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ABSTRACT

REAL NATURE VS REALITY OF THEATER ART BASED ON GABRIELA ZAPOLSKA'S „SKIZ” DIRECTED BY MARIA SPISS.

In my doctoral dissertation, I have analyzed the presence and ways of interpreting nature in theatrical scenography. I based my analysis on the „Skiz”, a play by Gabriela Zapolska (directed by Maria Spiss, Ateneum Theater in Warsaw, 2010). I also used other examples from my own work as a theatre set designer. My main thesis is that a piece of nature taken out of its surrounding habitat and placed on stage as an element of the scenery is no longer the same, and its meaning is altering. This piece is subject to reinterpretation both by the author and the audience.

I begin my analysis with the history of stage design examples, where nature appears in various incarnations: ranging from realism to symbolism to postmodern theater. This chapter is entitled „Theater - A world without the sun.” Indeed, the theater is an enclosed space deprived of natural daylight. The play takes place in the presence of artificial light sources subjected to manipulation. The light or lack of thereof determines the audience's perception. In this chapter, I showcase many examples proving that as the sun is nature's life-giving energy in the natural habitat, the stage light ultimately determines the very existence of everything on a theatrical stage.

In the next chapter, I analyze various ways of showcasing nature in my work, ranging from the transfer of living nature elements, through its mapping and substitutes, to transformations, and finally to reinterpretations reflecting its image.

The next chapter forms an introduction to the contents and issues of „Skiz” and chapter five describes the elements of the scenography and its meanings. The forms of walls, grass, scaled swan head, and reproduction of Rousseau's painting are all justified in the context of the subject of my doctoral dissertation.

Summing up, I conclude that in the theater setting, within the „world without the sun,” different laws apply, so nature's introduction will bring a different outcome. But that does not mean nature is losing its ability to live. Its life needs to be looked for elsewhere. Nature also appears in „Skiz” and the explored example of my work alike, in a new, meta meaning - as an idea.

