

CAPTURING THE MOMENT: CREATING HYBRID PERFORMANCES THROUGH COLLABORATIVE POLARITY

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Abstract

This article-essay documents and explores a recent devised and site-specific theatrical piece created at the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras, Greece, between February and April 2016. The reasoning for this documentation is that it has revealed tangential and important reflections related to subjects as varied as cultural identity, communication, public versus private education, pedagogy, the participation of guest artists in educational and professional settings, discoveries related to devising, student and faculty interaction, goal setting and much more.

Keywords

Autoethnography, devised, site-specific performance, guest artists, public versus private education, best practices

Introduction and method

This article-essay draws on the qualitative method of autoethnography (Ellis and Bochner, 2000, pp. 413–414; Anderson, 2006, pp. 378–379) in an attempt to reflect on and connect the cultural differences that existed between the codirectors as scholars, educators and artists with the broader context of teaching in Higher Education institutions, theatre and dance practices, and student learning. In this formulation, autoethnography had four main features; it was: based upon the researchers' involvement in the experiment; analytically reflexive; visible in the research; committed to a critical realistic discussion by pointing out all of the issues revealed. Through this collaborative autoethnographic methodology (Warren, 2011, pp. 140–143), information was collected during the project by documenting and critically discussing the codirectors' lived experiences.

This process revealed a polarity related to cultural identity, communication, public versus private education, and aesthetics. It also raised numerous points for examination in terms of pedagogy, the participation of guest artists in educational and professional settings, strategies for devising, and student and faculty interaction that brings together the personal and the social through performative acts. It therefore felt important to document the whole process, as the multitude of experiences covered a wide range of possibly shared academic practices that could inspire further examination of the collaborative process for others in the

academy. Moreover, this creative collaborative project has also uncovered how a performative act of teaching (McLaren and Kincheloe, 2007; Liew, 2013, pp. 262–264) becomes consequential in a multitude of ways (Liew, 2013). Like critical pedagogy, autoethnography emphasizes reflexivity and the questioning of subjectivity and objectivity (Atkinson, 2006, pp. 400–404; Warren, 2011, pp. 140–143).

Background

Rob Roznowski (Associate Professor, Michigan State University, USA) was awarded a Fulbright Fellowship for spring 2016 to teach and complete several projects while at the University of Patras in Greece. His initial directing project was to be a production of Arthur Miller's *A View from the Bridge* that fused ancient Greek theatrical techniques (the use of Chorus, themes, and some of the writing structures) with contemporary theatrical exploration of the common man in relation to the "American Dream" found in several Miller texts.

Upon arriving at the University of Patras, Department of Theatre Studies, several issues were raised by Katia Savrami (Assistant Professor, Choreologist, University of Patras, Greece) and students regarding this project. The first insurmountable one was the students' fear of working solely in English with the chosen text. Roznowski's rudimentary understanding of the Greek language also posed issues regarding the need for translation throughout any theatre-making process. Savrami also mentioned the lack of dependable commitment modeled on an American rehearsal process in a department that focuses on Theatre Studies rather than practical performance. The final issue was actually a pleasant one to discover, as there seemed to be high student interest in getting involved in the production: nearly forty students expressed interest in voluntarily participating in the project. This was a unique situation for the Department, and high student interest was unexpected for a purely voluntary project (sans academic credit).

It was during Savrami's early discussions and exchanges with Roznowski, before the beginning of rehearsals, that information was shared about the student actors' past experience, training and language skills, which necessitated an alteration of the initial idea of Roznowski's proposal. The project would transform from a scripted performance narrative to a more flexible and open process of devised and site-specific theatre to allow students to develop a personal motivation by emphasizing creativity and collaboration. It was also decided that devised work might better fit the unknown process that lay ahead.

In order to address the various issues mentioned, the Miller text was scrapped in order to create a theatrical experience uniquely addressing the infrastructure of the University of Patras to utilize the talents and resources available. This devised performance might best match the disparate schedules, capabilities and strengths of all involved and create a more flexible experience for the participant. The site-specific element was also important as "understandings of space as fluid, changeable and responsive to the situation of bodies, has prepared the ground for radical concepts and uses of space with implications for how we conceive of contemporary lived

reality" (Hunter, 2016, p. 65). But given the limited rehearsal time, the usual lengthy discovery process of a devised theme or subject was jettisoned while Roznowski sought to identify a topic that might offer the impact required for the Fulbright experience. While traversing the rolling campus, he was drawn to various landmarks that made this campus unique and different from those in America – they all fell within the category of public art. The thematic examination of public art on the campus was identified as a possible way to solve the aforementioned variances related to the original proposal.

The public art on the campus would be defined in three broad categories: approved public art sanctioned by the university, the ubiquitous graffiti on campus buildings, and the breathtaking natural landscape with the snow-capped mountains on one side of the campus and the Ionian Sea on the other. Students in various performances, happenings and installations throughout the campus would examine these three categories. Since most campuses contain public art in some form, this subject seemed to a) offer a uniquely personalized performance for this campus and b) become possible inspiration for future devised performance topics for others to showcase the uniqueness of campuses globally.

It would be the job of codirectors Roznowski and Savrami to coordinate the event and offer critique throughout the process. Being a choreologist, Katia Savrami volunteered her services as codirector, choreographer and translator. She had recently worked collaboratively at the University of Surrey, during her sabbatical in 2014. Roznowski and Savrami had not been connected before, so their partnership was forged within the first days of the former's arrival. This was due to two possible reasons: a) the structures and hierarchies of the Theatre Studies Department dictate that the Chair must contact and coordinate guest teachers and b) the difference in disciplines (Dance and Theatre) might not immediately predict natural collaborators. Had discussions begun beforehand, many of the issues chronicled later in this essay could have been solved through keen planning.

Based on the hierarchical structures in a public institution in Greece, university and departmental approval was needed for such a project, which would encompass quite a swath of real estate within the university. Roznowski was asked to present his plan to the Department of Theatre Studies faculty and staff, and once approved his plan was presented by the Chair to the Dean of the University for final support. Despite the approval from all involved, more than a simple change of production required other adaptations throughout, based on educational, foundational and communication challenges.

Project description

Here was how the show was described in a press release:

A new theatre piece called a "A Private Response to Public Art" will take place at the University of Patras on Thursday, April 21st, at 6:00 PM. The show is a devised and site-specific piece created

by Fulbright Fellow and guest of the Department of Theatre Studies, Associate Professor Rob Roznowski, from Michigan State University, faculty member Assistant Professor Katia Savrami, and numerous undergraduate students. The piece examines the various types of public art on display around the campus, including donated and university approved work, the various graffiti on display, and the unique elements of the surroundings that can be categorized as public art. The show begins at the Theatre Studies building, where the audience will be given maps to explore the various acts or “installations” around the campus, culminating in a final performance celebrating the public art of the campus.

After an initial meeting with students, where the codirectors revealed the theme of the show (taking the time to explore how public art can move or madden someone), students were tasked to find something related to the three definitions of public art on the campus that inspired or angered them. They were then to share those findings with the cast and codirectors to create possible reactionary theatrical events or installations.

The project would then be bookended by an opening and a closing sequence devised by Savrami and Roznowski, which would showcase themes of the performance and utilize the unexpectedly large cast. Between the opening and closing sequences the audience would be given a map to find the various acts throughout the university and watch the work in reaction to the “public art” found at the numerous locales.

For example, students responded to graffiti that bemoaned the refugee situation by reciting ancient Greek poetry about the beauty of the land while actors playing the discarded refugees rolled in the ashes of a recent brushfire in a natural setting. An actor created a sequence regarding the current non-theatrical uses of an abandoned amphitheater on campus. Students wrote a scene about two unrelated statues placed across the street from each other, sending messages back and forth over time. A well-dressed young woman sitting by a modern fountain washed her fancy clothes and sang traditional Greek songs. Even faculty got involved, such as Special Teaching Staff: Yianna Roilou wrote a monologue that was performed by a student, reimagining a modern-day Antigone as a homeless woman eating from the trash next to the relatively posh eating quarters for students on campus. Each installation was created by the students and enhanced by faculty involvement.

Some installations required no actors and were ironically titled, such as the empty frames which showcased the view of the mountain and sea surrounding the campus, titled, *Best Public Art on Campus*. Others included an imported Italian olive oil bottle placed among a grove of olive trees and called *5 Euros*, and an unflattering graffiti of the current Dean of the University entitled *Washing Day* with a nearby bucket and scrub brush.

The project ended up consisting of over twenty acts of various designs created by the students and overseen by the codirectors. The map used nearly one half of the sprawling university campus and took over an hour to traverse. The audience would follow the path by following marker balloons indicating travel directions and installation locations.

The bookends to the project were the opening and closing sequences at two very prominent statues on the campus. The show would begin at the Theatre Studies Department building, which has at its entrance a statue seemingly inspired by Aeschylus's *The Persians* (as it contains a quote from the play). The trapezoid-shaped marble stone at its center could be interpreted to be an actor surrounded by some trappings from ancient Greek theatres. Upon further research, it was revealed that the statue had no title and its rather nebulous shape was open to a wide spectrum of interpretations. The opening sequence would set the tone for the rest of the show and focus the audience on more deeply inspecting the public art on campus and looking for unique interpretations.

The final act revealed itself through a stroke of luck. During an interview with the Public Relations Director at the University, Andromache Chrisafi, regarding public art on campus, it was discovered that one of the pieces on the tour was created and donated by a prominent doctor, Kostas Spiropoulos, from the University hospital on campus. The doctor then agreed to appear at the climax of the show to share with the audience the title of the piece and also what he hoped any viewer of the work might feel. The idea of actually having the artist tell the audience what to feel and how to interpret seemed fitting to end the evening journey of artistic exploration in a unique fashion.

Despite the completion of the structure of the event, along the way there were many challenges concerning educational and artistic issues.

Challenges

Creating a schedule for a diverse group of students not used to attending regularized rehearsals and the fact that these rehearsals were hosted by the Theatre Studies Department, also lacking infrastructure based on past performances, were major issues at the top of the process. Finding a time to match the students and codirectors' free time also proved challenging. It was decided that twice a week for nearly three months would offer a tight but sufficient time to create a devised theatrical piece. Extra rehearsals were offered by appointment but were rarely asked for by students.

From the first moment, communication regarding all elements of the event appeared problematic, as communication between codirectors and students could not be fully expected to reach students through email, given that many did not have email accounts or lacked regular access to computers. File-hosting sites like Dropbox, a common communication method for the United States, were initially used for the project but then discarded because students lacked the knowledge of how to use it. Communication about rehearsals were posted on the Department callboard and spread through limited means, which were also unreliable. It is unclear how many students never completed the project because of lack of communication.

Similar communication and language barriers existed in relation to the rehearsal process. These vocabulary impediments (Scott and Hoggett, 2014, pp. 5–8) expanded beyond the

obvious Greek and English translation-less vernacular or metaphors, and extended to unexpected differences in discipline related to expectations in creating theatre. Definitions of devised theatre (Lerman and Borstel, 2003) and/or the judgment or use of aesthetic criteria were notions unfamiliar to students (ibid.). More effective communication channels and definitions should have been created earlier in the process to clarify the context and streamline the process.

Other challenges include the limited time to create a devised piece, as usually a devised piece is forged through a unified and collective mission to discover, reveal or expose a subject through ensemble-building exercises. In this context, the limited rehearsals did not allow for such exploration. However, the thematic of examining public art throughout campus was identified as a way to allow students to still have ownership and artistic license within a broad structure.

Culture

Both communication and cultural differences affected the whole process. Cultural differences were certainly evident, but educational expectations, political leanings, and other gaps were also exposed. Each issue brought unique challenges and demanded unique solutions in order to best traverse the gestating production. Cultural identity is a firmly held personal value, and learning to respect those differences and allowing the process to be flexible enough without diminishing personal artistic integrity for all involved was key (Cherry, Ellis and DeSoucey, 2011, pp. 236–238).

Culturally, there is a more relaxed relationship to time in Greece, as compared to the strict standards of time management of the United States. While these are broad stereotypes, the reprimands imposed on professional and academic actors in the United States who miss or are late for rehearsal or class are commonplace. These deadlines ensure the disciplined and dependable artist who will thrive in that culture. The Greek students and actors normally arrive thirty minutes late to class or rehearsal and do not respond well to such rigidity of schedule. Students also did not know how to allocate time effectively to prepare the work they had to share for commentary, as they had no experience doing so. Savrami notes that there is also a cultural understanding of waiting to the last minute for deadlines; in addition, it was notable that, whenever students had to prepare for another class, they were not participating in rehearsal.

Academically, the Department has a distinctly Theatre Studies focus: “The four-year undergraduate degree (BA) granted by the Department is primarily theoretical in orientation, with special emphasis being given to the study of ancient Greek theatre”.¹ While there are practical courses offered in Acting and Directing, the students tend more easily toward critique and examination rather than invention and creativity. Theatre Studies students’ lack of academic or

1. See <http://www.theaterst.upatras.gr>

professional performance and practical experience, rehearsal background and understanding of crafting performance within a given structure created the need to teach artistic standards during the rehearsals. Rather than diving immediately into the process of creation, initial rehearsals were largely spent on rehearsal etiquette and expectations.

Related to the students' inexperience, there was an absence of understanding of critique as a chance for positive growth. Receiving critique normally turned into what from an American perspective could be described as heated argument and on the Greek side as a healthy debate. The students' "defensiveness" or lack of understanding of the criteria on how to evaluate their work was a constant barrier when offering feedback to their projects.

Unexpected for Roznowski were religious, geographical or national customs and holidays, unknown when creating the schedule, which impeded the momentum necessary for the project. There was "Meat Day", a religious custom, "Clean Monday", a national religious holiday after the weekend of Carnival, and "March 25th", a political national holiday to commemorate Greek liberation. All impacted the already tight rehearsal schedule.

When entering any new culture / university department as a guest, there is often a new "vocabulary" to learn. This is an expected element of residency. But rarely does one become aware of the necessity for a holistic shift of expectations and explanation in one's area of expertise and one's practical approach to performing it. When visiting a department within one's own country, there is an expectation of rehearsal etiquette, shared language, and a shortcut of explanation based on mutual understanding. For, despite a common outcome (the fact that truth in performance is related to a cathartic journey), the aesthetic between Greek and American theatre is quite different. Theatrical training and lauded performances in Greece seem to combine a realistic approach with a peppering of Grotowski and Meyerhold physicality when compared to American acting. The American approach seems too naturalistic and avoids dramatic stakes compared to Greek performance. These diverse approaches to theatrical training and aesthetic required circumvention, reexamination and reinvention to create a hybrid aesthetic of performance.

This transformation of past practices demands a thoughtful and consistent recalibration of work in order to best communicate and connect with students certainly through a refined communication, but more importantly through a tightly held (in this case, Greek or American) theatrical cultural barrier. Approaching the discipline from an American-centric (not purely Western) method for playmaking contains the hubris that American theatre is the nexus for all things theatrical. Similarly, the Greek approach needed transformation related to its stylized and physical method to offer a more globally engaging entrance to the work. The adaptation created a hybrid approach and used the best of both acting methodologies.

The Fulbright Foundation also makes it quite clear that all projects should avoid political commentary, and as such this directive limited the scope of the project. Understandably, students wanted to respond to two very political issues connected to the graffiti around campus

and national concerns. This included Greece's economic austerity measures as well as the refugee crisis, which appeared to reach its breaking point during the spring 2016 rehearsal process. Other, more university-based political projects proposed for the show included the high price of bus fare and the "worthlessness" of the degree from a Greek university. Great care was taken to shape these works into projects that offered more balanced or even humorous commentary on these subjects.

However, perhaps the most glaring disparity between cultures occurred in the vast difference related to learning approaches and expectations between the tuition-based American universities and the mostly free public education within the university system of Greece. In particular, public higher education in Greece is operated and funded by the government and, therefore, the students do not have to pay tuition or fees as opposed to the higher education model currently existing in the United States, where the students are making a deep financial investment by paying tuition even though the university is supported in some measure by the government. While the Greek higher education system offers numerous degree-granting programs that vary from university to university, students are often assigned a major or area of study not necessarily related to their interests, based on standardized placement testing. This shaded the entire approach to the project, which affected regularized rehearsals, classes and expectations for and from the Greek university student. The little to no cost education brought with it an approach unlike the consumer-based American educational system, where students relate experience to cost.

Oversights

Rather than bemoan challenges and cultural differences, an educator must also take ownership of oversights they have made in any project in order to grow and offer alternative ways to future problem-solving. This project exposed many oversights or shortcuts to student learning based on hubris, impatience and rigidity related to the non-production-based culture of the Department.

Hubris came into play when the project's outline and theme were chosen without student consultation. This extended to the rehearsal schedule, where it was decided in consultation with department faculty and staff rather than student input. The belief that the shared experience of theatre and dance professionals and academics would know best how to build a project without student consultation lacked the forethought necessary.

That lack of forethought was also born from a lack of patience due to the limited rehearsal schedule. Entering into a collaborative and devised process with an eye on the clock created a timetable that did not match the way in which the students worked. The impatience was evident each time students missed a deadline, lacked understanding of an expected concept or missed a rehearsal. No matter how masked the codirectors believed they were being, that frustration was present throughout (Guyotte and Sochacka, 2016). Ironically, the impatience usually resulted from a need to educate the students – either on expected understanding

of best practices or theatrical understanding.

Similarly, the codirectors' reliance on structure created rigidity within the process that did not mesh with the approach to the project from the students who had volunteered to be part of a "fun" experiment during their already over-burdened schedules. The students believed they had come on board for an experiential extracurricular activity while the codirectors were hoping to create a polished product that offered a more professional experience. However, it was important for students to take responsibility in order to transform education and gain from the experience (Cook-Sather, 2010, pp. 562–564). Despite the oversights from the educators, there were several unexpected positives that affected both student and teacher learning.

Positives

There were several moments at which the project positively affected all involved through collective good will and shared purpose. Throughout the process the codirectors recognized and addressed the oversights previously mentioned and were constantly experimenting with content delivery, relaxed artistic approaches, and reformulated expectations.

A residual byproduct to this constant adjustment of approach resulted in a reinvigoration within teaching and directing, as past approaches were augmented based on the demands of current needs. It forced a re-evaluation of the definition of "guest artist" which may have been understood as meaning that an invitation to a new department was solely an invitation to share the guest's version of the artistic process. In practice, a clearer examination of the needs and culture of the host's environment could result in a transformative and shared approach by both. So rather than a condescending approaching of, "Let me show you how it's done", the work in this case began to be about: "What do we need to do that would benefit all involved?"

The process also forced two rigid teachers to find a more fluid approach to production. The Theatre Studies students needed to approach this performance work as they had been trained – through their theoretical base. Once that was explored, the more practical approach of how that head-centered work could transform to affect an audience relied on a less rigid directorial manner. For any educator, a transformation of the personal process could similarly yield new personal discoveries.

The codirectors engaged in problem-solving (Greiff, Holt and Funke, 2013, pp. 72–73) and had to allow for these students' unique learning structure by handling all elements of the production. The codirectors took away from the students most of the infrastructural tasks, such as publicity, logistics, clearances, supplies, so that the latter could only focus on their acting and designing. Each time students would voice a concern or remind the codirectors of possible issues, the codirectors volunteered to address it immediately or, in most cases, had already handled it in order to avoid excess strain to the students' work.

Discovering a like-minded artist (Roznowski and Savrami) also allowed their similar

approaches to transform in tandem in an utterly unique experience. While certainly many discussions, questions and complaints occurred during the process as students missed rehearsals, “wasted time”, or were unprepared, the codirectors worked together to transform their combined goals by reminding each other of their similar rigid tendencies. This shared transformation created a strong bond of collaborative honesty.

The scope of the project also created good will and a collaborative spirit between the Department, administration and the campus as it spilled out beyond the confines of the Theatre Studies area and traditional performance venues to affect a wider population. Students, faculty and staff without any previous knowledge of the Department’s work now observed public rehearsals and performances.

Process

The process of doing any devised or site-specific production already augments the traditional theatrical or dance production model as new approaches are introduced related to expected performance and directorial approaches. This production (for all of the reasons mentioned above) had other layers that colored the rehearsal experience. Mutual understanding between codirectors and cast was paramount and achieved sporadically.

As previously mentioned, Roznowski first toured the campus to find the artwork that inspired him. He found numerous statues and the best views of nature on campus. He took pictures of graffiti (written in Greek) to be translated by others in order to share with students. The first rehearsals were spent doing preliminary work related to the artwork that Roznowski had identified on the campus. Being a guest to campus paid off in this instance, as he experienced the campus with fresh eyes and identified elements that others may have taken for granted. While students were initially enthusiastic with the creative collaborative project, they also showed a lack of understanding of the project’s themes. When the codirectors asked them to identify a sculpture, graffiti or site on the campus to theatricalize with, they did not understand that process. It seemed that students had not been exercising the tools of imagination and creativity in their current education, so both codirectors would have to teach them how to approach the work in this context.

Preliminary exercises included ways to inspire creative thought related to the images the codirectors shared. In one exercise a graffiti mural of a woman with three faces inspired talk of id, ego and superego, three sisters, confusion, depression and much more. One successful exercise was to visit a statue on campus and examine it in various ways: first as the character of the statue, then as the artist creating it, the man posing for it, the man decades later looking at this younger form, and finally a dog on campus observing this “strange” statue. Students were also asked to present and defend their favorite piece of art (movies, book, music, painting etc.) to the directors, who “dismissed” their choices in order to engage the students in an artistic debate and help them better understand the personal connection and more deeply value their artistic integrity. Throughout, the

goal was to create a shared understanding of a) how an artwork can inspire a reaction and b) how that reaction can be theatricalized.

In early rehearsals students offered ideas for installations that had little or nothing to do with the actual public art. They wanted to comment on things that irked them but not by using the artwork or graffiti but simply based on their own sense of outrage. So, while interesting and mostly from a political slant, the ideas lacked any true connection to the environment. This pattern was repeated throughout the early phase of the process and students were reminded of the message of the show by short exercises reminding them how inspiration can be found through locale and artwork. To solve this, the codirectors toured the campus with students assisting them in seeing things in unique ways reminding them of the original directive.

The locations for the various projects were finally identified and a pathway revealed itself throughout the campus. This route would easily allow the audience to experience, at their leisure, the various installations. This path also prescribed the need for more installations in long stretches of the walk where performances did not appear. The student company walked the path of the audience and offered various ideas to expand the content throughout. It was at this point that the students embraced the concept and understood the themes of the show.

One consistent problem was the actual beginning of the piece. The Aeschylus-inspired statue where the show would begin caused a debate that raged throughout the process. The first idea was to give a nod to the classical theatre studies traditions within the Department by creating an opening act that had the student actors explore the statue's possible theatrical inspiration and included cleansing their hands in the ceremonial bowl at the statue's front. Students would share inspirational quotes from ancient Greek plays, philosophers and even ancient graffiti to set up the themes of the show. Following the first rehearsals of this version, students complained that it seemed too "lifeless" and they then offered suggestions of how to make it more "authentic". The codirectors gave them time to create their version. Authenticity resulted in a group of Greek teenagers talking about life around a statue that lacked any compelling dramatic tension. Compromises throughout led to revision after revision of the opening. Finally, the codirectors interviewed the student actors about public art and shaped those stories in a less classical theatrically-based opening. This compromise still laid out the themes of the show but also allowed students more personal identification inspired by the use of their actual interviews.

Throughout the process, the codirectors set deadlines and gave clear expectations of what was necessary for the next rehearsal. Despite this fact, students constantly came unprepared, so that the rehearsal process became work sessions with students and codirectors pitching, experimenting and refining ideas. This transformed process was necessary to improve the twenty installations to be included but lacked further exploratory ensemble exercises.

As the project continued, students began to change their work ethic and the rehearsals became more fruitful. They arrived at the appointed time for rehearsal, they worked outside of

the appointed rehearsals and began to offer deeper feedback to their peers while gracefully accepting suggestions from the codirectors as the opening performance drew near.

During the final rehearsals, it was clear that the project had achieved a rare devised hybrid by embracing polarity – American and Greek acting, and the blend of the codirectors' organization with the students' freedom. Implicit in each performance were the political and financial tensions so prevalent in Greece, a true understanding and examination of the environment of the campus and all that connotes, and the work which now combined the theatre studies propensity for examination in conjunction with the aesthetic of academic professionals. It became clear that this project could only be created at this moment, in this place, with these people. Despite the barriers, the work began to feel free of constriction – an entirely personal public statement. The project in its final form perfectly encapsulated all elements within this essay by accepting the polarities to create a hybrid performance. It captured the moment.

Performance

The performance of the piece was presented on April 21st, 2016, with over seventy people in attendance.² The thirty-member ensemble who had never worked with an audience showcased their work and ideas well. The ambition of the project and its sprawling nature was praised by audiences, who saw the campus in a new way. Audiences understood the contextual framing device of public art and embraced the nuances throughout. It also created more active audiences, who, while searching for the next installation, were residually forced to look at all of the campus's artwork while seeking the next installation. Despite the occasional confusion of the process, the resultant product offered sharp and focused commentary.

Summary

Although the project's findings are promising, as they uncovered several issues that took place during this creative collaborative teaching-learning setting and performance, the codirectors agreed that a cooperative leap forward is necessary in order to develop and expand the transformative learning and outcomes. This creative collaborative approach, which took place at the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Patras, has been beneficial for all the participants, as it was an honest shared process which revealed issues of understanding and dealt with differences in cultural identity, the importance of a shared vocabulary, public versus private education, pedagogy, the participation of guest artists in educational and professional settings, issues related to devising, student and faculty interaction that brings together the personal and the social through performative acts.

As Geertz (1973, pp. 10–13) has argued, a "good interpretation of anything [...] takes us

2 See www.theaterst.upatras.gr/events/1/

to the heart of that of which it is the interpretation". The dialogical process that our autoethnographic narrative embodies illustrates this.

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