

Composition & Dramaturgy

for *Performing Robots*

Fall 2020

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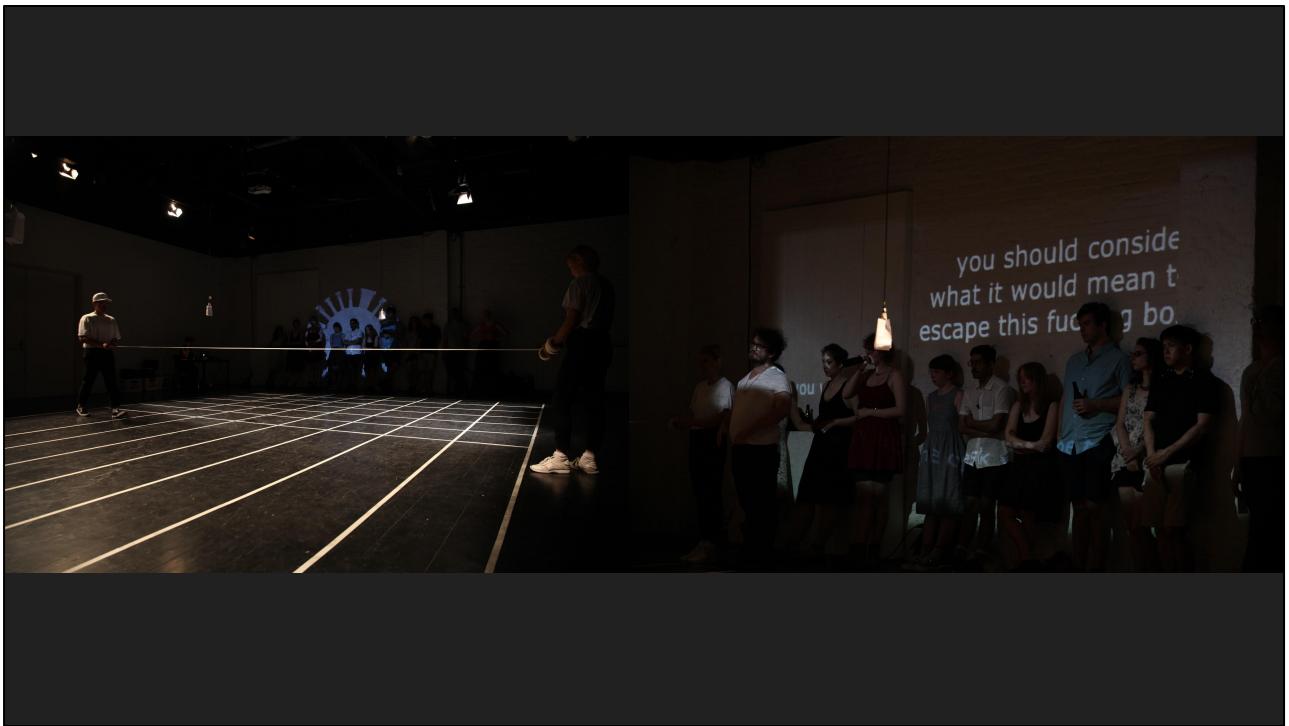


Tegan
Ritz
McDuffie

- BFA in Directing from Carnegie Mellon University (2013)
- Performance creation & research in New York City and Berlin
- Instructor of Project and Stage Management for the NYUAD Theater Program

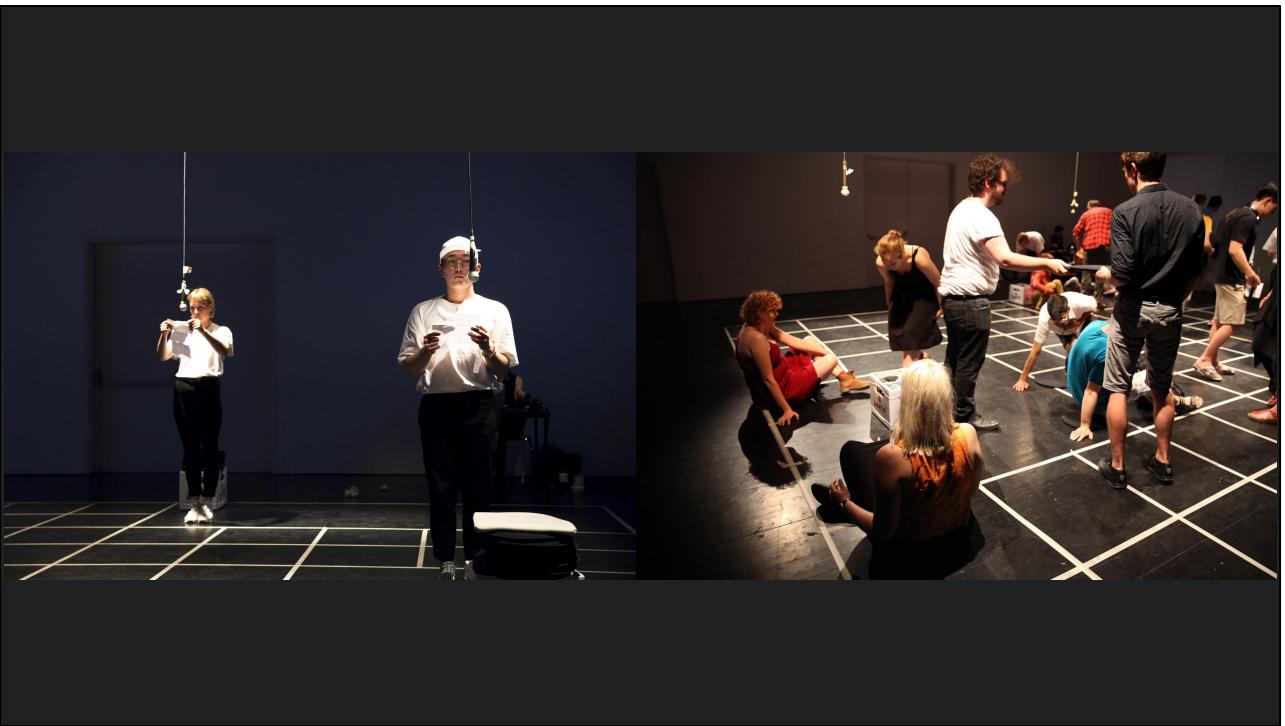


Stage Management: NYUAD Student Productions
(Yellow Brick Road, 2016; The Aeneid, 2017; The Caucasian Chalk Circle, 2019)

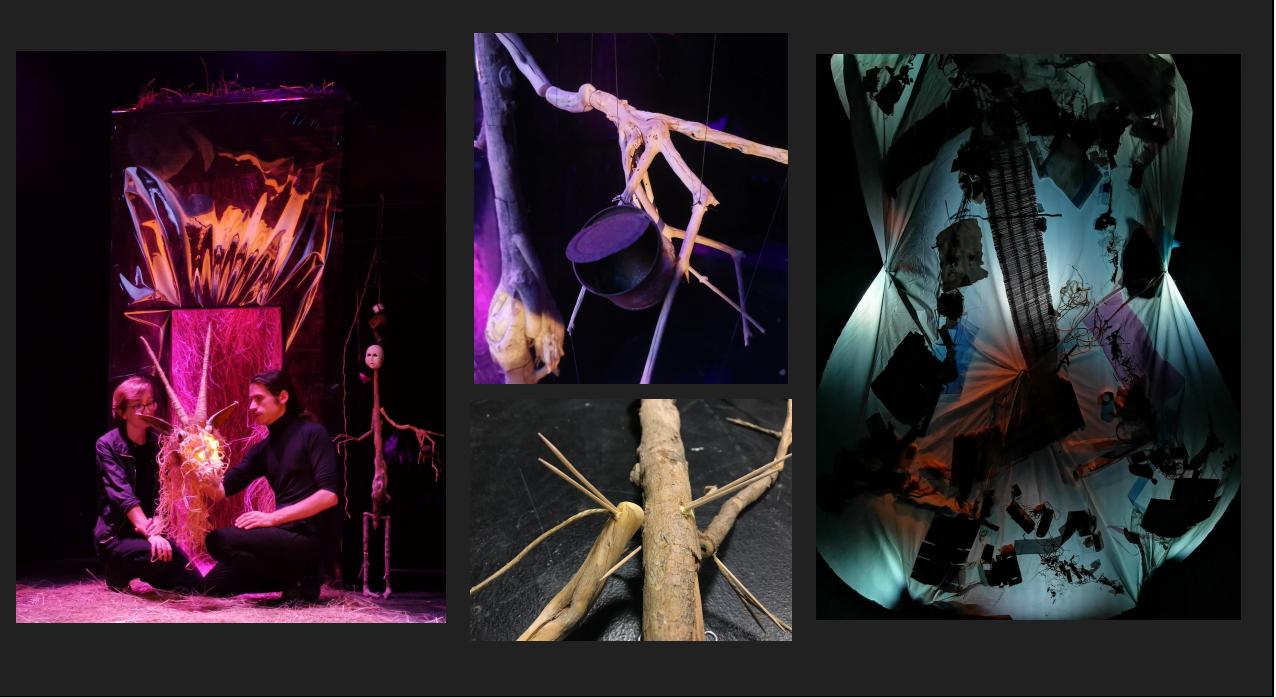


Created/Directed:

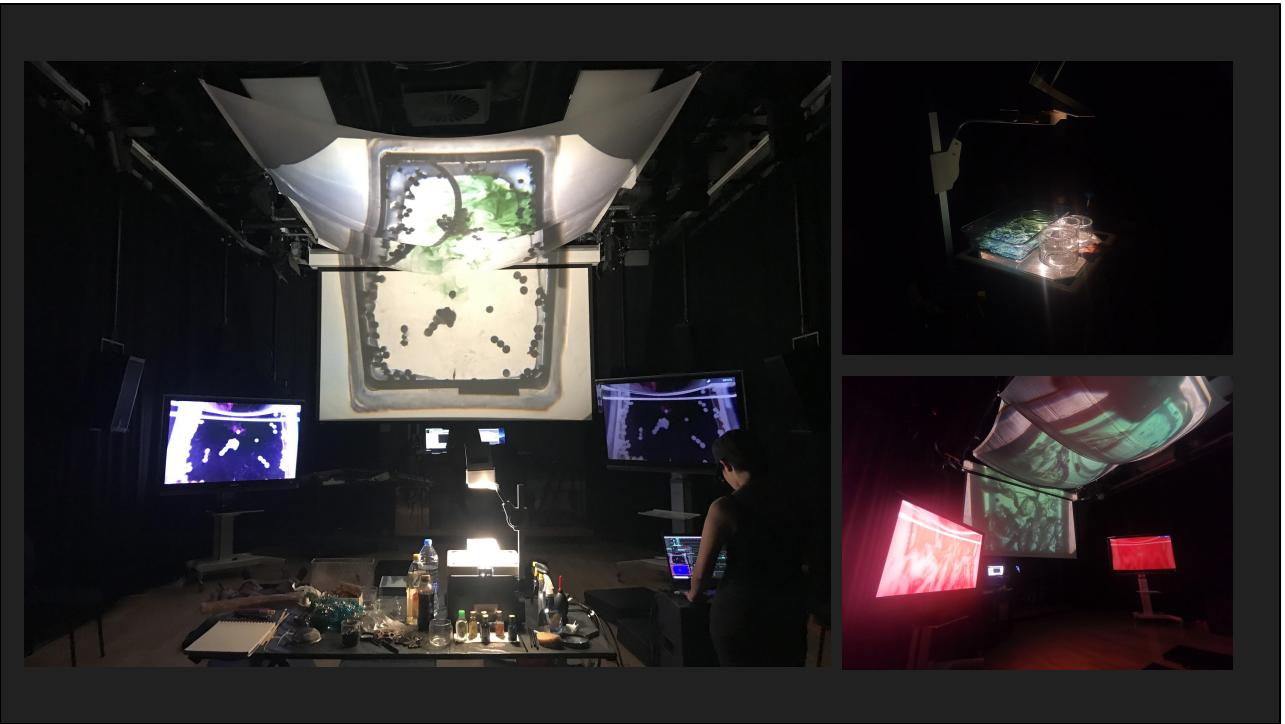
(Brutal Architecture, English Theater Berlin | International Performing Arts Center, 2016)



(Brutal Architecture, English Theater Berlin | International Performing Arts Center, 2016)



The Last Auction Lab Cycles (Fall Lab: Environmental Object Animation), NYUAD
2019
With Gabriel Hazuda



The Last Auction Lab Cycles (Spring Lab: Audio-visual Installation), NYUAD 2020
With Harshini Karunaratne & Kristin Mueller

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Dramaturgy

“...a comprehensive exploration of the context in which the play resides....the physical, social, political, and economic environment in which the action takes place, the psychological underpinnings of the characters, the various metaphorical expressions in the play of thematic concerns; as well as on the technical consideration of the play as a piece of writing: structure, rhythm, flow, even individual word choices.”

(*Terry McCabe, Mis-Directing the Play: An Argument Against Contemporary Theatre*)

DEFINITION IS HIGHLY DEBATED in the theater community

Consider Context, Intention, & Impact

- What do you want to say? / What question are you asking?
- How does the structure of the performance support that intention?
- Who is your audience?
- What do you want your audience to experience?
- Who/what is included or empowered?
- Who/what is excluded or erased?
- What is the relationship between the “characters” and the action?
- Why this work now?

Intention ≠ Impact

- When creating performance, BE YOUR OWN DRAMATURG or enlist a collaborator /friend
- Intention ≠ Impact >>> Practice & Attempts

Dramaturgy

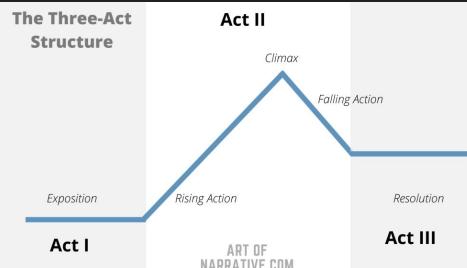
“The impact that structure has on an audience.”

(Rubén Polendo, Theater Mitu)

Dramatic Structure

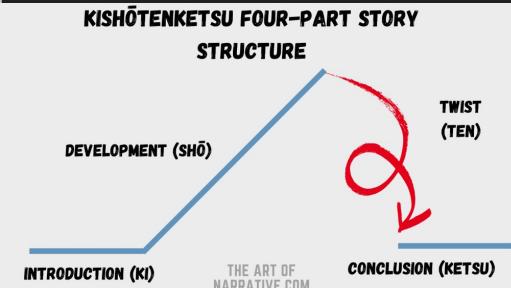
3 Act / Freytag's Pyramid

- Origin: Greece > “The West”
 - “Conflict Based”
 - Structure:
 - Exposition
 - Rising Action
 - Climax
 - Falling Action
 - Resolution / Denouement



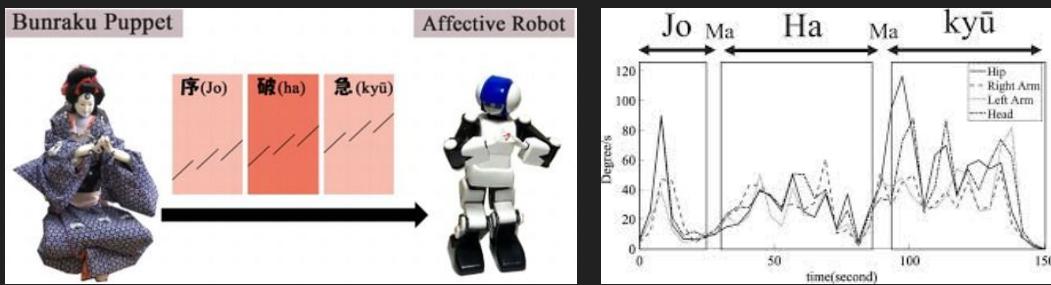
Kishōtenketsu (起承転結) / 4 Part Story

- Origin: China > Korea > Japan
 - “Conflictless”
 - Structure:
 - Introduction
 - Development
 - Twist
 - Resolution



Relationship to Performing Robots

- Dramaturgy as entry point to building performance
- Example Research:
 - “Robot motion design using bunraku emotional expressions - focusing on Jo-Ha-Kyu in sounds and movements”
 - By: Ran Dong, Yang Chen, Dongsheng Cai, Shinobu Nakagawa, Tomonari Higaki & Nobuyoshi Asai



Another dramatic structure: Jo - Ha - Kyo [Ma]: “Beginning / Break / Rapid [Hold/Pregnant Pause]”

Research Abstract:

“One of the UNESCO intangible cultural heritages Bunraku puppets can play one of the most beautiful puppet motions in the world. The Bunraku puppet motions can express emotions without the so-called ‘Uncanny Valley.’ We try to convert these emotional motions into robot affective motions so that robots can interact with human beings more comfortable. In so doing, in the present paper, we present a robot motion design framework using Bunraku affective motions that are based on the so-called ‘Jo-Ha-Kyū,’ and convert a few simple Bunraku motions into a robot motions using one of deep learning methods. Our primitive experiments show that Jo-Ha-Kyū can be incorporated into robot motion design smoothly, and some simple affective robot motions can be designed using our proposed framework.”

(Link: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01691864.2019.1703811>)

Relationship to *Performing Robots*

“Dramaturgically [robotic and virtual figures] link new perspectives on technology, media, politics, and ideas of subjectivity and existence within hybrid performance events that blur the traditional theatrical borders between live and mediated effects.”

(Peter Eckersall, *Towards a Dramaturgy of Robots and Object-Figures*)



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Composition a method for:

- Creating new work
- Practicing how to select and arrange separate components to create a cohesive experience
- Generating, defining, and developing ideas
- Revealing to ourselves our hidden thoughts
 - Impulses and ideas emerging from limitations on time and/or scale
- Strengthening trust in our impulses (our creative voice)
- Being in dialogue with different forms (engaging interdisciplinarity)
- Practicing our art

From *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

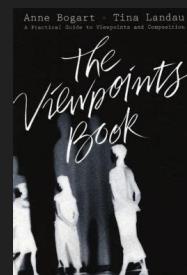
Approach to Composition: The Viewpoints Method

- A philosophy translated into a technique for:
 - Training actors
 - Building ensemble
 - Creating movement for stage
- A set of names given to certain principles of movement through time and space
- Points of awareness that a performer or creator makes use of while working

From *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Anne Bogart & Tina Landau's Viewpoints

- Time
 - Tempo
 - Duration
 - Kinesthetic Response
 - Repetition
- Space
 - Shape
 - Gesture
 - Architecture
 - Spatial Relationship
 - Topography



- First developed in the 1970's by Mary Overlie as "a logical way to examine, analyze, and create art in a profound way"
- Adapted by Anne Bogart and Tina Landau, then published and popularized in 2005 with *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*
- Bogart - The SITI Company; Landau - Steppenwolf Theater Company

Time: Tempo

The rate of speed as which a movement occurs



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Thermal Receipt Self Portrait (Fiscal Year 2011) by Javier Proenza
<https://vimeo.com/channels/kineticartprojects/30991299>

Time: Duration

How long a movement or sequence of movements continues



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Chico MacMurtie's Amorphic Robot Works, 'Fetus to Man'
<http://amorphicrobotworks.org/fetus-to-man>

Time: Kinesthetic Response

The timing in which you respond to the external events of movement or sound



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Noga Erez's YOU SO DONE music video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xn813NKlhzl>

Time: Repetition

Repeating something

1. Internal Repetition
2. External Repetition



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Image from “What the Legco!” ¾ Voting Machine sculpture by locHlkIT
<https://vimeo.com/channels/kineticartprojects/30615682>

Space: Shape

The contour or outline of a body/object in space

1. Lines
2. Curves
3. Combination

Stationary or in movement

Can be made in 3 forms

1. The object in space
2. The object in relationship to architecture
(making a shape)
3. The object in relationship to other objects
(making a shape)



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Amit Drori's Gulliver

<https://amitdrori.com/>

Space: Gesture

A shape with a beginning, middle, and end.

1. Behavioral Gesture
 - a. Concrete, physical, observable in reality
 - b. Private & Public
2. Expressive Gesture
 - a. Emotion, desire, idea, or value
 - b. Abstract or symbolic



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Simon Gietz's "I made a lipstick robot"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcW70-6eQcY&feature=youtu.be>

Space: Architecture

The physical environment in which you are working and how awareness of it effects movement

1. Solid Mass
2. Texture
3. Light
4. Color
5. Sound



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Amit Drori's Gulliver
<https://amitdrori.com/>

Space: Spatial Relationship

The distance between things in the performance space

1. One object to another
2. One object to a group of objects
3. The object to the architecture

Dynamic distances: extreme proximity or extreme distance



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Android-Human Theater's "Sayonara"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uo-4RQPEHlk>

Space: Topography

The landscape, floor pattern, or design we create *through* space



Definition from: *The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition*

Image from: Amit Drori's Orlando
<https://amitdrori.com/>

Building Composition

- Set limitations
- Isolate components for focused exploration
- PLAY
- Attempt
 - “Fail”
 - Attempt again
- Arrange & rearrange
- Clarify your questions / message
- Make choices
- Share the work & engage feedback

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