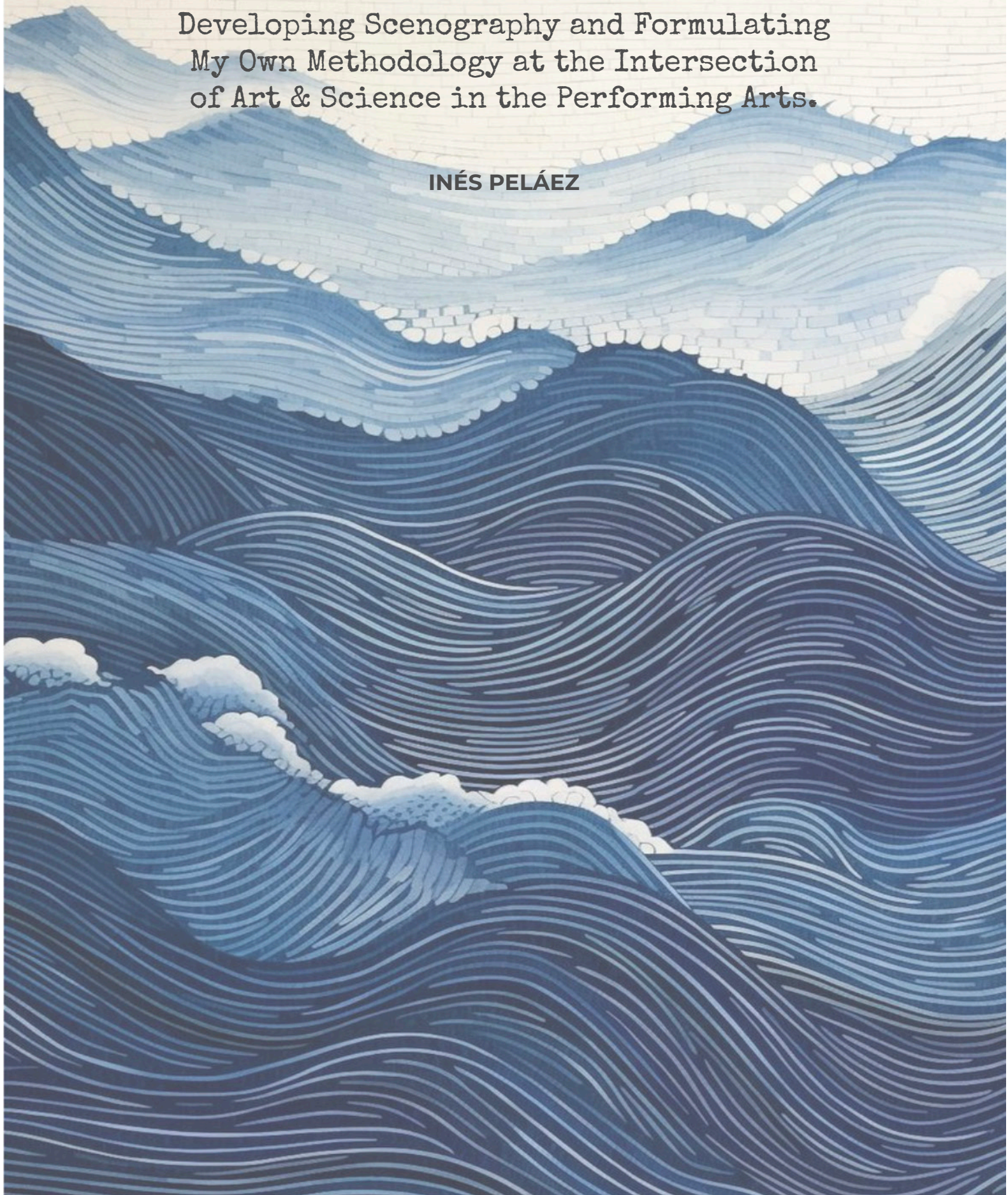


Shopping for a Blue Whale:

Developing Scenography and Formulating
My Own Methodology at the Intersection
of Art & Science in the Performing Arts.

INÉS PELÁEZ



**“SHOPPING FOR A BLUE WHALE: DEVELOPING SCENOGRAPHY
AND FORMULATING MY OWN METHODOLOGY AT THE
INTERSECTION OF ART & SCIENCE IN THE PERFORMING ARTS”.**

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— A B S T R A C T

This thesis explores the practice of performing arts through a comprehensive examination of the elements of time, narrative construction, and musical accompaniment in order to create a scenography. Central to this exploration is the scenographic expression developed, which draws inspiration from the narrative “Shopping for a Blue Whale” and a musical composition by Adele Thomas. The narrative intertwines personal experiences with scientific inquiry, particularly focusing on the concept of time from a physics perspective, shaping both the scenography and the accompanying music.

Challenging conventional roles within scenic artistry, especially prevalent in Latin America, this study advocates for a broader understanding of the craft beyond traditional definitions. Emphasizing the role of scenography as a facilitator of storytelling rather than mere installation, the thesis underscores its significance in guiding the audience through a narrative journey.

Ultimately, this work serves as a documentation of the author’s journey and provides valuable insights for practitioners interested in exploring the intersection of art and science within the realm of performing arts.

To my niece/daughter Mónica Antón Peláez.

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Another dream achieved, Dad.

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The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious.
It is the source of all true art and science. He to whom the
emotion is a stranger, who can no longer pause to wonder and
stand wrapped in awe, is as good as dead: his eyes are closed.

— Albert Einstein

PROLOGUE

—

SHOPPING FOR A BLUE WHALE

Paulina's birthday party... She is the daughter of one of my dad's best friends. My mom and sister were busy and didn't want to go, but my dad knew I would accept because their house has a pool and I love water. My mom packed a small backpack with my bathing suit, a towel, clean underwear and the gift my dad had bought for Paulina. I saw my dad throwing my backpack in the back of his yellow pick up truck and...

YOU and I left

We spent two hours singing Maroon 5 songs, trying to name as many kinds of whales as possible and gossiping about my mom's family.

I already knew Paulina's family and let's just say that she is the kind of girl in a pink SHINY bathing suit, who judges you by the kind of gift you bring her. Well... it turns out that she is not a big fan of the latest Phil Collins album recorded at the Montreux Jazz Festival... but SURPRISINGLY her dad was... I felt awful for a few seconds, my dad saw the look of disappointment on my face, felt guilty and proceeded to point out the pool.

My dad stands by the pool, talking to other adults while he tosses coins into the water and challenges me to find them. I could do this for hours.

I paused and thought:

You pushed me into the water and made me SWIM.

With time, the coins got bigger and heavier, like your absence, so I needed to search deeper and deeper for YOU, until I was no longer searching in a pool, I was SEARCHING in the DEEP SEA.

In one second you were gone and I was the same age as Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix when they passed away. I saw your temples sink. But then I thought: YOU taught me how to swim. So I kept swimming, looking for YOU.

I discovered so many things trying to find YOU; an entire city, Mexico City to be precise, living underwater, with little houses, abandoned cars, supermarkets, kindergartens, middle schools, universities and everything... I saw pufferfish, rainbowfish, I dodged some swordfish, I dated some clownfish... until I met a very smart inkfish. I had to learn how to change tires and file my own taxes.

In the vastness of the sea, I saw a blue whale... a blue whale! I GASPED, my eyebrows raised, my eyes and mouth opened, I stopped breathing for a few seconds, my right hand went straight to cover my mouth. They are HUGE! They are the largest animals on Earth, growing up to around 100 feet in length and weighing as much as 200 tons. I was shocked and I asked:

CAN I FOLLOW?

Can I follow you into the deep sea?

I tried... I tried to hold on VERY tightly.

But YOU kept swimming and left me BEHIND.

YOU became so big in my head and in my heart that YOU no longer fit in my arms, and I had to let you go.

Blue whales have a heart the size of a small CAR and their tongues alone can weigh as much as an ELEPHANT.

Despite their size, blue whales primarily feed on tiny shrimp-like creatures called krill, consuming up to 4 tons of krill per day during feeding season.

You can find blue whales in the Northern Hemisphere. They often travel to areas such as the Gulf of California or the Sea of Cortez, in Mexico.

So I traveled to Loreto, a VERY small and deaf coastal town on the Gulf of California. In Loreto, it was said that Don Andrés was in charge of selling blue whales. I thought: Selling...? and where am I supposed to put it?

Don Andres said, "You pay me to see the blue whale, we head to the high seas, fish it, you get to name it whatever you like, and then set it free."

"Agghhh, sooo... it's a scam? Okay, how much is it?" Honestly, I didn't care; I just wanted to see YOU again, in any form, at any place.

Don Andrés told me that we had to be ready at 5 a.m. so that the sunrise would reach us in the open sea.

When YOU become lost, it's important to remain in place. The temptation to move can be strong, but it's best to stay put until you're located. I recall reading once that...

I suggested to Don Andres that we should anchor, but he countered, saying: "In the open sea, anchoring is impossible. There's no anchor long enough to reach the bottom of the ocean, and you're carried by the currents whether you intend to be or not."

However, I possessed the longest anchor of all: patience. So I got ready to see YOU again. I took out my fishing rod.

I needed to fish in time, I just had to point the rod to a specific event in space-time, the day, hour and minute you were lying in that hospital bed. The future lies above, while the past resides below.

I WAS FISHING IN TIME.

So much time passed... that when I became aware again that I was on this earth, the world had already changed, we were already stranded. Where am I? Where is the blue whale that I bought?

I didn't know where I was; Theory A proposes that the present is a singular, significant moment, relegating past and future moments to secondary, illusory, or even non-existent statuses. On the other hand, Theory B treats all moments equally, asserting that past, present, and future moments exist with the same relevance. I lost the ability to understand before seeing. At that moment, Benjamin Labatut's book title flashed in my mind like an LED sign left on all night: 'When We Cease to Understand the World.' And when that happens, you surrender to the greatest Leviathan.

And I surreNDER...

Now, I'm fishing in my own forbidden waters,
looking for YOU in the present.

Now I don't feel so lost, but I do have a fear of loss, so I keep my eyes open in case I see a blue whale passing by. ¡Memento! I think I just saw one. Stay here; I'm going to see.

— INTRODUCTION

This thesis delves into my journey as a performing artist, with a primary focus on the creation of scenography and its interplay with other elements intrinsic to the performing arts. Rooted in my experience within the realm of performing arts, particularly as a member of the theater company “Los Conjurados Teatro” consisting of seven individuals, this thesis project presented a challenge as I ventured for the first time into solo work. Despite this, I sought solace in the familiarity of the stage, thus directing my efforts towards set design. Central to the development of the scenography are elements sourced from both the performing arts and scientific realms. Drawing from the performing arts, the narrative “Shopping for a Blue Whale,” authored by myself, and the musical compositions by Adele Thomas form integral components. Meanwhile, the scientific dimension explores the concept and image of time through the lens of Albert Einstein’s theory of relativity.

In this thesis, I navigate the intersection of art and science within the performing arts, elucidating the creative process behind the formation of scenography and its symbiotic relationship with narrative, music and time. In this work, I am an actress who wrote the story, in order to build the set design and perform in it. Through this exploration, I intend to shed light on the transformative potential of interdisciplinary collaboration and innovation in the field of artistic expression.

— CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS AND CONCEPTUALIZATION OF SCENOGRAPHY

My initial engagement with the scenography of this project was deeply rooted in writing. I aimed to design a stage, and thus I created the narrative “Shopping for a Blue Whale.” Initially, this narrative served merely as a foundational tool for scenographic development. However, as I revisited the text and discussed it with others, it naturally evolved into a scene. This transformation posed a challenge, since the original intent of the text was to serve as a personal guide. As feedback increased, the need for clarity grew, prompting the narrative to transform into a scene that others could understand.

The version of the scene you will witness at the MA Exam may slightly deviate from the original text provided here. In staging a scene, incorporating elements such as space, music, and timing often necessitates textual adjustments, leading to a subtle metamorphosis. I envision the stage as a focused lens where every element communicates with the audience, demanding precision in storytelling. Reflecting on my recent year and a half of intensive studies in the MA Art & Science program, I have been particularly drawn to the visual dimensions of theater. Given this focus, approaching theater through the prism of scenography feels natural, laying a visual foundation that supports and enhances the deeper layers of theatrical expression.

Having immersed myself in Latin American theater for over a decade, my understanding has crystallized in the following definition: theater, regardless of where it is staged or what sources it originates from, consistently possesses the transformative power to elevate the ordinary to the extraordinary. With this perspective, we are better positioned to delve deeper into the definition of scenography and its integral role in the theatrical experience. Scenography not only shapes the physical space but also enhances the narrative, bridging the gap between the visual and textual components of a production. This integration is vital, as it enriches the audience’s engagement and brings the story to life in a multi-dimensional space. Thus, scenography becomes more than just a backdrop; it is an active participant in the storytelling process, a testament to the evolving relationship between text, performance, and visual art within theater.

To delve deeper into this subject, I turn to Patrice Pavis, an important figure in the field of theater theory. Through his significant contributions, Pavis has not only shaped the discourse surrounding theater, but has also illuminated its multifaceted nature and intricate components. Born in the UK on 8 June 1948, Pavis has explored the complexities of theater, in fields such as performance theory, semiotics, and dramaturgy. In this endeavor, I borrow his definition of scenography, which I will present in the following sub-chapter.

1.1 Adoption of Patrice Pavis' Stage design Definition

"The concept of stage design today goes beyond the notion of ornamentation and packaging, which is often still tied to the outmoded conception of theatre as decoration. Stage design aspires to be a kind of writing in three- dimensional space (to which we could even add the dimension of time) rather than a pictorial art of painted canvas, just as theatre is no longer content with naturalism."¹ Pavis' definition of scenography resonates particularly with my artistic vision because it considers scenography not merely as a background or setting. Instead, it strives to become a form of spatial storytelling, incorporating not only physical dimensions but also the element of time.

He advocates for a holistic approach, wherein scenography is perceived as both a physical environment and a platform for conveying significance, imparting meaning, atmosphere and narrative within the theatrical context.

With this definition in mind and being drawn to the visual arts throughout the MA program, a question arose during the process of this written component: why create a scenography instead of an artistic installation? The next subchapter will address this question.



¹ Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*, trans. Christine Shantz (1998), 352-353.

1.2 Distinguishing Scenography from Installation Art

At the outset of this project, a central decision revolved around whether to classify the work as scenography or as an installation. My choice to designate it as scenography stemmed from three key considerations.

Firstly, my extensive background in theater provides me with an insight into the role and impact of scenography within a theatrical setting. This understanding allows me to recognize how scenography can either enhance or diminish the overall theatrical experience.

Secondly, theater operates within a framework of established conventions. British theater director Peter Brook famously remarked: “I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him, and this is all that is needed for an act of theater to be engaged.”² Consequently, an element classified as scenography within a theatrical context assumes this identity through convention.

Lastly, the process of set design motivated me to integrate elements inherent to theater. This inspiration led me to develop a story tailored to the set design’s potential. As the narrative and scenery evolved, concepts for costumes and lighting emerged, subsequently shaping the acting performances.

The decision to classify this project as scenography was influenced by my theater background, recognizing scenography as an element for enhancing the theatrical experience. Additionally, the established conventions of theater and the immersive set design process reinforced this classification. This approach allowed for a cohesive integration of narrative, costumes, and lighting, shaping the final acting performance.



2 Peter Brook, *In the Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre: Deadly, Holy, Rough, Immediate* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 11.

1.3 Scenography as a Narrative Tool in “Shopping for a Blue Whale”

The scene “Shopping for a Blue Whale” serves as a narrative exploration of scenographic elements, intertwining symbolic components with the active participation of a professional actress—myself. This approach underscores the dynamic relationship between performer and stage environment. Drawing inspiration from Pavis’ *Dictionary of the theater: Terms, Concepts and Analysis*, which defines scenography as “writing in three-dimensional space,” the project translates textual narrative into spatial representation.³ Through this transformation, symbols materialize in the stage design, conveying deeper layers of meaning.

In line with Pavis’ description of scenography, and considering that it will be displayed at the Angewandte Festival without my stage presence, the design needed to effectively convey “Shopping for a Blue Whale” visually. To achieve this clarity, the stage will feature a projected blue whale accompanied by Adele Thomas’s continuous music. A strategically positioned raincoat will suggest a seated person, the main character and narrator of “Shopping for a Blue Whale” engaged in fishing, with the fishing rod “suspended in the air,” pointing towards the center of the hourglass/spacetime visualization.

To further engage the audience, various props will be placed on stage, and printed sheets containing the story will be accessible for attendees interested in exploring the narrative alongside the scenography.

A parallel goal to creating a whole scene is to make the scenography live without me. This is why certain props to assist the narrative are essential.

I will now proceed with describing the set design to provide a clearer mental image. Following this, I will elaborate on the symbols represented by the props in the scene.



3 Patrice Pavis, *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*, trans. Christine Shantz (1998), 352.

1.4 The Process of Practical Application to Scenographic Scene and Symbolic Integration

Once the story was clear to me, I could begin drawing the world in which “Shopping for a Blue Whale” exists. Thus, I began sketching. In the practical application of these concepts, the project unfolds through a series of sketches, each designed to visualize specific thematic elements:

■ First Sketch | The Shop

The conceptual genesis of “Shopping for a Blue Whale” started with an evocative image: a store that sells whales, underscoring the surreal nature of the narrative. This scene introduces our narrator, who is the main character, depicted fishing inside a painting of a store that sells whales. This setting not only captivates the viewer with its imaginative approach, but also sets the tone for the thematic exploration of the story.

Drawing upon Pavis’ *Languages of the Stage: Essays in the Semiology of the Theatre*, the analysis of symbols in this narrative context becomes crucial. Pavis, an expert in semiotics—the study of signs and symbols—highlights the significant role of symbols in conveying meaning within theater and performance⁴. He meticulously examines how verbal, visual, and gestural symbols contribute to the creation of theatrical sign systems, facilitating the communication of ideas, emotions, and themes to the audience. Pavis also notes that symbols in theater are typically polysemous; they carry multiple layers of meaning, enriching the viewer’s experience and allowing for intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic engagement.

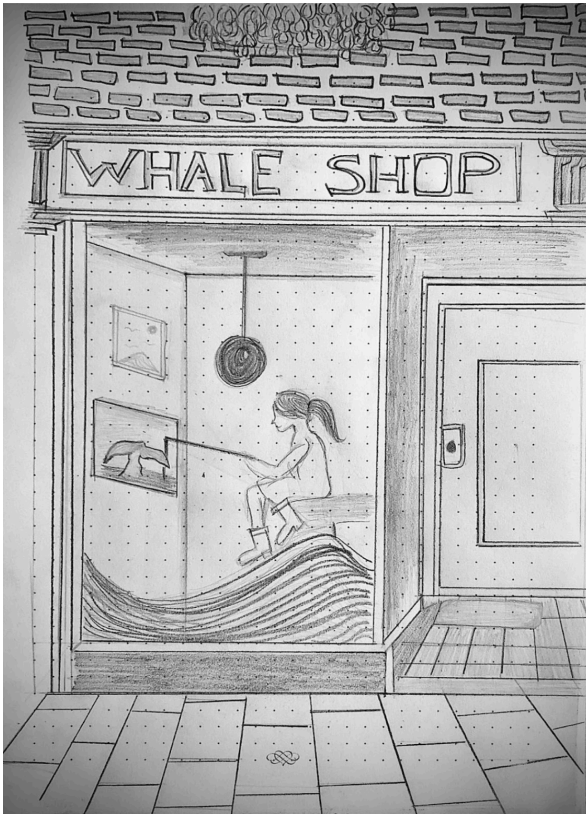
In the initial sketches for this narrative, symbols emerge prominently. The first of these is the shop itself, a polysemous symbol that juxtaposes the impossibility of buying a blue whale with the commonplace activity of



4 Patrice Pavis, *Languages of the Stage: Essays in the Semiology of the Theatre* (PAJ Publications, 1982).

shopping for necessities. This shop thus becomes a surreal hub, where one can absurdly fish for a blue whale. The second symbol is the fishing rod, an emblem of patience and anticipation. It represents the act of waiting for an aquatic creature to bite, embodying the uncertainty and randomness of fishing. The rod, in this context, symbolizes the blind hope and the unpredictable nature of seeking something significant. The third symbol is the blue whale, representing my deceased father. As the largest animal on earth, it is challenging to see but not impossible. It symbolizes the immensity of love that emerges after the departure of a loved one, and the eternal longing to see, embrace, and hear them once more.

However, upon completing the initial drawings, I recognized certain practical limitations in translating this vision to the stage. The scene, as initially conceived, presented a static image with minimal interaction or movement, adhering too closely to a traditional depiction of a shop. Furthermore, the human scale initially considered for the stage design seemed insufficient to capture the intended surreal effect. Alternative scales, either monumental or minimal, were contemplated but found incompatible with the spatial constraints of the designated area for the Master's exhibition. This realization prompted a reevaluation of the staging approach to more effectively convey the surreal and thematic essence of the narrative within the physical limitations of the theater space.

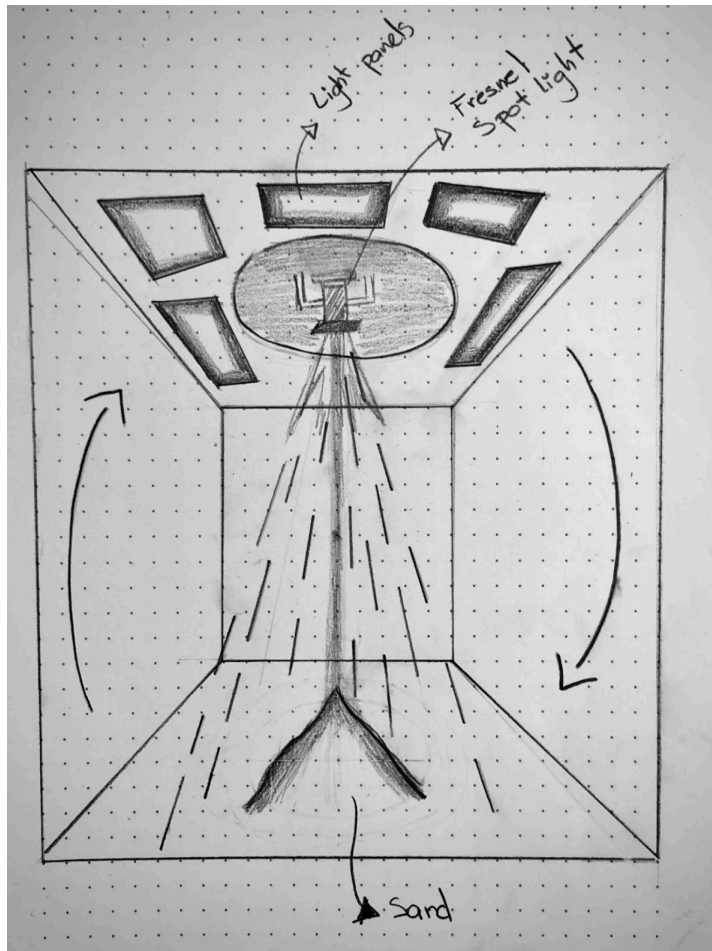


■ Second Sketch | **The Sand**

Thanks to the first sketch, I realized that there were certain elements of the story that I should highlight. As I further dissected the symbol of the fishing rod, I came to understand that time was a crucial symbol, if not the most important one. Given that the story was inspired by a blue whale and the sea, one element that could connect them would be sand. Sand is both a material and an element used to measure time, as seen in sand clocks.

Focused on the visualization of time, this sketch incorporates a sand clock where sand and light converge in a representation of passing time. The constant fall of sand against the backdrop of zenithal light creates a dynamic interplay of shadow and accumulation, symbolizing temporal passage.

However, the symbol of the fishing rod, the falling sand and the blue whale were not in harmony. Something was needed to contain these three elements, to unite them.



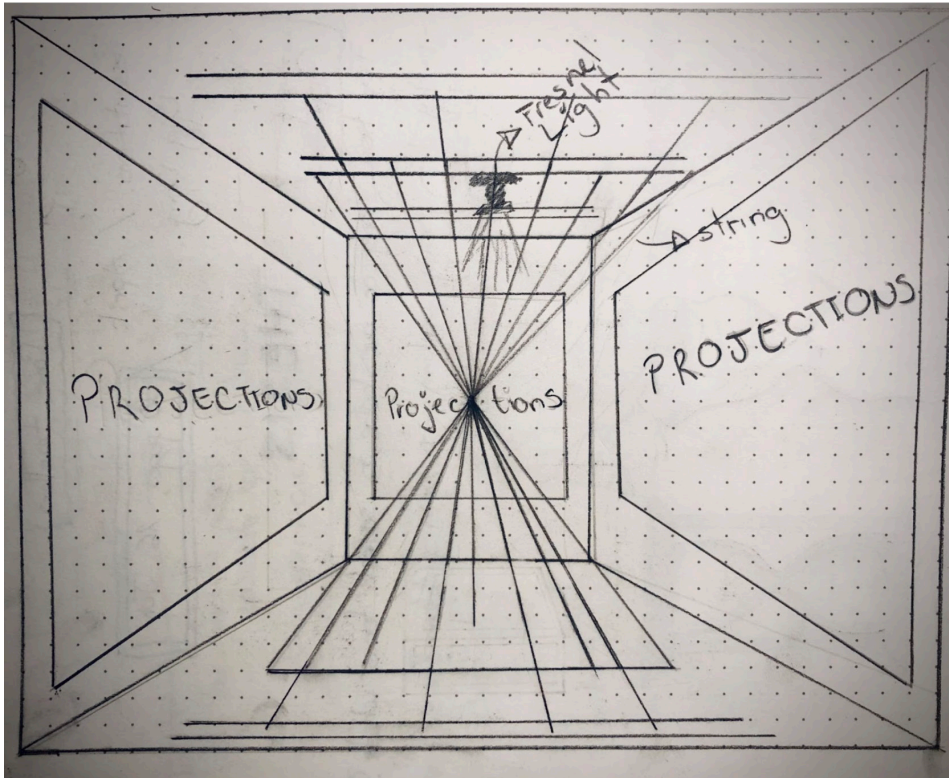
■ Third Sketch | **The Sand Clock**

The sand sketch, with its sensation or feeling of showing how time goes by, prompted me to ponder: How does physics represent time? While physical formulas immediately came to mind, I was seeking something more picturesque. In attempting to answer that question, I stumbled upon how the theory of relativity conceptualizes time. Thus, this design seamlessly blends the imagery of a sand clock with concepts from the theory of general relativity.

In this theory, time is depicted as two cones converging at the center, creating the present—more on this later. The essence lies in the similarity between the image of and the way physics, particularly the theory of relativity, portrays time, in form. Additionally, I will incorporate elements not depicted in the

drawing, such as a mound of sand upon which the narrator will sit to fish, positioning the fishing rod at the center of this visual sand clock.

Each element in these sketches functions both as an individual symbol and as an integral part of a unified scenographic vision designed to engage the audience's interpretative skills. The integration of narrative and music, especially through the story of "Shopping for a Blue Whale" and accompanying compositions by Adele, enhances the audience's immersive experience.



The sketches presented depict the evolution of set design, from the initial concept to its closest approximation to realization.

1.5 Conclusions on the Design of the Scenography for the Narrative “Shopping for a Blue Whale”

Ultimately, I have delved into the foundational significance of scenography within the field of theater. Drawing upon Pavis’ definition, scenography emerges not merely as a visual backdrop, but as an integral medium for conveying a production’s overarching message.

The project “Shopping for a Blue Whale” puts these theoretical ideas into practice, using a story-based approach to scenography. By translating textual narrative into spatial representation, this project materializes symbols within its design, thereby conveying layers of meaning to the audience, polysemous.

The decision to classify this endeavor as scenography, as opposed to installation art, was informed by its immersive design process, adherence to theater conventions, and a commitment to creating a cohesive narrative experience. This classification facilitated the development of a scenographic vision designed to engage the audience’s interpretative faculties, further enriched by the integration of narrative and musical elements.

To conclude the project “Shopping for a Blue Whale” represents a synthesis of theoretical concepts and practical applications, aiming to create a scenography design that can communicate effectively and independently, even in the absence of the performer.

In the next chapter, I want to further analyze the main elements and symbols applied in the narrative and the scenography design.

ANALYZING THE THREE CORE COMPONENTS OF THE SCENOGRAPHY

2.1 Introduction to Scenographic Elements

In this chapter, I explore the semiotic nature of scenography, as Pavis views it as a system for communicating meanings, emotions, and thematic content to the audience. Building upon this perspective, I delve into an examination of the symbols identified in earlier stages of my research: time, the narrative “Shopping for a Blue Whale,” and Adele Thomas’s composed music. By considering symbols as representations that extend beyond literal interpretation, I recognize their role in shaping the scenography of my theatrical research practice. These symbols serve as foundational building blocks, embodying both artistic and scientific dimensions in the creation of immersive theatrical experiences.

As one enters a space where a scenic event unfolds, the initially prominent objects on the stage are just the beginning. With the addition of elements like light, sound, and acting, everything springs to life, gaining deeper meaning for the spectator. This transformative process is why we will explore how these elements gradually come to life. Ultimately, we attend the theater to witness life and connect with other human beings.

2.2 Objective of Scenographic Exploration

The objective of this exploration is to dissect and understand the scenic elements inherent within these foundational aspects, extracting raw materials for crafting a comprehensive scenography. This endeavor aligns with the overarching goals of my research, in which I seek to create a visual

environment that not only complements but also enhances the intended narrative and atmosphere of the theatrical production.

Scenography plays a central role in creating a visual setting that enhances the overall theatrical experience, as mentioned in the previous chapter. Its primary role is to establish the atmosphere and context of the production, guiding the audience through the narrative journey while effectively communicating ideas and emotions. This chapter aims to delineate how each element contributes to these goals, moving beyond mere decoration to a strategic endeavor that facilitates narrative coherence, enhances communication, and creates a powerful visual impact.

2.3 Detailed Exploration of Scenographic Elements

2.3.1 Time

Time serves as a fundamental concept for human beings, allowing us to measure the duration and sequence of events and providing a framework for understanding their order. This parallels the role of a theater director who orchestrates events in a play to create coherence and understanding. In this project, I assume the role of the director of time from a scenic perspective, crafting an immersive experience for the audience from the moment they enter the room and the act begins, lasting until the performance is finished. While time is omnipresent both inside and outside the stage, our exploration in this subchapter will focus on two specific aspects within the stage setting.

We will delve into time as a symbol on stage through two distinct yet interconnected meanings that have significantly influenced the creation of my scenography: the portrayal of the conceptualization of time in the theory of general relativity, especially the light cone, and time in music. But first we need to understand time according to the theory of general relativity.

In Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity, time and space are combined into a four-dimensional framework called spacetime. Unlike older views, where time was seen as constant everywhere, general relativity says time can change depending on gravity.

Overall, general relativity changed how we conceptualize time by connecting it closely to space and showing that gravity can affect it. It gives us a more complex view of time, where it can change and bend, playing a big role in how the universe works. For a better understanding, the light cone is a visual representation of this notion.

2.3.2 Light Cone

Before delving into the more theoretical aspects, I want to highlight the striking resemblance between the light cone and a sand clock, which has piqued my interest. The sand clock, believed to have originated in the Byzantine Empire, predates Albert Einstein's theory of general relativity. While it's incorrect to assert a direct influence between the two, the coincidence is indeed intriguing. The similarity in shapes between these two devices forms the foundation for my conceptualization of time in this context.

It's a fundamental concept from the theory of relativity, how we saw it earlier, and illustrates the paths that light or any electromagnetic radiation can take through spacetime. This concept will be used to explore the visualization of time manipulation in scenography, with the dual nature of the light cone's upward and downward extensions serving as a metaphor for the narrative's exploration of past and future events.

This is how the light cone is described:

A light cone is typically depicted on a spacetime diagram, where time is represented vertically and space horizontally. In general relativity, the light cone serves as a visual aid for understanding the relationships between events in spacetime.

Here is how the light cone works:

_ Central Point: At the center of the graph lies the event marking the narrator's father's passing. Depicted here, the narrator fishes for a blue whale, symbolizing her father. This central point encapsulates the narrator's moment in time.

_Two Cones: From this central point, two cone shapes spread out. These cones show where light, or any information could travel from the event.

_Future Cone: The top cone shows where light could go from the event in the future. Anything inside this cone could be affected by the event. The future starts from the central point, that is, from that central event, which was the death of the narrator's father, the future comes out, that is, her entire future is affected by that event.

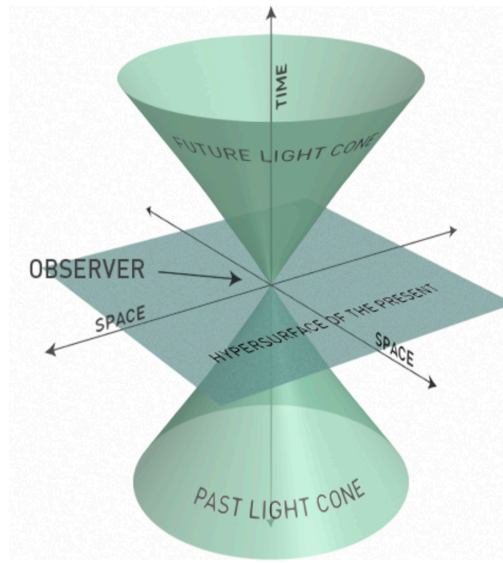
_Past Cone: The bottom cone shows where light could have come from in the past to reach the event. Anything inside this cone could have influenced the event. This is where all of the narrator's memories are, like the game they had in which her father threw coins into the pool and she had to look for them.

These descriptions of the light cone concepts were not directly used in the creation of the narrative or the scenography, but serve to help understand what the light cone is.

_Causality: The light cone helps us understand cause and effect. If two events are outside each other's cones, they can't directly influence each other.

_Types of Paths: Inside the cones, paths are "timelike," which means they can be traveled by things moving slower than light. Outside the cones, paths are "spacelike," which can't be traveled at all.

Therefore, the light cone is a way to see how events are connected in spacetime and how information, like light, can move between them.



2.3.3 Music

In the realm of music, time is not just a measure; it infuses rhythm, meter, and tempo into the essence of every composition. This segment delves into the complex relationship between time and music, especially through the lens of Adele's musical improvisations. These improvisations, deeply rooted in repetitive structures, construct a narrative framework that mirrors the cyclical concept of time depicted in the story "Shopping for a Blue Whale."

To arrive at Adele's improvisations, we embarked on a series of sessions. Initially, we delved into discussions about the desired ambiance, the complexities of rhythm, and the emotional depths she aimed to explore. Throughout our conversations, a central theme emerged: the desire for Adele's presence to resonate deeply within the music, going beyond conventional piano playing. It was during these exchanges that the music evolved into a symbol, not merely accompanying the scene, but embodying Adele's performance and everyday life that we could hear; it symbolized a life beyond the confines of the piano. My aspiration was to intertwine her personality and artistic flair into the musical fabric. Guided by this vision, I encouraged her full immersion in the creative process, resulting in recordings infused with improvisations inspired by the narrative's text.

These recordings not only showcase Adele's musical talents, but also her human experiences—coughing, sharing thoughts, handling interruptions, and resuming her performance. This genuine portrayal adds a life-like quality

to the music, reinforcing the idea that art is shaped by life's uninterrupted flow, encompassing both deliberate artistic expression and spontaneous personal moments. I wanted to listen to Adele and make her a part of it in every way.

Drawing from my experiences in Latin American theatrical productions, I noticed a common fragmented approach where individuals often work in isolation. In stark contrast, this project embraced a holistic collaborative ethos, advocating for a cohesive environment in which each contributor is fully engaged with others' creative processes. This approach promotes an atmosphere of mutual inspiration, fostering the exchange of ideas and constructive feedback, thereby enriching the collective creative endeavor.

By blending these elements, this section presents a cohesive exploration of how time, articulated through music, acts as a dynamic narrative force, illustrating the transformative power of integrating deep artistic collaboration into the fabric of musical storytelling. The musicality introduced by Adele sets the rhythm and timing for the scene, making it a key narrative element in theater. This musical guidance is essential for the audience's understanding of the scene.

2.4. Analyzing: Shopping for a Blue Whale.

This narrative element stems from a personal memory, transformed into a story that weaves together emotional and scientific themes. It explores the search for my father, symbolically represented by the blue whale, and details how the narrative strikes a balance between emotional depth and scientific insight.

"Shopping for a Blue Whale" is crafted in layers, moving from a simple memory to the depths of the sea, and ultimately into a realm lost in time. Each memory acts like a change in scenery, introducing another layer of fiction as we delve into the emotional world of the narrator.

The story opens with an invitation to Paulina's birthday party, which entices the narrator with the promise of a swimming pool. Despite a social mistake where the narrator gives an unwanted Phil Collins album, she finds solace in retrieving coins from the pool—a game initiated by her father. This game

morphs into a symbolic and surreal journey beneath the water's surface, marking our entrance into the narrator's emotional and existential reflections.

As she dives deeper, the narrator imagines submerging into an expansive, underwater version of Mexico City, populated with vibrant marine life and mirroring the city's terrestrial features. This fantastical exploration leads her to encounter various sea creatures, including an intelligent inkfish, pulling her further from reality and illustrating the challenges of growing up without a father.

The narrative intensifies when the narrator decides to take a journey to see her deceased father, represented by a blue whale. Inspired by the sighting of a blue whale, she embarks on a quest that takes her both physically and metaphysically into the ocean's depths. This quest brings her to Loreto, a small coastal town, where she meets Don Andrés, who offers the opportunity to see and name a blue whale for a price.

This physical quest mirrors an inward journey as the narrator confronts concepts of time and existence, finding herself adrift in the vastness of her own mind and memories, fishing for moments and connections lost in time. Her recollections and imagined scenarios seamlessly integrate with her real-life actions, underscoring a continuous search for meaning. This is symbolized by the simple act of collecting coins, representing the human condition's perpetual oscillation between the depths of memory and the surface of present reality.

Scientific data within the narrative contextualize the surreal images, adding depth and scale. Descriptions of a blue whale's weight and diet, along with explanations of time theories, enhance the viewer's experience of feeling lost alongside the protagonist, grounding the surreal elements in a tangible reality.

In conclusion, this chapter explored foundational elements influencing theatrical scenography, focusing on the interplay of time, narrative, and music. Time was depicted as complex, manifested in the rhythm and tempo of music and intertwined with space in the theory of general relativity. The light cone concept visually demonstrated the interconnectedness of events in spacetime, emphasizing how past events shape future outcomes.

Adele Thomas's musical improvisations exemplified the intricate relationship between time and artistic expression, blending emotion and spontaneity to reflect life's continuous flow. "Shopping for a Blue Whale" served as a narrative vehicle, intertwining emotional depth with scientific insight, offering a nuanced portrayal of memory, loss, and the human quest for understanding death. The incorporation of scientific data added authenticity and depth to the narrative.

Additionally, collaborative creativity was emphasized, drawing from diverse theatrical experiences to foster mutual inspiration and collective growth.

This sets the stage for further exploration in subsequent chapters. The described creative process outlines the methodology for my Master's project and serves as a framework for future endeavors. Consequently, I have incorporated this methodology within the context of Art & Science for the Performing Arts in this thesis.

— CHAPTER 3

“DISCOVERING, FORMULATING, AND CRAFTING MY OWN ART & SCIENCE METHODOLOGY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS”

Since the beginning of the MA Art & Science program, I recognized the importance of mapping my creative journey and pinpointing elements of my process, especially in comparison to other performing arts projects. This chapter aims to delineate these steps, outlining my methodology in the confluence of art and science.

My exploration was catalyzed by the first-year exhibition of the MA Art & Science program, “Licking Structures,” themed around crystals—a subject resonating with my interests in physics and astronomy. Despite rigorous research, finding a concept that spoke to me proved challenging due to my limited scientific background.

Delving into physics theories, I encountered the concept of time crystals. This scientific insight inspired me to weave emotional and theatrical elements into a narrative, aligning with the theory of time crystals. A pivotal moment came during a conversation with Flora Safar, a fellow Art & Science student. Our discussions sparked reflections on my adolescence, leading to a theme that could be connected with time crystals.

To materialize this vision, I developed an interactive installation, “Time Crystals or a Four-Dimensional Dining Room,” allowing audiences to immerse themselves in the narrative through a tangible experience.

I did this by creating the visual illusion that the dining table was piercing through the floor and people could sit in one of the chairs and listen to a narrative that involved both physical theory and personal history.

3.1 Methodological Framework

In formulating my methodology, I identified four key elements:

- **Scientific Relevance:** Identifying scientific material pertinent to the artistic piece.
- **Emotional Resonance:** Crafting an emotionally compelling narrative.
- **Narrative Integration:** Seamlessly blending scientific and emotional elements.
- **Theatrical Fusion:** Employing theatrical elements to enhance the narrative's impact.

These elements coalesced in “Time Crystals or a Four-Dimensional Dining Room,” an installation inviting audiences to engage with the narrative physically and emotionally.





3.2 Development of the workshop “Discovering, Formulating, and Crafting my own Art & Science Methodology”

As my creative process became more clear, I felt compelled to inspire other students to develop their own methodologies within Art & Science. Towards the end of the summer of 2023, I reached out to Virgil Widrich and Martin Reinhart to propose a workshop. Fortunately, they were enthusiastic about the idea.

Recognizing the power of teaching as a method of learning, I embarked on this journey. To date, I have conducted six sessions with students from both the first and second years of the Master’s program.

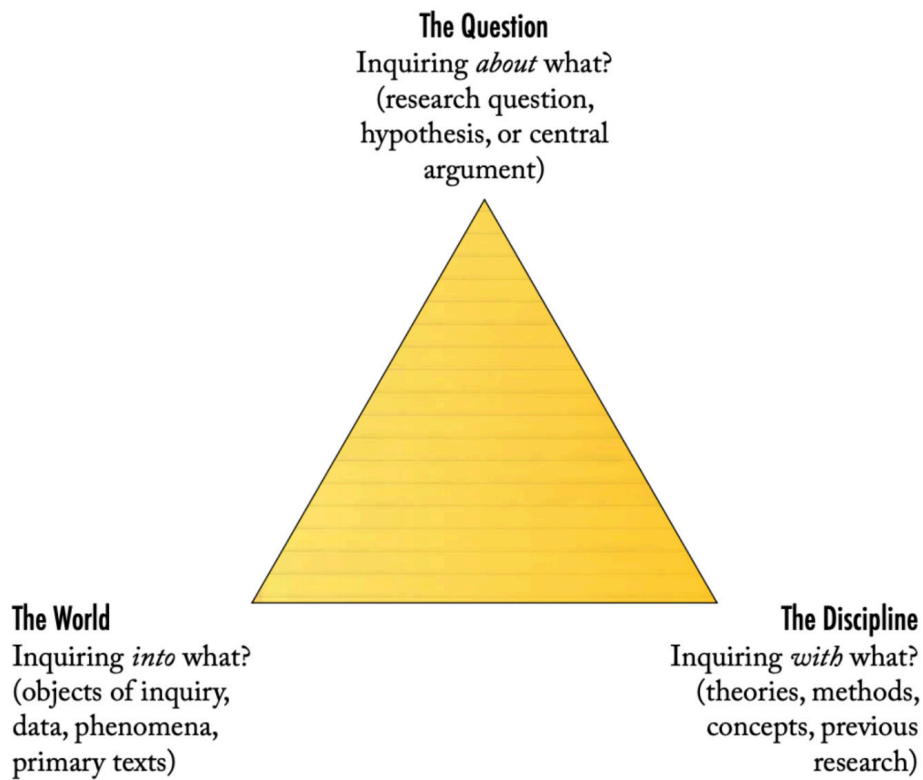
The workshop’s structure drew from my experience with “Los Conjurados Teatro,” integrating practical exercises to stimulate creativity. The sessions were structured as follows:

The first step involves composing, drawing from “Los Conjurados Teatro”’s methodology:

- Idea Generation
- Experimental Movement
- Selection and Refinement
- Structuring
- Performance
- Evaluation

The second involves presenting both a beloved work of art or scientific creation and one that evokes dislike. Verbally articulating these preferences acts as a mirror, prompting self-reflection to discern the reasons behind one’s likes and dislikes. This process facilitates an understanding of which themes resonate personally and why, thereby aiding in the identification of preferred subjects and their underlying motivations.

The third step involves addressing the triangle method. The objective of this stage is to help you delineate your artistic practice using the triangle method, as described by Lotte Reinecker, the former Writing Centre Director at the University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Although this method is traditionally used for writing academic papers, I found it valuable for the art world and chose to adopt it.



The Question: What message or idea do you aim to convey with your artistic work?

The Discipline: How will your chosen artistic tool help you express this message?

The World: Which disciplines will your artistic piece contribute to?

This reflective exercise can also prompt practical questions, such as material selection for sculptures or choosing between painting and installation for conveying a message. The goal of this exercise is to recognize your unique artistic practice, which not only benefits you, but also inspires others to develop their own through your example.

Feedback from workshop attendees indicated two main benefits: they gained insights from peers' processes that enhanced their own creativity, and regular reflection deepened their understanding of artistic practice, achieved by both writing and verbalizing their insights.

*Photos of the workshop “**Discovering, Formulating and Crafting your own Art & Science Methodology**”.*



Photo 1 | Dejan Markovic

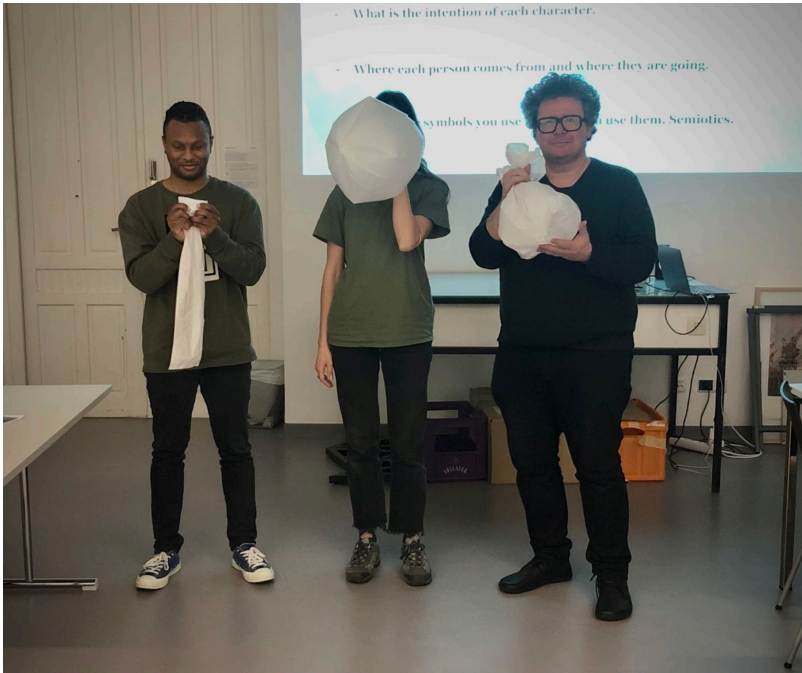


Photo 2 | **Byron Hayes Roberts, Markela Koniordou, Martin Reinhart**

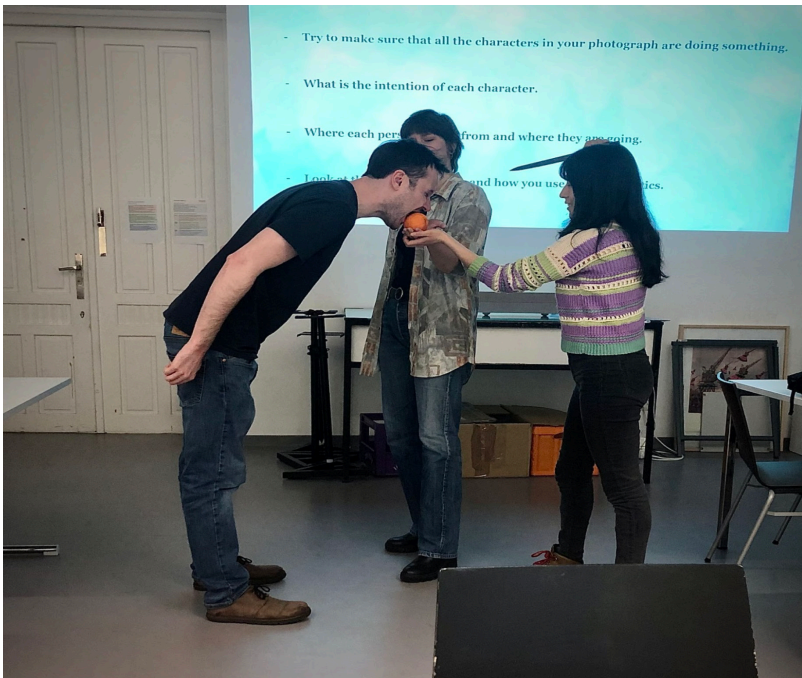


Photo 3 | **Stefan Gorka, Rebecca Martíńková, Carolina Páez**

3.3 Mapping my own Art & Science methodology for the performing arts

After outlining these processes, I have developed my own methodology that integrates the two previous steps. This methodology is not set in stone; rather, it requires flexibility and ongoing evolution. Nonetheless, it has guided me in creating this Master's degree project and instills confidence for its application in future projects, which I will describe below.

Research Phase:

For me, this entails immersing myself in the world—attending art exhibitions, watching movies, reading books, and visiting theaters—to nourish my creative spirit and select what resonates most with me at any given moment.

The Importance of Narrative:

I have recognized the significance of having a written text or narrative to guide the creation process, whether authored by myself or another. This narrative serves dual purposes: as a scientific guide and a scenic guide, without necessarily needing to be performative.

References:

It's essential to incorporate both artistic and scientific references, which can be visual or written, to enrich the creative process.

Deepening References:

Further exploration of both scientific and artistic references enhances understanding and depth.

Triangle Method:

Answering the triangle method succinctly with prior research clarifies ideas:

- What do I want to achieve?
- How do I intend to achieve it?
- Which domains will my work impact?

Testing Ideas:

Constructing a model to visualize the piece aids in its development. If the piece is text-based, reading it aloud or embodying it more deeply helps me. Experiment with various theatrical elements to stage the piece being created.

Creation and Adaptation:

Crafting the piece and modifying it based on spatial- stage requirements.

Feedback:

Collecting and documenting feedback allows for reflection and subsequent improvements.

All these steps may vary in duration and sequence, but they serve as a guide for the stages to follow in the creative process.

This chapter encapsulates my evolving methodology, a flexible framework that guided my master's project and offers a foundation for future endeavors. The importance of narrative guidance emerged as a consistent theme, whether authored by myself or others, emphasizing the power of storytelling in artistic creation.

— CONCLUSION

In the written component of my Master's thesis, I first examined the critical role of scenography in theater, redefining it not just as a visual backdrop but as a medium for conveying a production's core message. In the project "Shopping for a Blue Whale," I applied these theoretical insights in a practical context, utilizing scenography to transform textual narratives into spatial representations, thereby embedding the design with multi-layered meanings. This approach not only framed the project within the domain of scenography rather than installation art, but also highlighted its ability to engage audiences through a cohesive, narrative-driven design enriched with musical elements.

Then I explored the semiotic aspects of scenography, underscoring its role as a communicative system that conveys meanings, emotions, and thematic content. By analyzing elements such as time, the narrative of "Shopping for a Blue Whale," and Adele Thomas's composed music, I identified their critical roles in structuring my theatrical research practice. These elements serve as essential building blocks in the staging process, enhancing the spectator's experience by merging light, sound, and performance to deliver profound meanings and connect with human emotions.

"Shopping for a Blue Whale" stands out as a narrative that blends emotional resonance with scientific grounding. It evolves from a simple childhood memory to a deep existential exploration, addressing themes of memory, loss, and the quest for understanding. The narrative's scientific authenticity grounds its fantastical elements, providing a realistic touch that complements its imaginative scope. The project also emphasizes the importance of collaborative creativity in theater, enhancing the creative synergy among the team.

This foundation paves the way for further exploration in subsequent chapters and establishes a comprehensive methodology for my Master's project, which integrates artistic collaboration, scientific precision, and deep emotional engagement. This methodology serves as a versatile framework within the realm of Art & Science for the Performing Arts, guiding future artistic endeavors.

Delving deeper, the narrative approach of “Shopping for a Blue Whale” demonstrates the seamless integration of theoretical concepts and practical applications in scenography. It highlights the transformative power of combining artistic collaboration, scientific insights, and emotional resonance. The project not only communicates effectively on its own, even without a performer, but also lays a robust foundation for future projects, illustrating the dynamic and adaptable nature of my methodology.

In conclusion, clarifying my creative processes through this project and subsequent workshops has significantly enhanced my understanding and ability to articulate my methodology within the field of Art & Science for the Performing Arts. This clarity has strengthened the justification for future projects, as I now possess a clear roadmap of the necessary steps for creation. Although these steps are not fixed and should ideally evolve, having an initial framework provides a stable starting point in the ever-changing landscape of the arts.

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