

# PROCEEDINGS OF THE PERFORMING SPACE 2023 CONFERENCE

(2025)

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PS

### PERFORMANCE & SPACE

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PERFORMING SPACE 2023 CONFERENCE

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# Performing Space 2023

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Performing Space is an ambitious project that aims to explore the relationship between performance and the built environment from all disciplines that study human activity. Using Erving Goffman's (1956) definition in his influential essay *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* as "an action carried out by a participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way in any of the other participants" (p. 8), we could consider that any activity that people perform with the conscious or (usually) unconscious intention of "influencing" their social, but also spatial, environment is a "performance". Our performances influence our environment, transform it, and the environment also influences and transforms us. So, we can deduce the daily activities or rituals of an ancient people from the remains of their environment, and we can also improve the performances of our society by optimising the environment in which they take place. Traditionally, the relationship between space and performance has been studied within the practices and studies of the performing arts. It is only in recent decades that other disciplines such as philosophy, anthropology, architecture, archaeology or cognitive science have become interested in this relationship, but in an isolated way, usually ignoring all the resources that the performing arts have to offer. The study of the relationship between performance and space can only be approached in a multidisciplinary way. The main objective of Performing Space is to create a meeting point where studies from different disciplines can be presented, experimented with and discussed.

The Performing Space 2023 Conference and Workshop, held in Nafplio, Greece, from 7 to 14 July 2023, was the second edition of this project. It was organised by the University of the Peloponnese together with the Polytechnic University of Madrid and hosted by the University of

the Peloponnese. This second edition had 36 papers and 12 workshop participants from more than 10 different countries. In the next edition, in July 2024, the number of papers and the countries of origin of the participants almost doubled, and the number of participants in the three workshops tripled, as a sign of the growing interest in this topic. The results of Performing Space 2023 presented in this publication show some of the main lines of work currently being carried out. A large number of presentations show the performative expression of space through site-specific performances, a recurring line of work since the origins of the artistic expression called Happenings or, later, Performance art. There is also a large number of papers exploring, from different angles, the relationship between space, ritual and myth, a very interesting approach to the built environment that has been recurrent since the 19th century in archaeology, anthropology, geography and sociology, but which is here extended to theatre studies and cognitive sciences. Different philosophical approaches to the scenic space were also presented and we hope that in future editions, within the always necessary philosophical approach, more works on the built environment will be presented. Another interesting approach is represented by the works of different disciplines that use performance as a tool to understand our environment, of which we had several presentations in this edition. One approach that could not be overlooked is the digital, a medium that is becoming increasingly present in our perception of the environment. In this issue, several papers reflected on the use of the digital image in different types of performance. Finally, several papers were presented on the use of performance in education, an increasingly important issue that needs to be addressed in order to counteract the harmful effects of digital media.

In the Performing Space 2024 Conference, these trends have been reinforced with new approaches and new ones have emerged. We hope that the project will continue to be enriched by new editions and new ways of working together in this fascinating way of understanding our world. We would like to thank all the participants in Performing Space 2023 for sharing their research and artistic practice and for providing a rich and diverse body of work that is captured in this volume.