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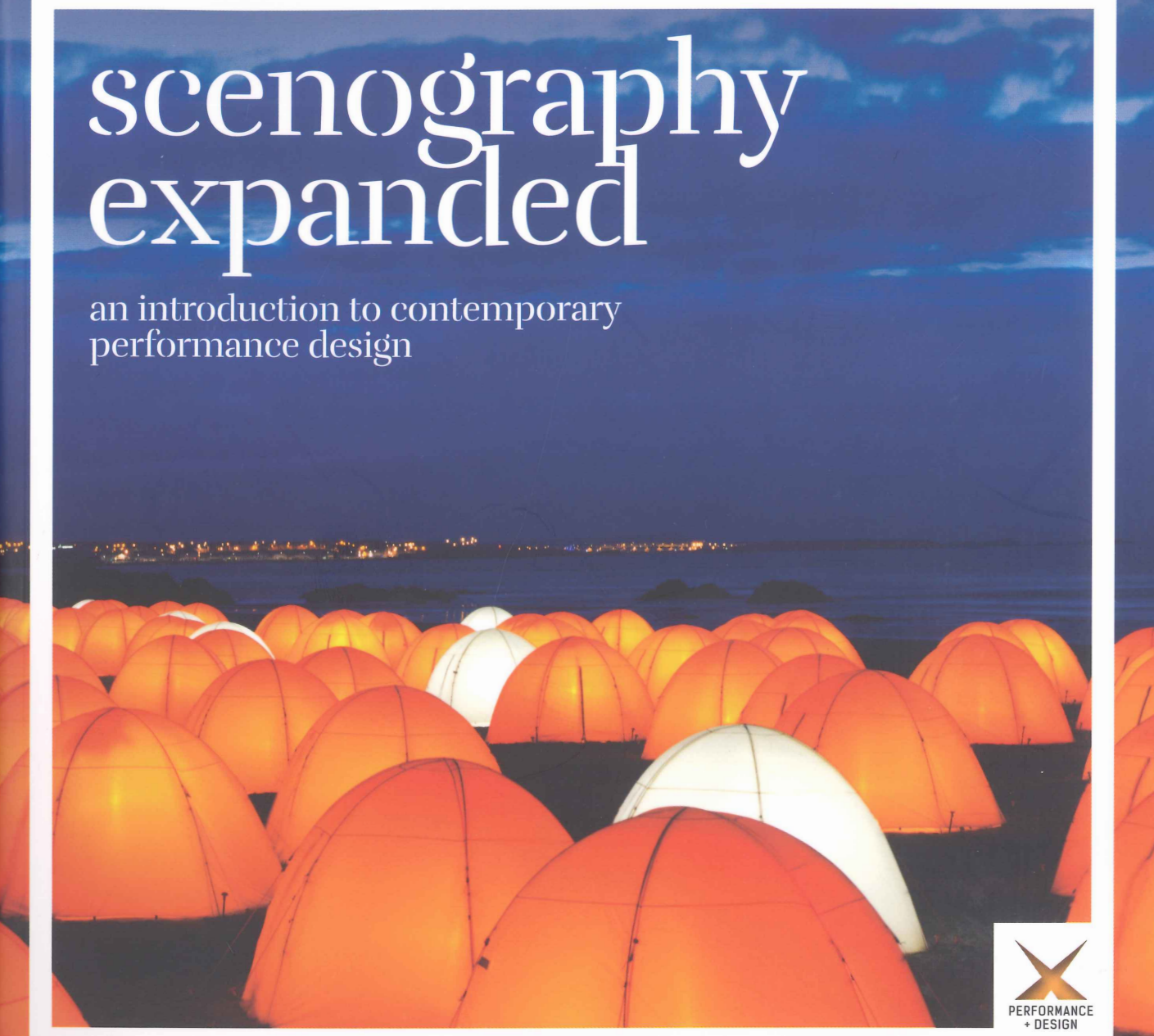
# scenography expanded

## an introduction to contemporary performance design



PERFORMANCE + DESIGN

Edited by Joslin McKinney and Scott Palmer

BLOOMSBURY

# Scenography Expanded

## An Introduction to Contemporary Performance Design

**EDITED BY**
**JOSLIN MCKINNEY AND SCOTT PALMER**

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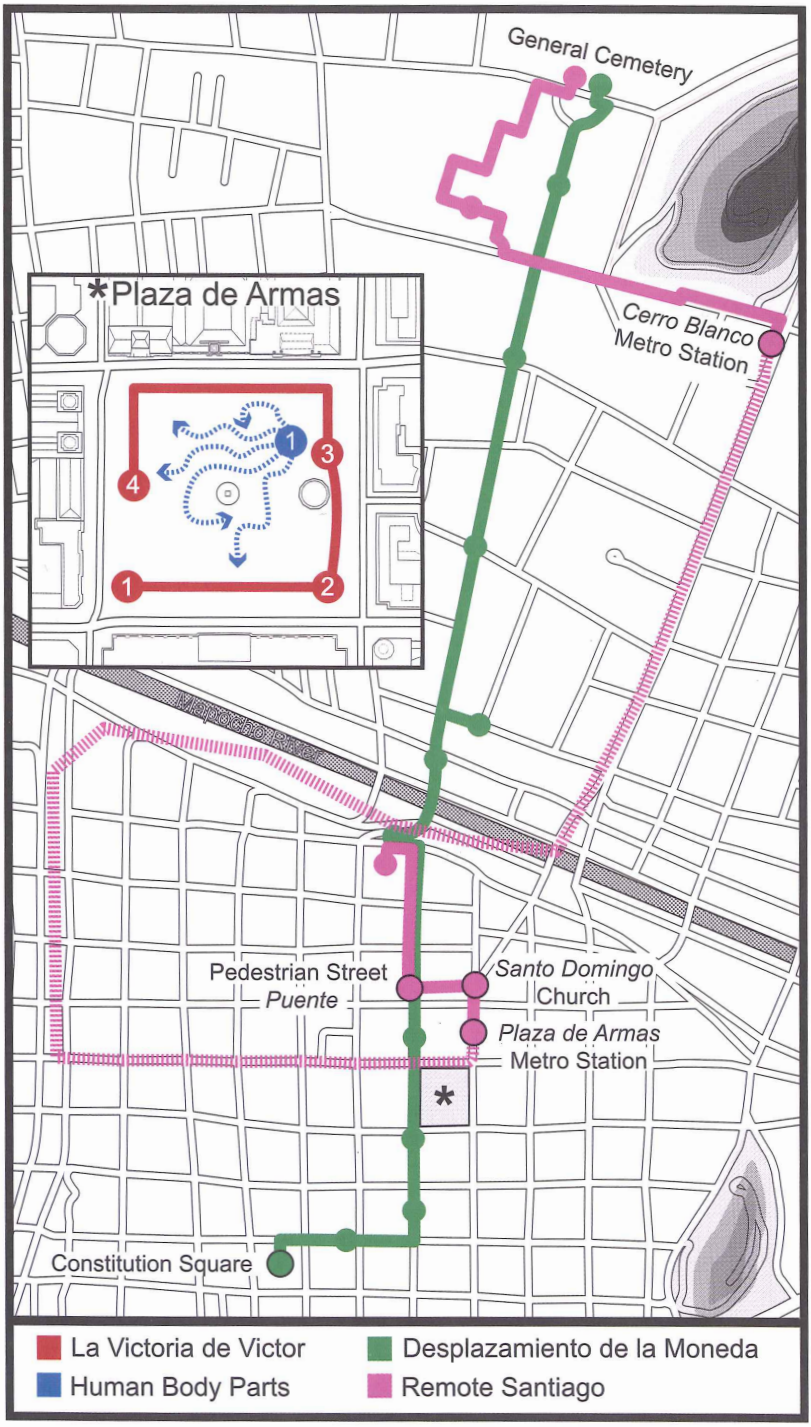


**PLATE 9** Performance trajectory maps in central Santiago (Daniel Maseda).



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# 4

# City as Site: Street Performance and Site Permeability during the Festival Internacional Teatro a Mil, Chile, 2012–2015

*Marcela Oteíza*

Street theatre performances activate the city, layering their meaning into the places where they are staged. Conversely, the city adds its own social and political history to the performances. In this chapter, I focus on the exchange that occurs between the city of Santiago, its inhabitants and festival street performances. The analysis is conducted from the perspective of stage design, as well as through the lens of site-specificity, in order to examine the different levels of permeability of a given site, taking into consideration the contemporary context of trans-disciplinary spatial practices in scenography.

The Festival Internacional Teatro a Mil[1] (FITAM) takes place every year in Santiago, the capital city of Chile. For several years now, I have attended the festival's street performances. Through my ethnographic research into the scenographic spatial significance of the festival's city, I have been considering how the occupation of iconic urban sites has the potential to reveal the many layers of the socio-political history of Santiago, as well as the curatorial insight required from the festival's organizers in support of each production's dramaturgy. The connections between the city, its inhabitants and the theatrical explorations of national and international companies raise questions about Chile, a country marked by geographical isolation and a history of government-imposed censorship.

FITAM aims to promote contemporary Chilean and international theatre, and to provide affordable and equal access for all audiences. Starting in 1995, the festival has offered free outdoor performances of music, dance, digital spectacles, urban interventions and street theatre, in addition to paid productions in theatres and alternative spaces. As its core mission, FITAM aims to expand local audiences' perceptions of contemporary performing arts. This is evidenced by their curatorial

choices where diversity and breadth seem to define their programming. Street performances reveal the diverse ways in which the festival re-shapes the city in itself into each production's scenography. Consequently, the city becomes a site that has been intervened upon. Utilizing Santiago as a site draws forth its socio-political history and its aesthetic urban composition. The socio-political history of Santiago is linked to that of its inhabitants. Thus, the city as scenography is layered with meaning that permeates through the reception of the street performances.

One cannot consider Santiago's history without considering the role it has played during the years of Chile's military dictatorship. During that time, Santiago's inhabitants occupied the city's public sites as they struggled to reclaim both their city and their right to self-governance. The Chilean dictatorship, led by military general Augusto Pinochet, was in power from the coup d'état on 11 September 1973 until 11 March 1990 – the inauguration day of the first president elected after the coup. The military regime was characterized by systematic suppression of human rights violations that were unprecedented in the history of Chile.

I grew up in Santiago during Pinochet's regime, at a time when gathering in public spaces was at first illegal, but later in the 1980s was seen as an act of resistance. Civilians had to abide a curfew for most of those years. I remember how my generation participated in acts of civil disobedience to reclaim the return of democracy in the county. In that process, streets, neighbourhoods, plazas and buildings became characters that were our partners in that struggle. For example, each time a protest began on the main street, Alameda, the aim was to reach La Moneda, the seat of the President of the Republic of Chile and, therefore, a representation of the military regime's power and oppression. Even if the protest dissolved before reaching it, the crowd would still shout: 'A La Moneda' ('To the Moneda').

Other areas in the neighbourhood of Alameda and La Moneda are also significant, and they all depart from Santiago's central plaza, the Plaza de Armas. Built in the 16th century, Plaza de Armas has long been the political, economic, social and religious heart of Santiago. Adjacent to the cathedral on the west side of the Plaza sits the Vicaría de la Solidaridad (Vicarage of Solidarity), which provided a safe haven from heavy police repression during times of protest. My generation knew the ins and outs of the city as a matter of survival: we knew from which direction the police water cannons would emerge, which streets connected to possible exit routes and where to re-group in case the manifestations (protests) were disbanded.

Protests in the Plaza de Armas are not solely events of the past. In 2012, Chilean high school and university students protested in the plaza against the decreasing level of the quality of public education (Vergara 2012). The Plaza de Armas also has its everyday users, such as workers looking for a green patch of grass in central Santiago, and with passers-by that mingle with puppet shows, evangelical preachers, shoe shining and souvenir stands. Thus, the plaza's adaptability to different uses and many populations makes it permeable to multiple readings.

Upon these buildings and spaces that are charged with history, FITAM productions add new layers of meaning to them. At the festival's outdoor performances, Chilean audiences experience a renewed connection with the space-characters of central Santiago. I use the term 'space-character' to refer to a specific urban place or architectural iconic site that has a latent socio-historical meaning for Santiago's inhabitants and that are used as recurrent theatrical spaces for the Festival, thereby rendering the space-characters a role within the construction of meaning of

the festival's productions. For example, Plaza de Armas and La Moneda both intersect with the dramaturgy of traveling productions. Even if the festival's productions are usually conceived for touring and, therefore, for other sites and audiences, at the moment in which they are transposed to space-character locations that are also home to Chilean audiences, these performances' visual compositions assume particular meanings in relationship to those spectators' collective memory. In turn, these productions actually recover and reaffirm the mnemonic qualities of Santiago's public spaces. During the festival, Santiago's central square, the Plaza de Armas, becomes a prime example of how collective memory is recovered at a public space.

Consequently, the occupation of Santiago's space-characters by FITAM productions expands the notion of the scenographic from a traditional stage design to a trans-disciplinary engagement with the performative space (Brejzek 2011: 8). This allows us to understand performance design as an 'idea' or as a model, enabling us to see and experience the city anew through the blending of theatre, urban architecture and history within a particular performance.

As I recorded and interviewed practitioners and spectators of FITAM's performances at different outdoor sites between 2012 and 2015, I examined how the notion of place and the spectator/actor relationship can transform the urban architecture into a stage. I was often reminded that independently of the type of site – be it a street or a park (transitory or permanent site of convergence) – the performance interventions cause the surrounding architecture to become part of the performance's *mise en scéne*,[2] and conversely, the dramaturgy is layered onto the city space-characters, thus addressing in a twofold fashion: first, the permeability of site and, second, the level of openness of the event.

To analyse the levels of site permeability into a given production, I utilize site-specificity as a point of entry. Kaye states that 'site-specific art [functions] as articulate exchanges between the work of art and the places in which its meanings are defined' (Kaye 2000: 1). This view, therefore, accounts for the space and the context in which each performance takes place. This view also takes into consideration Fiona Wilkie's assertion that site-specific performances foreground spatiality as a locus of performance meanings (2004: 2). Furthermore, Jen Harvie writes that site-specific performance can be especially powerful as a vehicle for remembering and forming a community (Harvie 2005: 42). By integrating the notions of Wilkie and Harvie into my analysis of the performances, I intend to re-define the street performances here presented as site-oriented performances, underscoring the performance-space relationship (Kwon 2014: 34). I will argue that the site (the city of Santiago), and in particular the 'space characters' (Plaza de Armas, La Moneda, etc.) where the street performances of Santiago a Mil are staged, interconnect the meaning of the productions with the ones of the site, even though some of the touring productions are not necessarily created for the places where they are shown.

I consider the street performances discussed here to be site-oriented works because they intervene into the public space and incorporate the context of their surroundings into viewers' construction of the production's meaning. In the description and analysis section that follows below, I will offer an account of the 'space-characters' Plaza de Armas (city central plaza) and La Moneda (Chilean presidential palace) within the socio-political context of Santiago, Chile, and describe how the street performances interconnect their own meaning with the particular historical, political, and religious significance of urban sites that they occupy.

## Plaza de Armas

During the festival, Santiago's central square, Plaza de Armas, becomes a prime example of how collective memory is recovered at a public space. Architect René Martinez Lemoine explains the history of spatial organization of such spaces in Latin America:

> We, in Spanish America, understand the city, beginning from a central, empty square. We 'know' that in the centre of the pattern there is a block missing, an empty square we will always find the Cathedral, the Municipal building, the Post Office, the central governmental office, the bank or a least a bank, and the main hotel. This is simply a 'fact', something that is the natural order of things. (Martinez Lemoine 2003: 367)

The Plaza's adaptability to different uses and many populations makes it permeable to multiple readings. In 1976, the Vicary of Solidarity (La Vicaría de la Solidaridad[3]) operated next to the cathedral. This left-leaning branch of the Catholic Church supported human rights during Pinochet's dictatorship. Activists held protests in front of this organization's building and throughout the Plaza. Currently, groups advocating for animal and ecological causes, or immigrant, gay and lesbian rights, mingle with its everyday users. As Marvin Carlson points out:

> The absence of a specifically theatrical structure from the medieval city's repertory of architectural objects by no means indicates that the physical situation of theatre performance within the city was devoid of symbolic significance. On the contrary, a situation allowing those producing a performance to place it in whatever locale seemed more suitable meant that the theatre could use to its own advantage the already existing connotations of other spaces both in themselves and in their placement within the city. (Carlson 1993: 14)

## *La Victoria de Víctor*

The performance's use of the city's pre-existing symbolic significance is certainly the case in the staging of *La Victoria de Víctor* (*Victor's Victory*) by the company La Patriótico Interesante (FITAM 2012). Utilizing a sequence of visual vignettes, the performance conveyed the story of Víctor Jara, a Chilean songwriter, theatre director and political activist that was tortured and killed due to his opposition to Pinochet's military regime. Its dramaturgical structure mirrored the stations of a liturgical medieval play. *La Victoria de Víctor* (see Plate 9) took the shape of a parade that led the audience through the corners, crossings and buildings of the Plaza de Armas, as the company director Ignacio Achurra states, 'The production has a structure built on the base of stationary and itinerant points. It has five stationary scenes and six itinerant or transit scenes' (I. Achurra, personal video interview, 7 April 2015). Therefore, the performance connected Víctor Jara's political martyrdom to the '*Via Crucis*' stations. The structure of a religious procession has been embedded in the performance's mechanics; for example, in the manner by which the actors introduced scenographic elements, such as litter chairs or carts. Achurra comments that these objects were

stationed in different locations, usually within two blocks of the performance's main focal point at a given moment. The actors moved these structures into the next scene as the parade developed, bringing with them new audiences of passers-by that were attracted to the performance and that may have curiously followed these design elements.

> For the Plaza de Armas [to] work for the production... [the performance] [had to move] circularly around the plaza. The audience doesn't see, [the different scenes] because it turns on its axis. But instead [the audience] advances like in a line [alongside] with the litter chairs. [The performers] go into different streets to [eventually] form ... a procession. (I. Achurra, personal video interview, 7 April 2015).

The performance of *La Victoria de Víctor* began when a group of actors wearing guerrilla masks appeared at the Plaza's south-eastern corner. They moved the crowd to the sides to open a path (see Plate 10). A truck arrived bringing the four guitarists that impersonated Víctor Jara, playing his famous song 'El Aparecido' – except that the arrangement distorted the melody. The scenes that followed included a depiction of Jara's relationship with his father and mother; a fictional meeting between Jara and songwriter-and-activist Violeta Parra; and the re-enactment of Jara's political life by a chorus standing on a wheeled platform. In another moment, actors dressed as the Chilean police arrived from the Plaza's north-eastern corner to re-enact Víctor Jara's imprisonment and murder. As the sun set, spectators turned their attention to an actor playing a Chilean official: standing on the truck, high above the audience and with the cathedral's facade as his backdrop, the official delivered an overtly demagogical discourse. This final moment was *La Victoria de Víctor*'s strongest example of how architecture, history and dramaturgy intersect. The Chilean audience could, therefore, experience the Cathedral as a space-character that was historically charged. The speech symbolized the alliance between the Catholic Church and the military dictatorial regime. It was an ominous reminder of the audience's national history.

Indeed, the symbolic significance of each cardinal direction and architectural feature at the Plaza in the context of specific dramaturgical events of the production prodded the Chilean audience to identify different power relationships. In the scene between Víctor Jara and Violeta Parra, the two arrived from opposite corners of the Plaza on litter chairs held high above the audience. Jara entered from the south-eastern corner where the cathedral is located, while Parra arrived from the Plaza's commercial southeast side. The choice highlighted the opposite but complementary ties between religion and economics. This scene placed masculine and feminine facing each other from opposite directions. The two characters connected, but held onto their distinct kinds of power.

The scene in which Jara was arrested unfolded on the ground. Audience and performer met at eye level. The shift in the spatial relationship underscored that the military regime had not only crushed Jara but also that the entire country had experienced disempowerment. *La Victoria de Víctor* was not specifically created for Plaza de Armas, but it became a site-specific performance because the performance incorporated the architectural buildings into the production's construction of meaning. As Achurra explains, the performance makes a deliberate use of iconic architectural sites:

> [In street theatre] When you [visually] compose the street for performance, in some ways, the street is a [pre-existing] picture that has been already painted – it's hyper-populated by

## Central Santiago

My next examples took place across a number of sites across the city centre. Santiago was designed during Spanish colonization in the traditional chessboard layout, starting from Plaza de Armas and continuing with eight blocks from north to south and ten blocks from east to west, in a pre-occupied *Picunche*[5] settlement, a native indigenous group. The Spanish-imposed grid layout, as Martinez Lemoine states, became Santiago's centre where the city would develop from its colonial architecture to neoclassic buildings. The cathedral, the opera house, the National Library and other edifices dating from the 1800s, currently blend-in with modern skyscrapers and other historic architectural buildings. Libertador General Bernardo O'Higgins Avenue, popularly known as La Alameda, serves as the main artery of the city and is where La Moneda is located (Aranguiz 2004: 56). La Moneda and the surrounding areas, such as the Plaza Cívica (Civic square) and the Plaza Constitución (Constitution Square), are used yearly as sites for FITAM's performances, as are other locations of the city, such as the general cemetery. The cemetery is the resting place for some of the most influential people in the country, among them President Salvador Allende,[6] and it has a vast green area and serves as a park. It also hosts a memorial in honour of those 'disappeared' during the military regime.

## *El Desplazamiento del Palacio de la Moneda o Minga*

*El Desplazamiento del Palacio de la Moneda o Minga* (*Displacement of the Moneda Palace or Minga*)[7] is a procession-style performance created by the Spanish artist Roger Bernat in 2014 specifically for the city of Santiago. It made evident use of the city's iconic sites and its communities as part of its dramaturgy by moving a replica of La Moneda governmental palace from its location to Allende's tomb at the General Cemetery. As Roger Bernat states:

> To deviate from our path towards la Legua[8] to go through the cemetery was an act of justice. The circumstances in which Allende was torn from La Moneda deserved it, it will not happen very often that La Moneda moves from its place, and we will make the effort to end the first round in front of his grave. (Bernat in Inostroza 2014)

Bernat thus utilizes the palace's symbolic power, as well as overlaying into the performance the Chilean tradition of la Minga, a custom from southern Chiloe Island, where communities work together towards a shared goal. The Minga usually entails moving a house from a current location to a better one. As a way of payment, they celebrate the completion of the work with a communal meal. *El Desplazamiento del Palacio de la Moneda o Minga* was also a long processional journey through the centre of Santiago, involving the multiple and varied communities who live there. The route started at Plaza Constitución behind La Moneda and crossed through Plaza de Armas, to arrive at the city's main cemetery.

The performance focused on a miniature wooden replica of La Moneda approximately two metres tall.[9] Wooden poles extended from the base of the square structure, so that this miniature

La Moneda could be carried like a processional altar. Community groups from along the route alternated in the carrying of the model and a ladder so that it could be used as a podium. Each community group used the Moneda podium to state their demands.

The approach to audience participation was key to the realization of this performance and to intervening in the city. As Jens Roselt states, 'The simultaneous presence of performers and spectators, which marks it as a cultural performance, generates and shapes specific forms of attention' (Roselt 2013: 265). The collective procession stopped at twelve locations, each highlighting a different community group. The structure of the performance allowed people from these communities to actively participate. For example, at Plaza Constitución, a political group stated their demands by addressing not only their own groups, audiences and creators of the piece but also the miniature of la Moneda Palace itself: 'This is a house [pointing to the palace miniature] of lies, where the people are not able to get in to build a better society' (*Santiago (en) Vivo* 2017). As Rancière underscores:

> The precise aim of the performance is to abolish this exteriority in various ways: by placing the spectators on the stage and the performers in the auditorium; by abolishing the difference between the two; by transferring the performance to other sites; by identifying it with taking possession of the street, the town or life. (Rancière 2009: 15)

Later, at Plaza de Armas, in front of the cathedral, another group stated its demands:

> I am a night-building-concierge representative and I am bringing our demands to the house of la Moneda. Even though we work in buildings, we are not part of the property. We cannot continue to be sold as property parts ... We want dignity and a living wage. (*Santiago (en) Vivo* 2017)

As Bernat explains, the audience involvement in his work went beyond spectators becoming performers and extended to the idea of active actors:

> The audience is led to become a sort of spectator of his/herself and to simultaneously be actor and spectator. They are productions in which spectators take responsibility not only of becoming the performer but also to bring the action of the performance to the end. This means that our shows never have the same form. It will depend on how each spectator interprets the rules of the game. (R. Bernat, personal video interview, January 2013)

While the community leaders voiced their demands, the intervention moved through the city, gathering more and more groups and onlookers, until it arrived at Allende's tomb at the cemetery. This processional intervention was particularly poignant to Chileans because, as scholar Jan Cohen-Cruz writes, 'witnessing supposes a connection between knowledge and responsibility' (Cohen-Cruz 1998: 65). The procession established an intimate relationship between audience and performance, because spectators fully participated in activating Santiago's mnemonic potential. Furthermore, it made visible the links between the city's political and religious powers and manifested the political unrest of entire generations as it stopped at each iconic site; it tied the city's architecture to its religious past; and it reminded all of the value of Chile's long history and belief in the power of

community. Ultimately, the intervention allowed spectators and performers alike to bear witness to their own past and to see anew the present of the urban space they occupy.

> Site-specific performance can be especially powerful as a vehicle for remembering and forming a community for at least two reasons. First, its location can work as a potent mnemonic trigger, helping to evoke specific past time related to the place and time of performance and facilitating a negotiation between the meanings of those times. (Harvie 2005: 42)

Jen Harvie's words became particularly pertinent many times during the processional intervention *El Desplazamiento de la Moneda*, but more clearly when the procession arrived at Paseo Puente where Peruvian immigrants, now a strong and thriving community in Santiago, took their turn on the la Moneda podium. They voiced their frustration with Chilean immigration laws and 'nominated' their own children as possible future presidents of Chile (see Plate 11). A representative of the Peruvian refugees Committee demanded:

> Thank you for this beautiful gesture. We receive and reaffirm that we want to be one nation. We are committed to Chile and its future; We are committed to the changes required by history. We do not want a constitution that excludes children because of their nationality, because we are all equal. As part of the immigrant community, I present to you Estrella who will state the demands of the children: Nobody should be Stateless. (*Santiago (en) Vivo* 2017)

The performance foregrounds the significance of the Paseo Puente site. This is where generations of Chileans took to the streets to voice their own discontent with the government. During the performance, the actual site acted as a backdrop where the immigrant community voiced their current demands. The performance happened in the present, but the mnemonic qualities of the site were brought forth and, by such, facilitated the understanding and negotiation between new communities.

## *Remote Santiago*

Site-specific performance can also be a vehicle for understanding the notion of place. For instance, the superimposing of an external reading to a familiar place such as your hometown can bring light to its idiosyncrasies. In 2015, Stefan Kaegi (Rimini Protokoll) adapted *Remote X* specifically for the city of Santiago. *Remote Santiago* was an auditory journey for an audience of fifty, who were guided through the city by a disembodied voice delivered through headphones. *Remote Santiago* took its audience on an 'anthropological' tour in order to induce the local audience to experience their city, customs and traditions as a computer being would if it was investigating the city through time and space in relation to its physical character, environment, social relations and culture.

The audio guide led the assembled audience through the city, allowing them to relinquish control and self-determination to the guiding technology, coupled with a sense of eerie disorientation and finishing with a liberating view from above (Rimmele 2013: 1). The sites were no longer only what we see, but what we are led to experience. This touring performance travelled through many

of Santiago's iconic sites. Here, I will focus on the meanings created by its use of the cemetery as a point of departure; and the neighbourhood of Plaza de Armas as the performance's mid-points.

At an Italian mausoleum in the General Cemetery, the audience gathered and put on headphones. The audience members were greeted by a GPS-style, computer-generated, female voice. 'Rosa' explained that her speech had been made by putting together syllables derived from 2,500 hours of female-voice recordings.[10] Rosa instructed audience members to become aware of the cemetery surroundings, and to focus their attention on a particular crypt, and the photographs and dates of the deceased buried inside. Rosa's voice through its narration invited the audience to draw parallels between the life of the unknown person inside the crypt and their own. The performance underscored individual histories and pointed the audience towards a 'nostalgic' view of the past. Later, when Rosa referenced Allende's tomb while a passage of Pinochet's discourse taking control of the nation during the days that followed the 1973 coup d'état was played, the audience had already been thinking of the past in reference to the themselves. This brought their own individual and subjective history to their current moment, to the performance present, becoming perhaps, as Rancière stated, an emancipated spectator. The use of the recording within this particular context had the effect of bringing forward specific individual memories to the audiences. However, a sense of detachment occurred while the audience crossed from the cemetery, where it had just left Allende's tomb, the adjacent monument to the detained and the disappeared during the military regime, back to the street. The GPS-style voice recording compelled the audience to somehow distance themselves and to create a moment devoid of actual feeling.

The audience continued to listen and to take its directions from Rosa, through streets and public transportation, until arriving at the Plaza de Armas metro station, where they walked into Santo Domingo's church. There, the audience sat in the pews of the dark and cool church nave where the group listened to Rosa's transformation into Rodrigo, a male computer-generated voice, while he gave instructions to divide the audience into two groups. Here, the religious culture of Santiago is highlighted in two ways in juxtaposition to the performance as a site occupied simultaneously by the audience and everyday church goers, and by the content of the performance narration that invoked the presence of the religious icon as possible embodiment for the computer-generated voice. This evoked in the audience important themes, such as trans-gender issues and the position of the Catholic Church in these matters, as well as an important shift in the performance structure as the group was divided for the first time. However, this moment of the performance doesn't become a pivotal one. Instead, it is accepted and experienced by the audience as an intellectual fact, as we kept following orders. *Remote Santiago* thus succeeded in superimposing the computer's point of view and provoking the audience to relinquish control and self-determination. This was made even clearer later when, out in the street, the voice of Rodrigo directed audience members to choose one personal object, to raise it over their heads and to shake it. While the recording shifted into an old recording of a political protest, a police escort appeared (see Plate 12). The march became a staged silent protest. It functioned as an imposed reminder of Santiago's past history, but it did not necessarily resonate in that specific present. The experience had a sense of present emptiness.

The superimposed GPS narrative with its anthropological perspective prompted the participants to experience the city with a sense of detachment, since the self had been replaced by the group, and the group was propelled by a programmed view of space and place. As Helmuth Höger, a member of the *Remote Santiago* company, asserts:

> I think *Remote X* is an invitation, at least from my point of view; an invitation to pause, an invitation to rediscover your city ... and to enjoy it, to know it from a different perspective, from other angles. (Höger, personal video interview, January 2015)

As such, the city and its landmarks are no longer what the audience has in front of their eyes; what they know and what it normally would experience. Instead, it is a myriad of possibilities, of possible realities that are heightened by the performance narration; possible realities that are latent and waiting to be awakened by the relational experience that each inhabitant has with its city and the construction of meaning of the performance narration.

*Remote X* is both 'site-specific', as it was in *Remote Santiago*, and a mobile project that moves from city to city. Here, then, it is important to consider the multiple mobilities embedded in this project. *Remote Santiago* was also a performance that moves in time, past and present. An example of its past could easily be seen in the use of historical recordings, and its present in the multiple locations that the performance occupies with their current uses, such as the Santo Domingo Church; but also its audience mobility, as they are actually moving, walking, riding the metro and other activities. This is in addition to the project that moves throughout the world. Wilkie writes that '[i]t is important that we think of [a] project as both mobile and site-specific. By emphasizing the mobility of place, makes the political argument that places need not be accepted as given but can be actively changed' (2012: 40).

*Remote X* has been conceived as a highly adaptable work, as it is inherently a site-specific work wherever it is performed. In this regard, the use of cultural memories, political history and landmarks of the city that it intervenes, activates the storyline of the journey and makes it site-specific. In *Remote Santiago*, the church, the cemetery, Allende's tomb and political and riot soundscapes are some of these elements.

I would like to emphasize that the way that these everyday spaces can be experienced by *Remote Santiago*'s audiences will depend on their own individualities, such as generational and cultural differences, even within a 'homogenous Chilean' audience. Street performances, and the majority of theatrical performances for that matter, address their audiences as a group. '[Street performances] address themselves to whole communities. Already conceptualizing their audience as a united collective, a valuable pre-condition for social change, these performances take place in public by-ways where people tend to congregate' (Cohen-Cruz 1998: 65). By providing individual headphones, *Remote Santiago* is no different, as everyone in the tour knows that every other participant, like himself or herself, are listening to the same recording, except when otherwise indicated. However, the individual agency is present as part of the personal power that each spectator brings to the shared experience, thus translating their perception in their own adventure.

## Conclusion

The performances that I analyse here utilized different modes of interrelational mobility and intertextuality. These interrelational modes refer to audience-performer-site interconnectivity, where the co-presence of actors and performance at a particular space-character co-creates layers

of meaning or intertextuality. For example, in *Human Body Parts,* the interrelation established by performers and audience, and their shared-space, effectively balanced the power dynamics of the theatrical event, where Plaza de Armas ceased to operate as a place of memory, but instead, as a place where a community could co-create a new history through the course of the performance.

In contrast, in the *Desplazamiento de la Moneda*, scenography is layered with meaning that can be perceived through its audience's socio-political knowledge of its own community and city, coupled with the audience's active role that carries the performance forward. *Desplazamiento de la Moneda* was a deliberately open performance with a structure and mechanics that functioned as a catalyst for its participants, where its clear modes of intertextual narratives became a powerful vehicle of remembering, while forging new bonds of complicity within its communities.

*Remote Santiago* and *La Victoria de Víctor* were street performances that utilized a specific storyline and script. In *Remote Santiago* for example, the script was an amalgam of historical recordings and site narrations by a computer-generated voice. In *La Victoria de Víctor*, the script was composed of Jara's songs and other devised texts. Here, the audiences that participated in these two performances contextualized the story to the physical, social, political and historical aspects of place and text. The audience's collective ability to understand the production's permeability and its socio-historical context in relation with Santiago's space-characters and its history was crucial to activating the mnemonic qualities of these performances.

The productions discussed here turned the centre of Santiago into a 'space of another nature' as they intervened into the city's daily life and rhythm. As Erika Fischer-Lichte writes, 'performances do not transmit pre-given meanings. Rather, it is the performance which brings forth the meaning that come into being during its course' (Fischer-Lichte 2009: 8). As I have documented, these productions performed at places that I identify with Chile's political past, gave my hometown a sense that was both fictional and real. The Festival reshaped the space-characters that I knew growing up during Pinochet's regime without robbing them of their historical significance. Audiences relived their collective memories and discovered new meanings in well-known streets and corners. The street performances at Festival Internacional Santiago a Mil re-contextualized the city's architecture in their usage of iconic sites; turned spectators into players and witnesses of the city's transformations; and in doing so, reshaped residents' experiences and perceptions of Santiago de Chile.

## Notes

1 The name 'Santiago a Mil' is Spanish for 'Santiago for 1,000 [pesos]' and refers to the low entry price of 1,000 Chilean pesos for events in the festival's early years. It is also a play on the phrase 'trabajar a mil por hora', Spanish for 'working a full one thousand per hour'. Prices for some events have risen over the years, but affordability is still a central factor, with several free performances and many low-cost tickets at the 2015 edition of the festival.

2 The *mise en scéne* creates experimental and ludic spaces which allow for unforeseen and unpredictable events to take place (Fischer-Lichte 2008: 189).

3 La Vicaría de la Solidaridad (1976–1992) was an agency from the Chilean Catholic Church. Its function was to assist the victims of the military dictatorship of General Pinochet. During this

time, the Catholic Church in Chile served both the government and its victims (Arzobispado de Santiago 2014).

**4** *Human Body Parts* by Snuff Puppets, Co., Australia. Original creator Andy Freer; designer and puppet builder Nick Wilson, Santiago a Mil 2013. Location: Plaza de Armas.

**5** *Picunches* is the name of the indigenous group that inhabits the valley of Santiago. From Mapudungun language: north people (*pikun*, 'north', y *che*, 'people').

**6** Salvador Allende Gosen, Socialist Chilean President, who was democratically elected and governed from 4 November 1970 until 11 September 1973 (the date of the coup d'état).

**7** La Minga (*mink'a* o *minga* in quechua, 'collective work done in favour of the community'; *minca* from quechua *minccacuni*, 'ask for help offering something in return'; or *mingaco*) in Chile 'Tiradura de Casa' (to move and transport a house). The house is attached to yoke of oxen, bulls or tractors and dragged to wherever it is going. Sometimes, particularly around Chiloé Island, it is also necessary to carry the house through the sea.

**8** La Legua Santiago neighbourhood is named after its location, as it is one league from Plaza de Armas. La Legua was originally established in the 1930s by a group of unemployed miners coming from the north of the country that occupied the land. It is politically considered as a bastion of the left.

**9** The replica of La Moneda Palace was made by la Legua carpenters, father and son, Jose and Patricio Saavedra. It is made of pinewood, measures 2 metres in length and is 2 metres wide. The whole structure has a height of 2.36 metres or 7'7", it weighs about 80 kilos and needs at least eight people to transport it.

**10** 'My words are created by more than 2,500 hours of a female voice. The words were divided into syllables by a computer. I form my words with these syllables. For example, I form the word 'identity' in four parts IN comes from the word *inauguración* DEN *densidad* comes from the word IT comes from *tiempo*, DAD comes from *dado*. My identity is composed of four syllables'. Transcribed and translated from video source (Fundación teatro a Mil (FITAM) 2015).