

PERFORMANCE: TRANSFORMATION OF THE SOCIO-CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

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Abstract: In the article, the concept of "Performance" is considered as a leading communicative art practice of socialization of distinct spaces of Western Ukrainian cities, and "Performance studies" is viewed as an effective global interdisciplinary field that studies performance and uses performativity as a method of studying various cultural processes and practice of setting up and collaborating in order to gain the most effective experience. The socio-cultural landscape is a metaphor that allows, among other things, to understand the importance of communication in public spaces, where the individual acquires socially significant experience and is in socially significant relationships as if seen through the realm of the psychosomatics. In this context, performance art pieces, artistic projects, political actionism, and other cultural practices and experiences will be presented on the examples of actionism of Western Ukraine. The scientific novelty of the work is that it underscores the need to involve performance art practices in regulating the socio-cultural landscape of the modern city, based on the analysis of the international scientific discussion of theoretical and practical research about the performing arts. Furthermore, the role of the object in interdisciplinary research was defined.

Keywords: Performance art, Performance studies, Performing arts, Socio-cultural landscape of the city, Western Ukraine.

1 Introduction

The popularity of performative practices in Ukraine has unexpectedly increased in the second decade of the 21st century. Despite the generalization and simplification of the linguistic translation of the group performing arts – performance art to Ukrainian [2, p. 34], the diversity of interpretation of the term "performance" by art critics and culturologists, sociologists, politicians, mass culture [28] remains unchanged in its communicative purpose. Each time the perception of the action by each of the observers is exclusively individual, as is the demonstration of the performance by the author. The process of immersion in practice allows developing imagination, better navigating in space, operating not only in visible forms but also in hidden meanings. These skills are extremely important for a 21st-century society that lives in an accelerated reality.

The performance declares "pure art", free from commercial and institutional dogmas, while at the same time urging the audience to free themselves from imposed norms of behavior and social rules. The study of this artistic practice is relevant for various educational, social, and cultural programs: performance studies are considered as an anthropological discipline by many scholars of European and American universities and colleges [3, 24]; Performance art and other forms of actionism are the subjects of research disciplines of some philosophy and culture departments of Ukrainian universities, departments of art academies in Kyiv and Lviv, cultural centers and galleries established as art laboratories [23, p. 138-141].

Possibilities of museumification of performance art are discussed, the genre is poeticized in modern verbal practices. Elements of the genre are often used in political actionism and in popular culture. Consequently, the term acquires new characteristics and is used in unusual contexts. Appearing in public space, communicating with space through the viewer, this practice from the artistic environment is integrated into the field of culture naturally, which necessitates the involvement of culturological methods in its study.

The socio-cultural landscape metaphor was chosen as an orientation, based on spatial axes, where the horizontal axis is understood as a fixer of the uneven distribution of knowledge and experience, and the vertical one determines the nonlinear dynamics of cultural and artistic processes and practices. The socio-cultural landscape is anthropogenic, determined by the ability to collaborate.

The aim of this study is to trace the dynamics of the use of performance to study the civic potential of Western Ukrainian society based on the analysis of the Ukrainian, European, and American scientific discourse. Accordingly, it is necessary to investigate the peculiarities of the spread of the term and practice of "Performance art" in the artistic environment of Western Ukrainian cities in the late twentieth century, to assess the degree of social reflection, investigate the reasons for the increased public attention to performance in the second decade of the 19th century.

2 Materials and Methods

2.1 Theoretical Background

The works of culturologists and anthropologists Jean-François Lyotard (1984) and Charles Taylor (2007), Volodymyr Yeshkiliev (1998), which raise the issue of changing the aesthetic paradigm from modern to post-postmodern, American scientist and performer Richard Schechner (2013) about the use of performance studies techniques at New York University, the world's largest theater schools, and sociological research were the theoretical basis of the study. The generalized works of encyclopedic nature by Hlib Vysheslavsky (2019), dissertation research of Yaryna Shums'ka (2017), Maria Antonyan (2015), which consider the features of performance art in Eastern European countries, including Ukraine, Russia, Poland, were also significant for the research. International academic dictionaries and materials of publications in the media that determine the "performance" in the arts and culture were used. The text uses the memories of participants and observers of the performances in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk, including the personal experience of the author.

2.2 Research Methodology

Methods of the systematic culturological approach were applied: a method of synthesis that helped to compare and generalize scientific sources and literature; a systematic method for the analysis of culturological aspects of performance, sociological method, where culture is considered as a factor in the organization of public life and the formation of the intellectual landscape. The field research methodology gave the work practical significance due to the use of valuable photography materials and memories of the participants in performative practices. Observing the organization of the performance allowed examining its reflexive effect on the audience. The existing theories on understanding certain qualities of the problem were gathered and scientifically substantiated, and the concept of performance as an important factor of stimulation of the social structure of the city of the hypermodern era was generalized with the help of the aforementioned methods.

3 Results and Discussion

The period of change of millennia was marked by critical processes in political and economic systems and in fundamental unified sciences and social relations. Technology is advancing with incredible speed; hence, adapting to these changes requires more and more effort. The crisis predicted by economists, environmental catastrophes, and simultaneous realities of the current global pandemic requires the mobilization of new efforts and changes in the daily schedule. Among these streams of information, it is extremely difficult to identify particularly important points. Thinking, controlled by media technologies, destroys the sense of reality and provokes crisis relations within society.

The apologist of postmodernism Jean-François Lyotard predicted the collapse of well-known narratives of Hegel's dialectic of reason and general emancipation: "The word is in current use on the American continent among sociologists and critics; it designates the state of our culture following the transformations which, since the end of the nineteenth century,

have altered the game rules for science, literature, and the arts. The present study will place these transformations in the context of the crisis of narratives" [16, p. 23].

Modern human being and society have no transcendent experience. Time "here and now" does not allow delving into the future, and the creation of a new one is most often expressed in the fractalization of the present and the past, the method of serial copying or parody [11]. The desire to reproduce (simulacra and simulation) has become a sign of modernity. According to Guillet de Monthoux (Pierre), a professor at the Department of General Management and Business School at Stockholm University in Sweden, "... Lyotard believed that humanity in its postmodern state had lost faith in global, universal scientific truth, and knowledge is preserved on the small "islands" of creative projects that give rise to new ideas for temporary social forms" [18, p. 326].

In accordance with Lyotard's texts, at the end of the twentieth century, art forms began to develop rapidly, avoiding traditional aesthetics, proclaiming new meanings, avoiding narrative in the visual representation. The main idea was to release the painting from the usual frame and at the same time from the traditional space. Qualifying modernity as post-secular, we touch not only on the relationship of faith and secular consciousness (given the special religiosity of the society in Western Ukraine), but also on the dialogue between different groups of society who have an alternative experience of transcendence, because "...One understanding of secularity then is in terms of public spaces..." [25, p. 2].

The space of the post-secular community is connected first of all with the change of ideas about art, which not only broadcasts the typical, fixed by canons and norms, but also experiments, provokes, looking for the limits of these norms. Art forms left the usual spaces of museums and exhibition halls and went public, which explains the spread of current art practices: graffiti, performances, flashmobs, and the consolidation of this vocabulary in mass use.

For the post-Soviet citizen, whose aesthetic tastes were formed under the influence of socialist realism, the established behavior of a Soviet citizen, these new, incomprehensible actions seemed rather absurd and were associated not so much with art forms as with the idea of the artist as a not very balanced person. The cultural landscape of Western Ukraine is extremely accurately described in Yuri Andrukhovych's novel "Recreations" (1990). The situation of Carnival, which marks the period called the "bad 90's", associated with the collapse of the USSR, the rapid change of overthrown heroes and replacing them with "new" idols, at first glance, seems a complete absurdity and a shocking mystification. The main characters are described as drunken poets who try to live life to the fullest, even in extremely difficult circumstances. Bright happening in the finale of the novel is understood as a bright definition of time: comic, theatrical, unreal, and absurd [1]. However, this cultural landscape "is practically inaccessible to the understanding of the representatives of traditional culture" [7, p. 346].

The first public underground exhibition took place in Lviv in 1987 in the Church of Maria Snizhna. Andriy Sahaidakovskyi exhibited an object that became a kind of symbol of the metamorphosis of new art: plaster lancets, which had previously fixed the artist's injured body, are presented as exhibition works [29]. These objects, which were hollow gaps duplicating the human body, received an artistic context the dumping of old armor from art and life in the broadest sense. Yaryna Shums'ka notes that this exhibition was the beginning of the establishment of new art genres [22, p. 121]. Also in 1990, a provocative landmark exhibition "Defloration" took place: "... We had ambitions then – to blow up lives. Zhora (Yuri Sokolov – NB) gathered around him artists in the unconventional sense of the word – not national, not coming from the union, but others ..." [21].

In Western Ukraine, the term "performance" as a genre of contemporary visual art was first officially declared in the

programs of international festivals and biannual exhibitions of contemporary art in Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk in the 1990s as an alternative art practice associated with postmodern influences. The first "VyVykh" festival took place in Lviv in 1990. The festival program also featured the performance art of V. Kaufman and V. Kostyrko "Transformation of the Flag of Soviet Ukraine into the Flag of Ukraine", during which artists painted the red stripe of the red and blue flag yellow.

In Ivano-Frankivsk, the first performance art performance took place in 1991 as part of the International Biennial Exhibition of Contemporary Art "Impreza" [6, p. 189] and was exclusively artistic in nature. The practice of new genres is associated with a group of artists united by the "Stanislavsky visual phenomenon" [30]. At the closing of the exhibition "Impreza. Provincial Annex No. 2" conceptual artist, Myroslav Yaremak demonstrated performance art, explaining it to the audience as the art of action. The author scattered large paper airplanes in the restaurant during a buffet dinner (Figure 1).



Figure 1 – Myroslav Yaremak. Photos with paper airplanes to demonstrate the performance at the "Provincial Annex No. 2", Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, 1991. Photo: © Pavlo Drobiak. Source: <https://www.facebook.com/csm.if.ua/photos/a.222407487925122/1745895902242932/>.

The planes were painted with arbitrary placed abstract or figurative compositions: "We make this exhibition for you since a new time has come along with new technological processes and new art. Planes fly, people pick up, also throw... At that time, in '91, it looked a little strange, but the guests who came from Europe were very happy and applauded. Then they commented in Warsaw or Munich on Radio Liberty: it turns out that Frankivsk is a city full of art. It has a traditional Soviet Union of Artists, a modern biennial "Impreza", i.e., salon art, and a third form that is completely identical to the European artistic context" [29].

Subsequent performances were even more radical. For several years, the Gentle Terrorism project, through actionism, exhibitions, media appearances, and the publication of its own culturological journal "Kinetsintsem" ("At the End"), popularized the idea of capturing traditional spaces and destroying any canons of acceptable aesthetics. Yaroslav Yanovskiy, a participant in the 2002 rally, the author of a photo project together with Vesela Naidenova, "Constitution Day", which raised unpopular topics of nudity and sex – both in human relations and political content [25, p. 61] – later developed it into a performance art series, based on the same compositional line, but reflecting a different context depending on the audience.

Thus, at the cultural festival of Ukraine in Regensburg, the performance art "Royal Fish" was demonstrated. The action took place on the bridge over the Danube for 15-20 minutes, accompanied by music. Performers dressed in the style of sadomasochistic supporters ("S&M") performed applicable actions: Naidenova humiliated her partner, inflicted cuts on his back with a blade, and licked the blood. In another version, she collected blood in a bowl and then poured it into the Danube. The main idea of this action was the thesis of the unity of acts of

creation and consumption: "... The Danube flows into the Black Sea, and from there, from the Black Sea, trout return to the Prut, and from the Prut – in mountain rivers, where we catch this trout again, that is, that is, the circle is closed..." [15].

Participant of the Stanislavsky Phenomenon, conceptual artist Volodymyr Mulyk describes the performance art of Taras Prohasko and Oleg Hnativ "Letters of a French Officer", which took place in Myroslav Yaremak's gallery "sOBYEKT" in December 1993:

"Prohasko was sitting on a chair, Mokhnatiy (Hnativ – NB) was bewitching something, walking around him, stuffing a jamb (joint – self-twisting with marijuana – NB), then took a straight razor and inflicted real cuts on Taras. Izdryk staged a performance of shaving his head with an electric razor. But unfortunately, he took an epilator instead of a razor, so after that performance, half of his hair did not grow back. So Izdryk became bald" [13]. The scene from this performance is given in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2 – Photo from Yuri Izdryk's speech "Shaving the head with an electric razor". Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine, 1991. Photo: © LubomyrStasiv.

All of these performances took place in a rather closed environment and caused more surprise than a search for context, even among those close to the creative process. According to O. Chulkov, it was "... an attempt to play in fashion..." [13].

The most radical performances had isolated responses in the press, which were based mainly on the description of performative action processes and expressed public condemnation [25, p. 60]. However, this small reaction caused a wider resonance in society than the performances themselves and other genres of contemporary art, testified to the secondary communication through the media.

According to A. Zvizhynskyi: "...artistic practices of contemporary art after the "Impresa" in the city went into a state of rather a guerrilla action..." [12, p. 174] and although we observe a fragmentary declaration of performance art in the programs of cultural and artistic festivals, preference is given to practicing performing arts, such as theatrical productions, music, and dance events. The democratization of the genre led to its transition from the sphere of art to the sphere of culture [2, p. 42-45].

There is the commercialization of art and a symbiosis of distinct cultural spaces through market relations. In our opinion, artists are cunning when they talk about performance art and pure art. Since the 2000s, virtually all stocks have been funded by various foundations, including the Renaissance Foundation (George Soros Foundation). The artist signed a contract, where the action, a work of art, was considered a commodity that had a certain value.

Today's art practices lose their meaning in the absence of the public. Traditionally, mass art usually has a wider audience. Observing the cultural and artistic processes, we note some progress: from almost complete isolation and rejection in the 80's – 90's of the twentieth century to some interest, participation, discussion among today's young audience, whose preferences are more related to mass culture than those of the representatives of classical schools or the older generation.

The mass public does not demand recognition of the "status of creation" in art practices [18, p. 572], so acts of performance become an area of study of social and psychological states, social behavior. Let us display this relationship in following scheme:

governance → *spectator* → *performance* ← *performer* ← *media*

According to Pierre Guillet de Monthoux, performance art originated in the Old World and returned only after rethinking and improving in the New World [17, p. 347], implying the evolution of performance in the U.S. colleges and universities. American rationalism used the performative principle of learning through play in the liberal tradition of education. The practice involved art in contemplating the nature of consciousness.

Analyzing the new social function of performance, we can use Jung's theory of archetypes, which considers "comprehensive ideas or images with the collective unconscious" [14, p. 11]. Archetypes in the everyday model are examples of instinctive behavior, so the introduction of performance in mass culture makes it possible to return to the recollection of custom, ritual practice, and therefore - to the formation of experience. Modern research in the field of performance studies reveals the possibilities of creative laboratories for the study of behavior, social relationships, and other areas of anthropological research:

"As I have said, I consider performance studies to be a paradigm-driven discipline. There is no object (or set of objects) called performance(s), the study of which performance studies take as its purpose. Rather, performance is an idea that serves as the paradigmatic starting point for any inquiry that occurs within the disciplinary realm.

In principle, this paradigm can function as a lens through which to examine almost anything. The project of performance studies as a discipline is to trace the paradigm through analysis of the myriad contexts in which it appears and to which it can be applied" [3, p. 2].

These ideas are supported in the essay *Metamodern view of science* by Hans Freinacht (2017), where the author reflects on the absurdity of traditional methods of cognition because modernity tends to expect the unexpected. The Manifesto of Metamodernism in paragraph 7 proclaims:

"Just as science strives for poetic elegance, artists might assume a quest for truth. All information is grounds for knowledge, whether empirical or aphoristic, no matter its truth-value. We should embrace the scientific-poetic synthesis and informed naivety of magical realism. Error breeds sense" [26].

Richard Schechner notes that "Performance studies starts where most limited-domain disciplines end", calling for any work of art to be perceived not as artifacts but as processes, connections, dialogue between spaces and cultures. He emphasizes the globality of culture: "The current means of cultural interaction – globalization – enacts extreme imbalances of power, money, access to media, and control over resources" [23, p. 3-4].

Western Ukraine has its own experience of using performance in educational practices. Back in 1997, the Lviv Academy of Arts was the place of creation of a diploma project by O. Voronko and O. Furdiyak "Wolves", which was later rethought in the format of performance art "Wolf Live" in Ivano-Frankivsk with the assistance of Kyiv artists R. Andriyashko and G. Butenko (Figure 3).



Figure 3 – Photo from Oleksa Furdiyak's project "Wolves", which was later rethought in the format of the performance "Wolf is Alive". Photo: © PavloDrobiak.

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/csm.if.ua/photos/a.222407487925122/1781805831985272/>.

An aluminum figure-structure resembling a half-decomposed corpse was solemnly carried through the streets of the city and eventually installed in the space of the Art Museum, which is located in the former Roman Catholic Baroque church. This and other figures that looked like wolves were ritually placed in the altar space, appealing to the mention of the theatrical performance of the ritual "pompa funebris", which took place here in 1751 [5, p. 49]. In this action, the performers demonstrated the idea of the death of the artifact in the museum space.

In addition to implementation in educational projects, performance studies are implemented through the festival movement, including "Plus-90" (Lviv), TAM (Lviv), "Days of Art Performance in Lviv" (Lviv), "GogolFest" (Kyiv), and "Porto-Franko Gogol Fest" (Ivano-Frankivsk), "Bruno Schulz Festival" in Drohobych, also well-known performance festivals in Poland. During the festivals, there are open lectures, master classes, open urban spaces, galleries, such as MO "Dzyga" (Lviv), "CSM", "Marginsy" (Ivano-Frankivsk).

An unprecedented event was the "Congress of Painters", announced in the first "Art Residence" program in Ivano-Frankivsk with the participation of Paweł Althamer. The project was implemented in the vast undeveloped spaces of the hotel "Dniester", built in the early twentieth century. Thousands of citizens took part; the act of creating a new art space lasted more than a month - graffiti accumulated on the walls, windows, and ceilings, stacked on top of each other, creating a cultural layer. This large-scale act became an interaction between different groups of the population, generations, and beliefs [20].

The most important idea is to know self, looking for the limits of own perception. Acute social and political issues are also objects of the above-mentioned ways of reflection in the art [4, 28], for example as Project-performance "Rays of Love" Carpathian region, for support of medical workers and the military (Figure 4).

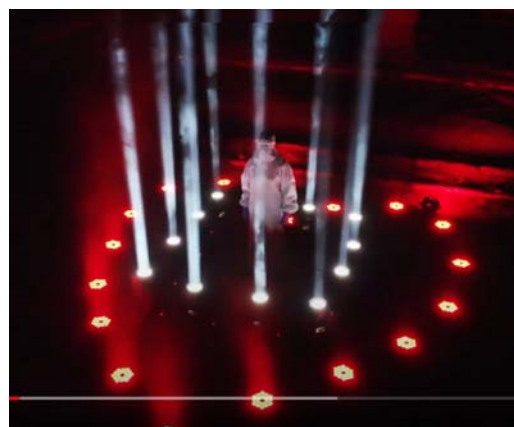


Figure 4 – Project-performance "Rays of Love" (Carpathian region).

Source: <https://kurs.if.ua/society/nad-frankivskom-zasyayaly-promeni-vdyachnosti-dlya-likariv-ta-vijskovyh/>.

Schechner's method is actively implemented in theatrical productions of the Ivano-Frankivsk Academic Drama Theater. Among the techniques inherent in performance studies, we note the involvement of volunteers in theatrical productions, the use of atypical spaces as the theater itself: roof, basement, artist-decorator's workshop, and landscape: the natural environment of Kryvorivnya village (staging of the musical "Hutsulka Ksenia"), Mount Pip-Ivan or the quarries of Donetsk region (the play "Nation"), the urban space of the Potocki Palace. The performances actively use elements of various ancient rituals associated with a funeral or other ritual practices; objects that became metaphors of political processes or mass culture: barrels that were used as drums during rallies on the Maidan during the Orange Revolution and the Revolution of Dignity; an old TV set as a carnival mask or crosspiece and puppet laces as an actor's costume.

A significant source of interest in the theme of performance and the problem of its use as a scientific method of the research of urban cultural spaces is the frequency of use of the term not only by visual artists but also by broad media, politicians, and social services in everyday practice. The universalization of the term took place at the level of lexical use – in the 21st century, the word became more popular than the genre. Thus, analyzing the media, we find many examples where performance means a light show, theatrical performances, names of dance groups, body care products, a popular show in a restaurant. Specifically, socialized strategies of the genre with the use of popular symbols and methods of mass culture are actively used by state structures of Western Ukraine, public organizations, thus declaring important slogans: combating violence, gratitude to doctors and soldiers of Ukraine, the memory of the Chernobyl disaster, communication between youth, etc.

4 Conclusion

The analysis of international applied culturological scientific discourse convinces us of the importance of studying the issues of cultural and artistic research of performance in view of their acute social significance. Performance Studies is chosen as an interdisciplinary field that examines the relationship between political and social relations and the impact of cultural processes in general.

It is determined that performance in the 21st century has become a concept-metaphor. Its identification is rather conditional and vague, which is explained by the expansion of the sphere of influence of performance from art to the general culture. According to its genesis, performance ignores generally accepted norms of behavior, aesthetic rules. It breaks down the boundaries between the artist and the viewer, "sends" the audience to contemplate the root cause of instinctive behavior, which brings it closer to the archetypes, rituals. In the general context,

performance is the practice of blurring the boundaries between any distinct social spaces, so it is a globalized society's cultural phenomenon.

Performance Studies is an important discipline that can be useful for all groups of the socio-cultural urban landscape. Anthropological field studies of performance allow us to understand distinct world cultures or to evaluate our own behavior critically. Artists frequently develop their intuitive abilities through performance, look for hidden meanings in familiar objects and actions. The practice or contemplation of the performance by the consumers of the culture of "Bread and spectacles" (Latin: *panem et circenses*) may consist in understanding one's own assessment of the circumstances, comparing it with the perception of others, perhaps by changing one's position.

Performance is a reaction, often critical, towards society. Performance Studies is an important discipline that can be useful for all cultural groups. Artists and theatergoers, dancers develop their intuitive abilities in this training, looking for hidden meanings in familiar objects and actions. Anthropological field studies of performance allow understanding distinct world cultures or evaluating our own behavior critically. Quoting Schechner, "...Taking a critical distance from the objects of study and self invites revision, the recognition that social circumstances – including knowledge itself – are not fixed, but subject to the "rehearsal process of testing and revising..." [23, p. 4].

Consumers of the culture of "Bread and spectacles" (Latin: *panem et circenses*) immersed in the rehearsal of the "theater of life" have the opportunity to argue with marketing technologies, the commercialization of space. Their training may consist of understanding their own assessment of the circumstances, comparing it with others' perception, perhaps – by changing their position. Government institutions have the opportunity to master additional resources of understanding with the city's distinct environments and at the same time acquire effective methods of personnel management.

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