

# The Proposed Theory to Study Applications of Video Art in Set Design

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**Abstract**— Studying video art is one of the new paths that those interested in contemporary majors of figurative arts could benefit from it in creating visual arts. In addition, studying video arts in facilities and the applications of video art in stage design could be considered as a textbook for university students; that is, this research in fact introduces the categories of stage design in contemporary arts based on benefiting from video equipment and in general, new technology. Each performance has a structure made of symbols and elements that is able to change the design structure organization in drama in different forms; on the other hand, it could serve important changes of classic performance in picture frame stages, black box and environmental stages. It seems that the role of video art could have considerable flexibility in theater; because it could be used both as a dramatic element and as a symbol in stage design.

**Keywords**— Video Art, Stage Design, theatre, contemporary Art.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Video art consists of audio-visual data with great amount of saving, projection and data feedback. There are many cases when that data is stopped, goes fast forward or rewinds in time in which, the real time or unknown time finds meaning. The location and stage of presenting the work and sometimes the act of audience- or in fact participant- and the feedback of data obtained by this interaction are also among other aspects of video arts.

According to *Contemporary Directions in the Visual Arts*: Video-art does not recognize the rules of cinema, even the independent cinema; for, it might clearly lack any narration, dialogues and plot. It could not be included in the tight circle of TV programs either; although it uses TV media, the facilities of TV stations and even TV set as a volume. Video art, as lives in the border between revision, concept, time and performance, employs digital photography arts, cinema, performing and in short, all modern media; all as contribution to a great achievement: unrestricted freedom of artist. Video sometimes discusses the definition or re-defines politics, gender, personal and cultural identity through linear and modern non-linear narrations. In other times, it acts as a multi-

aspect piece of poetry, in times; it works with the body of the artist and his/her performance and sometimes to the audience, his/her presence and his/her physical reactions [1].

The concerns of theater artistic of contemporary art are using modern media was at first, plain recorded pictures and presently, in a very few works are to use projection in making a theater beyond theater. By theater, it is post-dramatic. The video and theater medias both focus on some aspects of work that at first are primitive and non-narrative; for the text of artistic work has lost its value in post-dramatic art and in turn, the objects that have come forward are the preliminary but traditional elements of theater: bodies, objects, moves, rhythm, light and space. In fact, the advantage of this frame of theater is manifested in its extraordinary capacity of influence susceptibility from other artistic frames including video media and preliminary cinema, as sometimes called “image-centered theater” and even in painting, dance and sculpture.

Stage design has the main role in dramatic arts because it is the actual visualizing factor of dramatic space of the drama. In stage design, any object could indicate desirable meaning of the designer and in another word; stage designer is able to take his/her concept from any object. This of course could become possible with contribution of other factors in addition to the designer’s arts and creativity- as the basis of the task. Those factors differ and most important of them are light, form and shape, color, layout and placement of elements in the stage. Various concepts could be driven from forms through lighting. Selection of angle and density of light makes concerned concepts more clearly and transparent. Therefore, each figure for the stage designer is not necessarily the shape people would know; but the stage designer sees an object in various placements, locations and spaces in his/her mind. The stage designer views the form of equipment and elements through dramatic imaging and conceptual expression and sees them as an actor who could play different roles and dramatic moods in various environmental and conditions. By taking suitable forms of equipment and elements and by lowering or intensifying shades and lights and their translocation, a designer could create effective atmospheres. The method of placement of elements and laying out the equipment could have impacts on the role and play of light in reflection of desirable spaces and therefore, by proper lay out and arrangements, various concepts, attitudes and atmospheres could be obtained from the emptiness and density to give totally new meaning to the two concepts.

Studies of this research attributes mainly in performing

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dramas with narrative aspect. In another word, performances that take place based on dramatic texts. Among the subjects of this thesis is the role of video art as a media that could show the real persons of drama in virtual form. In the meantime, it could be said that the presence of video art in performing the drama affects the conventional communication patterns of theater as well; however, it helps the audience to follow the quality of progress in the story aspect of the dram. The reason is that video art could play the role of a reactor in drama and/or even cause emergence of different reactions from audiences or even the personages on the stage. It is in this case that a stage designer could benefit from applications of video arts in making changes in drama structure. For example video art creates the possibility of having virtual audiences along with actual audiences; and/or, a part of theater hall could be filled with audio-visual media such as video and TV. They could not show reactions like a real audience; but instead, they could witness and observe all reactions of audiences in the course of performance and record both at the same time. In picture frame halls, it is possible to have virtual audiences around stages. In addition, in a part of picture frame stage, a part could be allocated virtually in creating multi-side stage and ultimately, by recording a part of performance by video art and broadcasting it in performance- based on a specific text- video art could become a major and important visual factor in the process of making dramatic atmosphere.

Procedure for Paper Submission

## II. DISCUSSION

The performance and video art was praised in the beginning of 1980s as the messengers of a new era in which, those forms played important social and aesthetic roles. Those involved in the work believed that visual arts, by using experimental media, could shake the independence of objects and could bond with audiences in a more direct and straightforward way.

In *Movements in Arts Since 1945*, Gary Hill, as one of the famous artists in 1970s, made a serious and effective activity and showed to be more involved in narrations and limitations of language in narrating than others. Since 1973, Hill has been trying to describe the complicated relationship between words and pictures. His first work, *Holes in the Wall*, was created in 1937. He joined his enthusiasm to sculpture with electronic media. Villa Viola (born in 1951) is one of the most important artists in video field. His first work, *Wild Houses* was produce in 1972. He has been working with Dien Tanaka, the painter and Zen instructor since 1980. Discovering identity and personal narration via deeply poetic symbols and pictures is the product of few decades of constant efforts [2].

According to *Post-Dramatic Theatre: Torn Space's "Area"*: "Over the last couple of decades, we have seen the emergence of a theatre that seeks to go "beyond drama." This post-dramatic theatre is out to re-think every traditional aspect of the art-form. It takes all that theatre has traditionally privileged—story, plot, character—and decenters it. Modernist theatre, it might be argued, also proceeds in this

manner. But post-dramatic theatre (sometimes loosely referred to as "postmodern theatre") pushes this de-emphasis of narrative to an extreme. Even the "text" of the work—that part of the work that we assume to exist prior to performance—is de-privileged. Instead, what come to the fore are the primal but traditionally repressed elements of theatre: bodies, objects, movement, rhythm, light and space" [3].Fig.1.

In *Movements in Art since 1945*, a professional video team that had significant activities in 1990s and is considered as one of the valuable examples of Italian art is a group named Studio Azzurr, made of actors and technical crew. Studio Azzurr creates a sensitive environment. In one of their products, *Chorus 1996*, the audience enters a dark place and is invited to walk on a large carpet. On the carpet, there are pictures of semi-naked bodies of men and women that are shown as if they are trapped in the mat fibers. As the audience walks inside the gallery and in fact on pictures of men and women, the pictures enrage and shout. The steps of audiences confront the reactions of pictured figures and as a result, their murmurs become loud and their bodies move and sing the songs of their sorrow and suffering. In present examples, the personages are enclosed in an image type of TV set or any other broadcasting stages where the audiences are in communication both as participants and as performance individuals and through each other, they share in making a dramatic act [4].

In *the hypnotic stage drama into Post-Dramatic Theatre: Torn Space's "Area"* a character (girl number 1) enters in an unnatural space that could be hardly identified as a space such as live space or work. The character passes through the stage slowly as if she is unconscious; however, she is deeply in thought; as if her movement path has been already adjusted. She pauses with an extraverted elegance to perform her daily duties such as making scrambled eggs. Each one of her movements and acts seems to be a part of carefully designed formalities. This formal silence is broken by a media voice beyond the stage; a voice that comes slowly and following girl number 1 and through memories and acts that perhaps she had done none. The TV set in the picture was turned off and ineffective before that but at this moment starts showing pictures of girl number 2 and those memories are dramatized by text; such as Raymond Corver's study. This causes creation of a delicate but mysterious story. In this example, girl number 2 appears as one of the two personages within the framework of the TV set. The character lacks human aspects and is only visualized in picture and sound; however, her conventional words formed as a play character; therefore, I, as an audience-reader accepted that character both as a character in play and as a part of visual space and stage designer's work [5].

According *Narrative a Critical Linguistic Introduction Personality* is an illusion and the reader is the creative ally of this illusion. A mass of characteristics of imaginary individuals along with apparent and hidden description- the actions and reactions of that individual are sufficient so most readers could imagine a person [6]. Although in the present

research, the researcher is not trying to prove that characters are or are not real; the fact is the person has replaced the human part of theater inevitably under the flag of work tools. In this case, in stage design, it is possible to be effective in making visual spaces by decoration in conventional methods under cover of play characters. Stage design is not limited to making decor in decoration workshop. It has various forms and perhaps, it is for its expansion that to this date, we do not have much subjects on stage design art Research in special grounds is always pleasant.

The complicated world of a stage designer includes his knowledge on all aspects of surrounding environment, expansion of research work and a dialectic method that he takes to deal with the play in searching desirable space. This world sometimes looks much more expanded and complicated than real world. A stage designer should merely maintain aesthetic within the major frameworks and general principles. Decoration should agree with contents of play in first place and leave highest effects in audience. In addition, he says that any decor has applicability only for its own special play and it should be so incorporated in the contents of its drama that could, by no means, show flexibility to be used in another play. Each play has its own world and naturally, its own decoration [7]. Based on this, in the context of play, a stage designer might benefit from existing facilities in contemporary world, including view art in favor of theater and create his own special values to create a special design for his stage. In 20th century and by increasing development of knowledge and science, and creation of new arts such as video art, the stage design would not be away from impacts of those changes. By considering changes in arena of arts, the bonds among arts are more significant. Mixture and combination (Eclecticism) in figurative arts, music, architecture...and theater has led to changes in structures of arts that in turn led to new changes in arts. Therefore, employing the capabilities of video art in stage design of contemporary plays could be considered as one of the meanings of eclecticism in theater, particularly in its stage design field.

### III. CONCLUSION

Theater art is a collective work and follows special rules. The main factors create a work as the result of a team work through collaboration and consultation with each other and by maintaining the style, method and their

Work personality. Stage design in its simplest definition is the main creator of visual space of theater. In another word, it is like an individual who views the sensitive stages and the apparent and hidden concepts of the texts, thoughts and views of the director as the guide and main key delicately and very closely. Video art could change the proportion of stage designer, director and even stage design in theater. That is, video art could replace stage designer or change his role with more different capabilities; while at the same time causing important changes in the process of drama performance,

quality of establishing communication between audiences and performance and the general atmosphere of the drama. It could be said that in this process, our definition of meaning of place, time and space in drama would take another shape; because, video art has the capability of causing virtual presence of personality on stage. Therefore, if we accept that, for example, space is a volume of human, location and time activities; therefore, by video art, new spaces with different structures could be established.

Among important patterns of video arts in this research, one may note post-modern patterns, including the works of Gary Hill, Howard J et al; and Studio Azzurr works and Torn space Company. The reason of choosing those samples is their analytical facilities in creating visual spaces; thus, the presence of video art as an actor could contribute in our new analysis on presence of those examples in performance and help us to achieve important visual and theoretical results.

### IV. FIGURES



Fig. 1. Torn Space's production of Area (2008). Photo: Lukia Costella [8]



Fig. 2 Torn Space's production of *The Architect* (2007). Lukia Costella [9]



Fig. 3 Torn Space's production of *Terminus* (2006). Photo: Aaron Miller [10]

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