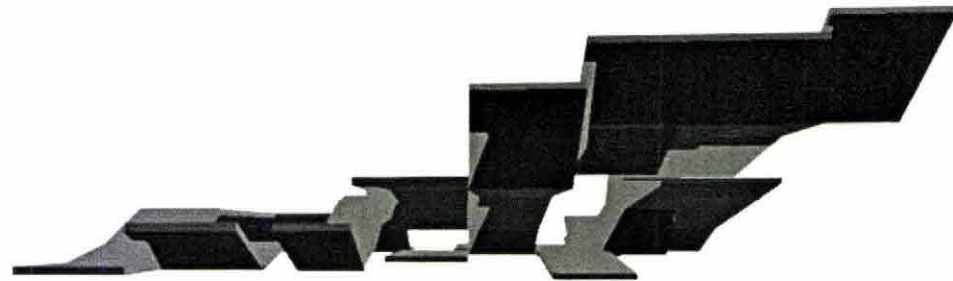


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Disappearing Acts and Spatial Representation

S. A. Mehzoud 2005

# **Disappearing Acts and Spatial Representation**

Designing 'The Heart of PQ' and 'Display' exhibition projects (2002-2004)

A thesis prepared in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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## Abstract

### Disappearing Acts and Spatial Representation

This thesis investigates practices of spatial representation and is positioned at the intersection of space and performance. The thesis argues that the presence of the live body in a performance space constitutes a dilemma for its representation as well as a promise for its presentation. It mobilises Bernard Tschumi's notion of the 'event' by focussing on the actions of bodies in space, to re-formulate representation as an embodied practice.

Two exhibition designs are presented and explored as research projects. The first project 'The Heart of PQ' was an interdisciplinary performance installation for the 2003 Prague Quadrennial (PQ); a four-yearly international exposition on theatre architecture and design. It explored the senses in performance and the active role that design plays in performance. The second project 'Display:

remembering a performance landscape' was an exhibition at the Michael Hirschfeld Gallery, Wellington, in 2004. In this project 'The Heart of PQ' was represented as a site-specific installation, exhibiting the documentation of the event and the archival material of its design process.

'The Heart of PQ' and 'Display' are utilised as vehicles to discuss how the generation of spatial representation is re-formulated and described as an event in which embodied processes allow for a more complex engagement with spatial experience. For the design of the 'The Heart of PQ' project embodied practices of representation were developed which investigated 'prospective' aspects of spatial representation. 'Display' offered the opportunity to consider how one might work with the remains of a performance to represent the past and therefore addressed issues of 'retrospective' spatial representation.

## Acknowledgements

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and assisting colleagues and students is found in the credits for each of the two projects. Inevitably, in any working situation there are some people that you work more closely with and so in particular I wish to thank my co-collaborator Lee Gibson for his camaraderie as well as his excellent design contributions. I also wish to express appreciation for the generosity the Czech Theatre Institute showed me during my lengthy visits to Prague and for welcoming me into their team.

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## Table of Contents

List of Figures and their Captions	V
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
Research Method: Design Research	7
<b>Acts of Spatial Representation</b>	<b>13</b>
The denied Body	17
Body-Subjects	23
A Speculation on disappearing Acts	26
<b>The Heart of PQ: a performance landscape of the senses</b>	<b>31</b>
Approach to the Project and Concept Design	31
Design Development and the workshopping Process	41
Developed Design	51
<b>Display: remembering a performance event</b>	<b>57</b>
Interpreting the Document	59
Concepts and Design	63
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>79</b>
1. The Heart of PQ Chronology of project and credits	79
2. DisPlay Chronology of project and credits	91
3. Theatre Institute Prague Letter of Consent	97
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>99</b>

## List of Figures and their Captions

All design work and photographs of the events were produced by and are credited to SCAPE @ massey unless otherwise stated.

<i>Figure</i>		<i>page</i>
1	The Heart of PQ Event: Overview of Installation.	2
2	DisPlay Event: View from Entrance.	4
3	The Heart of PQ Event: Landform with Threshold in the Background. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	6
4	The Heart of PQ Bröllin Workshop: Performance by Lemi Ponifasio. Video Still Image.	8
5	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Evening Performance on Landform behind the Tower of Touch.	10
6	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Evening Performance on Stairs of Landform. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	12
7	DisPlay Event: Black Box Diorama.	14
8	The Heart of PQ Concept Development: Conceptual Image.	16
9	The Heart of PQ Concept Development: Concept Design showing individual type-based spatial elements.	18
10	The Heart of PQ Concept Development: 1:50 Model of Concept Design, frontal view.	20
11	The Heart of PQ Concept Development: 1:50 Model of Concept Design, top view.	22
12	The Heart of PQ Bröllin Workshop: Performance by Akhe Group. Video Still Image.	24
13	The Heart of PQ Design Development: Sketches showing Development of Landform Integration.	26
14	The Heart of PQ Design Development: Digital Modelling Studies of Landform.	28
15	The Heart of PQ Final Design: 1:200 Model of Installation.	30
16	The Heart of PQ Final Design: Schematic Plan of Installation.	32
17	The Heart of PQ Final Design: Digital Rendering of Installation.	34

18	The Heart of PQ Design Development: Cross-Section of Installation.	36
19	The Heart of PQ Final Design: Tower of Taste, Elevation.	38
20	The Heart of PQ Final Design: Tower of Touch, Section.	40
21	The Heart of PQ Event: Tower of Taste. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	42
22	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Evening Performance, Tower of Touch.	44
23	The Heart of PQ Event: Recto-Verso, Day Performance inside Tower of Sight. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	46
24	The Heart of PQ Event: Tower of Sound.	48
25	The Heart of PQ Event: Tower of Smell. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	50
26	The Heart of PQ Event: Mau Dance Company, Day Performance at Threshold Wall.	52
27	The Heart of PQ Event: Kyzyl Traktor, Evening Performance on Landform. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	54
28	DisPlay Final Design: Composite Image showing Cross-Section and Landforms.	56
29	DisPlay Final Design: Plan of Installation.	58
30	DisPlay Final Design: Longitudinal Section through Installation.	60
31	DisPlay Event: View from Entrance.	62
32	DisPlay Event: Landform with Louvres and Models.	64
33	DisPlay Event: Black Box Diorama with viewing Holes.	66
34	DisPlay Event: View from Entrance with Black Box Diorama.	68
35	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Day Performance, Projection Silo. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	70
36	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Evening Performance on Landform. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	72
37	DisPlay Event: Black Box Diorama Projection. Video Still Image.	74
38	DisPlay Event: Inside Black Box Diorama showing 1:50 Model and Projections.	76
39	The Heart of PQ Event: Several simultaneous Day Performances around Table.	78

40	The Heart of PQ Event: Landform with Tower of Sight.	80
41	The Heart of PQ Event: Landform Construction.	82
42	The Heart of PQ Event: Tower of Taste with Anarchic Kitchen. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	84
43	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Tower of Touch.	86
44	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Day Performance, Dancer in viewing Slot. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	88
45	The Heart of PQ Event: Landform with Tower of Sight.	90
46	The Heart of PQ Event: View of Threshold, Tower of Touch and Tower of Sound. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	92
47	The Heart of PQ Event: Carol Brown, Evening Performance on Landform by Tower of Touch.	94
48	The Heart of PQ Event: Tower of Taste, Detail. Photograph by Rastislav Juhas, Theatre Institute Prague.	96
49	DisPlay Event: View from Entrance with Seating on the left and Black Box Diorama on the right.	98
50	DisPlay Best Award: Presentation Panel, Section through Landform.	100
51	DisPlay Best Award: Presentation Panel, Cross-Section through Landforms.	102
52	DisPlay Event: Opening Night, View from Entrance.	104
53	DisPlay Event: Black Box Diorama.	106
54	DisPlay Event: Close-up of Model between Louvres of Landform.	108
55	DisPlay Event: View from Entrance .	110