

# Staging Movement: On Architecture and Dance through the Work of Adolphe Appia, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and the Halprins *Ada Massarente*



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

Movement is an intrinsic characteristic of life. But precisely because of its changing nature, it does not serve as a design tool in architecture. Whereas architecture designs spaces for the human body, movement is a fundamental relation between body and space. This essay introduces the central role of ordinary movements and their ritualization. It conceptualizes how the ground plane, reminiscent of the first Greek theaters, was abstracted into horizontal lines in theater and landscape. The writings and projects of two couples of choreographers and designers—Émile Jaques-Dalcroze and Adolphe Appia, Anna and Lawrence Halprin—are analyzed as the realization of Appia's utopia of *Festspielhaus*.

The collaboration between designer Appia and composer Dalcroze consisted mainly in elaborating spaces designed and constructed for rhythmic gymnastics. Both were initially trained as musicians at the Geneva Conservatory, and both were deeply influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophy. They considered movement to be a means to expand the music into space and regain the lost Dionysian unity between the audience and performers.<sup>01</sup> The *Espaces Rythmiques*, originally designed by Appia in 1909–10 and realized in the Institute Jaques-Dalcroze in 1910–11, are con-

01 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The birth of tragedy and other writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 17.

ceived as a *Festspielhaus* where all kinds of emotions and movements are manifested.<sup>02</sup>

After pursuing two different fields of study, one in dance and the other in horticulture, Anna and Lawrence Halprin began a life collaboration in movement and landscape choreography. Both influenced by Moholy-Nagy and the Jungian approach, they understood movement as a collective process for releasing emotions and creating communities, as well as a means to reproduce the experience of nature in the landscape. First on the domestic scale, in the Dance Deck, then on the urban scale, in the Forecourt Fountain, Lawrence created non-formal stages for ordinary movements that left to the audience the choice to either assist or participate in the performance.

### MOVEMENT AS A RITUAL

Movement constituted the origin of the stage itself and represented a personal experience that dancers and spectators could share.<sup>03</sup> For Jaques-Dalcroze, as for Anna Halprin in the late nineteenth century, movement was the origin of their research in dance and choreography.

Both considered movement not as a result but as a process of releasing emotion. Dalcroze and Halprin considered movement to be a personal experience that could only be felt from within the body, with an immediate and natural attitude.<sup>04</sup> For both, movement began with walking as a means to connect to the inner rhythm of breathing and to engage the body in its unity.

Ritual began with paying attention to the expressive quality of movement, transforming its automatic character into an intentional action. Any ordinary movement could be performed as a ritual if one were to bring one's consciousness inside the act of movement.<sup>05</sup> Ordinary movements, in relation to an intention, became artistic expression as long as they were performed in such a real and direct way that they would not need interpretation. A way to attend this degree of consciousness was to use constraints, or *scores* in choreographic terminology, which oblige the body to move in a more intentional way.<sup>06</sup>

Beyond the domestic space, Anna Halprin extended the act of defamiliarization of ordinary movements inside the theater with works like *The Five-Legged Stool*—a work of dance-theater realized in 1962 that presents a series of imaginaries where performers had to confront themselves with everyday objects and situations—or again in 1964, with *Parades and Changes*—a theater exercise in defamiliarization in which the domestic task of undressing and dressing is performed.<sup>07</sup>

### ABSTRACTION OF THE GROUND

At the turn of the twentieth century, Adolphe Appia responded to the question of the reunification of actors and spectators in *Die Musik und die Inszenierung*, which appeared in 1899. This writing is considered the beginning of the modern period in theater as well as a response to Wagner's reform

02 From his earliest writings, Appia elaborates the concept of *Festspielhaus*—literally meaning “festival hall”—as an urban stage which extends horizontally beyond the theater.

03 Johannes Odenthal, “Danced Space: Conflicts of Modern Dance Theatre,” *Daidalos* 44 (June 1992): 38.

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

05 Anna Halprin and Rachel Kaplan, *Making Dances That Matter: Resources for Community Creativity* (Middletown, Connecticut: Wesleyan University Press, 2019), 15.

06 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.

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

of the dramatic arts.<sup>08</sup> To understand this view of drama, which considers music to be the only art that is non-representational since it does not represent an image but it is the image itself, it is necessary to trace the origins of tragedy,<sup>09</sup> so influential in that period of reflection on modern theater.

Greek tragedy was born in the Dionysian chorus: a level ground on which the spectators leave themselves and enter into the reality of the myth. The Apollonian scene was only a vision of that myth, embodied in the reality of the chorus through music, language, and movement. Indeed, originally, there was no separation between actors and spectators since the drama was not conceived as a work of art but rather as a choral and collective experience unified by music.

Both Wagner and Appia attempt to give back to music its subordinating role in the drama and reinvest the sense of unity through abstract landscapes rising from the stage.<sup>10</sup> In Appia, this abstraction takes the form of platforms rhythmically united by steps: rigid planes in contrast to the mobile human body.<sup>11</sup>

As Appia does with theater, in landscape Lawrence Halprin abstracts the ground into horizontal lines that are put at the service of movement. Only this abstraction serves to make visible the process of form-making in nature and reproduce the experience of it in landscape.<sup>12</sup> Notably, at the time of his collaboration with Thomas Church, movement represented a design principle on its own, whereby gardens were reduced to simple planes of sweeping lines, comparable to stage sets for domestic life.<sup>13</sup>

## ESPACES RYTHMIQUES

In the spring of 1906, Adolphe Appia attended the first public demonstration of rhythmic gymnastics lessons given by Jaques-Dalcroze and saw in it the confirmation of his first intuitions about bodily movement as a unifying element in staging, as well as a means of rendering music something that concerned the whole body.<sup>14</sup>

A prolific collaboration emerged between Appia and Dalcroze, which began between 1909 and 1910 with Appia's elaboration of around twenty drawings of spaces for rhythmic evolutions, the renowned *Espaces Rythmiques*. This series of drawings brings together all the principles of his previous writings, but above all, those that would be presented in his last work, *L'Œuvre d'Art Vivant*. In this text, the rhythmic spaces are implicitly described. The space is made up of a limited number of lines: first, the horizontal one, which expresses the gravity of the body; then, the vertical one, which corresponds to its uprightness. These two lines sometimes meet in the staircase, an obstacle *par excellence* to engage the body in its unity and theatricalize its movement. Nevertheless, the horizontal line remains for Appia the most important, since from this line the stage setting rises.

In *L'Œuvre d'Art Vivant*, as well as through the *Espaces Rythmiques*, Appia presented for the first time the idea of what movement represents: life in art. Movement is the guiding principle that regulates the union between music, body, and space, converging the various art forms at a given point.<sup>15</sup>

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

09 See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The birth of tragedy and other writings*.

10 Anno Mungen, "Entering the Musical Picture: Richard Wagner and 19th-Century Multimedia Entertainments," *Music in Art* 26, n. 1–2 (2001): 123.

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

12 Lawrence Halprin, "Nature Into Landscape Into Art," *Ekistics* 55, n. 333 (November 1988): 351.

13 Lawrence Halprin, "The Choreography of Gardens," *Impulse* (1949): 32–33.

14 As he himself reveals in the preface to the drawings within *L'Œuvre d'Art Vivant* (Genève: Édition Atar, 1921).

15 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. Christopher Baugh, "Richard Wagner, Georg Fuchs, Adolphe Appia, and Edward Gordon Craig," in *The Routledge companion to scenography* (London: Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 365.





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Adolphe Appia, Espace rythmique, Terrasse avec trois piliers (i), Les Trois piliers (ii), Trois marches (iii), Ouverture (iv), 1909–10. From MAH Musée d'art et d'histoire, Ville de Genève.

The spaces designed by Appia are rhythmic in that they punctuate the cadence of space and body movement. This is through their composition, the alternation of built and empty space, and the presence of steps that act as transitions between one platform and another. The steps, in particular, through their sequence and organization, influence the gait of the body and translate a sense of order and discipline to movement.<sup>16</sup>

One critical problem Appia raised in his later writing is the incongruity between the immobility of works of art and the mobility of life that these works of art represent. The solution, in his view, is embedded in the human body itself, which is the *living work of art*. The body is the only creator of dramatic art, being both actor and spectator of the drama.<sup>17</sup>

The fact that a drama does not need spectators in order to occur explains the ambiguity of *Espaces Rythmiques*, which exist even without spectators. The ambiguity of these spaces also results from the very principle of horizontality: since no vertical elements suggest the existence of an interior and an exterior, the spaces could represent stagings as well as urban landscapes.

Already in his first book in 1895, Appia depicted the imaginary of *Festspielhaus* as a diffuse space able to accommodate the manifestations of artistic and social life not only on stage but in the entire city, as if the theater spread 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, in the utopia of a *Totaltheatre*.<sup>18</sup>

## INSTITUTE DALCROZE

The architectural responses to the rhythmic spaces designed by Appia have their origins in the history of the first garden city in Germany. After attending a rhythmic gymnastics demonstration in Dresden, Wolf Dohrn, the first secretary of the *Werkbund*, proposed that Dalcroze use a purpose-built location in Hellerau to teach his methodology. Rhythmic gymnastics would extend its pedagogical objectives to bring the individual's entire personality into alignment with the project of social reform of the garden city. Rhythm would punctuate the time of dance but also the times of work, rest, and festivity.

The idea of rhythm becoming an inseparable component of everyday life, a totalizing element combining art and work, raised the challenge of constructing a space dedicated to making evident the influence of rhythm on the experience of movement. This space was conceived as a performance hall where rhythmic gymnastics festivals would be held every summer and announced all over the world. The imaginary of a *Festspiele* as majestic festivals that include the participation of an entire people, of a chorality lost since the Greek tragedy, is a vision already present in Appia's early writings, and which is partly realized in the construction of the Institute Jaques-Dalcroze, a *Festspielhaus* that serves as a new community theater in Hellerau and the location for Dalcroze's teaching.

Even if the realization of the project was assigned to the young Heinrich Tessenow, Dalcroze made sure Appia was involved in every aspect of the design and construction of the Institute. The three of them met in Lausanne in April 1910 and later in Dresden in June 1910. The influence of Appia's rhythmic spaces, and of his larger *œuvre*, is readable in the Institute Dalcroze, particularly in the performance hall, where all the principles enunciated in Appia's writings are put into practice.<sup>19</sup> The space is unadorned,

16 Mary Hollinshead, "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.

17 The term originated from the Nietzschean concept of the body in Greek tragedy as a work of art. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The birth of tragedy and other writings*.

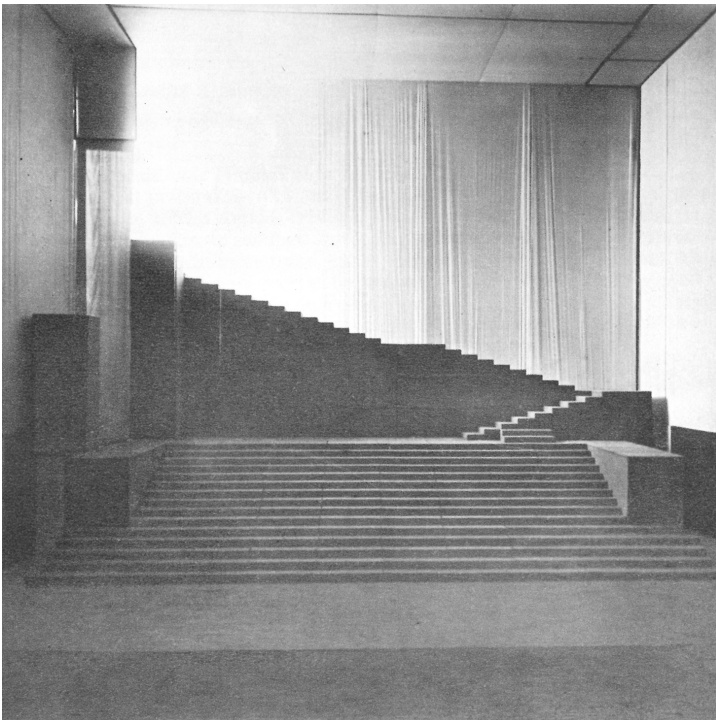
18 Manfredo Tafuri, "La scena come 'città virtuale.' Da Fuchs al Totaltheater," *La sfera e il labirinto* (Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1980), 135.

19 Ross Anderson, "The Appian Way," *AA Files*, no. 75 (2017): 164–182.

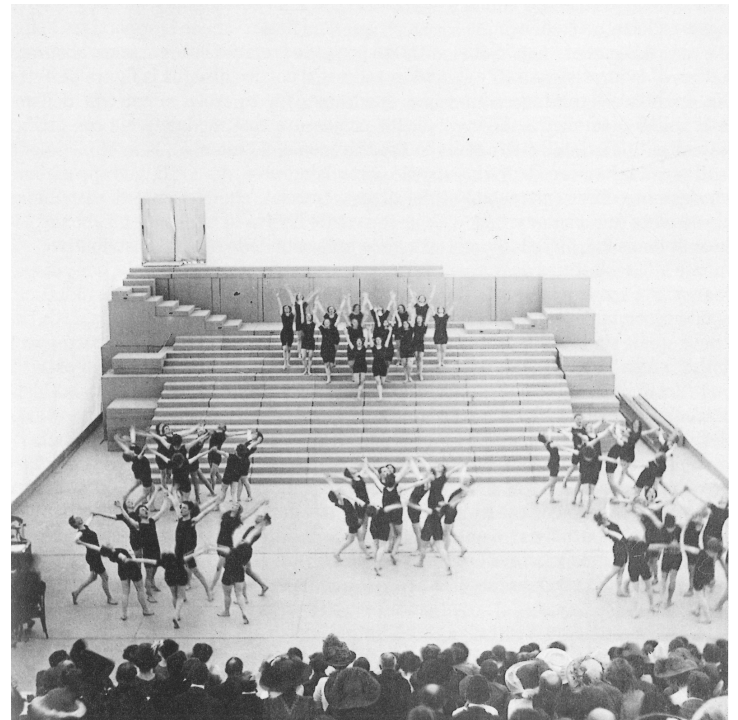


composed of a single platform on which both the stage and the audience assume different configurations thanks to the use of movable stage settings. The walls contain the light installations, thus freeing the space from all other equipment. The floor contains the orchestra, which, when covered, can disappear.

The stage is conceived as a landscape that interacts with the audience, according to the principle that dramatic art is an ensemble work in which the hall is with the stage, the audience with the actors.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, the space itself is reminiscent of the first Greek theaters. This is because the audience sits on steps, the single platform which signifies the performance corresponds to the chorus, and the walls that almost dissolve in diffuse light correspond to the scene.



Adolphe Appia, scene for Act II of *Orpheus and Eurydice* by Gluck, Festspiele in Hellerau, 1912. From Marco De Michelis, "L'istituto Jaques-Dalcroze a Hellerau," in *Heinrich Tessenow (1876-1950)* (Milano: Electa, 1997), 25.



Rhythmic gymnastics exercises in the Institute's performance hall, 1912. From De Michelis, "L'istituto Jaques-Dalcroze a Hellerau," 25.

The abstract and silent architecture realized by Tessenow retreats before the life that awakens in space, placing itself at the service of the body, which, through movement, attempts to recover the point of contact between music and space, lost since Greek tragedy.<sup>21</sup> For the space to come alive and participate in the living proportions of movement, it must be devoid of anything that does not originate in the living presence of actors.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, the stagings designed by Appia and realized in the Institute are unadorned, as is the body itself. On stage, the body is covered only by a black overall to render the light visible. The costume was conceived as an element of staging in its own right. It therefore had to obey the principle of subordination to the body, itself under the orders of music.<sup>23</sup>

The sets designed by Appia are conceived from the space intended for movement, but also from the movement that inspires and conditions the space, the one without the other remaining fragmentary.<sup>24</sup> By space is

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

21 Adolphe Appia, "La gymnastique rythmique et le théâtre," *Œuvres complètes*, vol. III (L'âge d'homme, 1983), 146.

22 Adolphe Appia, *L'Œuvre d'Art Vivant*, 112.

23 Adolphe Appia, "Du costume pour la gymnastique rythmique," *Œuvres complètes*, vol. III, 158.

24 Adolphe Appia, "Art vivant ou nature morte?" in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. III, 65.

meant both flat surfaces and obstacles destined to render the body more aware of its balance, flexibility, and its unlimited number of possibilities. For this reason, Appia's stage settings are essentially composed of stairs, as the staircase forces the body to become aware of its movements through the slowness it imposes.

The Festspiele at the Institute Dalcroze proved a huge success all over the world.<sup>25</sup> In the summer of 1912, Appia and Dalcroze staged *Echo and Narcissus* and the second act of C.W. Gluck's *Orpheus and Eurydice*, repeated in 1913. In these stagings, Appia practiced the principles of the *Espaces Rythmiques*, which will have an influence on the history of modern theater in the centuries to come.

## DANCE DECK

The first stage Lawrence Halprin realized in 1954 was one for his wife, Anna, on their property in Kentfield, California, which would serve as an explorative platform for movement. The project is, in fact, a real deck, a non-formal stage composed of simple planes made of platforms, within which a few vertical elements anchor the horizontality of the composition. The whole project is a choreographic sequence, starting from the house down countless steps, through the woods, and onto the deck.<sup>26</sup> The latter is composed of broad steps and narrow subspaces, which allow multiple settings for performance and stimulate both view and participation, blurring the limits that separate dancers and spectators. Indeed, in the first Greek theaters, broad circular steps were a spatial device creating a sense of proximity within the audience and concentrating its attention on the drama, as well as an intentional display to encourage participation.<sup>27</sup>

Here, as in original Greek theaters, steps act as devices for both enhancing immersion in the performance and stimulating participation. The largest main platform represents the Dionysian chorus, whose smaller contiguous platforms define its form. The trees of the forest correspond to the Apollonian scene dedicated to distance and contemplation. The effectiveness of this spatial device lies precisely in the fact that it offers a choice between contemplation and participation.

Similarly to the earliest dwellings in history, platforms allow the performance of ordinary movement. The platform, disposing of a clearly defined form, allows for the performance of rituals in acting as a stage. However, being a horizontal surface not delimited by vertical elements, it does not exclude the spectators standing outside of it and, on the contrary, incites their participation.

Being an outdoor platform, the deck is altered by atmospheric agents, making it a space in constant movement. The weather-borne variations within the deck act as scores, as constraints for the bodies, increasing the attention of the bodies themselves to the quality of movement and amplifying their limits in explorations.<sup>28</sup> In addition to these external variations, the internal configuration of the deck, characterized by alternating wide and narrow spaces, leads to an urgent need to move and explore space through movement.<sup>29</sup> The complexity of this environment simplifies movement, offering it limits in exploration, as the body doesn't have the time to intellectualize the surrounding changes. Another aspect proper to the deck with respect to conventional stages is the impossibility of having a fixed visual reference point, as the space is composed only of irregular shapes, thus forcing bodies to find internal, and not external, points of reference.

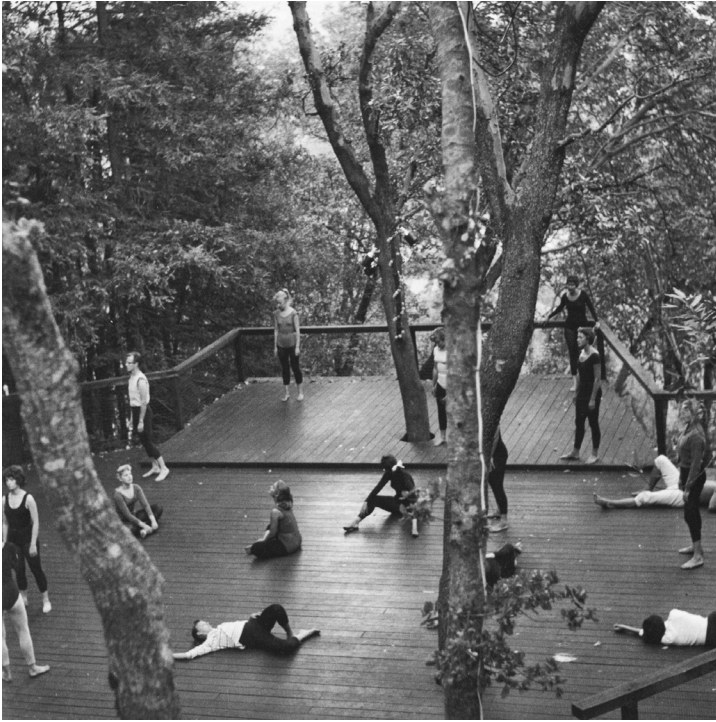
25 Richard Beacham, "Appia, Jaques-Dalcroze, and Hellaer, Part Two: 'Poetry in motion,'" *New Theatre Quarterly*, vol.1, n.3 (1985): 245–261.

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

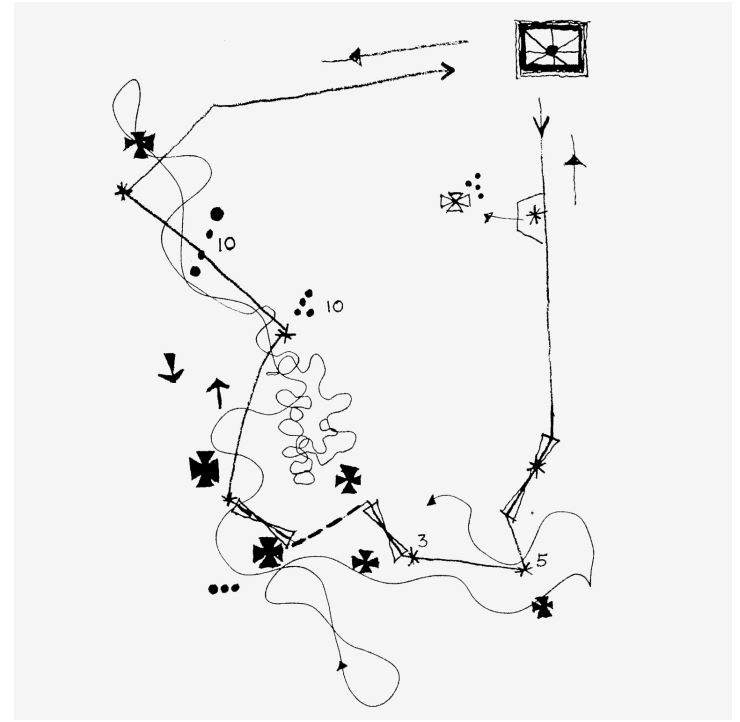
27 Mary Hollinshead, "Monumental Steps and the Shaping of Ceremony," 50.

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

29 Serena Massimo, "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): 119–122.



Ernst Braun, Anna Halprin's summer workshop, 1959. From Bennahum Ninotchka, Perron Wendy, and Robertson Bruce, *Radical Bodies: Anna Halprin, Simone Forti, and Yvonne Rainer in California and New York, 1955–1972* (Santa Barbara: Art, Design & Architecture Museum, University of California, 2017), 31.



Lawrence Halprin, Plan for a 45 minute-environment, 1962. From Lawrence Halprin, *Notebooks 1959–1971* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972), 73.

Experiences on the Dance Deck allowed Anna Halprin to enlarge domestic performances into landscape, notably through *The Prophetess* in 1947 and *Hangar* in 1957, and to discover how collective movement can create a sense of community, a theme later developed on an urban scale in *Ceremony of Us* in 1969, a performance aimed at overcoming racial and social prejudices.<sup>30</sup>

Some of the most important figures of modern dance have performed on the deck, such as Merce Cunningham, Simone Forti, A. A. Leath, Yvonne Rainer, Trisha Brown, and Robert Morris.

While Anna Halprin was experimenting on the deck, Lawrence, developed a system of movement notation named *Motation* that would serve as a design tool to conceive space through movement.<sup>31</sup> This was developed after observing the dancers' movement, which then became an element of design to the measure of others, and probably over others, since one of the fundamental characteristics of space is to be constantly in motion in a way that is specific to life.

## FORECOURT FOUNTAIN

The system of movement notation is put into practice by Lawrence in the Open Space Sequence project in Portland: a choreographed walking sequence structured by water that links four urban plazas. In this project, *Motation* serves to choreograph a sequence of movement that offers the experience, but not the appearance, of nature.<sup>32</sup> As Lawrence Halprin explained in his essay *Nature into Landscape into Art*, it is not the form of nature that is transcribed into urban space but the dynamic experience of it.<sup>33</sup>

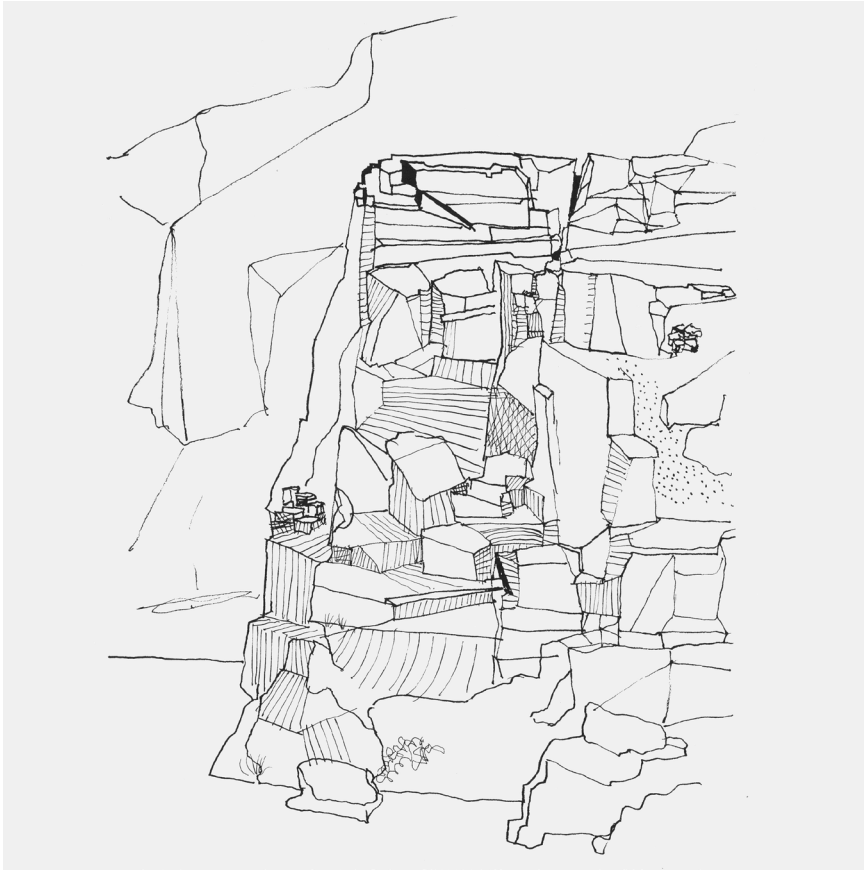
30 Peter Merriman, "Architecture/Dance: Choreographing and Inhabiting Spaces with Anna and Lawrence Halprin," *Cultural Geographies* 17, no.4 (2010): 434.

31 Lawrence Halprin, "Movement Notation," *Cities* (New York: Reinhold, 1963), 208.

32 Laurie Olin, "An American Original: On the Landscape Architecture Career of Lawrence Halprin," *Taylor & Francis* 32, no.3 (2012): 153.

33 Lawrence Halprin, "Nature Into Landscape Into Art," *Ekistics* 55, n. 333 (November 1988): 352.





Lawrence Halprin, Possible wall for Portland fountain, 1968. From Halprin, *Notebooks 1959–1971*, 284.

Over several years, Halprin explored landscapes with the desire to understand the origins of natural form, particularly noting the movement of water and describing its dynamic qualities.<sup>34</sup> Water is an element present in all urban landscapes designed by the landscape architect, as it produces a strong sensorial and emotional involvement and encourages participation in movement. Influenced by Jungian thought and practice, Halprin saw one of the strongest collective archetypes in water, the sound and sight of which stirs the most elemental, innate roots.

The kinetic approach to movement in urban landscape comes from the influence of Moholy-Nagy's teaching at Harvard, and particularly from his manifesto *The New Vision*.<sup>35</sup> In the latter, space is defined as a sensorial experience, a relationship between forces in *in*-visible tension. According to this definition of space, all architecture is a creation of spatial relations in constant balance. The complexity of space, therefore, derives precisely from being able to render visible these forces. As is the case in the Open Space Sequence, where movement defines the design of space, that is constantly conceived with the idea of the body in motion.<sup>36</sup>

The transcription of Lawrence Halprin's observations of natural processes and body movement into space is particularly explicit in the last urban plaza inaugurated in 1970: Forecourt Fountain, an urban theater where ordinary movements as well as formal performances can take place. The irregular configuration of the fountain alludes to the waterfalls observed along the Columbia River, here represented in abstract volumes, which, although not natural, reproduce the experience of nature in landscape.

34 Lawrence Halprin, *Notebooks 1959–1971* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1972).

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

36 Alison Hirsch, *City Choreographer. Lawrence Halprin in Urban Renewal America*, 44.



Auditorium Forecourt Fountain, opening day, June 23, 1970. From Randy Gragg, Janice Ross, John Beardsley, and Susan Seubert, *Where the Revolution Began: Lawrence and Anna Halprin and the Reinvention of Public Space* (Washington DC: Spacemaker Press, 2009), 10–13.

The Fountain is an urban stage evoking the composition of early Greek theaters, where steps are a device to both focus the audience's attention and stimulate its participation; platforms suspended over the water correspond to the chorus; and the waterfall scene represents the Greek topographical landscape alluding to a more contemplative dimension of the ritual. As in the Dance Deck, the possibility of choosing between assisting and participating produces a creative attitude in the behavior of passers-by, who become responsible for the evolution of the performance.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the very form of the platforms, defining a clear and inclusive space, encourages the involvement of bodies in movement.

Lawrence Halprin's gesture, more than introducing the experience of nature in urban space, recovers the capacity of every experience to be an aesthetic one, offering a space in which domestic behaviors transform into public performances. The utopia of a Festspielhaus readable through Apia's drawings for *Espaces Rythmiques*, as of a theater diffused throughout the city in which body movement could express itself everywhere, is realized here in Forecourt Fountain and, more broadly, in the Open Space Sequence.

Not only is the dynamic dimension of nature recreated in Forecourt Fountain, but also the danger associated with it, as reproducing the force of nature within an urban space implies that the experience of it is at everyone's own risk. This system of internal responsibility of the individual, as opposed to the system of external regulation of space, enhances the participant's ability to anticipate danger and stimulates the imagination when

faced with unforeseen situations, as well as encourages movement.<sup>38</sup> The simplicity and clarity of the compositional elements invite bodily participation, while at the same time, the abstraction of volumes leads the bodies to create their own rules of play, interacting with each other in a physical rather than verbal way.<sup>39</sup>

In Lawrence's projects, people learn how to move in relation to space on the ground plane, which serves as a stage above which to perform private behaviors and domestic experiences, questioning the separation between the public and the domestic sphere.

### IN THE EXPERIENCE OF MYTH

The three last case studies are essentially interpretations of early Greek theaters, in which steps welcome the audience and serve to concentrate the attention, while the stage invites the audience to either assist or participate to the performance, and the scene recalls an individual act of contemplation.

The configuration of early Greek theaters is particularly interesting as it returns to the stage its primary value. When religion and ritual blended together, the stage was larger than the audience, for in the beginning, there was no difference between the audience and the performers, nor between the steps and the chorus, since the chorus was the drama itself. While the set was a view to the landscape around and below the theater that consisted of a levelling of the topography. In fact, like in the earliest dwellings in history, Greek theaters are defined by the leveling of the ground into platforms, allowing the performance of the ordinary. This leveling equally translates in the case studies into the abstraction of the ground into platforms, which, through their rigidity and estrangement, stimulate the interaction between body and space, thus supporting the performance.

Another element that persists from the earliest Greek theaters until today is the dichotomy between Dionysian and Apollonian. Although the Apollonian scene emerges after the Dionysian chorus, it has gained more and more importance to the point of corrupting the very principle of the dramatic arts. The three case studies tend to return the performance to its primitive Dionysian dimension, which is more direct, simple, and experienced collectively, as opposed to the Apollonian, which is instead more elaborate, intellectualized, and contemplated from an individual point of view. The two couples of choreographers and designers make theater, as well as landscape, into an experience rather than a vision, one that is practicable in everyday life through bodily movement.

Already in Nietzsche's sense, and even more so today, distance has taken identification over, 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 space from the physical and experimental dimension of movement, is a means of recovering the ritualistic aspect of life, within which the body identifies with myths and experiences.

38 Annalisa Metta and Benedetta Di Donato, *Anna e Lawrence Halprin. Paesaggi e coreografie del quotidiano* (Melfi: Casa Editrice Libria, 2014), 79.

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



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