Digital Performance Now is the first symposium organized by the Digital Performance Network (DPN). The symposium will bring together artists and researchers (most of whom are DPN members) to discuss new technologies in theater, with a particular focus on the encounter between virtual reality and theatrical art. The meeting will take place in a virtual world in which the speakers will appear as avatars, creating a dematerialized agora that will *de facto* open the debate on new spaces of artistic and political expression.

About the Digital Performance Network:

Introducing DIGITAL PERFORMANCE NETWORK: an innovative platform that merges virtual reality technology and live theater experiences. Our goal is to redefine traditional theater by creating a groundbreaking platform that offers immersive, inclusive, and collaborative experiences.

DIGITAL PERFORMANCE NETWORK is focusing on creating live performances taking place simultaneously on many stages. Each location consists of one or more actors and two or more projections, along with virtual reality equipment, with a live audience present. The performances also occur in a virtual layer, using multiplayer tools where actors on each stage share a common virtual layer. This layer is materialized on each stage in all the locations through video streamings, input, and output streams from and into virtual reality, using multiple projectors to create digital set design and add a virtual reality layer to the physical reality. The audience can participate live both in the physical reality layer and also virtually, using virtual reality equipment.

Symposium topics:

- XR TECHNOLOGIES & TRANSMEDIA STORYTELLING
- EXTENDED WORKFLOWS & HYBRID PRACTICES
- XR IN EDUCATION
- HUMAN-COMPUTER INTERACTION
- REFLECTIONS ON PERFORMING IN/PERFORMING WITH THE VIRTUAL
- AUGMENDING COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCES IN PERFORMING ARTS
- ACTIVATING AUDIENCES THROUGH XR NARRATIVES
- THE   POLITICS OF PLACEMAKING THROUGH HYBRID PERFORMANCE
  or: How I Learned   to Love VR
- RECONSIDERING LIVENESS: A HEIDEGGERIAN ONTOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF TRADITIONAL AND VR THEATRE

LINE-UP

10am - 10:30am CET

Krzysztof Garbaczewski

Poland / theatre director, XR kabbalahist

Subject: *Digital Performance Now 2025*

10:30am - 11:00am CET

Kyounghee An

South Korea / Far East University Professor, Director, Actor, Facial Action Coding System Programmer

Subject: Reconsidering Liveness: A Heideggerian Ontological Analysis of Traditional and VR Theatre

11:00am - 11:30am

Romana Isabella Soutus / NASHi Experimental Theatre Club

Ukraine / frontline performance lab

Subject: The Politics of Placemaking in Virtual Reality

short break

12:00 - 13:00pm

Predrag Terzić (FMK Belgrade)

Serbia / artist, theorist, festivalist,

Subject: Extended workflows and hybrid practices

1. a conversation with Georgy Molodtsov
2. a conversation with Sara Tirelli

13:15 - 13:45

Radomir Majewski

PL / Student of Fine Arts in Warsaw and interdisciplinary visual artist

Subject: Designing VR memory worlds

Lunch break

15:00 - 15:20

Chrysanthi Badeka

Greece / Choreographer, Cinematographer, Editor, Videodance Trainer / Media Supervisor of b12 Dance & Performing Arts Festival (Berlin)

Subject: CHOREOGRAPHIC XR THINKING NOTES or messages to my future self

15:20 - 15:40

Elina Roinioti

Greece / Assistant Professor in the Department of Performing and Digital Arts at the University of the Peloponnese

Subject: Tell Me a Story with an R

15:40 - 16:00

Kostadis Mizaras (Greece/ Actor and Puppeteer), **Chrysanthi Badeka (**Greece / Choreographer, Cinematographer, Editor, Videodance Trainer / Media Supervisor of b12 Dance & Performing Arts Festival in Berlin), **Anastasios Theodoropoulos** (Greece / Assistant Professor in the Department of Performing and Digital Arts at the University of the Peloponnese)

Subject: BRAVE NEW WORLD transmedia theater performance – stories from the Greek Hub

Short break

16:15 - 16:45

Billy Clark (NYC – CultureHub / La Mama ETC)

USA / Artistic Director CultureHub, producer, performer, educator

Subject: IRL/URL Performing Hybrid Systems | In search of Transformation at the intersection of Art and Technology

16:45 - 17:15

Rébecca Pierrot

(FR/PL) PhD student at Paul-Valéry University in Montpellier (France) and dramaturg.

Subject: The Digital Performance Network: a dramaturgy of space.

17:15 - 18:00 (end of symposium)

Discussion

Bio's and summaries:

Rébecca Pierrot

Biography

Rébecca Pierrot was born in 1993 in Poznań, Poland. She holds a Master's degree in Theatre and Performing Arts from the Université Paul-Valéry – Montpellier III, under the direction of Didier Plassard, and devoted her first- and second-year dissertations to the work of Polish director Krystian Lupa. Alongside her university studies, she attended the preparatory class at the Conservatoire Régional d'Art Dramatique, in Montpellier. In 2021, she was awarded a doctoral contract at the University Paul-Valéry – Montpellier III to carry out research for her thesis project entitled, *Can the stage direction be passed on? Krystian Lupa and new polish theatrical generations*, co-directed by Didier Plassard (University of Montpellier), and Piotr Rudzki (University of Wroclaw). Since 2020, she has also been active in Theatre in Progress, an association for research and artistic creation in connection with new technologies. Since 2023, she has been a member of Dream Adoption Society, and has worked as a dramaturge on shows by director Krzysztof Garbaczewski: *Germinal,* after Émile Zola, at Teatr Śląski in Katowice; *The Books of Jacob,* after Olga Tokarczuk, at La MaMa Experimental Theatre Club in New York; *Nowy wspaniały świat* [*Brave New World*], after Aldous Huxley, at Teatr Juliusz Osterwa in Gorzów Wielkopolski; *Jephte* by composer Giacomo Carissimi at Tear Łaźnia Nowa in Krakow, as part of Opera Rara; *Tak zwana ludzkość w obłędzie* [*So called humanity in Madness*], at Teatr Juliusz Słowacki; *The books of Jacob / Part II* at La MaMA Experimental Theatr Club in New York, *Agora* at Fabryka Sztuki in Łódz.

subject: The Digital Performance Network: a dramaturgy of space.

Summary:

This talk will offer a joint analysis of the formation of the Digital Performance Network (DPN) and the specific nature of dramaturgical work, through the prism of the shows created by this network. The questioning will focus on the establishment of parameters necessary for network creation and their impact on the dramaturgical creation of the proposed shows. We'll see how certain constraints, implicit in such collaboration, paradoxically become the guarantors of greater creative freedom, but also how the multiplied space offered by this international network, with performances accessible simultaneously in remote and face-to-face settings, influences the content and form of the shows. Finally, how do these different configurations and strata of space (created by articulating real and virtual space) shape the aesthetics of the shows, inserting them into a new geometry of space for theater?

Billy Clark

Title:

Performing Systems: In Search of Transformation and Transcendence

Abstract:

All art has the potential to spark transformation but is it really transcendence that we are looking for? Why are we here? This universal question drives humans to make art but as art practices become more informed by technology, are we moving closer or further away from illuminating our existence? Performative systems that are simultaneously real and virtual may open new potentials for transcendence. If art in itself is transformative, what happens when this art exists between realities? Does a third space emerge? A place for transcendence?

Bio:

Billy Clark is the Artistic Director of CultureHub. A graduate of NYU's Experimental Theatre Wing, Billy is a performer, director, creative producer, and designer working in New York City for over 30 years. His work has been seen at La MaMa, GBGBs, P.S. 122, Theatre for a New City, the Brooklyn Museum, and Asia Society. Internationally he has performed with the Great Jones Repertory Company, in Korea, Serbia, Turkey, Italy, Austria, Japan, Croatia, and Macedonia. He has performed in two of Min Tanaka's world premieres and three of Tamar Rogoff's performance projects. He is a professor at the Seoul Institute of the Arts where he has taught for 16 years. He won an Innovative Theatre Award for the video design of Panorama by Motus and was chosen as one of the 100 Top Creatives by Origin Magazine. He was described as "a lythe and subtle actor" by the New York Times.

Website: billyclark.nyc

Chrysanthi Badeka

Subject: CHOREOGRAPHIC XR THINKING NOTES or messages to my future self.

Summary: The body and the world are not static entities, but they are in constant flux, engaging in a reciprocal dance of influence and transformation. Human body is a dynamic, reprogrammable system, capable of interfacing with bioelectric, biochemical, and biomechanical dynamics. The dancer's body, in this sense, becomes a living interface, mediating between different realms and triggering interactions that transcend traditional boundaries. In the context of bioengineering and hybrid performances the boundaries between life and machine, self and environment are blurred, creating a continuum of emergence and agency. Departing from her transmedia choreographic practice and curiosities, with this participatory talkative promenade Chrysanthi shares raw ideas of interwoven imagery and research notes, proposing choreographic space as an environment for meaningful action and extended thinking, through collective experiences emerged by the body and XR technology.

Short CV: Chrysanthi Badeka after her BA in dance (Athens), she pursued her MFA at NYU - Tisch School of the Arts (New York), focusing on choreography and new media. As maker, propelling dance & composition, her transmedia practice merges movement with XR technology, nature and science, working through different mediums, on or off stage to synthetic environments. Her work has been supported by the Greek Ministry of Culture and NEON foundation, Onassis Stegi and Stavros Niarchos Foundation among others. For 10 consecutive years, she dedicated herself to the promotion of the videodance art form, co-directing AVDP – International Dance Film Festival in Greece (2010-2020). Today she is Media Supervisor of b12 Dance & Performing Arts Festival in Berlin [www.b12.space] // [www.chrysanthibadeka.com]

Elina Roinioti

Subject: Tell Me a Story with an R

Summary: When we discuss virtual experiences and storytelling, we often focus on embodied narratives, branching paths, and environmental storytelling. However, in our attempts to define the virtual narrative experience, one crucial aspect is frequently overlooked: spatiality. Spatiality brings not only opportunities but also significant limitations. The virtual world we design becomes a territorial shell, one that imposes rules of engagement—what is permitted and what is forbidden, how far you can go, and how versatile you can become. But what if we approached the virtual environment as an intermediate narrative space—one that connects the virtual with various instances of the physical? An emergent space that acts as the core of a Labyrinth, from which different stories diffuse across different spaces and time zones. In this performative lecture, we will play a game of stories—all of which begin with an R.

Short CV: Dr. Elina Roinioti is Assistant Professor at the department of Performing and Digital Arts, University of the Peloponnese, specializing in interactive storytelling, narrative design in games, and video game production cultures. Her work explores the intersections of digital arts, cultural policy, and participatory design. She has collaborated with institutions such as Onassis Stegi, EMST, and Playpublik, and co-authored Digital Games and Learning (Kallipos, 2023). She's spent over a decade moving between indie studios, game festivals, and auditoriums — curating events, designing stories and playful experiences and helping creators bring their games to life.

Kostadis Mizaras, Chrysanthi Badeka, Anastasios Theodoropoulos

Subject: BRAVE NEW WORLD transmedia theater performance - stories from the Greek Hub

Summary: Using the experience gathered from collaborations with Dream Adoption Society, members of the Greek Hub will present technical, dramaturgical, and performative aspects of the process. Kostadis Mizaras opens with a philosophical and dramaturgical reflection on Brave New World, invoking Artaud and exploring the mirroring between theatrical illusion and virtual presence. Chrysanthi Badeka then focuses on XR choreography and the real-time direction of a trans-spatial performance, highlighting the interplay between body, scenography and digital space. Finally, Anastasios Theodoropoulos examines how the technical framework not only supported but amplified the artistic impact of the performance. Drawing from video game design, he analyzes how game-based structures can shape embodiment, interaction, and immersive storytelling in VR theater.

Short CVs:

Dr Anastasios Theodoropoulos is Assistant Professor at the department of Performing and Digital Arts, University of the Peloponnese, where he teaches and researches game development, immersive technologies, and human-machine interaction. His work bridges game studies, education, and digital performance, with a focus on creative applications of game mechanics in VR and the arts.

Chrysanthi Badeka after her BA in dance (Athens), she pursued her MFA at NYU - Tisch School of the Arts (New York), focusing on choreography. As maker, propelling dance & composition, her transmedia practice merges movement with XR technology, nature and science, working through different mediums, on or off stage to synthetic environments. Her work has been supported by the Greek Ministry of Culture and NEON foundation, Onassis Stegi and Stavros Niarchos Foundation among others. For 10 consecutive years, she dedicated herself to the promotion of the videodance art form, co-directing AVDP – International Dance Film Festival in Greece (2010-2020). Today she is Media Supervisor of b12 Dance & Performing Arts Festival in Berlin [www.b12.space] // [www.chrysanthibadeka.com]

Kostadis Mizaras is an artist of many practices and disciplines. Actor and puppeteer since the age of 21, he is also a stage director, manager of a photo space in Athens, Greece, cook, waiter and participant or curator of several events and collective actions. He had his first VR experience in november 2023 and as soon he realized that avatars are like puppets felt at ease with the whole thing. He is now based in Montpellier, France.

https://www.facebook.com/share/1CCV2MbgqL/?mibextid=wwXlfr

http://whyownblog.blogspot.com/p/blog-page.html

Predrag Terzić

Summary:

I believe that if contemporary art is to remain vital, it must move through complex territories where the boundaries between image, body, space, and technology are increasingly porous. I don't believe in returning to some notion of an "authentic gaze," but I do believe in art's capacity to slow down automated ways of seeing and to construct new zones of attention. And it's through that attention—through micro-interventions in how we perceive space, movement, and rhythm—that I see a possibility for artistic resistance.

Short CVs:

Graduated from the Belgrade Faculty of Fine Arts, Department of Painting in 2000, Professor Čedomir Vasić's class. Master's degree at the same Academy. In 2001. Members of the Association of Fine Artists of Serbia (ULUS). He obteined his PhD degree in the Interdisciplinary Studies of Theory of Art and Media, under the mentorship of Professor Divna Vuksanović, PhD, at the University of Arts, Belgrade. https://terzicpredrag.com/bio/
Subject: VR and Technology

Summary:

We can say that the specific technological nature of new media has helped the growth of virtuality and its increasingly significant development. In this way, the question of reality also arises, which can be a thematic object, directly articulated by virtualization processes, which have been encouraged by new media. Through this articulation of the real and the virtual, the context appears as a synonym for derealization, further emphasizing the view that the virtual is only a suspension of the real. Referring to Henri Bergson here, the virtual appears more as a relational concept than a mere ontological operator. The dynamic framing of what we mean by reality is largely a consequence of such inclusion of the virtual in meaning-making processes. In other words, the real, through the virtual, opens up to the possibilities of its realization. You can learn more about this way of acting and working in a conversation with Georgy Molodtsov

https://gmolodtsov.com/

Predrag Terzić

Subject: Extended workflows and hybrid practices

Summary:

With the emergence of new media, reality and meaning-making processes can no longer be considered from a logocentric perspective. Language is no longer the dominant form, but merges with images and other modes of mediation. In other words, the increase in possibilities in the constitution and perception of reality is also related to the growing articulation between different media. When we talk about the articulation of words with images, not only space and time are transformed, but also their nature is symbolically transformed. This leads to the fact that new technological devices reveal this convergence of media, words with images, images with music, and through which communication and perceptive spaces can be renewed that can no longer be identified with the traditional characteristics of each involved media. More about it through a conversation with Sara Tirelli
https://www.saratirelli.com/

Kyounghee An

Bio: Kyounghee An is the Head of the Department of Theatre and Acting at Far East University, South Korea. She holds a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Arts from Sungkyunkwan University and an MFA in Theatre Practice (with Distinction) from the University of Exeter, United Kingdom. Her doctoral research focused on the development of innovative actor training methodologies, particularly through the application of Facial Action Coding System (FACS) to refine and enhance expressive capabilities in facial performance. Professor An is widely recognised for her dynamic international collaboration, especially with institutions and artists in Denmark, Poland, and across Asia. As an actress, she has appeared in acclaimed productions such as *Samguk Yusa Project – Dream* and *The Temptation of New Feathers* at the National Theatre Company of Korea, Hamletman, Fine Dinning. Her directorial work includes the Korea–Denmark co-production *Sorrow of War*, as well as pioneering virtual reality theatre projects such as *Agora*. She has also directed interactive, site-specific performances including *2022 Elegy for Marginalised Artists*. Her academic contributions span a wide range of subjects in contemporary theatre, with numerous peer-reviewed publications examining the characteristics of VR theatre, advanced methodologies in facial expression training, and psychophysical approaches to actor development.

Subject: Reconsidering Liveness in Digitally Mediated Performance: An Analysis of Essential Differences between Traditional Theatre and VR Theatre through Heidegger's Ontological Framework

Summary:

This study examines how virtual reality (VR) theatre fundamentally transforms the concept of theatrical "liveness" through Martin Heidegger's ontological framework. Using the Korean-Polish collaborative project *Agora Hybrid Virtual Theatre* (2024) as a primary case study, the

research challenges traditional liveness theories proposed by Peggy Phelan, Philip Auslander, and Erika Fischer-Lichte. The analysis demonstrates that existing frameworks, which emphasise physical co-presence or media opposition, inadequately explain the complex reality of digitally mediated performance.

Through Heidegger's concepts of Dasein, Being-in-the-world, and presence, the study reveals how VR theatre creates new modes of existence that transcend conventional spatial and temporal boundaries. *Agora* exemplifies this through real-time testimony about South Korea's martial law declaration, where Korean and Polish actors interact across thousands of kilometres, creating authentic presence in virtual space.

The research introduces "ontological liveness" as a new concept characterised by multiple simultaneous presence, spatio-temporal transcendence, intersubjective constitutiveness, political immediacy, and ontological openness. This framework demonstrates how VR theatre functions not merely as technological innovation but as a medium for exploring new possibilities of human existence and political solidarity.

The study concludes that digital performance art actively investigates new modes of being rather than passively adapting to technological change. Future research should focus on phenomenological analysis of audience experience, techno-philosophical implications of VR technology, intercultural communication possibilities, and conditions for VR spaces as democratic public spheres.

Romana Isabella Soutus/NASHi

Romana Isabella Soutus is an award-winning producer, performer and playwright living in Kyiv, Ukraine. She is the Founder and Executive Director of NASHi Experimental Theatre Club, a Kyiv-based multidisciplinary theatre company that empowers emerging artists to create experimental and innovative performing arts programming for a global audience. Her work also includes "Diaries in Exile", a documentary video series from the Ukrainian/Polish border chronicling the personal stories of the Ukrainian refugees and the immigrants who called Ukraine home, and her solo-performance piece "HYENA!", winner of "Best Experiment Show" at the New York United Solo Festival.

Subject: The Politics of Placemaking in Virtual Reality

Summary:

This speech questions the boundaries between the "virtual" and the "reality" of life in contemporary wartime Ukraine, and how these questions better illuminate our country's unique political intricacies. In this speech, we will explore how the conditions of wartime, including martial law, conscription, and daily attacks, have shaped Ukrainian artists' interactions with the VR as a creative practice.

Radomir Majewski

Bio

Young multimedia visual artist graduated at Academy of Arts in Szczecin and attended academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw. His main field of exploration circulates around the creation of the virtual worlds and their interaction with immersants. Co-responsible for theater plays

that mixed the virtual with reality and a virtual expieriences that had their premiere in Venice and Berlin.

Summary

The study of personal journey with the virtual reality and its possible radiation to fields beyond the technological bounds

Krzysztof Garbaczewski

Bio

Krzysztof Garbaczewski is a director of over 40 theatre productions and the founder of Dream Adoption Society. He uses theatre as a medium to explore existential questions and expand the boundaries of human experience. Since 2017, he has been developing a new theatrical language that merges 3D virtual environments, avatars, digital scenography, and live actors. His innovative approach creates carefully crafted mixed-reality experiences—designed both for online platforms and live audiences. By blending traditional and digital elements, Garbaczewski offers immersive experiences that challenge conventional theatrical norms and invite the audience into interactive, avant-garde narratives.

Summary

In a luminous address that fuses personal reflection, philosophical depth, and visionary provocation, the keynote inaugurates the symposium as a dematerialized agora — a digital amphitheater where presence is redefined. Speaking as both artist and architect of hybrid stages, the speaker recounts a journey through VR theatre experiments, from *Nietota* to the globally networked *Books of Jacob*. The keynote challenges assumptions of reality, liveness, and embodiment, invoking Heidegger, Bergson, Artaud, and Plato to articulate a new poetics of performance: one that embraces paradox, distributed presence, and spectral dramaturgy. The Digital Performance Network is introduced not only as a technological framework, but as a political and artistic gesture — a rupture in space-time, a proposal for a new kind of public sphere. The keynote closes by honoring a diverse group of collaborators and thinkers, inviting all participants to become both actors and audience in this ongoing, planetary performance.