MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

UNIVERSITY OF ARTS OF TÂRGU MUREȘ

DOCTORAL SCHOOL

DOCTORAL THESIS

The Fusion of Digital Technologies with the Performing Arts:

Exploring the Convergence of Visual Media, Postdramatic Aesthetics, and the Reconceptualization of Stage Presence in Contemporary Theater

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UAT Târgu Mureș

2025

I. Justification

This chapter argues that contemporary theatre is undergoing a structural mutation generated by the fusion of digital technologies with the stage language. Video screens, multimedia projections, digital compositions, and interactive interfaces are not peripheral artifices, but constitutive principles of representation: they enter the very dramaturgical architecture, participating, alongside the actor's body and the spoken word, in the construction of meaning.

From this cohabitation results a change of paradigm: the performance is no longer a linear narrative medium but becomes an expanded, multidimensional event, in which live action intersects with visual layers, digital soundscapes, and mediated presences. These elements activate new perceptive mechanisms, subjecting the spectator to a polyphonic experience that simultaneously mobilizes sight, hearing, and kinesthetic perception.

This shift makes research necessary in order to identify the mechanisms through which digital technologies reconfigure the structure of theatrical performance and to analyze the consequences of this reconfiguration on concepts such as theatrical presence, authenticity, and the relationship with the audience.

II. Introduction

The research starts from the observation that the performing arts of the last decades are marked by the ever more visible presence of digital technologies, which have ceased to be used sporadically or illustratively and have become structural elements of theatrical composition. The screen, projection, and video are not only accessories but are integrated into the construction of meaning, redefining both the dramaturgical architecture and the mechanisms of artistic elaboration.

In this context, the aim of the thesis is to analyze the fusion between digital technologies and the art of performance, understood as a complex and multidimensional process that affects all levels of theatrical creation: the stage space, the relationship between actor and image, the dramaturgy of temporality, and the interaction with the audience.

The central hypothesis is that the insertion of visual digital media has generated a postdramatic paradigm, where narrative linearity gives way to fragmentary, layered, and hybrid forms, in which the spectator's perception is engaged in an expanded manner. The research proposes to explore the expressive values of these technologies, the decision-making foundations that guide their use, and the consequences on the aesthetic, dramaturgical, and communicational dimension of contemporary theatre.

Thus, the work positions itself at the intersection of theatre studies, media theory, and performance studies, assuming an interdisciplinary methodology that combines the analysis of theoretical sources with interviews conducted with theatre practitioners and the investigation of relevant case studies.

III. Methodology

The chapter dedicated to methodology describes the foundation of the research and explains why a qualitative approach, centered on interviews with contemporary theater practitioners, was chosen: in order to capture the subtle transformations that technology produces in the performing arts, it was necessary to employ a method capable of foregrounding the voices of those directly involved in the processes of creation. Documentary analysis or classical observation would not have been able to capture, to the same extent, the motivations, aesthetic strategies, and challenges encountered by artists when integrating digital media into stage construction.

The interviews are presented as complex discourses, carriers of artistic and ideological visions. They function both as empirical material and as opportunities for critical reflection, since each answer opens the way to new interpretations and theoretical confrontations. A semi-flexible structure was adopted: on the one hand, the interviews followed a common set of questions to allow for comparison of results; on the other hand, participants were given the freedom to develop personal themes, so that their expressivity would not be limited.

Active creators in the field of contemporary theater were selected, with the aim of including directors, playwrights, and scenographers from different generations, in order to capture the contrast between the perspectives of those trained in an analog era and those who established themselves in the digital age. The age range between 38 and 65

ensured a balanced distribution, reflecting both accumulated experience and the current dynamics of theatrical creation.

Regarding the format of the interviews, the written version was chosen, considered the most suitable for the subject: the absence of time pressure allowed respondents to formulate their ideas rigorously, to develop arguments, and to express themselves in an analytical manner. The result is a corpus of substantial texts that reflect both the practical experience and the theoretical reflection of the artists. From a methodological perspective, this format guaranteed the quality of the discourse and the relevance of the material obtained. The responses were subjected to qualitative content analysis in order to identify recurring themes, to map points of convergence and divergence, as well as to highlight the tensions between different aesthetic approaches. The research did not aim to offer an exhaustive image of the phenomenon, but rather a contextual radiography, filtered through the voices of relevant practitioners.

IV. Theoretical and Historical Foundations of Digital Performance in the Performing Arts

This chapter seeks to outline the theoretical and historical foundations that underpin the emergence and development of digital performance in the performing arts. Before analyzing contemporary examples, it is necessary to take an overview of the ways in which theater, since its earliest forms, has coexisted with technical means, always searching for solutions to amplify the stage effect. From the Deus Ex Machina of ancient Greece—a mechanism designed to introduce the gods into the dramaturgy of tragedy—to the avant-garde experimentations of the twentieth century, the history of theater appears as a continual quest for hybridization between the corporeal and the technical.

In the nineteenth century, Richard Wagner's reflections in the essay Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft provide an essential starting point. His conception of Gesamtkunstwerk—the "total work of art"—advocated for the unification of all arts (music, poetry, painting, architecture, dramatic expression) into an organic synthesis. This integrative vision, not a mere juxtaposition of media but a unified orchestration, anticipated the intermedial logic of contemporary theater. Wagner proposed that performance should become a multisensory experience, in which each artistic element contributes coherently to the

construction of a whole—an idea that decisively influenced the avant-garde of the following century.

The avant-garde of the first half of the twentieth century marks a crucial stage in the genesis of digital performance. In an era shaped by industrialization and technological revolutions, artists felt a discrepancy between traditional forms of theater and the new realities of the modern world. Consequently, they experimented, dismantled conventions, abandoned linear narrative structures, and proposed hybrid forms of expression. The avant-garde was not only an aesthetic movement but also an epistemological stance, an attempt to formulate a new relationship between artist, performance, and audience. Through the blending of disciplines— theater, film, choreography, visual arts, music—an interdisciplinary framework was created that anticipated today's multimedia performance. This synthesis generated amplified artistic experiences that transcended the conventional limits of genres. In this context, digital performance appears as a natural continuation of a historical tendency to explore the technological potential of the performing arts.

Entering the twenty-first century, contemporary theater is defined by intermediality, a concept theorized by scholars such as Chiel Kattenbelt and Freda Chapple. Intermediality does not mean the simple addition of video projections on stage, but rather the organic fusion of the live actor with digital media. Projections, animations, filmed materials, or prerecorded sounds are no longer external elements, but constitutive parts of dramaturgy. The stage becomes a layered space where the actor's body interacts in real time with visual and sonic material, generating a type of expanded performativity. This coexistence of media creates a particular aesthetic: the actor's corporeality is placed in dialogue with his or her multiplied image; classical scenography is combined with dynamically generated digital sets; and the audience's reception becomes an experience of navigating between multiple planes. Intermediality in today's theater is explained not only by technological progress, but also by the broader cultural shift that has transformed the perceptual habits of spectators.

Within this process, postdramatic theater, as conceptualized by Hans-Thies Lehmann, plays a major role. It entails a structural mutation: the dramatic text is no longer central, but placed on the same level as image, body, and sound. The narrative structure becomes fragmented, and the performance functions as a collage of heterogeneous signs. Instead of the unified character and continuous story, we find accumulations of

visual, sonic, and corporeal fragments, which the spectator is invited to assemble. This aesthetic corresponds to the logic of the digital age, characterized by simultaneity, multitasking, and parallel information flows. Postdramatic theater thus becomes the ideal framework for integrating digital media, as the abandonment of linearity allows for free experimentation with projections, electronic sounds, and superimposed visual layers. The result is a kind of theatricality that does not offer predefined meanings, but challenges the audience to construct an active interpretation.

The chapter also provides a historical analysis of early experiments with multimedia elements in theater, highlighting the figure of Erwin Piscator. In 1920s Berlin, Piscator integrated film projections into his epic productions, using them not merely as ornament, but as dramaturgical and political instruments. For him, cinema complemented theater by contextualizing events, introducing documentary images, and amplifying the ideological message. Projections were not special effects, but means through which theater became a critical agent of social reality. This approach paved the way for the later integration of video on stage. Piscator's experiments show that technology, when used intelligently, can enrich theatrical discourse and contribute to the development of an innovative aesthetic. At the same time, his example illustrates the constant tension between the aesthetic and the ideological dimensions of multimedia theater.

Digital performance is therefore the result of a historical and theoretical tradition that has evolved continuously. From the machinery of ancient theater to Wagner's vision of the total artwork, from the radicalism of the avant-garde to the fragmentary aesthetics of postdramatic theater, there is a line of continuity that explains the emergence of today's intermedial performances. What differentiates the present from earlier epochs is the technological scale: augmented reality, virtual reality, and interactive projections transform the stage into a hybrid space where the boundaries between live and mediated, real and virtual, authentic and constructed become fluid. Digital performance is the expression of this new paradigm, in which theater rethinks its functions, roles, and forms in order to respond to a profoundly technologized world.

V. Reconceptualizing Stage Presence in the Context of Theatrical Mediation and the Reconfiguration of Spectatorial Experience

The increasingly complex integration of multimedia elements into contemporary performance art produces a profound shift in how stage presence is understood and, equally, in how the spectator participates in the theatrical experience. This chapter begins from the confrontation between two theoretical perspectives: Peggy Phelan defends the irreducibility of the performative act, arguing that the specificity of theater lies in its ephemeral and unrepeatable character, while Philip Auslander contends that the notion of *liveness* must be viewed in an interdependent relationship with technological mediation. This dialogue between ephemerality and technological reproduction structures the entire contemporary debate on redefining stage presence.

In current practice, the actor no longer appears as the sole center of communication, but as a layered figure, caught between physical corporeality and the image mediated through projections or live transmissions. The actor becomes a mediator, constantly negotiating between tangible reality and the virtual universe, adapting to flows of digital images and sounds. The result is an augmented stage, where live energy and technological representation complement one another. Stage presence is therefore extended beyond the limits of the actor's body, configuring a "distributed presence," divided between the physical and the virtual plane.

This transformation has direct consequences on reception: contemporary audiences, accustomed to the simultaneity of informational flows, can no longer remain passive observers. They are called upon to navigate between multiple layers of meaning, to choose between the corporeal and the projected plane, to decode sound and visual fragments simultaneously. Thus, the spectator becomes a co-author of meaning, constructing a personalized experience by interpreting the scenic puzzle. In some cases, technology produces enhanced immersion, but just as often it is used to generate critical distance, in a Brechtian spirit, by exposing the technical mechanisms on stage. This oscillation between empathy and alienation constitutes a central artistic tool of digital theater.

The chapter also emphasizes the necessity of directorial discernment in the use of technology. Video, projections, or processed sounds have no intrinsic value unless they are integrated into a coherent vision. When functioning as part of a dramaturgical

structure, they can generate expanded visual spaces, energize scenography, and create new mechanisms of cognitive and affective participation. The stage becomes a fluid territory, where material elements overlap with projected ones, and traditional conventions are reconfigured without being annulled.

Therefore, the reconceptualization of stage presence does not entail the disappearance of theater as an art of direct contact, but rather its expansion through the integration of digital media. The actor becomes simultaneously a living body and a mediated image, the spectator transforms into an active participant, and the stage becomes a site of constant interaction between the real and the virtual. This dynamic redefines both the nature of presence and the spectator's experience, shaping a new model of theatricality for the digital age.

VI. Reconfiguring the Aesthetic Dimension of Contemporary Performance: Case Studies

This chapter focuses on the ways in which the aesthetics of contemporary performance have been reshaped through the integration of multimedia technologies. The use of video elements, digital projections, and live transmissions has enabled the emergence of visual universes comparable in scale to cinematic aesthetics, offering new tools for critical commentary on a social reality marked by media omnipresence. Within this framework, the case studies analyzed — The Wooster Group, Robert Lepage, Ivo van Hove, Agnieszka Polska, and Justine Macadoux & Jacques-André Dupont Castro — illustrate how contemporary intermedial theater negotiates the relationship between corporeality and technology.

The Wooster Group, founded in the 1970s under the direction of Elizabeth LeCompte, stands out through a radical aesthetic based on intertextual collage, narrative discontinuity, and visual layering. The actors interact constantly with video devices, multiple projections, and elaborate soundscapes, generating a hybrid stage space where the boundaries between physical presence and digital mediation are blurred. The Wooster Group's work functions as a conceptual laboratory of postmodernism and intermediality. Their performances destabilize the conventions of unity of time, space, and action, requiring the spectator to participate actively in the construction of meaning. Through the simultaneous layering of images, texts, and sounds, the company creates a

stratified theatrical experience that compels the audience to navigate reflexively across multiple planes. This method has influenced numerous later creators, demonstrating the critical and transdisciplinary potential of multimedia theater.

Canadian director Robert Lepage explores multimedia technology as a tool for investigating memory, identity, and the fragmentation of the self. He employs mobile screens, reactive sets, and interactive projections to place the actor's body in continuous dialogue with its visual avatars. Here, video becomes a narrative and symbolic medium through which psychological processes are exteriorized on stage. Lepage cultivates a productive ambiguity: technology does not diminish live presence but reaffirms it, highlighting the irreducible character of theatrical corporeality. The confrontation between the ephemerality of live presence and the stability of the visual double generates a fertile tension, in which nostalgia for bodily authenticity coexists with digital experimentation. In this way, Lepage articulates a type of theater that celebrates intermediality while remaining faithful to the unique vibration of the actor's presence.

Ivo van Hove is the third director considered, one who consistently integrates live video into the architecture of his productions. Unlike the traditional mimetic aesthetic, which concealed technical mechanisms, van Hove exposes cameras, monitors, and equipment on stage. This strategy produces a minimalist and austere aesthetic, where technology becomes both co-scenographer and co-narrator. Actors are filmed and projected simultaneously, while live editing creates a dynamic visual dramaturgy. Narrative structure is deconstructed and reconstructed through video montage, confronting the spectator with a double reality: the actor's gesture and its mediated image. This postdramatic aesthetic transforms theater into an experience of perceptual and reflexive layering.

The analysis then turns to the performance *The Talking Car* by Polish artist Agnieszka Polska. In this production, digital technology has not only an aesthetic but also a critical function, questioning the relationship between the individual and information culture. Digitally generated images, accompanied by an off-screen voice, create an atmosphere of alienation in which the spectator reflects on the role of technology in conditioning perception and collective memory. Through *The Talking Car*, Polska demonstrates how visual media can serve as instruments of socio-political commentary, problematizing technological omnipresence. The spectator's experience is one of tension between

immersion and critical reflection, confirming the potential of multimedia to generate new forms of awareness.

Similarly, *Anatopias* by Justine Macadoux and Jacques-André Dupont Castro explores, through technology, the relationship between corporeality and virtual space. Video projections, in constant dialogue with the actors, produce an effect of augmented stage reality. The space becomes fluid and fragmentary, while the actor's presence is visually multiplied, creating a layered perceptual experience. The audience is invited to interpret the relationships between the scenic and the projected planes, constructing personal meaning through the interaction of these levels.

The comparative analysis of the case studies highlights several major conclusions: technology is not an external addition but a constitutive force of dramaturgy; stage presence is reconceptualized as a distributed reality between body and image; and the spectator becomes an active participant, confronted with the task of navigating multiple layers of meaning. In each case, digital media function both as an aesthetic resource and as a critical vehicle, producing an intermedial theater capable of reflecting the tensions and complexities of contemporary culture. Thus, the aesthetic reconfiguration of contemporary performance lies not merely in modernizing stage technology, but in a conceptual mutation: theater becomes a hybrid space where art and technology merge to generate new ways of sensing, thinking, and experiencing stage presence.

VII. Intermedial Configurations of Contemporary Performance: Visual Infrastructures, Stage Presence, and Aesthetic Reception

VII.1. Visual Infrastructure and the Integration of Video as a Stage-Technological Device in Contemporary Performance

The integration of video technology into contemporary theater performance represents a profound transformation of the visual infrastructure, reconfiguring the relationship between scenography, the actor's body, and the performative space. This process entails both a conceptual commitment and a rigorous management of technical parameters, designed to ensure aesthetic coherence between the digital medium and live stage action.

One of the most important techniques employed is projection mapping, through which images are no longer displayed on standard screens, but on architectural surfaces, mobile set elements, or even on moving human bodies. This visual cartography transforms any volume or textured plane into an active support, and through geometric distortions and topological adjustments it adapts perfectly to the specificities of the stage space. Thus, scenography becomes an interactive network of projectable surfaces, where walls, floors, or costumes are converted into animated screens capable of creating multiple and simultaneous symbolic spaces.

These possibilities have been amplified by specialized software such as Isadora, QLab, or Watchout, which allow the integration of video content—whether generative or prerecorded—with lighting, sound, and movement systems. Through them, theatrical space can be reshaped as a fluid and composite medium, and physical sets can be fully substituted by immersive visual landscapes. In this way, video becomes a tool with equal status in the ecology of performance, directly participating in visual dramaturgy.

On the aesthetic level, the use of video radically reshapes scenographic conventions. Projections can replace painted backdrops and three-dimensional structures, offering far greater flexibility in representing narrative contexts. They can reproduce recognizable environments or generate entirely new, autonomous landscapes, with a high degree of abstraction and expressivity. Moreover, these insertions can externalize affective or psychological dimensions, visually transposing inner states, identity tensions, or intimate conflicts.

Video also contributes to the acceleration of visual transitions, the re-dimensioning of space, and the addition of symbolic and documentary layers. Archival collages, thematic sequences, or socio-political insertions can be integrated without recourse to verbal explanations, relying solely on the suggestive power of the image. In this way, visual dramaturgy becomes an autonomous storytelling instrument, capable of complementing, contradicting, or multiplying the live stage action.

VII.2. Strategies of Light Control and Modeling in Multimedia Performance

In the context of video integration into contemporary theatrical performance, the control and modeling of light become decisive factors for the aesthetic and technical coherence

of the production. Digital projections require a well-calibrated optical environment, usually characterized by low ambient light intensity, which makes close collaboration between the light designer and the media specialist essential. This collaboration aims to synchronize parameters such as the direction of light flows, intensity, chromatic palette, and focus, so that the projections remain visible, clear, and expressive, without being compromised by parasitic lights or unwanted shadows.

In practice, this process often translates into the intentional reduction of overall lighting intensity or the elimination of certain static sources that might affect the legibility of projected images. At the same time, video content can be strategically adapted—through adjustments of brightness, contrast, and saturation—so as to integrate harmoniously into the visual context of each scene. This reciprocal adaptation between stage lighting and digital projections prevents dysfunctions such as accidental shadows produced by actors crossing the projection beams or the loss of image clarity caused by excessive frontal light. Whether standard projectors or high-resolution LED screens are used, their positioning must be established from the early stages of scenographic design, taking into account distance, angles of incidence, and set elements, in order to avoid visual blockages and guarantee optimal functioning.

This integration of light and video is not merely a technical process, but also an artistic one, in which each adjustment becomes part of the expressive construction of the performance. Traditional light and digital imagery coexist as complementary elements, and success depends on the team's ability to continually negotiate optical solutions. In this visual ecology, light retains its defining role of sculpting space and the actor's presence, but at the same time it is subordinated to the requirements of projection, becoming a partner of the digital image in articulating a coherent and layered composition.

VII.3. Correlating Stage Cues in the Multimedia Performative Regime

Within the technological montage of a multimedia theater production, the correlation of stage cues is a crucial element for the coherence of the entire performance. When video, sound, light, and live action coexist on the same stage, success depends on their perfect synchronization. Projections and digital effects must be triggered with millimetric precision so that they align with the actors' gestures, spoken lines, and dramatic

transitions. Without this rigorous control, media insertions risk disrupting the dramaturgical flow, appearing artificial, or distracting the spectator's attention from the unfolding stage action.

To achieve this level of accuracy, contemporary theater employs high-performance media servers and applications dedicated to real-time control. These tools enable the advanced programming of sequences and their automation within a well-defined timeline. A notable example is the QLab platform, through which the technical team can create a succession of "cues," each associated with a key moment of the performance: a video transition, a change of frame, a sound insertion, or a graphic effect. During the performance, the operator triggers these cues with a single command, thus avoiding the risk of timing errors and maintaining the continuity of the stage experience.

An illustrative example is the coordination between an actor's gesture and the triggering of an animation: when the performer mimes the opening of a door, the animated projection of that door must appear at precisely that moment to create the convincing illusion of interaction. Similarly, visual and sound effects must be correlated: the projected lightning must coincide with the sound of thunder, otherwise sensory coherence is lost. These seemingly technical details are, in fact, the foundation of multimedia performance expressivity, because only through intermodal alignment can the desired aesthetic unity be achieved.

VII.4. The Artistic Impact of Integrated Video on Scenic Composition and Dramaturgy

Video can substitute for conventional set elements or complement them, offering great flexibility in constructing the stage space. Projected images become carriers of meaning, capable of creating recognizable environments or abstract, symbolic landscapes that function autonomously as the space in which the action unfolds. This capacity to generate self-contained visual universes brings stage thinking closer to cinematic logic, while still preserving its theatrical specificity.

Integrated video contributes not only to the remodeling of space but also to the acceleration of visual transitions and the development of an extended expressive register, through which affective and psychological dimensions can be externalized.

Projections can stage the inner life of characters, their intimate tensions, or identity conflicts, adding a visual layer that expresses what cannot be spoken. At the same time, documentary sequences or archival collages introduce layers of historical and socio-political contextualization, generating a direct critical discourse through the power of the image, without recourse to verbal explanation.

A central aspect of this artistic impact is the redefinition of dramaturgy itself. The term is no longer limited to text and the actor's action but includes the ensemble of means through which the story is constructed and conveyed. In this stage ecology, video becomes an autonomous narrative vector, capable of complementing, contradicting, or multiplying the live action. The projected image can introduce parallel narrative threads, anticipate or comment on the stage unfolding, and construct its own visual dramaturgy superimposed on that of the actors. Consequently, dramaturgy is reconfigured as a network of signs, where the visual and the corporeal remain in constant dialogue.

This redefinition generates a layered theater, in which the spectator navigates between multiple planes of representation. Projections make it possible to create simultaneities, to extend duration, or to introduce atemporal, symbolic, or transcendent dimensions.

VII.5. Live versus Pre-Recorded: Strategies of Integration in the Aesthetics of Multimedia Performance

Real-time generated content brings spontaneity, authenticity, and an intense performative dimension to the performance, by capturing micro-gestures or facial expressions that would otherwise be lost on stage. This type of visual material produces an experience of perceptual layering, multiplying stage action by simultaneously presenting multiple angles and perspectives. However, the use of live streams requires rigorous logistics: coordination between actors and camera operators, technical precision, and the adaptation of acting to the presence of the camera. Any synchronization error becomes immediately visible and can compromise the coherence of the entire performance.

On the other hand, pre-recorded video offers the advantage of aesthetic consistency and narrative control. It allows for highly precise visual construction, with carefully calibrated effects and stable production value. This option, however, brings another

challenge: actors must adapt their performance to a fixed material, which demands impeccable synchronization and heightened stage discipline. Pre-recorded content leaves no room for improvisation, requiring meticulous coordination, especially in scenes with accelerated rhythm or high density of multimedia cues.

Many contemporary productions opt for a strategic combination of the two forms, in which live and pre-recorded video complement one another. Whether live or pre-recorded, success depends on stylistic coherence and on the dramaturgical justification of each insertion. Video must support the theme, enrich the narrative symbolically, or create a reflexive tension—avoiding the risk of becoming a mere ornamental effect.

VII.6. Media–Stage Interaction and the Transformations of the Theatrical Presence Paradigm

This subchapter analyzes how the integration of visual media into stage space produces a fundamental shift in the paradigm of theatrical presence. The actor's presence is no longer understood exclusively as physical and ephemeral existence, but as the result of an ongoing negotiation between the living body and its mediated doubles. The video image, whether transmitted live or pre-recorded, doubles and extends corporeal presence, transforming the stage into a territory where immediate reality and virtuality coexist. This ontological layering redefines the notion of "being there," questioning both authenticity and the limits of theatrical experience.

New media do not simply replace the old, but recontextualize them within a relationship of critical interdependence. Thus, multimedia theater does not passively adopt the aesthetics of cinema or television but subjects them to a reflexive process of theatricalization, exposing and interrogating the mechanisms of each medium. The stage thereby becomes a field of confrontation and cohabitation between live presence and mediated image, while performance is transformed into a simultaneous sensory and cognitive event, in which the audience's perception is both seduced and deconstructed.

VII.7. Spectator Reception and the Aesthetic Configurations of the Visual Act

The introduction of video also brings about a change in the theatrical convention, since the stage is no longer merely a material space but a composite territory where physical

and digital elements coexist. Projections create new perceptual dimensions, reorganizing the way the audience relates to time, space, and narrative. Within this framework, the spectator must simultaneously manage diverse stimuli—from actor and set to superimposed visual layers—transforming the act of reception into an active and self-reflexive process.

This reorganization frequently generates effects of distancing, reminiscent of Brechtian principles, though transposed into a technological context. The spectator becomes the epistemological partner of the performance, engaged in the construction of meaning through the negotiation of multiple significations. In some cases, visual insertions can intensify affective participation, while in others they may introduce critical distance. This ambivalence confirms that video functions as an aesthetic vector that simultaneously shapes both emotion and reflection.

VII.8. Theoretical Perspectives on Intermediality and Narrative

Intermediality redefines theater as a field of media convergence, where text, body, and digital image coexist without fixed hierarchies. It grants video and other digital technologies an equivalent narrative status, transforming performance into an experience that is simultaneously sensory, cognitive, and critical.

An essential aspect is the reconfiguration of narrative conventions in postdramatic theater. Instead of a coherent, unidirectional plot, the performance becomes a multidimensional experience, constructed through collages of images, sounds, movements, and textual fragments. The audience is invited to navigate through diverse semiotic registers, directly experiencing discursive plurality. This “leveling of the hierarchy of theatrical signs,” identified by Elinor Fuchs and correlated with Hans-Thies Lehmann’s theory, suspends the traditional supremacy of the dramatic text. In the new paradigm, no semiotic system retains exclusive authority over narrative. A video projection, a musical piece, or a visual image can hold the same narrative value as the actors’ lines.

This aesthetic model emphasizes the transition from linear dramaturgy to a network-based dramaturgy, where meaning is generated through the layered interaction of signs. The spectator becomes an active participant, confronted with a tapestry of stimuli that

must be correlated and interpreted. Narrative is no longer a singular flow but a formal and discursive polyphony, specific to postdramatic theater.

VII.9. Multimedia as a Narrative Vector Rather than a Disruptive Factor

This subchapter shows that when digital technology is integrated with conceptual rigor and aesthetic discernment, it can enhance the clarity and depth of the narrative discourse, becoming a dramaturgical partner—a co-author of the narrative. It expands the stage space, deepens the symbolic universe, and creates mechanisms for visualizing invisible dimensions of the text and of the actors' performance.

In *Roman Tragedies*, directed by Ivo van Hove, video screens did not disrupt the stage action but allowed the audience to follow secondary intrigues taking place in the background, without the need for verbal explanations. Technology functioned as a narrative vector that multiplied visibility and expanded the field of perception. Similarly, Robert Lepage, in *Elsinore*, used projections to externalize Hamlet's mental processes, staging what was impossible to convey through traditional acting means. In these cases, multimedia means did not simply add a decorative layer but created a symbolic and dramaturgical extension of the performance, sustained by directorial logic.

VII.10. Visual Technologies and the Reconfiguration of the Relationship Between Authenticity and Representation in Contemporary Theater

The use of multimedia elements in contemporary theater can be understood as a creative force capable of decisively influencing not only the formal configuration of performance, but also its narrative, aesthetic, and conceptual architecture. The integration of these audiovisual means into stage construction has allowed directors and performance artists to formulate critical reflections on the very socio-cultural context that structures human existence in the digital age, offering thus a representation—or, more precisely, a visual and conceptual reconfiguration—of a culture marked by informational oversaturation and by the constant mediation of everyday experience through visual communication technologies.

What ultimately results is a type of theatrical experience that is more immersive and more faithful to the fragmented, discontinuous, and technologically mediated mode in

which human existence unfolds in contemporaneity. Thus, multimedia theater reflects not only our daily lives shaped by the omnipresence of screens and the uninterrupted flows of images and information, but also succeeds in providing a privileged critical space for reflection on these phenomena, activating the specific potential of live stage expression to expose, problematize, and constantly interrogate the hyper-mediated reality of the digital age.

VIII. Interviews: Perspectives of Directors, Playwrights, and Scenographers

VIII.1. The Expressive Valences of Digital Visual Media in Configuring Stage Space and Their Influence on Theatrical Creative Processes

Beyond their diversity of functions and roles, the expressive value of digital media lies in their ability to integrate organically into the creative process, either as partners of dramaturgy or as instruments for diversifying registers of expression.

A first direction identified is the conceptualization of video as an integrating tool within a complex stage architecture. In this framework, digital media actively participate in generating meanings and diversifying levels of artistic communication, contributing to the shaping of coherent artistic identities and to the articulation of an expanded theatricality.

Another line of interpretation proposes a functionalist use of digital visual resources, subordinated to the directorial vision and the expressive requirements of the performance. From this perspective, the selection of techniques is carried out rigorously, in direct relation to artistic intentions. Video may consolidate the narrative, introduce semantic discontinuities to energize interpretation, or accentuate the tension between actor and audience—without diminishing the specificity of theater as an art of physical presence.

In addition, several directorial and scenographic perspectives emphasize the capacity of the digital image to function as a catalyst for an autonomous scenic dimension, one that generates parallel realities and expressive extensions. Projections and digital media can construct independent visual spaces that coexist with stage action and provide a symbolic, conceptual, or dreamlike framework impossible to achieve through conventional means.

VIII.2. Decision-Making Foundations in the Use of Video in Performance: From the Directorial Concept to the Relationship Between Text, Space, and Visual Language

The interviews reveal that the integration of video in contemporary performance is accepted as a legitimate practice only when it organically serves the director's intention, respects the structure of the text, and harmonizes with the architecture of the stage space. Decisions regarding the use of video rest on three major axes: the directorial concept, the relationship with the dramatic text, and the configuration of the performance space.

The first axis confirms the importance of directorial primacy. The video image gains value only if it supports the coherence of a clear directorial vision, avoiding the status of mere ornament. Projections become strategic instruments, capable of intensifying meaning and expressivity, subordinated to an interpretative logic drawn from the reading of the text and from the director's intention.

The second dimension concerns the relationship with the dramatic text, perceived as an open, non-linear material that generates visual layers. Video does not substitute the actor's voice but functions complementarily, extending the dramatic language where it encounters the limits of theatrical convention. The examples highlight that the text can be visually reinterpreted through projections that introduce simultaneities, ruptures, or temporal extensions, thereby broadening the field of meaning.

The third axis is constituted by the stage space, analyzed as both a technical and compositional factor. Decisions regarding the type of projection, the visual format, the size, and the placement of surfaces are adjusted according to the architecture and technical equipment of the venue. Space becomes an active criterion, capable of directly influencing the expressive value of video and determining its function within the performance.

The interviews also show a preoccupation with maintaining balance between multimedia resources and the live presence of the actor. Directors and scenographers emphasize the need for careful selection, compared to a "Swedish buffet," where technology is used only to the extent that it responds to expressive needs. At the same time, they underline the role of visual collaborators—specialized artists capable of translating the directorial concept into a coherent and authentic visual form.

VIII.3. Scenic Interferences Between Video Projection and the Live Actor: Functions, Relations, and Dramaturgical Possibilities

The relationship between the actor and the video image is defined as a process of interdependence and continuous adaptation. Video assumes multiple roles—from transitional visual support to dramaturgical counterpoint—yet its value always depends on its capacity to integrate into the logic of the performance and to sustain live presence, the irreducible core of theater.

A first aspect emphasized is the necessity of integrating the video image within a coherent directorial architecture, capable of sustaining a functional dialogue between the digital dimension and corporeal presence. Projection is not assigned a predetermined role but a flexible one, adapted to each dramaturgical structure.

A recurring line in the responses concerns the potential of video to amplify the actor's presence, especially in situations where the physical distance between stage and audience might diminish affective intensity. Projections, whether live or pre-recorded, create sensory and emotional proximity that complements the performer's expression. In the same sense, the role of video emerges as a reflector of the character's inner dimensions—thoughts, memories, dreamlike projections—expanding the dramaturgical plane through symbolic layering.

The interviewees nevertheless stress the necessity of keeping the actor at the center of the theatrical convention, considering that the digital image has meaning only as a support for the coherence of the performance, without substituting live presence. At the same time, multiple functional possibilities are noted: video can become a conceptual background, a narrative counterpoint, or even a catalyst for an autonomous visual dramaturgy, generating parallel structures that coexist with stage action.

There are also conceptions that value video as a living element, generated and modified in real time, in direct dialogue with the actor, which allows for the emergence of an interactive visual dramaturgy. In these situations, the image is no longer a static décor but an expressive partner that can intensify, complement, or comment on stage performance.

VIII.4. The Impact of Video Integration on Scenic Composition and Narrative Development: Exploring Formal Limits and Expressive Possibilities in Contemporary Theatrical Creations

Projections do not become defining structural elements but rather instruments of refinement, of densifying atmosphere, or of adding symbolic layers. Their expressive value is measured by their capacity to complete the artistic universe without substituting the living core of theater—the actor's presence, the spoken text, and interaction with the audience.

The digital image is perceived as a pragmatic solution, meant to replace physical sets, create animated entities, or resolve complex scenographic situations. This type of usage is encountered especially in puppet and animation theater, where technology does not alter the structure of the text or the narrative, but remains a support for the directorial vision, ensuring efficiency and extending representational capacity.

The projected image also becomes a compositional catalyst, generating autonomous narrative structures and underpinning original conceptual developments. Practitioners evoke the possibility of video becoming an equal partner of dramaturgy, capable of creating independent visual universes or of shaping new narrative logics. The examples mentioned illustrate a fragmentary, multilayered approach, in which projected material overlaps the actor's discourse, generating a visual dramaturgy that amplifies the dynamics of performance.

VIII.5. Coordinating the Creative Process Between Director and Video Artists: The Dynamics of Interdisciplinary Collaboration and the Integration of Technical Teams into Stage Construction

The conclusions drawn from the interviews highlight a diversity of models of collaboration between directors and video artists, ranging from strict hierarchical structures to balanced creative partnerships.

A first model is the hierarchical one, in which the director holds absolute control over the artistic discourse. In this framework, the video artist is subordinated to the preexisting concept, and the projected image is valued only insofar as it supports the

directorial intention. Video remains a derivative instrument, integrated punctually and rigorously controlled to avoid any deviation from the coherence of the staging.

On the other hand, a significant set of practices values collaboration based on dialogue and reciprocity. Here, the video artist is not a mere technician but a co-author, with a creative contribution comparable to that of a composer. The director–media artist relationship is equated with that between the director and other members of the artistic team, with each contribution integrated into a unified vision. This equivalence presupposes both freedom of expression within the directorial framework and aesthetic responsibility.

Several perspectives underline the importance of the early involvement of technical teams in the creative process. Practice shows that the development of video components must begin as early as the rehearsal phase, in order to adapt organically to the rhythm of the acting and the evolving structure of the performance. Constant communication, testing, and mutual adjustment are essential conditions for achieving coherent expressive unity.

VIII.6. The Impact of Video Components on the Perception of Stage Rhythm and on the Reconceptualization of Temporal Structure in Contemporary Theater

The digital image does not function merely as visual support, but as an agent that reshapes the narrative flow, introducing autonomous temporal layers that coexist and interact with the live time of the actor. Thus, stage time becomes fragmented and multilayered: simultaneities, asynchronies, leaps, slowdowns, and accelerations can redefine the sequence of events. Practitioners emphasize that video induces a perception of duration that is variable, capable of distorting classical chronologies and generating alternative logics of scenic succession.

A consistent direction is the recognition of video’s function in reorganizing compositional rhythm. Techniques such as rapid montage, slow motion, looping, or visual superimposition enable a meticulous management of scenic intensity and density, alternating between stasis and dynamism, between contemplation and action. This reorganization demands a recalibration of the actor’s impulse, since the rhythm of the

line no longer depends solely on the presence of the stage partner but also on the visual dynamics of the projection.

VIII.7. The Reconfiguration of Traditional Stage Space Through the Integration of Video Media and the Transformation of Visual Conventions in Contemporary Theatrical Construction

Most interviewees regard video as an organic element of creation, responding to the aesthetic and communicational needs specific to the digital age. It extends the physical limits of the stage, introduces additional symbolic planes, and stimulates the audience's multilayered perception. However, the need for artistic discernment is emphasized: technology is effective only if it supports the directorial vision and the balance of stage relationships, avoiding disruptive effects.

Thus, video generates expanded and hybrid visual spaces, greater compositional flexibility, and a heightened mode of cognitive-affective participation. The traditional scenographic convention is transformed: fixed relationships between set and action are replaced with adaptable strategies, based on digital projections and overlaps between material and virtual. The stage becomes a territory where tangible reality coexists with extended visuality, reshaping the organization of mise-en-scène and the actor's dynamics.

The interviews also indicate that this reconfiguration does not necessarily entail the elimination of traditional elements, but rather their rearticulation through the integration of video resources. Technological interventions create complementary realities that not only complete but also challenge existing structures, stimulating new forms of symbolization and multiplying expressive registers.

VIII.8. The Collaboration of Visual Media and Scenic Elements in Structuring Contemporary Theatrical Expression

The collaboration of visual media and scenic elements redefines the language of contemporary theater, consolidating an aesthetic in which digital technology, sound, light, and set design do not function separately but within a logic of interdependence. Contemporary theatrical expression is built through a careful harmonization of visual

media with the ensemble of scenic elements—light, sound, and décor—all subsumed under a unified directorial vision.

Practitioners emphasize the collaborative nature of the integration process, which requires constant deliberation among departments. Lighting is calibrated according to the needs of projections, sound is synchronized with the image, and scenography is adapted to accommodate both material and digital elements. Each visual intervention produces a global reconfiguration of the performance, demanding continuous technical and aesthetic refinement.

It is also stressed that video, through its diversity of functions, creates conceptual backgrounds, symbolic markers, and visual spaces that clarify or amplify the directorial intention. This multiplication of expressive levels supports both the audience's cognitive participation and their sensory activation, leading to a complex and nuanced reception of the performance.

VIII.9. Transformations of the Relationship Between Performance and Audience Through the Use of Digital Visual Media

The use of digital visual media profoundly transforms the relationship between performance and audience: it can intensify emotion and proximity or, on the contrary, produce distancing, depending on how it is integrated.

A first direction highlights the catalytic potential of video projection. Used coherently and creatively, it enhances affective participation, deepens emotional reception, and opens access to inner dimensions otherwise inaccessible through traditional theatrical means. The audience is invited to immerse themselves more fully in the fictional universe, experiencing it as an augmented reality in which visual overlays amplify the process of interpretation.

Conversely, there are situations in which video becomes a source of distancing and perceptual withdrawal. When used redundantly, illustratively, or without a well-articulated aesthetic logic, it overwrites theatrical codes, diminishes the actor's physical presence, and weakens direct communication with spectators. Such uncritical use leads to a reduction in intensity and to a suspension of the unmediated interaction between stage and audience.

A consensus thus emerges that the artistic effectiveness of digital media depends on their integration into a coherent dialogue with other expressive components—text, acting, scenography. Practitioners emphasize that only through organic articulation can the authenticity of theater be preserved, avoiding the transformation of the experience into a purely visual exercise devoid of engagement.

At the same time, visual technologies are associated with an adaptation to the expectations of contemporary audiences, accustomed to interactivity and the dynamics of digital media. From this perspective, they become additional channels of communication, capable of streamlining the stage relationship and multiplying levels of interaction. Mapping, synchronized projections, or reactive interfaces do not substitute the theatrical act but enhance it by diversifying forms of participation.

VIII.10. Exploring Thematic, Affective, and Discursive-Artistic Expressivity Through Digital Visual Media

The thematic, affective, and discursive-artistic expressivity of digital visual media manifests itself through their capacity to intensify emotion, generate perceptual variations, and add symbolic and documentary layers—all organically integrated into stage construction. Video thus becomes an organic instrument of artistic discourse, mobilized strategically to introduce perceptual variations, discursive counterpoints, or affective intensifications.

This functionality is understood as a trigger for reconfiguring the interpretative horizon: the projected image supports the stage unfolding without competing with or breaking existing expressive codes, maintaining a relationship of interdependence with the other elements. Practitioners also emphasize the role of video in transforming the visual and affective space of performance. The mobility of the digital image allows for the rapid reconfiguration of scenery, the exploration of multiple environments, and emotional proximity to the audience through the detailed amplification of the actor’s expressivity.

At the same time, it is highlighted that video projection becomes a medium for representing metaphorical or documentary thematic registers. It makes possible the articulation of abstract and incongruent universes, sustaining aesthetics of fragmentation

and exposing social issues. This functionality brings a reflexive dimension through which theater relates to reality and contextualizes it critically.

VIII.11. Dimensions of Contemporary Theater's Adaptation to Technological Media and the Implications for Its Artistic Configuration

The conclusions drawn from the interviews highlight that the presence of video elements, digital projections, interactive interfaces, and advanced visual or sound mechanisms is perceived as a natural expression of the process of reconceptualizing stage language. Practitioners believe that theater does not lose its identity through these insertions but rather expands its resources in order to maintain the relevance of communication with contemporary audiences.

A central aspect is the understanding of technology not as a contamination of theater, but as a stage within a tradition of visual innovations that runs throughout the history of the performing arts. References to historical precedents show that current digital tools belong to a continuous process of refining expressive mechanisms, capable of responding to the visual alphabet and sensibility of today's spectators.

Thus, the notion of hybridization is rejected as bearing a negative connotation, being replaced by the idea of a productive convergence between tradition and innovation. Theater does not substitute itself with technological media but integrates them into a coherent system, where each component—text, actor, set, digital projection—contributes to the construction of a complex stage universe adapted to the present.

Another consistently emphasized point concerns the role of digital technologies in streamlining the relationship between stage and audience. Projections, mapping, reactive interfaces, and interactive media do not annul the authenticity of the theatrical act but create additional channels of communication, increasing proximity and diversifying levels of participation.

VIII.12. The Problematic of Video Implementation in Performance: Technical, Conceptual, and Creative Dimensions

This subchapter highlights the major difficulties and challenges related to the implementation of video in contemporary theater, structured along three dimensions: technical, conceptual, and organizational.

On the technical level, interviewees emphasize the lack of adequate infrastructure and high-performance equipment, as well as the insufficient specialization of technical teams within theater institutions. This discrepancy between artistic aspiration and material possibilities creates tensions in the creative process and affects the coherence of stage discourse. Furthermore, the use of video demands precision, synchronization, and repeatability—elements that contrast with the adaptability of the live performer. Any technical error produces a fragile imbalance in the performance, which is why a rigorous process of planning, testing, and calibration is necessary, supported by strict methodology and careful coordination among all departments.

From a conceptual perspective, the emphasis is placed on the need for video to be used only when it derives organically from the structure of the performance and serves the director’s intention. Criteria such as contextual adequacy, expressive relevance, and narrative functionality become fundamental for the selection of visual resources.

On the organizational level, the importance of adapting to concrete performance conditions, to the institutional facilities available, and to close collaboration between visual designers and technical teams is underlined. The success of implementation depends on the professionalization of these collaborations and on the development of creative solutions capable of overcoming infrastructural limitations.

VIII.13. The Evolution of Video Use in Individual Artistic Trajectories and the Affirmation of a Personal Visual Language

The relationship to video within individual artistic trajectories has evolved gradually, oscillating between a complementary approach and one in which it becomes an autonomous expressive core.

A first direction highlights the use of video as a functional support, integrated only insofar as it sustains the directorial discourse and dramaturgical coherence. From this

perspective, projection is an instrument of completion, meant to deepen stage expression without eclipsing the live presence of the actor, regarded as the irreducible center of theater.

Another direction emphasizes the progressive adoption of video media as constitutive instruments of stage composition. The interviewed practitioners speak of the accumulation of experience, the reevaluation of audiovisual resources, and the increasing willingness to explore symbolically and affectively through the projected image. Within this framework, video is perceived as an extension of stage thinking, as a space for articulating psychological, temporal, or affective dimensions that are difficult to access through traditional theatrical conventions.

Furthermore, some individual artistic trajectories describe a clear transition: from a skeptical use, in which video was perceived as a foreign body to the theatrical language, to its full assumption as a constitutive part of stage construction.

IX. Conclusions

IX.1. Summary of Research Findings

The research results highlight the profound structural transformations produced in contemporary theater by the constant integration of digital visual technologies. The insertion of these components has led to a rapprochement between multimedia expression and traditional forms of the stage, fostering the consolidation of a postdramatic model and the modification of established aesthetic paradigms.

Thus, classical narrative and dramatic linearity lose their centrality, being replaced by mosaic structures composed of visual fragments, projections, cinematic elements, acoustic supports, and bodily movement, articulated into a discontinuous composition. This reconfiguration shifts the function of performance from the simple transmission of a story to the simultaneous activation of multiple perceptive registers—sensory, affective, and intellectual.

The analysis confirms that today’s stage performance constitutes itself as a multidimensional and immersive experience. The audience navigates between visual, sonic, and performative layers, while the architecture of performance imposes the overlapping of expressive codes. In this process, the traditional hierarchies between

word, image, and sound are deliberately re-evaluated, which calls for new analytical tools capable of capturing the complexity of emerging aesthetic articulations.

A central aspect emerging from the investigation is the redefinition of stage presence and of the actor's role. The performer now functions both as a bearer of live corporeality and as an element inserted into a network of projections and digital mediations. The actor becomes a node between the physical and the technological planes, articulating a hybrid presence that reflects the current dynamics of the performing arts.

IX.2. Recommendations for Future Research

The conclusions point to a series of emerging directions that can support the methodological and conceptual expansion of the field. They concern both theoretical deepening and applied exploration of the new configurations generated by the interaction of theater with technological media.

A first vector is represented by technologically mediated forms of stage presence, made possible by advanced devices for transmission and digital processing. These allow the co-presence of actors in shared virtual spaces, even when they are situated in different geographical contexts. Within this framework, conventionally designated as telematic theater, it becomes necessary to reassess the concepts of co-presence, authenticity, and ephemerality, since the aesthetic experience unfolds simultaneously in multiple locations through digital infrastructures.

Another direction concerns the investigation of visual dramaturgies built on the principle of fragmentation and hyperconnectivity. Future research could analyze the impact of these structures on audience reception, as well as on the ways in which they influence the mechanisms of constructing theatrical meaning.

Equally, there emerges the necessity for interdisciplinary studies that explore the intersections between live theater, visual arts, cinema, and interactive media. Such an approach could highlight how relations of influence are being reconfigured and how new hybrid forms of expression are constituted.

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- **"Feminism and the Selfie Policy,"** *Symbolon. Journal of Theatrical Studies* International Conference on Media Studies · May 5, 2022

- **“From Futurism to Contemporary Multimedia Performance: Elements in the Evolution of Hybrid Artistic Forms,”** UART Press · July 2, 2021