

Periodical Performance: Redefining the Boundaries of Contemporary Theatre

In the midst of a rapidly evolving theatrical landscape, the concept of periodical performance has emerged as a captivating force, challenging traditional notions of theatre and expanding the boundaries of contemporary theatre studies.

Coined by Edward Gordon Craig, a visionary theatre practitioner of the early 20th century, periodical performance encompasses a diverse range of theatrical experiences characterized by their ephemeral nature. Often described as "live art," these performances prioritize the immediacy and transience of the moment, embracing the fact that they exist only for the duration of their presentation.



The Mask: A Periodical Performance by Edward Gordon Craig (Contemporary Theatre Studies (Paperback)

Book 30 by Richard Taruskin

★★★★☆ 4.8 out of 5

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Unlike conventional theatre productions that strive for longevity and repeatability, periodical performances are fleeting and unrepeatable. They exist in the realm of the present, inviting audiences to engage with the transient beauty of the moment. This ephemeral quality imbues these performances with a sense of urgency and preciousness, encouraging audiences to savor the experience before it fades into memory.

Embracing the Ephemeral in Contemporary Theatre

The ephemeral nature of periodical performances has profound implications for contemporary theatre studies. By embracing the transient, these productions question the traditional emphasis on documentation and preservation. Rather than focusing on creating permanent records, they prioritize the live experience, encouraging audiences to participate in the moment and forge personal connections with the work.

This shift away from documentation opens up new avenues for experimentation and innovation in theatrical practice. Free from the constraints of permanence, artists are liberated to explore unconventional formats, unconventional venues, and unconventional modes of audience engagement. The result is a vibrant and ever-changing theatrical landscape, where the ephemeral becomes a source of artistic inspiration.

Theatrical Rituals and Immersive Experiences

Periodical performances often incorporate elements of theatrical rituals and immersive experiences, drawing audiences into a world that transcends the boundaries of traditional theatre. By blurring the lines between performer and audience, these productions create a sense of shared participation and communal connection.

Ritualistic elements evoke ancient traditions and archetypal themes, tapping into the primal instincts and emotions of human nature. Immersive experiences, on the other hand, transport audiences into a fully fabricated environment, where they become active participants in the unfolding narrative. These immersive productions challenge conventional notions of spectatorship, inviting audiences to become co-creators of the work.

Experimental, Site-Specific, and Participatory Theatre

Periodical performances often embrace experimental forms of theatre, pushing the boundaries of traditional theatrical conventions. Artists experiment with unconventional performance spaces, alternative modes of storytelling, and innovative technological advancements. Site-specific performances, for example, take place in unique and non-theatrical locations, often incorporating the surroundings into the narrative.

Participatory theatre empowers audiences with agency and choice, inviting them to actively engage with the performance. This participatory element breaks down the traditional hierarchy between performer and audience, creating a more egalitarian and immersive theatrical experience.

The Legacy of Edward Gordon Craig

The concept of periodical performance has its roots in the seminal work of Edward Gordon Craig, an influential theatre practitioner of the early 20th century. Craig envisioned a theatre that was ephemeral and transformative, an art form that could evoke powerful emotions and profound insights through its transient nature.

Craig's ideas have inspired generations of theatre artists, including those working in contemporary theatre studies. His belief in the ephemeral as a

source of artistic inspiration continues to resonate, challenging traditional notions of theatre and paving the way for innovative and experimental theatrical practices.

Periodical performance is a captivating force in contemporary theatre studies, challenging traditional theatre conventions and opening up new possibilities for artistic expression. By embracing the ephemeral, these performances prioritize the live experience, encouraging audiences to engage with the transient beauty of the moment.

Through theatrical rituals, immersive experiences, experimental forms, site-specific productions, and participatory theatre, periodical performances create a vibrant and ever-changing theatrical landscape. As we move forward, it is likely that periodical performance will continue to evolve and influence contemporary theatre studies, inspiring artists and audiences alike to explore the transformative power of the ephemeral.



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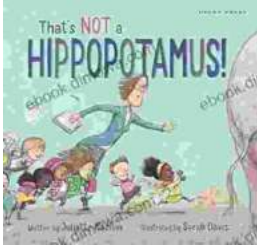
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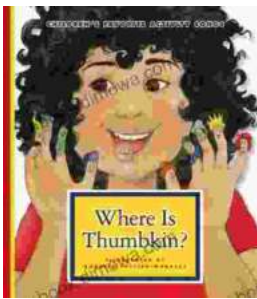
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