

International Symposium of the journal *Estudis Escènics* 2024

Live Art and Uncertain Technologies

Institut del Teatre, Barcelona, 3 and 4 October 2024

In 2024, the focus of the Symposium will be on the relationship between live art and technology, with special attention on those technologies that we have called "uncertain" due to their hybrid nature, the indeterminacy of their use and their propensity for rapid evolution often leading to unexpected paths, based on digital media and virtual tools. We are interested in reflecting on how technology "modifies" or expands the body itself (devices, virtual reality interfaces, neural implants, prostheses, etc.), how all this can impact on relationships between people showing, consequently, repercussions for creation. We are therefore interested in exploring the performing arts potential of this kind of technical innovation: what opportunities does it provide when it comes to expanding the concepts of *theatricality* and *performativity*? How can virtuality dialogue with the in-person nature of theatre?

Questioning the multifaceted quality of identity and the bodies that digital technologies stress in the contemporary scene is the general framework of this symposium. The call is to share research and practices related to this phenomenon, which is not new but is accentuated in the digital age in which we live. The co-presence of the physical body and the machine, or the dialectic between the real body and the virtual body, or the increasingly recurring use of exosomatic devices, are facts that historically accompany a process of decentring, reformulation or even dehumanisation of the individual. Our aim is to trace in live art, as a laboratory of everyday life, these multiple qualities of the theatrical body, which is both present and split in its image, prolonged, amplified or replaced, in order to recognise it as fragmented and fragile.

The symposium will endeavour, therefore, to open a shared space for reflection and dialogue based on these themes, with the aim of drawing theoretical lines and imagining possible future horizons, based on four approaches that continually dialogue and intersect

with multiple points of contact: virtuality and presence; technology as an extension of the body; non-human presences and agencies; the transformation of live art.

Thematic lines

Virtuality and presence

If one of the collateral effects of digitalisation is a certain sense of dematerialisation of bodies and virtualisation of experiences, we ask ourselves how we can approach this apparent dislocation through the specificity of live art. We are interested in questioning the value of presence as well as the poetics of absence and the relationships between the two.

Technology as an extension of the body

Beyond understanding technologies as a tool, we are concerned with those perspectives that allow us to imagine them as a body, or as an extension of a body. We want to dialogue with practical or theoretical approaches that particularly consider this material and sensitive dimension of technology, and that help us understand it in coexistence with other bodies.

Non-human presences and agencies

Applications, circuits, robots, materials or microorganisms are some of the bodies that are increasingly part of creative teams and approaches. We are interested in looking at performative processes where these new actants are the protagonists, as well as establishing lines of dialogue between the disciplines that deal with them and the knowledge of live art on issues such as empathy, convention or the autonomy of objects.

The transformation of live art through technology

Despite the feeling that we are in a moment of technological change, technology has always been inseparable from live art and its transformations. We welcome contributions that explore the links between technical changes and aesthetic or dramaturgical transformations that live art has experienced historically and is experiencing today.

The 6th International Symposium of the journal *Estudis Escènics*, to take place at the Institut del Teatre in Barcelona on 3 and 4 October 2024, announces its Call for Papers.

Paper proposals (around 15' - 20') can cover any of the four lines of debate in the Symposium and can be submitted (in Catalan, Spanish or English) until 15 May 2024 through the following online form: <https://forms.office.com/e/9yd6uwW6YQ>