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Conjuring the Threshold

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Conjuring the Threshold A Performative Ritual of Repair

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Abstract

Conjuring the Threshold is a performative ritual presented at Performing Space 2025 in Nafplio, Greece. Rooted in a symbolic wound encountered during the 5,232 km performative walk *Ex-tracés* (from Paris, France to Mardin, Turkey, 2022), the work addresses a denied crossing at the Greek-Turkish border. The performance reactivates that rupture through a precisely choreographed device: an eight-metre red Line-Suture, a synthetic voice reciting GPS coordinates in Turkish and Greek, and a walking body negotiating space, memory, and constraint. Inspired by Turner's concept of liminality and Rendell's exploration of spatial thresholds, the performance seeks to poeticise the act of repair and reclaim agency by transforming an administrative border into an embodied site of passage.

Keywords: Walking Art, Performance, Border, Ritual, Repair, Technology

Conjuring the Threshold

Conjuring the Threshold was presented on 7 July, 2025, in the garden beside the Labour Centre in Nafplio, Greece, during the Performing Space 2025 conference. The performance emerged from a rupture experienced on 2 July 2022, during *Ex-tracés*, a 5,232 km performative walk from Paris (France) to Mardin (Turkey). At Stage 107, on the Greek-Turkish border, I was forbidden to cross a 100-metre bridge walking. This interruption created a symbolic wound within the continuity of my journey.

The performance reactivates this wound through an embodied ritual of repair. It explores the threshold as a physical, symbolic, and temporal space — a site where absence is transformed into presence, reclaiming agency over a denied territory.

Genesis of the Wound

Borders are not just administrative lines; they are lived experiences shaping the body's relationship to space. On July 2, 2022, standing before the Maritsa River bridge between Greece and Turkey, my steps were stopped. The crossing was forbidden to pedestrians, privileging motorised bodies over walking ones. This prohibition fractured a continuous line of thousands of kilometres, creating a *symbolic scar*.

Drawing on Anzaldúa's (1987) concept of *Borderlands*, the moment revealed the border as a site of negotiation between identity, memory, and political power. *Conjuring the Threshold* transforms this rupture into an artistic and poetic act of reclaiming place through walking.

The Device: From Line to Suture

At the core of the performance is the **Line-Suture**: an eight-metre-long medical bandage dyed in red eosin, assembled from four two-meter strips joined with red glue. These visible junctions — like scars — evoke both fragility and resilience.

The soundscape, carried on my body, unfolds over four minutes and seventeen seconds. A synthetic voice reads the GPS coordinates of the forbidden bridge, first in Turkish and then in Greek. At the midpoint, a 20-second silence emerges: a liminal interval where time suspends, echoing Turner's (1969) concept of "in-between spaces."

Ritual of Repair

The performance begins with a spoken prologue, followed by a silent ritual. As the synthetic voice speaks Turkish coordinates, I zigzag towards the Line-Suture — a metaphor for the constrained movement imposed by geopolitical regimes. Reaching the bandage precisely at

the moment of silence, I place my walking stick — the same one carried across 5,232 km — on the ground.

This “gesture of dispossession” opens the possibility for passage.

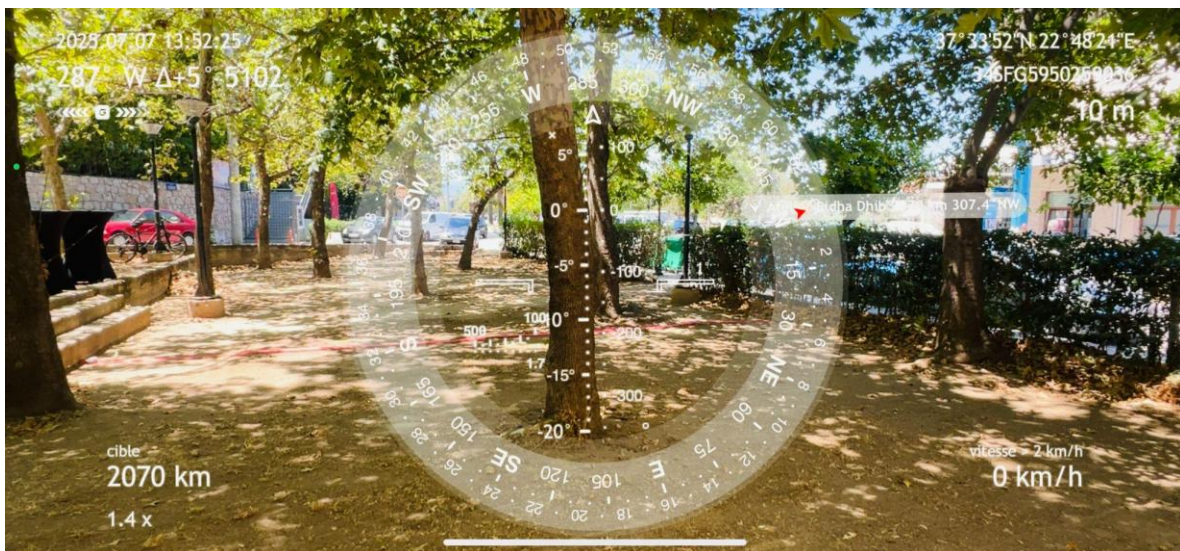
When the voice resumes in Greek, the act transforms: I cross the Line-Suture and walk straight ahead, exiting the garden until I disappear from the audience’s view. What remains is absence, a scar marked in red — a poetic negotiation of denial, embodiment, and repair.

Technology as Extension

Throughout *Conjuring the Threshold*, technology operates as an extension of the body rather than a spectacle. The smartphone, carrying GPS coordinates, and the synthetic voice act as mediators between memory, space, and digital presence. Following Hannah’s (2018) approach to performance spaces, the device functions as an “architecture of passage,” where analogue and digital dimensions converge.

Figure 1

Conjuring the Threshold — The Line-Suture at Nafplio (photo: Ridha Dhib, 2025).



Conclusion

Conjuring the Threshold demonstrates that performance can transform personal and political wounds into collective rituals of repair. By translating a denied passage into an embodied act, the work challenges the fixity of borders and reclaims the walking body’s right to inscribe meaning onto contested spaces.

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