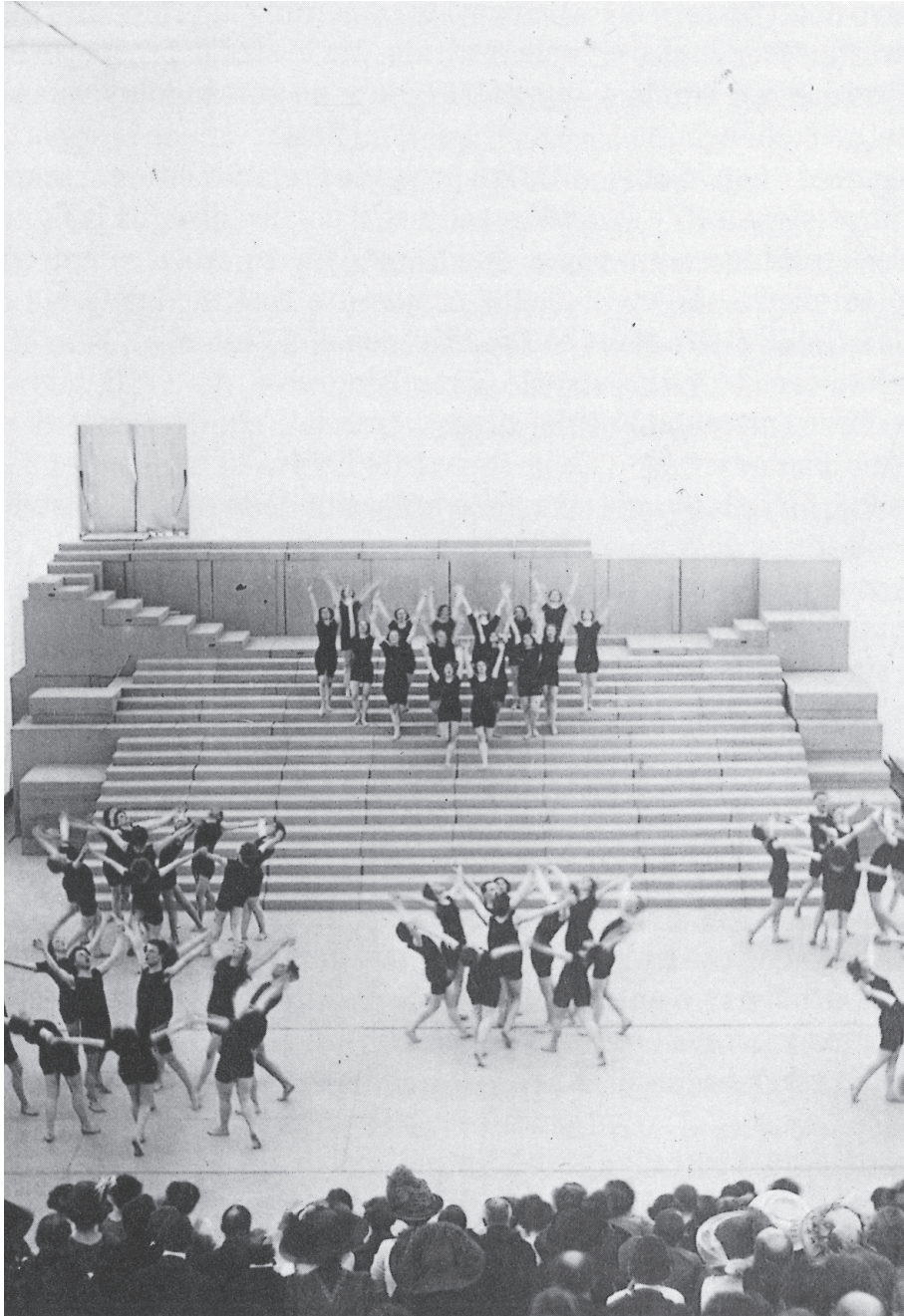
53 Adolphe, Appia. ‘La gymnastique rythmique et le théâtre’ in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. III, 146.

participation of an entire people was already recounted by Appia through the lines of *Die Musik und die Inszenierung* in 1899.⁴⁸ The ideal of a chorality lost since Greek tragedy, restored in large festivals where each person can express their own emotions, is a vision already present in Appia’s early writings, and which is partly realised in the construction of the ‘*Festspielhaus*’, at once a new community theatre in Hellerau and an institute for teaching Dalcroze’s method.

The construction of the Institute initially assigned to Peter Behrens was later entrusted, according to Dalcroze’s desire, to the young architect Heinrich Tessenow, who, through the realisation of the building, succeeds in precisely bringing into practice the conjugation of different scales: the domestic one of the houses and the monumental one of the theatre; a contrast that originally preoccupied architects and contractors in the project. Although he was not in Hellerau, Appia was totally involved by Dalcroze in the design and construction of the Institute, as is readable in the correspondence between the two. In fact, Tessenow, Dalcroze and Appia met in Lausanne in April 1910 and later in Dresden in June 1910, and although this was not written in a formal document of collaboration, the influence of Appia’s rhythmic spaces, and more largely of his entire thought, is visible in the construction of the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, particularly in the performance hall.⁴⁹

Beyond the rarefied atmosphere animated by the deep shadows of the drawings, the construction of the Institute puts into space all the principles enunciated in Appia’s writings. The space is reduced to an empty unadorned hall, composed of a single platform, the ground, on which both the stage and the audience assume different configurations thanks to the use of movable stage settings broken into segments which, composed, form any possible arrangement of levels.⁵⁰ The walls contain the light installations, thus freeing the space from all other equipment, and the floor contains the orchestra which, when covered, can disappear. The stage is conceived as a landscape that interacts with the audience, as an active performer creating and sharing significance, according to the principle that dramatic art is an ensemble work in which the hall is with the stage, the audience with the actors,⁵¹ in the idea of recovering the lost collective dimension of the Dionysian myth. Indeed, the space itself is reminiscent to the first Greek theatres in which the audience seats on broad steps, the chorus of satyrs, which is at the origin of the drama, is directly in front of the steps above a platform, and the scene, which is the topographical landscape, are elements of Apollonian contemplation of images. Here, as in archaic theatres, the audience seats on steps, the single platform which signifies the performance corresponds to the chorus, and walls almost dissolving in diffuse light correspond to the scene.

The abstract and silent architecture realised by Tessenow is a success for both Appia and Dalcroze, in the way it retreats in front of the life that wants to awaken in space, placing itself at the service of the body, which is the measure of everything.⁵² If the point of contact between music and space had been lost since Greek tragedy as modern dramatic music had abandoned bodily form, movement attempts to recover it, by expanding music into space, which in turn becomes the emanation of the plastic forms of the body.⁵³ For the space to come alive and participate in the living proportions of the movement, it must be devoid of anything



Rhythmic gymnastics exercises in the Institute's performance hall, 1912,
Heinrich Tessenow, 23-31.

54 Appia, Adolphe. *L'œuvre d'art vivant*, 112.

55 Adolphe, Appia. ‘Du costume pour la gymnastique rythmique’ in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. III, 158.

56 Adolphe, Appia. ‘Art vivant ou nature morte ?’ in *Oeuvres complètes*, vol. III, 65.

57 note that during the first rhythmic gymnastics lessons Appia attended, he required the use of a staircase.

58 Jaques-Dalcroze, Emile. *Souvenirs et notes critiques* (Neuchâtel: Éditions Victor Attinger, 1942), 141.

that does not originate in the living, moving presence of actors.⁵⁴ It is for this reason that the stagings designed by Appia and realised inside the Institut Dalcroze are unadorned, as is the body itself. On stage, the body is covered only by a black overall, or a grey tunic, to render light visible. The costume for rhythmic gymnastics was conceived as an element of staging in its own right, and therefore, like it, had to obey the principle of subordination of the body, itself under the orders of music.⁵⁵

The body commands the space, so that the spectator feels transformed inside and desires to participate in the transformation of the space by the living body. The stagings designed by Appia for the Institut are conceived from the space intended for movement, but also from the movement that inspires and conditions this space; the one without the other remaining fragmentary.⁵⁶ In view of the interaction between body and space, the study of space is taught at the Institut to the same extent as the study of body rhythm. All the children in the garden-city of Hellerau learn rhythmic gymnastics not with the aim of studying the aesthetic life of the body, but to awaken this life in their own bodies, and express it in space. By space is meant both flat surfaces and obstacles destined to render the body more aware of its balance, its flexibility and the unlimited number of its possibilities. It is for this reason that the stage settings designed by Appia are essentially composed of stairs, an obstacle par excellence and a sure guide for the body.⁵⁷ The staircase forces the body to become aware of its movements through the slowness it imposes, a fundamental principle according to Dalcroze that allows the eye time to analyse, the mind to make comparisons and the emotions to express their vibrations. Slowness helps to become aware not only of the action of movement itself, but also of its points of departure and arrival, specific to *musical nuances*.⁵⁸

The ‘Festspiele’ staged at the Institut Dalcroze proved a huge success all over the world. In the summer of 1912, Appia and Dalcroze staged the drama ‘*Echo and Narcissus*’ and the second act of C. W. Gluck’s ‘*Orpheus and Eurydice*.’ The latter, having a great response, was staged again in its entirety in 1913. For each performance, the stage settings corresponded precisely to the set drawing that Appia created, on the basis of which Dalcroze developed choreographies for rhythmic gymnastics. These stagings in which Appia practised the principles of *Espaces Rythmiques* had an influence on stage directors of his contemporaries, and would be determinant on the history of modern theatre in the centuries to come.

STAGING MOVEMENT



Ernst Braun, Anna Halprin's summer workshop, 1959, *Radical bodies*, 31, and Museum of Performance + Design.

Outdoor Platform: Dance Deck

The first stage Lawrence Halprin realised in 1954 was the one for his wife in their property in Kentfield, California. The Dance Deck would serve for Anna as an explorative platform for movement, and at the same time as a way to be close to her children. As Lawrence after having collaborated with Church founded his own firm in the Bay Area, and since the fulcrum of emerging dancers as Martha Graham or Doris Humphrey was in New York, Anna had to create her proper stage of exploration in the dance field.⁵⁹ The project is in fact a real deck, a non formal stage inside the woods of their property - the latter realised by William Wurster in 1952 whose architectural designs were often conceived in complementary with Church's landscape ones - in which most of the spatial principles Lawrence explored in previous years at the garden scale are here put into practice.

The deck is a composition of simple planes made of platforms, within which few vertical elements anchor the horizontality of the scene. The whole project is in reality a processional choreographed sequence from the house, down countless steps that emphasise and slow down the passage through the woods into the deck.⁶⁰ The latter is effectively a structure of piles suspending an agencement of platforms at several levels and of irregular shape, which adapt to the slope of Tamalpai Mountain and to the trees of the forest; three of them, included in the composition, act as anchor elements.⁶¹ The deck is equally composed of broad steps and narrow subspaces, which allow multiple settings of performance and stimulate both view and participation, blurring the limits that separate dancers and spectators.⁶² In fact, in the first Greek theatres, circular broad steps were a spatial device to create a sense of proximity inside the audience in order to concentrate its attention to the drama, as well as an intentional display to encourage participation.⁶³ As at the origins of Greek tragedy, here steps act as a device for both enhancing immersion in performance and stimulating participation, the largest main platform represents the Dionysian chorus whose the elevation of smaller contiguous platforms define its form, and the forest correspond to the Apollonian stage dedicated to contemplation and distancing. The richness of this spatial device lies precisely in the fact that it offers the choice between contemplation and participation, both in the case of broad steepes and smaller transitional spaces around the main platform. It is interesting to note how platforms in the earliest dwellings in history above which domestic experiences were ritualised, are manifested in the Dance Deck equally in the form of platforms suspended among the trees, where ordinary movements of life are performed.⁶⁴ In effect, the platforms, disposing of a clearly defined form, provide the performance of rituals acting as a stage, but at the same time, being horizontal surfaces not delimited by vertical elements, do not exclude the spectators standing outside of them and, on the contrary, incite their participation. The construction of the Deck profoundly influenced the artistic careers of both Anna and Lawrence, providing a place to experiment with early choreographic principles later developed on urban scale.

The explorations inside the Dance Deck radically changed Anna's vision of movement. Indeed, the deck, being an outdoor theatre, is altered

59 Halprin, Lawrence. *A life spent changing places* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 70.

60 Hirsch, Alison. *City choreographer. Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America* (London: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 47.

61 Halprin, Lawrence. *A life spent changing places*, 79.

62 Massimo, Serena. 'The Performative Power of Architecture. Anna Halprin's Dance Deck as the Source of her 'Transformational Dance,'' *Collana del Centro studi beni culturali e ambientali* 25 (2023): 110-114.

63 Hollinshead, Mary. 'Monumental Steps and the Shaping of Ceremony', 50.

64 Richard Bradley, 'A Life Less Ordinary: The Ritualization of the Domestic Sphere in Later Prehistoric Europe,' *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 13, no.1 (2003): 5-23.



Warner Japson, 'The Branch', Halprin's dance deck, 1957, *Radical Bodies*, 92.

65 Wasserman Judith, 'A World in Motion: The Creative Synergy of Lawrence and Anna Halprin' *Landscape Journal* 31, no.1-2 (2012): 37.

66 Ross, Janice. *Anna Halprin. Experience as Dance* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2007), 257.

67 Massimo, Serena. 'The Performative Power of Architecture,' 119-122.

68 Bennahum Ninotchka, Perron Wendy, and Robertson Bruce, *Radical bodies*, 67.

69 Odenthal, Johannes. 'Danced Space: Conflicts of modern dance theatre,' 43.

70 Merriman Peter, 'Architecture/dance: choreographing and inhabiting spaces with Anna and Lawrence Halprin' *Cultural Geographies* 17 no.4 (2010): 434.

71 Bennahum Ninotchka, Perron Wendy, and Robertson Bruce, *Radical bodies*, 63.

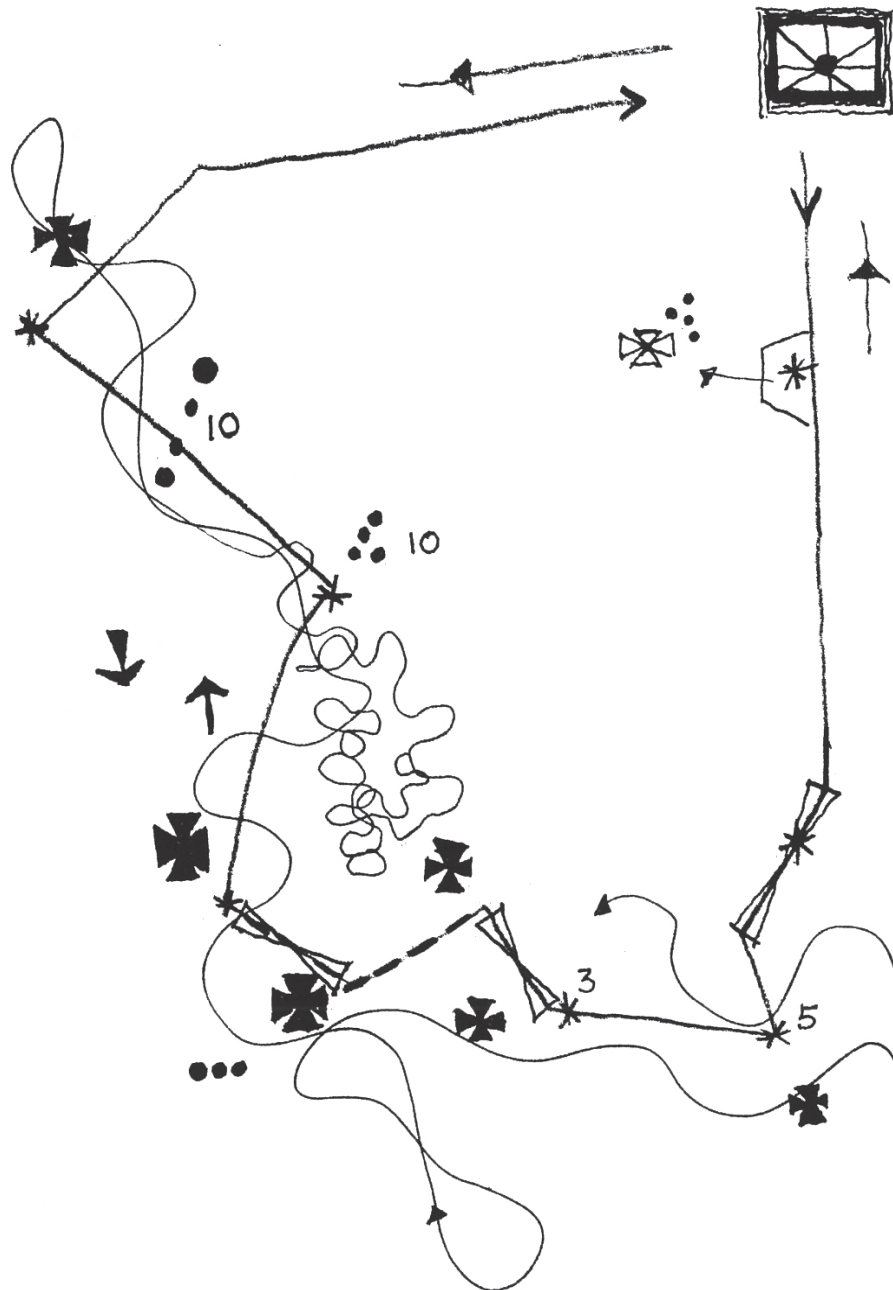
72 Metta, Annalisa e Di Donato, Benedetta. *Anna e Lawrence Halprin. Paesaggi e coreografie del quotidiano* (Melfi: Casa Editrice Libria, 2014), 127.

by the atmospheric agents that surround it: the sky, the trees, the flight of birds. These changes that occur in the space affect the perception of movement on the platforms, thus participating in the dance of the bodies. If at first the dynamic condition of the deck disorients the dancers, it leads them at the same time to reorient themselves again and again within a space that is itself in movement, becoming less introverted and more responsive to their surroundings, thus stimulating their artistic creativity.⁶⁵ The variations within the deck space act as 'tasks,' according to Anna's teaching, as constraints for the bodies, increasing their attention to the quality of movements and amplifying the limits of bodily exploration.⁶⁶ In addition to these external variations, the internal configuration of the deck, characterised by alternating wide and narrow spaces delimited by angular lines, also leads to an urgent need to move and explore space through movement.⁶⁷ If at first one is inclined to think that the complexity of this environment complicates the freedom of movement, it actually simplifies it by offering it limits in exploration, and thus leads it to express itself more clearly and directly, not having the time to intellectualise the surrounding changes. Another aspect that varies markedly in the deck compared to conventional stages is the dancer's impossibility of having a fixed visual reference point, as the space is composed of only irregular shapes and is surrounded by trees, each one different from the other.⁶⁸ This forces bodies to find internal and not external points of reference, and leads them to develop new ways of moving and interacting with space. Incidentally, this typical configuration of the stage probably influenced the conception of movement of Merce Cunningham, one of the artists who danced and performed on the deck, according to whom any point in the space can be the centre, since the space is composed of several centres; thus affirming the autonomy of movement over music and stage.⁶⁹

Through the explorations of movement on the Dance Deck, the interaction between body and space is profoundly reconsidered by Anna, who used these explorations as experiments that could then be applied outside the open-air theatre in landscape. Notably 'The Prophetess' initially performed on the deck is then performed in an open space, as is 'The Hangar'.⁷⁰ In addition to revealing the intrinsic relationship between body and space, the experiments on the deck allowed Anna to discover how collective movement can create a sense of community, which would later be the theme developed in projects on urban and social scale, such as in 'Ceremony of Us,' a performance that was the result of a collective workshop aimed at overcoming racial and social prejudices within the participants.⁷¹ Among the most important emerging figures of modern dance collaborated in 'task performances' on the Dance Deck now known as the Mountain Home Studio, such as Merce Cunningham, Simone Forti, A.A. Leath, Ruth Emerson, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, Robert Morris, and more, thus marking the history of modern choreography.

While Anna was exploring the limits of dance in the Dance Deck space, Lawrence observed and sketched the movement of the dancers' bodies and drew on Anna's choreographic notes to develop a system of movement writing that would serve as a design tool for both choreography and space.⁷² 'Motation', literally 'movement notation,' is created as a project tool to represent the complexity of Anna's choreographies and to

STAGING MOVEMENT



Lawrence Halprin, Plan for a 45 minutes environment, 1962, Notebooks, 73.

73 Wasserman Judith, 'A World in Motion: The Creative Synergy of Lawrence and Anna Halprin,' 41.

74 Halprin, Lawrence. 'Movement notation' in *Cities* (New York: Reinhold, 1963), 208.

75 see Halprin, Lawrence. *The RSVP Cycles: creative process in the human environment* (New York: George Braziller), 1969.

76 Olin, Laurie. 'An American original: on the landscape architecture career of Lawrence Halprin' *Taylor & Francis* 32, no.3 (2012): 153.

77 Halprin, Lawrence. *Notebooks 1959-1971*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972.

78 Halprin, Lawrence. 'Nature Into Landscape Into Art,' 350.

79 Metta, Annalisa e Di Donato, Benedetta. *Anna e Lawrence Halprin*, 56.

80 Moholy-Nagy, László. *The New Vision* (New York: George Wittenborn, 1947), 59.

conceive space through movement.⁷³ Movement then becomes an element of design to the measure of others, and probably above others, since one of the fundamental characteristics of space is precisely that it is constantly in motion, movement that is specific to the condition of life. According to Lawrence, in fact, the inability of designing mobile spaces does not stem from the immobility of that spaces, but from the lack of graphic means to represent movement in space.⁷⁴ Later, the 'Motation' system would be expanded and articulated by Lawrence into what he would then call the *RSVP Cycle*, a system of participatory artistic creation that can be read in different directions, linking four of the system's nodal points: (*R*) standing for resources, (*S*) for scores, (*V*) for valuation, and (*P*) for performance; showing the importance of the creative process on the result.⁷⁵

Urban Theatre: Forecourt Fountain

The system of movement notation is put into practice by Lawrence in Open Space Sequence project in Portland, a choreographed walking sequence structured by water which linked four urban plazas that can be enjoyed separately or as a continuum: Lovejoy Fountain, Pettygrove Park, Source Fountain, and Forecourt Fountain. In this project, 'Motation' is turned into a prescriptive device to choreograph a movement sequence which offers the *experience* of nature without having the *appearance* of it.⁷⁶ In fact, as Lawrence later explained through the writing of 'Nature Into Landscape Into Art', it is not the form of nature that is transcribed into urban space but the experience of it. Over several years, he explored landscapes of the western High Sierra not only through his own body, but also by a more and more systematic interpretation of natural processes through drawing and photography, in the desire to understand the origins of natural form. Lawrence particularly notes the movement of water, describing its dynamic qualities through graphic representations and verbal adjectives.⁷⁷ Water is an element present in all urban landscapes designed by Lawrence, an element that in particular within the Open Space Sequence landscape, drives the metaphorical narrative of nature, producing a strong sensory and emotional involvement, and encouraging participation in movement. Indeed, according to Lawrence, influenced by Jungian thought and practice, water is one of the strongest collective archetypes, the sound and sight of which stirs the most elemental, innate, transpersonal roots.⁷⁸ Halprin is among the pioneers of the *processional* approach to landscape, based on knowledge of the laws that determine its natural dynamics.⁷⁹

The kinetic approach to movement that the landscape of the Open Space Sequence provokes probably comes from the influence that the teaching of Moholy-Nagy at Harvard has on Lawrence as well as on Anna, particularly through the writing of his manifesto *The New Vision*. In the latter, space is defined as a sensorial experience, as a relationship between forces in visible tension - in the case of the position of bodies - , or invisible one - in the case of physical energies. According to this definition of space that can be experienced in the most direct way through movement, all architecture is a creation in constant equilibrium of spatial relationships.⁸⁰ The complexity of a space therefore derives

STAGING MOVEMENT



Auditorium Forecourt Fountain, opening day Juin 23 1970,
Where the revolution began, 10-13.

81 Hirsch, Alison. *City choreographer. Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America*, 44.

82 see the difference between tactile and visual perception of space in Riegl, Aloïs. *L'industrie d'art romaine tardive* (Paris: Éditions Macula, 1901).

83 Hirsch, Alison. *City choreographer. Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America*, 146.

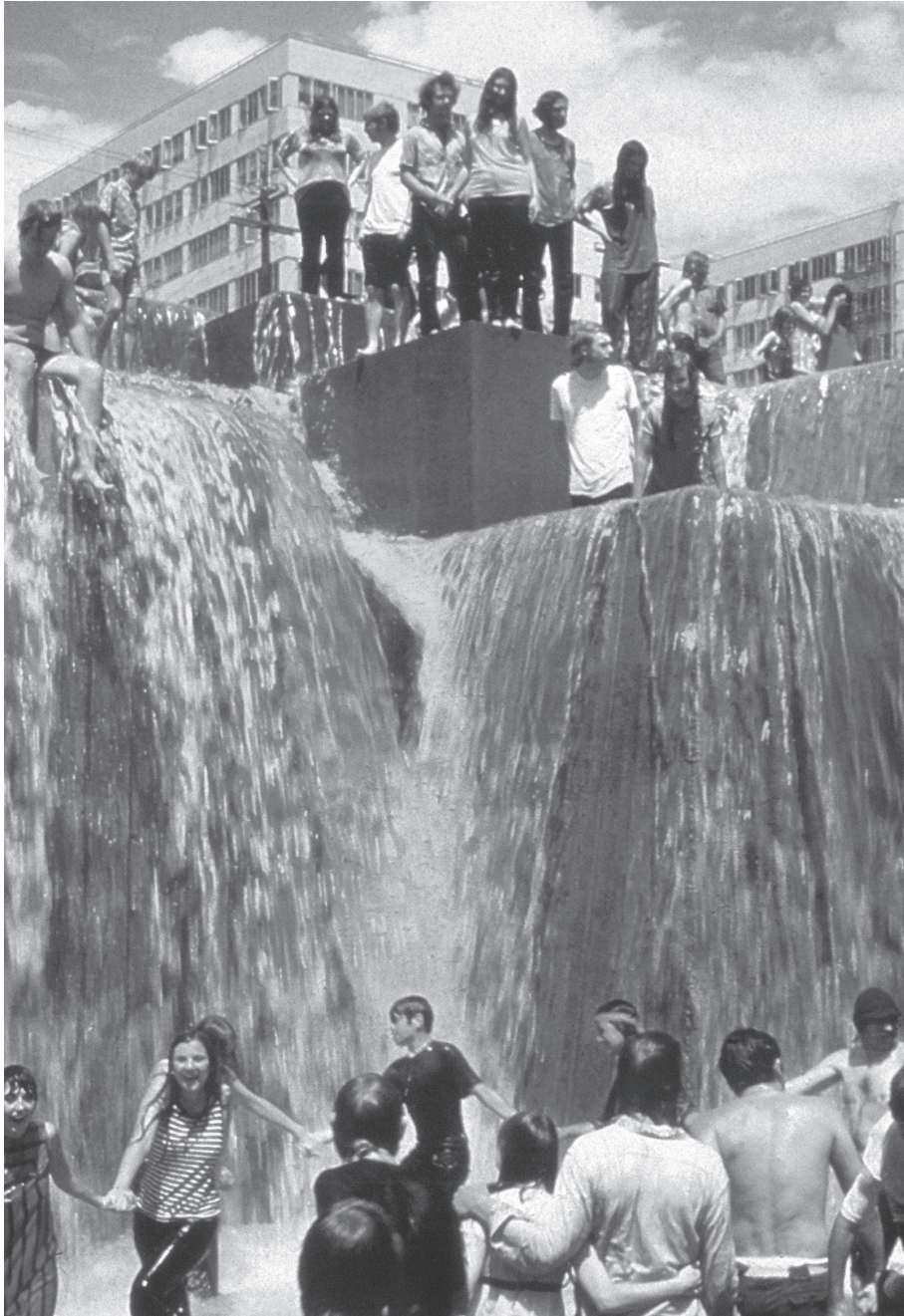
84 Halprin, Lawrence. 'Nature Into Landscape Into Art,' 355.

85 Gragg, Randy. Ross, Janice. Beardsley, John. and Seubert, Susan. *Where the revolution began*, 11.

precisely from being able to render visible these forces in tension. As is the case in Open Space Sequence where it is movement, reproducing the natural experiential equivalency, that defines the design of the space; the latter conceived constantly with the idea of the body in motion and therefore according to different points of view.⁸¹ Lawrence in fact maintains a critical eye on the stasis and monumentality dominating most contemporary landscapes from the Italian Renaissance onwards, characterised by a perspective view of space from a single point of view, and instead he is inspired by Roman gardens of the High Renaissance that stimulate changes in viewpoints through water displays, and lead to an *aptic* rather than *optic* approach to space.⁸²

The transcription into space of Lawrence's observation of natural processes and movement of bodies is particularly explicit in the last urban plaza realised along Open Space Sequence: Forecourt Fountain. The latter is an urban stage where ordinary movements as well as formal performances are welcome.⁸³ The irregular configuration of the fountain alludes to topographical landscapes, which comes in fact from waterfalls observed along the Columbia River that Lawrence transformed into a civic space, combining in a score the structural elements and the effects composition of an actual waterfall. The cascade here is represented through a three-dimensional design of abstract volumes which, although not being natural matter, reproduce the biological experience of nature, alluding to the large landscape beyond the city to which Portland's psyche belongs.⁸⁴ The Fountain is an open-air theatre composed of broad steps which welcome the public and face a series of overlapping platforms where users perform ordinary movements as on a stage, beyond which stands a waterfall background. The whole evokes the composition of early Greek theatres where, as in this urban space, the steps are a device to both focus the audience's attention and stimulate its participation in the performance, the platforms suspended over the water correspond to the circular platform of the chorus from which the real core of the drama historically originated, and where the waterfall scene represents the Greek topographical landscape alluding to a more contemplative dimension of the ritual. As in the case of the Dance Deck, the possibility of choosing between viewing and participating produces a creative attitude in the behaviour of passers-by, who become responsible for the development of performance. Besides the fact that the very form of the platforms, defining a clear and inclusive space for the performance, encourages the involvement of bodies in movement.

The reclamation of the city as a theatre contained in the urban space of Forecourt Fountain has been the inspiration for a growing collection of plazas and parks that spread in the 1990s from Lawrence's Open Space Sequence project, designed specifically as an expandable pedestrian system: to the north into two interconnected fountain plazas and a park - Jamison Square, Tanner Springs Park, and soon to be completed The Fields; and to the south into a greenway of restored native fish habitat next to the city's tallest residential towers.⁸⁵ Lawrence's gesture, more than introducing nature into the city, recovers the capacity of every experience to be an aesthetic one, offering a space in which domestic behaviours transform into public performances. The utopia of '*Festspielhaus*' readable through Appia's drawings for *Espaces Rythmiques*, as of a theatre diffused throughout the city in which the movement of the body could express itself everywhere,



Forecourt Fountain, opening day 1970, Where the revolution began, cover.

86 Hirsch, Alison. *City choreographer. Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America*, 151.

87 Ibid., 147.

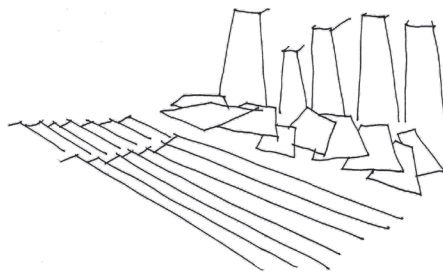
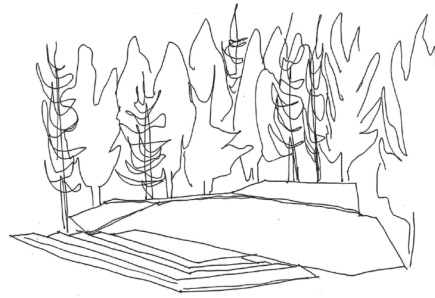
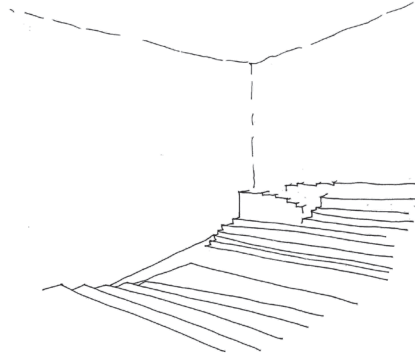
88 Metta, Annalisa e Di Donato, Benedetta. *Anna e Lawrence Halprin*, 79.

89 Sennett, Richard. *The Craftsman* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 234.

is realised here in Lawrence's project of Forecourt Fountain, and more largely of Open Space Sequence. This intervention stimulated the diffusion of continued movement and everyday performances, within which people become responsible in urban choice and act in movement with space.⁸⁶

Not only the dynamic processes of nature are recreated in Lawrence's projects, but also the violence and danger associated with it. In fact, in Forecourt Fountain there are no barriers to prevent participants from tumbling down from the built waterfalls nor from the suspended platforms, as the idea of reproducing the force of a nature within an urban space also implies that movement within this space is at each individual's own risk.⁸⁷ This system of internal responsibility of the individual as opposed to the system of external regulation of public space, that is increasingly common today, enhances the participants' ability to anticipate danger and stimulates the development of imagination in front of unforeseen situations, as well as encouraging movement.⁸⁸ In fact, it is precisely the fact of being able to choose their own rules for moving in space that leads users to express themselves in unexpected ways, thus letting one think that the regulation of contemporary spaces provokes a flattening of the body's motor capacities. Similarly to the playgrounds built by Aldo van Eyck in Amsterdam, the simplicity and clarity of the compositional elements invites participation, while at the same time the ambiguity of the abstract forms of spaces, not imposing a method of use, leads the bodies to create their own rules of play, interacting with each other and with the space in a physical rather than verbal way.⁸⁹ If, as in the Dance Deck, the body is initially disorientated by the possibility of innumerable movements and physical variations taking place around it, it later learns from the feeling of disorientation and reorientates itself in space, investing movement in unexpected ways. Furthermore, the fact that the limits of space are ambiguous, and not defined by vertical elements, induces the body to relate to it in a tactile rather than a visual way, involving it in its unity. In both Lawrence and Aldo van Eyck projects, people learn how to move in relation to space on the ground plane, which itself serves as a stage above which to perform private behaviours and domestic experiences, questioning the urban dimension of the city and the separation between public and domestic spheres.

STAGING MOVEMENT



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the three last case studies are essentially interpretations of early Greek theatres, composed of the following elements: the steps to welcome the audience and engage participation; the stage itself, where collective performances happen; and the topographical scene recalling an individual act of distancing from the drama. These three spatial devices repeat in each case study: in the Institut Jaques-Dalcroze, the steps reduce to mobile stagings, the stage is the principal platform of the performance hall, and the scene is suggested by the evanescent walls of light; in the Dance Deck, the wood steps conclude the forest walk and open on the stage, which is an agencement of several platforms, surrounded by the scene of trees; in Forecourt Fountain, concrete steps welcome passers-by soliciting their interaction with the stage, a series of platforms contained by a waterfall scene.

The configuration of early Greek theatres is particularly interesting in the sense that it returns to the stage its initial value. When religion and ritual blended together, the stage was larger than the audience, for in the beginning there was no difference between audience and performers, nor between the chorus and the stage, since the chorus was the drama itself. The scene was properly a view of the landscape around and below the theatre, which consisted of a levelling of the natural topographical terrain. In fact, like the earliest dwellings in history, Greek theatres are defined by the levelling of the ground into platforms, allowing the performance of the ordinary. And it is interesting to note how this levelling translates in the case studies into the abstraction of the ground in essential forms, which through their rigidity and estrangement stimulate the interaction between body and space, thus provoking movement.

Another element that persists from the earliest Greek theatres until today is the dichotomy between Dionysian and Apollonian. Although the Apollonian scene emerges after the Dionysian chorus, it gains more and more importance over it to the point of corrupting the very principle of the drama. The three case studies tend to return the performance to its primitive Dionysian dimension which is more direct, simple, and experienced in a collective manner, as opposed to the Apollonian which is instead more elaborate, intellectualised, and contemplated from an individual point of view. Indeed, all of these projects place the audience and the stage in the foreground over the scene, which instead has a secondary role. Infact, in early Greek theatres, the entire drama took place within the body and through the body, and was sometimes reflected in the surrounding landscape through visions thus allowing to lighten the catharsis of drama by contemplating a reality more distant from it. Hence, the ritual resides precisely in this balance between action and contemplation. Already in Nietzsche's sense, and even more so today, distance has taken over identification, sight over touch, appearance over experience, progressively erasing from life the dimension of myth, and thus of ritual. Intentional and non-automatic movement in space, whether domestic or urban, together with the design of the ground of that space from the corporeal and experimental dimension of movement, are means of recovering the ritualistic and collective aspect of life, within which the body identifies with myths and experiences.

ANNEXE

Movement explorations

Jaques-Dalcroze, *Bibliothèque de Genève Iconographie*













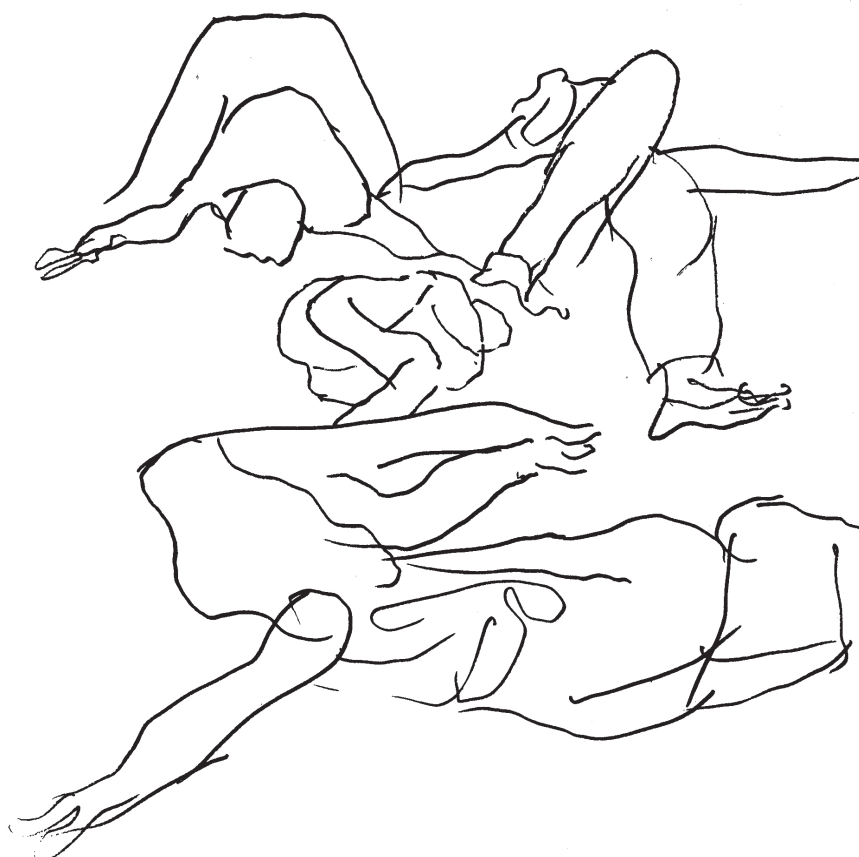


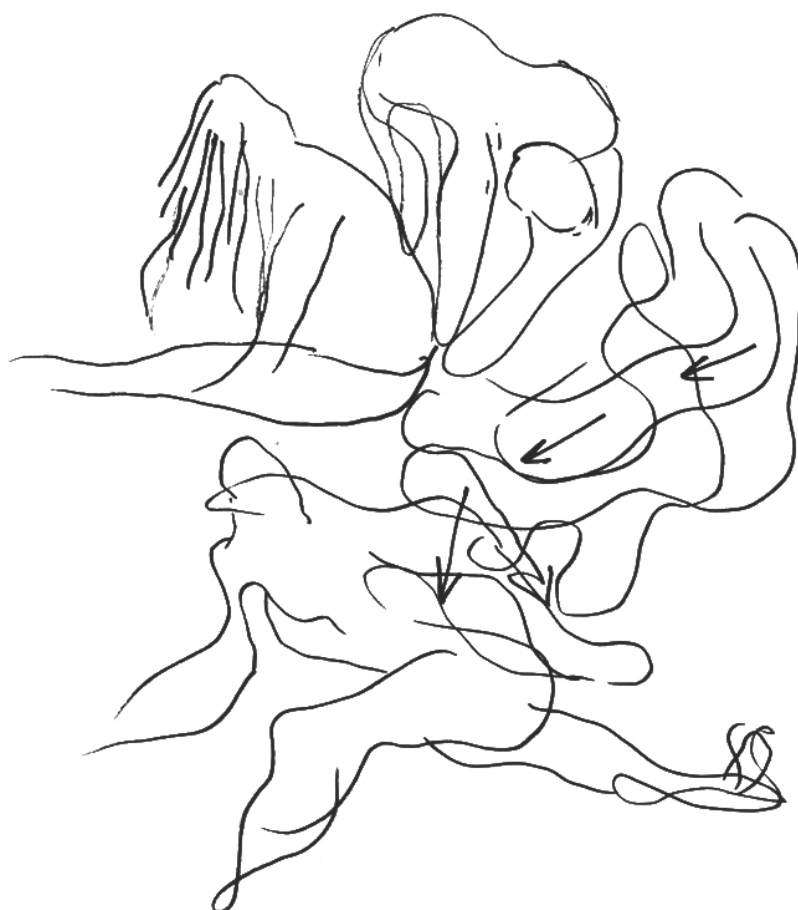


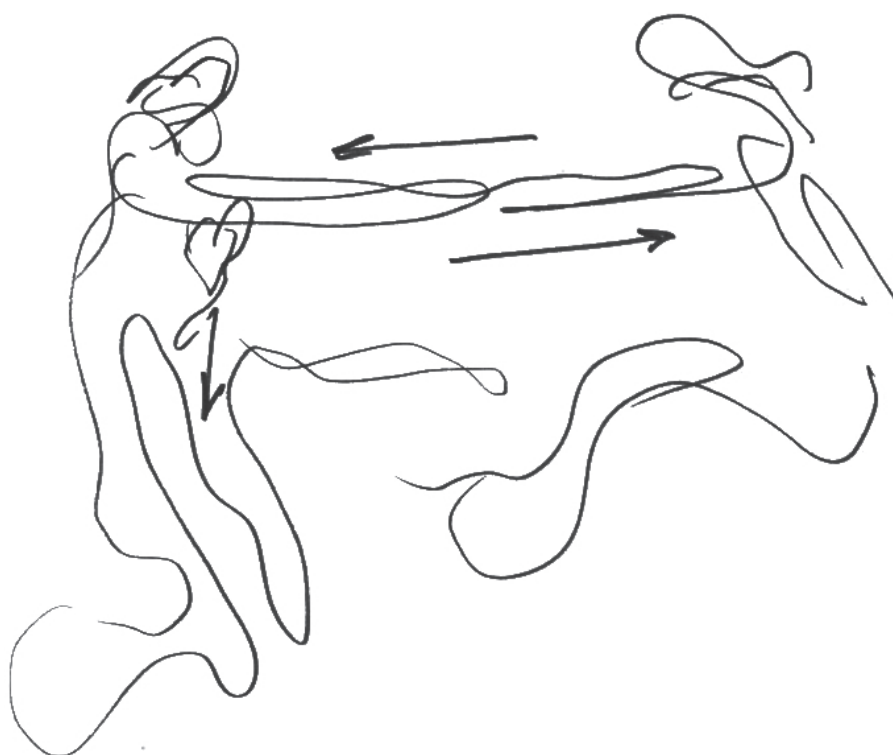


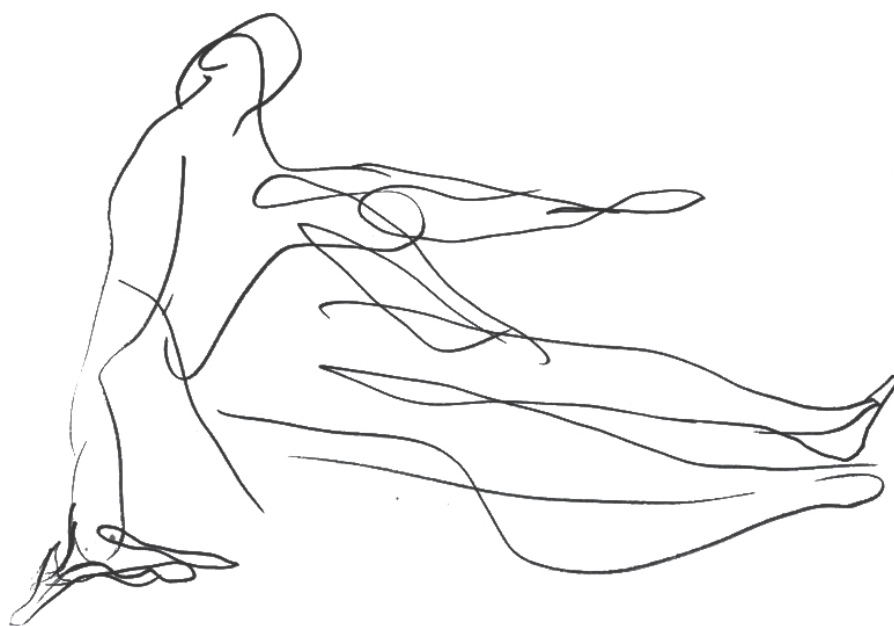


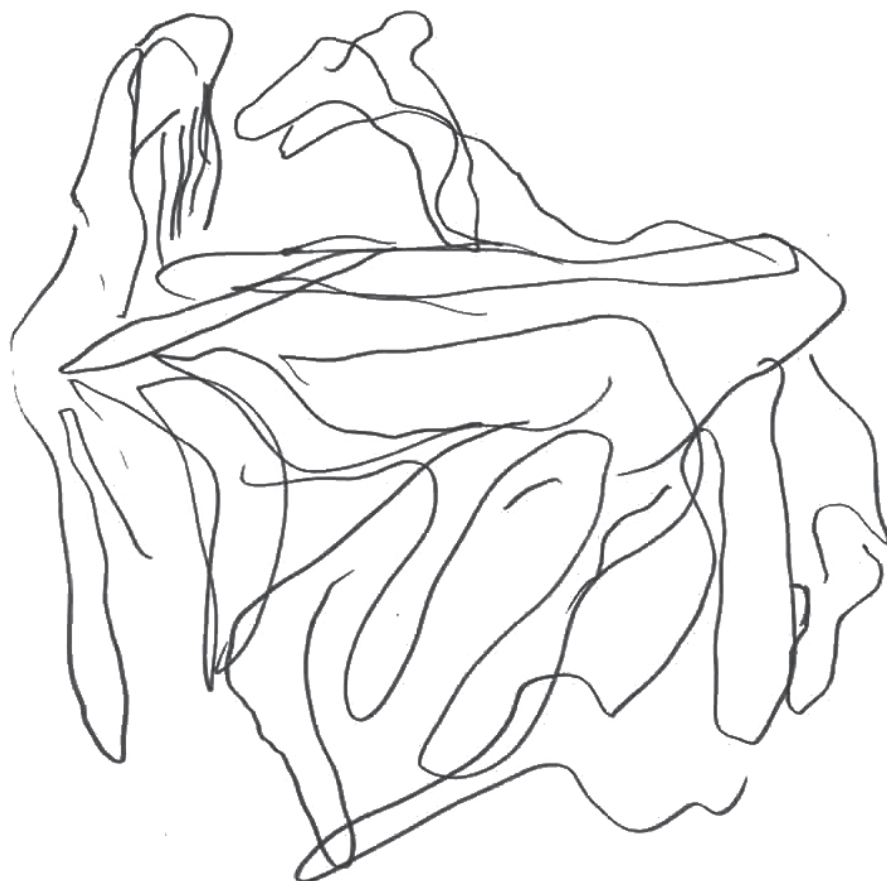
Movement observations
Lawrence Halprin, *Notebooks 1959-71*

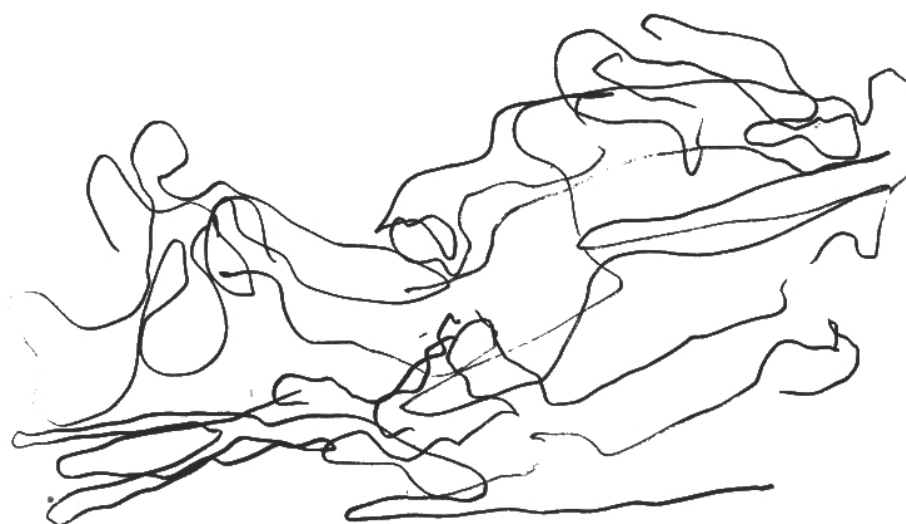








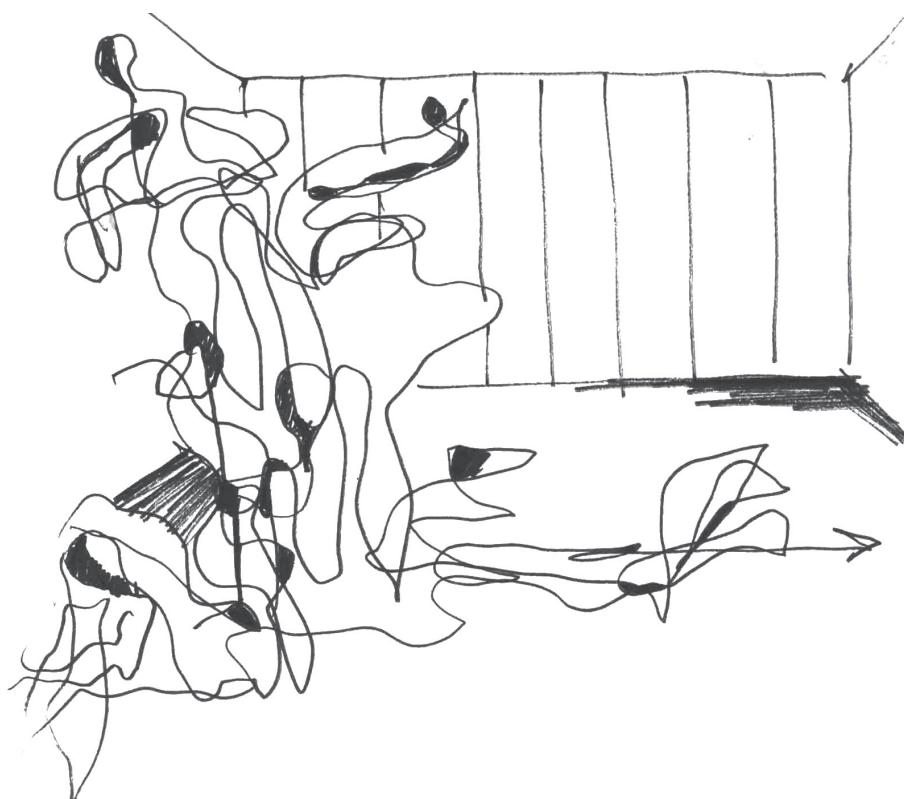
















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