

1. This work was supported by FWO - Research Foundation [grant number G038513N].

Some notable publications in the growing list of publications on the genesis of theatre are Almuth Grésillon, Marie-Madeleine Mervant-Roux, and Dominique Budor, *Genèses Théâtrales* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2010); *Making Contemporary Theatre: International Rehearsal Processes*, ed. by Jen Harvie and Andy Lavender (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010); and the special issue of *Theatre Research International* on 'genetics of performance' edited by Josette Féral, 33.3 (2008).

2. See, among others, Andrew Quick, Paula Court, and Mary Gearhart, *The Wooster Group Work Book* (New York: Routledge, 2007); Luk Van den Dries, *Corpus Jan Fabre: Observations of a Creative Process* (Burggravenlann: Imschoot Uitgevers, 2006); Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Bojana Cvejić, *A Choreographer's Score* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2012 and 2014); Marianne Van Kerkhoven and Anouk Nuyens, *Listen to the Bloody Machine: Creating Kris Verdonck's End* (Utrecht: Utrecht School of the Arts, 2012). Also important in this respect are multimedia projects and archives by/on William Forsythe (Synchronous Objects, Motion Bank), Emilio Greco (Inside Movement Knowledge), or Siobhan Davies (Siobhan Davies Archive).

Tracing Creation: The Director's Notebook as Genetic Document of the Postdramatic Creative Process

Frederik Le Roy, Edith Cassiers, Thomas Crombez, and Luk Van den Dries

In the last decade, theatre research has been marked by a growing interest in the documentation, reconstruction, and analysis of creative processes in the performing arts.¹ Theatre, dance, and performance scholars, often in collaboration with or in response to theatre makers and choreographers keen on exploring and sharing their own creative processes and working methods, have expanded their horizon from the 'final product' – the performance – to the varied and often complex activities that precede and eventually establish that performance.² One of the underlying ideas that fuel the interest in the analysis of what Josette Féral once termed the 'pre-performance', is the expectation that insight in the genesis of the performance will provide a more encompassing perspective on the work as a whole.³ This 'genetic' perspective is especially fruitful when we consider the contemporary performing arts and, more specifically, 'postdramatic' theatre, which will be the subject of this article. Even a cursory glance reveals that the vast aesthetic diversity of theatrical languages in contemporary theatre is matched by an almost equally great variety of working methods and creative strategies. These methods are often specific to the theatre makers who use them, or even to individual projects – '[e]ach work creates its own method' the Belgian dramaturge Marianne Van Kerkhoven once stated.⁴ But the relationship between the creative process and the final performance is complex, often elliptical, and without a predetermined, linear path that leads from inception to result. Gaining access to, and understanding this relationship, especially in theatre forms that rely more on performative and visual rather than textual elements can pose significant methodological challenges.

In this article, we will focus on one crucial element of this creative process, namely the varied notes that are produced by the theatre director

3. Josette Féral, 'Towards a Genetic Study of Performance Take 2', *Theatre Research International*, 33.3 (2008), 223–33. The term 'pre-performance' is a reference to the terms 'avant-texte' and 'pre-text' in text genetics (p. 231).
4. Van Kerkhoven and Nuyens, *Listen to the Bloody Machine*, p. 308.
5. Together, 'all the written, visual and aural documents' constitute, according to Josette Féral, the 'scenic drafts' leading up to the production. Féral, 'Towards a Genetic Study', p. 223.
6. Hans-Thies Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, trans. by Karen Jürs-Munby (London: Routledge, 2006). Jan Fabre is one of the most frequently referred to artists in Lehmann's book.
7. For a discussion of these written sources, see Almuth Grésillon and Jean-Marie Thomasseau, 'Scènes de Genèses Théâtrales', *Genesis*, 26 (2005), 19–34 (pp. 29–31).
8. Almuth Grésillon, Marie-Madeleine Mervant-Roux, and Dominique Budor, 'Pour une génétique théâtrale: prémisses et enjeux', in *Genèses Théâtrales*, ed. by Almuth Grésillon, Marie-Madeleine Mervant-Roux, and Dominique Budor (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2010), pp. 5–23 (p. 7).

while making theatre. We approach these manifold notes as 'genetic documents': they are traces of the creative process and show the 'scenic drafts' leading up to and eventually constituting the final production.⁵ Studying these notes gives theatre researchers an entry point into a director's poetics of creation, which in turn, allows them to better understand the resulting poetics of the theatrical work. At stake here, however, is not only *what these notes document* but also, and especially, *what these notes do*. In postdramatic theatre, the media that are traditionally used as note-taking devices by theatre directors expand beyond writing and even beyond the page. We will argue that this shift has an important impact because the specific properties of the media of the 'director's notebook' have a pivotal and often underestimated influence on both the process and the final production.

This article thus starts from the premise that if we are to acquire a better understanding of the postdramatic theatrical creative process, we should take into account the decisive role of the varying media used by makers during that process. To discuss this, we will first consider how creative processes have changed in the past decades, since the emergence of the so-called postdramatic paradigm. We will argue that the creative process has become increasingly hybrid and that the combination and adaptation of different media, in short 'intermediality', plays a crucial role. To test and demonstrate this theory, we will investigate the intermedial transitions in the notes of two Belgian theatre makers that have been influential for the development of 'postdramatic theatre', both nationally and internationally: Jan Fabre and Luk Perceval.⁶ Fabre, renowned for his focus on the body's physicality in performances, starts the creative process with, and will continually return to, the activity of drawing. Perceval uses another device: he videotapes rehearsals and, after editing them, uses these recordings during later rehearsals as a tool to work with actors. To fully understand how these drawn or videographic notes influence the genesis and aesthetics of the performances they create(d), we need to understand the specific character of their process-documents. To do this, we will shortly outline the (changing) status of these directors' notes, before we direct our attention to Fabre and Perceval.

Tracing Transforming Creations

Apart from the various drafts of the play-text, we can distinguish the preparatory notes, which register the dramaturgical or historical research done by the director, actors, and/or the dramaturge, and the very diverse and often chaotic working notes produced during the rehearsal period.⁷ While genetic research into theatre can evolve relatively successfully if the objects of study are such written sources, a text-based genetic analysis falls short when dealing with non-textual aspects of the creative process or with theatre forms that are not or no longer centred around the text.⁸ Theatre within the so-called postdramatic paradigm is therefore particularly challenging. Hans-Thies Lehmann argues that one of the main characteristics of the postdramatic aesthetic is a shift away from theatre's 'logo-centric' legacy and towards performance. This means, on the one

9. Postdramatic theatre does not get rid of the dramatic text, but changes our relation to it (and the ideal it encompasses), often opening up new critical readings. Or, like Heiner Müller once said about his own theatre, it 'always bears the memory of the deceased dramatic forms'. Qtd in the German version of Lehmann's book, *Postdramatisches Theater* (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1999), pp. 30–31, our translation.
10. See Grésillon et al., 'Pour une génétique théâtrale'.
11. Lehmann, *Postdramatic Theatre*, p. 22.
12. See *Intermediality in Theatre and Performance*, ed. by Frieda Chapple and Chiel Kattenbelt (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006); Chiel Kattenbelt, 'Intermediality in Theatre and Performance: Definitions, Perceptions and Medial Relationships', *Cultura, Lenguaje y Representación/Culture, Language and Representation*, 6 (2008), 19–29.
13. The terms 'intersemiotic' and 'intermedial' are (unfortunately) often used interchangeably. Both imply a crossing of borders between different semiotic codes and between different media respectively. Intersemiotics, however, is intrinsically linked to linguistics and literary studies. Intermediality is used more broadly to study how distinctive media interact, are combined, or communicate information differently when this information is transposed from one medium to another. Since we will discuss

hand, that a postdramatic theatre aesthetic challenges or even dissolves the dramatic form, and, on the other hand, that the role of text on stage no longer takes precedence over the scenography, the presence of the performer, the material quality of the voice, the lighting, and other elements of the scenic language.⁹ Retracing the genesis of theatre should thus also include the embodied, visual, and immaterial aspects that characterise the aesthetics of postdramatic performance.¹⁰

Lehmann also couples the decentralisation of text and the development of postdrama with the 'caesura of media society'.¹¹ A hitherto little researched aspect is how the emergence of new media not only influences theatre aesthetics, but also transforms the creative process.¹² To the sketches, notes, and conceptual reflections traditionally found both literally and figuratively in the margins of the dramatic text, a diversity of forms and media are added, often borrowed from other artistic fields (film, video, music, the visual arts), mixing old and new media. Indeed, it is striking how directors borrow techniques from filmmaking (like storyboarding) or music (like scoring), use photography and video as rehearsal tools, rely on certain computer programs and other digital media, or incorporate visual art practices like drawing or sculpture. This heterogeneous mediality of the rehearsal documents begs for an 'expanded' definition of the director's notes, and challenges us to take into account the way in which these media contaminate each other as well as influence the final product.

The processes leading from the creative process to the final performance inevitably involve transitions from one medium to another. However, the main focus of the research into intermedial or intersemiotic transitions in creative processes has frequently been on the transition from play-text to performance, or 'from page to stage'.¹³ Although studied elaborately, often under different headings (translation,¹⁴ transposition,¹⁵ adaptation,¹⁶ or a combination of these terms),¹⁷ the point of departure in these transition-theories remains the dramatic text and thus a (purely) textual or linguistic source-text. As Reba Gostand argues, theatre, even if it is dramatic theatre, always requires 'a constant process of translation', not just from play-text to performance but 'from original concept to script (when there is one), to producer/director's interpretation, to contribution by designer and actor/actress, to visual and/or aural images to audience response'.¹⁸ Furthermore, theories of 'intermedial' or 'intersemiotic translation' tend to focus on the translation of the *message* from one medium into another medium, and consequently disregard the impact of the medial carriers of both source- and target-text. The underlying dichotomy between, on the one hand, the 'meaning', 'content', or 'idea' that is to be conveyed (the 'textual' or 'message';¹⁹ the *signified*), and, on the other hand, the medial carrier or semiotic code of the message (the 'material' or 'medial';²⁰ the *signifier*) that conveys the meaning unadulterated, leads to an approach that risks losing sight of the preservation of medial traces of the source text.

Although the sensibility for the impact of the medial carrier of the message has grown significantly in the past years,²¹ the effect of the mediality and materiality of both source- and target-text within a theatrical creative process has been relatively unstudied. However, this merits attention. The decreasing importance many theatre directors attribute to

our objects in terms of their media, rather than their semiotic code, we opt for the term 'intermedial'. This also allows us to expand the discussion in theatre studies to reflect on intermediality not only *in* theatre performances, but also *in the creation process* of theatre performances.

14. See Roman Jakobson's 'intersemiotic translation' in Roman Jakobson, 'On the Linguistic Aspects of Translation', in *Selected Writings: Word and Language*, ed. by Walter de Gruyter (The Hague: Mouton, 1971), pp. 260–66. For the use of 'intersemiotic translation' in theatre studies see, Jean-Michel Déprats, 'A French History of Henry V', in *Shakespeare's History Plays: Performance, Translation and Adaptation in Britain and Abroad*, ed. by A. J. Hoenselaars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 75–91; Reba Gostand, 'Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication: Drama as Translation', in *The Languages of Theatre: Problems in the Translation and Transposition of Drama*, ed. by Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), pp. 1–9; Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, 'Towards a Typology of Literary Translation: Drama Translation Science', *Meta: Journal des Traducteurs/Meta: Translators' Journal*, 33 (1988), 485–90.
15. See, for example, Claus Clüver and Burton Watson, 'On Intersemiotic Transposition', *Poetics Today*, Art and Literature, 1.10 (1989), 55–90. Zuber-Skerritt furthermore describes transposition 'as a

the dramatic text (and, consequently, to the implied medial carrier of paper and ink), coupled with the medial hybridisation of the creative process, ensures that the form of rehearsal documents in contemporary theatre fundamentally changes.

The media of postdramatic rehearsal documents – existing of, among others, drawings, writings, audio scores, video, digital programs, and storyboards – are crucially different from those of the performances they help originate. The notes of the director are ideal for such an analysis: they are exemplary for the development in media, as they evolved from a linguistic form to an intermedial hybridisation – as we will indicate through the work of Jan Fabre and Luk Perceval.

Beyond the Director's Book: Creation through Drawing in the Creative Process of Jan Fabre

Belgian visual artist, theatre maker, and performance artist Jan Fabre (born in Antwerp in 1958) has played a central role in the development of a postdramatic poetics since the 1980s. In 1982, his eight-hour performance *It Is Theatre as Was to Be Expected and Foreseen* made a strong impression at several European performance festivals, and launched his career as an internationally acclaimed artist. From the outset, his pioneering work crossed the boundaries between theatre, dance, and performance art. Inspired by the use of 'real time/real action' in performance art, Fabre's theatrical language revolves not around characters, but around the impact of the corporeal presence of the performer on the stage. Bodies are brought to a state of perpetual physical metamorphoses: not only do they sweat, get exhausted by having to continually repeat the same gestures, or bump into the limits of what they are physically capable of doing, they also negotiate cultural disciplining mechanisms that sketch out the boundaries between the human and the animal, or between the normal and the abject body.

Within his creative process, Fabre's drawing practice takes a primordial place. Creative acts, not only in his visual work, but also in his work for theatre, opera, and dance, start with (and regularly return to) a hand-drawn exploration on paper where themes and ideas that will materialise in the performance first take shape. For his theatre performances, these drawings are remarkable traces of the genetic process. We can distinguish several kinds of drawn theatrical traces: first, drawings made during the preparation and rehearsals of a performance, some of which have been published,²² while others remain in the personal archive of the artist or were deliberately destroyed; second, drawings made *as* performance, in which the act of drawing itself is part of the performance;²³ third, drawings made *after* the performance. For this article, we are mainly interested in the first category.

To understand the status of these drawings as postdramatic 'director's notes', it is useful to compare them to the 'director's book' and to the role drawings traditionally have within these books. The director's book, sometimes also called production book or theatrical notebook, is perhaps

special kind of translation, namely: transposing or transferring the dramatic text on to the stage. This dramatic transposition is a specialized form of translation, unique to drama and different from translating poetry or narrative prose'. Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, 'Translation Science and Drama Translation', in *Page to Stage: Theatre as Translation*, ed. by Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984), pp. 3–12 (p. 3).

16. See, for example, Graham Ley, 'Discursive Embodiment: The Theatre as Adaptation', *Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance*, 2 (2009), 201–09.
17. Franz H. Link, 'Translation, Adaptation and Interpretation of Dramatic Texts', in *The Languages of Theatre: Problems in the Translation and Transposition of Drama*, ed. by Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), pp. 24–50.
18. Reba Gostand, 'Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication', p. 1.
19. Valerie Robillard, 'Beyond Definition: A Pragmatic Approach to Intermediality', in *Media Borders, Multimodality and Intermediality*, ed. by Lars Elleström (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 150–62 (pp. 159–60).
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.
21. See, for example, Lars Elleström, 'The Modalities of Media: A Model for Understanding Intermedial Relations', in *Media Borders*, ed. by Elleström, pp. 11–48; Lars Elleström, *Media Transformation: The Transfer of Media*

the best-known example of an (occasionally publicly available) document that captures the director's scenic imagination. Significantly, the practice of preserving theatrical notebooks starts around 1900, contemporaneous with the emergence of the director as a pivotal figure in the staging of a play. The director's book serves as a symbol for the director's empowerment in the history of modern theatre. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the authority of the playwright (and thus of the dramatic text) as the sole origin of the performance is questioned.²⁴ This evolving relationship between director and playwright,²⁵ or more broadly, between dramatic text and performance, is embodied by this form of 'theatre notation' that is, according to Patrice Pavis, 'a materialization of the optical and acoustic vision of the director at work'.²⁶ Max Reinhardt's *Regiebücher* are exemplary of how directors would develop their own personal performance aesthetic often literally in the margins of the dramatic text: he jotted down notes and sketches 'beside, above and below the text' as well as 'in between the lines'.²⁷ Not only was his *mise en scène* (scenography, acting style, costume, floor plans, and so on) first imagined in the gaps and intervals that the dramatic text inevitably left, this practice also signalled that the performance could develop its own particular theatricality and aesthetics, autonomous from the literary artefact. The *Regiebuch* can thus be linked to what Erika Fischer-Lichte referred to as the 'first performative turn' in theatre history at the beginning of the twentieth century.²⁸

If the director's book can be seen as one (of several) factor(s) in the emancipation process of the director, it still remained closely linked to the text-based logic of dramatic theatre. Not only do the published examples of director's notebooks²⁹ clearly show a predilection for the didascalia as a paratext to the original drama text,³⁰ they also function as an instruction manual for the stage production and its subsequent revivals in the same way play-texts and published promptbooks were once meant to control the production 'as much as possible, from the printed page'.³¹ Drawings are part of this paratextual material and serve a clear function, namely providing an illustration of the scenography or costumes. Not surprisingly, the use of director's books was institutionalised in theatre contexts that have a strong repertory tradition.³² The image that the 'director's book' conjures up today, is associated with a rigid application of the *Regiebuch* as a repository of the 'original' of the theatre performance as it was envisioned by the director: an 'authorized *mise-en-scène*' that serves as a mnemonic device of how a performance should be (re-)played in the future if it is to approach the director's original vision.³³ In this context, the agency of drawings is limited to their instrumental function as memory aids for the visual aspects of the original performance.

Some of the drawings Fabre made during the preparatory stages of a performance do seem reminiscent of the classical mimetic 'performance recipes' of director's books. These include sketches for the scenography, costumes, or (albeit more rarely) floor plans.³⁴ Depending at which moment in the rehearsal process they were produced, these drawings are more or less detailed. However, such drawings are not typical. If we take a step back in order to overlook the entire corpus of drawings Fabre produced in the context of his theatre performances over a span of 30

Characteristics among Media (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); André Gaudreault and Philippe Marion, 'Transécriture and Narrative Mediativities: The Stakes of Intermediality', in *A Companion to Literature and Film*, ed. by Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004), pp. 58–64; Irina O. Rajewsky, 'Intermediality, Intertextuality and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality', *Intermedialités: histoire et théorie des arts, des lettres et des techniques/ Intermediality: History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies*, 6 (2005), 43–64; Regina Schober, 'Translating Sounds: Intermedial Exchanges in Amy Lowell's "Stravinsky's Three Pieces Grotesques", for String Quartet', in *Media Borders*, ed. by Elleström, pp. 163–74; Werner Wolf, 'Intermediality Revisited: Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality', in *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage*, ed. by Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden, and Walter Bernhart (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2002), pp. 13–34.

22. Jo Coucke, Willy van den Bussche, and Jan Fabre, *Tekeningen, Modellen en Objecten. Theater, Performances en Akties. Jan Fabre* (Brugge: P. M. M. K. Oostende, 1989); Jan Fabre, Patrick Roegiers, and Jean-Marc Adolphe, *Le Temps Emprunté* (Paris: Actes Sud, 2007).

years, we are struck by the variety of functions and aesthetic languages he developed. If we consider the collection of drawings made for a specific performance, a different, postdramatic 'director's book' appears, which offers neither a snapshot of the moment between the general rehearsal and the première, nor an instruction manual that controls subsequent re-stagings. Not only do they point towards the aforementioned hybridisation of the theatrical notebook in the postdramatic theatre, these drawings are also marked by their embedding in an ongoing, dynamic, and transitory creative process where the emergence of ideas is key. Indeed, rather than illustrations or instructions, they function within a continuous dialectical loop with the rehearsals: Fabre's drawings determine the rehearsal and the rehearsal in turn has an effect on his drawings.³⁵ In what follows, we will illustrate a few of the many functions performed by these drawings in the course of the creative process.

In *Writing on Drawing*, the drawing and design scholar Steven Garner argues that drawing 'supports cognitive processes, particularly creativity and the emerging of ideas'.³⁶ Similarly, Fabre describes his drawing as 'thinking while drawing and drawing while thinking'. 'Drawing,' he continues, 'is a form of dancing with the wrists with always unexpected results'.³⁷ A good example of how each drawing functions as a *Denkbild* or 'thinking image', intertwining thinking and drawing, the cognitive and the physical, is shown in the preparatory sketches for the dance solo *Quando l'uomo principale è una donna* (2004). In this performance he explores the boundaries of gender and sexuality creating an androgynous figure constantly shifting his/her identity. This double-sidedness of gender was first explored in drawings in which clear male and female symbols coalesce on the page. Rather than a design for the stage setting, the drawing was a way to research how this quest for an androgynous and very fluid dance performance style could be conceptualised (see [Image 1](#)).

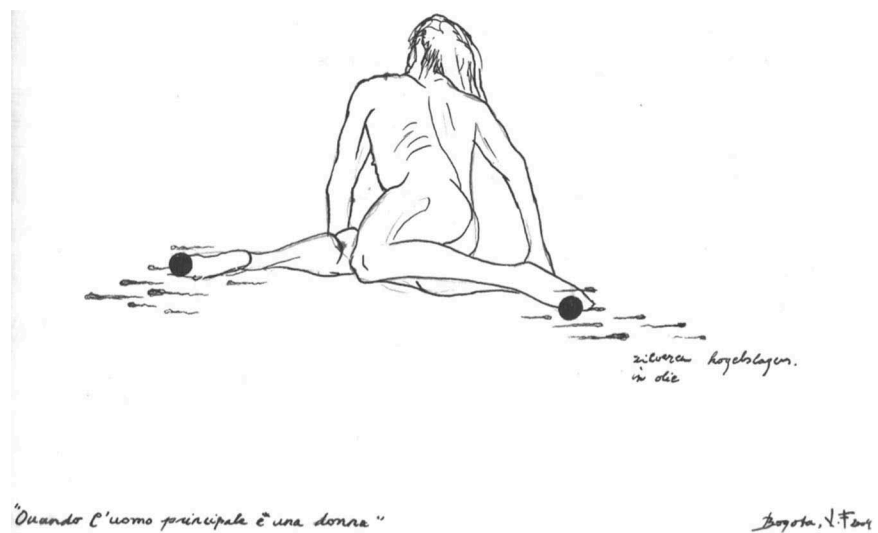


Image 1 Drawing for *Quando l'uomo principale è una donna* (2004) by Jan Fabre.

23. This is especially the case in his early performance work, in which Fabre drew with blood, salt, BIC-pens, or the ashes of burned paper money (e.g. *My Body, My Blood, My Landscape* (1978), *Money Performance* (1979), *Ilad of the Bic-Art* (1980), *Sea-Salt of the Fields* (1980), *Ilad of the Bic-Art, the Bic-Art Room* (1981)).
24. On the emergence of the director in modern theatre, see Erika Fischer-Lichte, *History of European Drama and Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2002), pp. 284–85. Although Pavis focuses on the advent of the *mise en scène* rather than on the position of the director (see Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1992), pp. 24–25), his account provides clear insights into the stakes of this development. See also David Bradby and David Williams, *Directors' Theatre* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1988); *Contemporary European Theatre Directors*, ed. by Maria M. Delgado and Dan Rebellato (New York: Routledge, 2010); Edward Braun, *The Director & The Stage: From Naturalism to Grotowski* (London: A&C Black, 2014); Helen Krich Chinoy and Toby Cole, *Directors on Directing: A Source Book of the Modern Theater* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1976); Simon Shepherd, *Direction: Readings in Theatre Practice* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).
25. This relationship is not always contentious. In some cases, playwright and director work closely together or are one and the same person.

An important category of drawings within his work is the 'improvisation sketch'. During the first weeks of rehearsal, Fabre gives his 'warriors of beauty' (as he likes to call his actors) hundreds of improvisation tasks, aimed at developing the possible themes for a new play. The ideas for these tasks are distilled from the images that emerge during the activity of drawing. While the act of drawing happens outside of the rehearsal space (at night, in the privacy of his studio or home), this initial research is passed on to the actors through the instructions that emerged from the imaginary of the drawings. According to Fabre, the drawings are 'limitless matter, overflowing with imagination, ideas and non-realized projects'.³⁸ Ideally, the dancers and actors become co-researchers, exploring similar material to that explored in the drawings but through different means and media; namely, through the physicality and intuition of their bodies, through movement, voice, repeated exercises, and so on. Though Fabre has a clear intuition about the end result, this process is meant to open up a space for him and his performers to find new and unexpected possible routes to attain this goal. The dynamic process between intuition and improvisation can be seen in the drawings he made for *Universal Copyrights 1 & 9* (1995). Some of the notes on the drawings are drafts for the typical improvisation instructions he gives his performers. For example: '[t]he body of the actor is smeared with honey and then bees are released!'; '[a]ll actresses must be pregnant three months (obligatory!)'; '[m]otif of the siamese twins, elaborate with Albert + Jacques, filling each other, making each other fat' (see [Images 2](#) and [3](#)).

Instead of assuming that these drawings 'lack' a performance component (and thus, considering the performance as the completion of the drawing), we should see them as autonomous art works that are not completed but adapted to another medium (i.e. the bodies of the actors, the performance).³⁹ These drawings function as a particular 'theatrical trace' that produced (and perhaps still produces) the precarious presence of performance. As the artist himself attests, as 'poetic objects' they carry a 'physical action' within them.⁴⁰

This process also offers a possible explanation for the great variety of techniques (Chinese ink drawings; sketches in pencil, pen, or ballpoint; watercolour paintings) and the different styles and aesthetics applied. The style, technique, and colours of the drawings are connected to the idiosyncrasies of each individual performance. The drawings of his first theatre trilogy (1980–84) for example are very rough and organic (see [Image 4](#)); while the drawings made during the productions of his 'Blue Hour'–productions (1990–95), for example, are much more tight, formal, disciplined, and partly drafted with a BIC-ballpoint pen, a technique he uses in his visual art work and that reappears through the intermediary of the drawing in the Bic blue colour of the scenography and costumes of his theatre and opera work (see [Image 5](#)).⁴¹ By studying the 'intermedial transposition', the translation of these drawings to the stage, we are able to analyse which elements and characteristics are taken into account during the creation of a performance and which influence formal aspects of the drawings, such as colour and lines, have on the actual performance.

Furthermore, this points to the blurring of the boundary between the visual arts and the theatre (a boundary Fabre is constantly crossing).

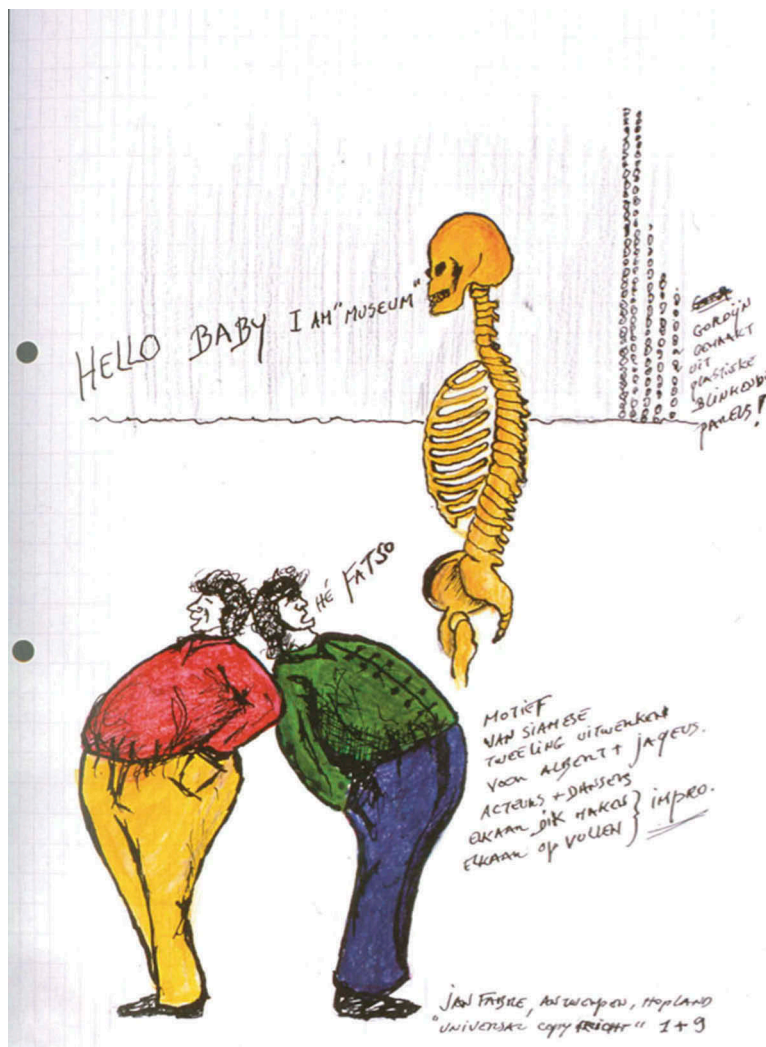


Image 2 Drawing for *Universal Copyright* (1996) by Jan Fabre.

Almuth Grésillon, 'La Double Contrainte: Texte et Scène Dans la Genèse Théâtrale', *ITEM*, 27 November 2006 <<http://www.item.ens.fr/index.php?id=14206>> [accessed 18 May 2016].

26. Patrice Pavis, *Languages of the Stage: Essays in the Semiology of the Theatre* (New York: Performing Arts Journal Publications, 1982), pp. 116–17.

While part of the rehearsal process, some of these drawings are art works in their own right. This dialogue with the fine arts becomes even more obvious when one looks at the many references to other artists included in the drawings: to Lucio Fontana in the drawings of *Falsification as it is, Unfalsified* (1992), to Yves Klein in *Quando l'uomo principale è una donna*, to pointillism in *Swan Lake* (2002). Conscious of his position *vis-à-vis* the fine arts, Fabre often intends for the drawings made during the rehearsal process to enter into other circuits of distribution. Many of the theatre-related drawings are published, exhibited, or even sold to collectors or museums.⁴² As far as these drawings are concerned, it is often very difficult, even impossible to distinguish between pre- and post-production drawings. For Fabre, who is both a theatre director and a visual artist, this distinction does not seem to matter: in the drawings both disciplines intersect.

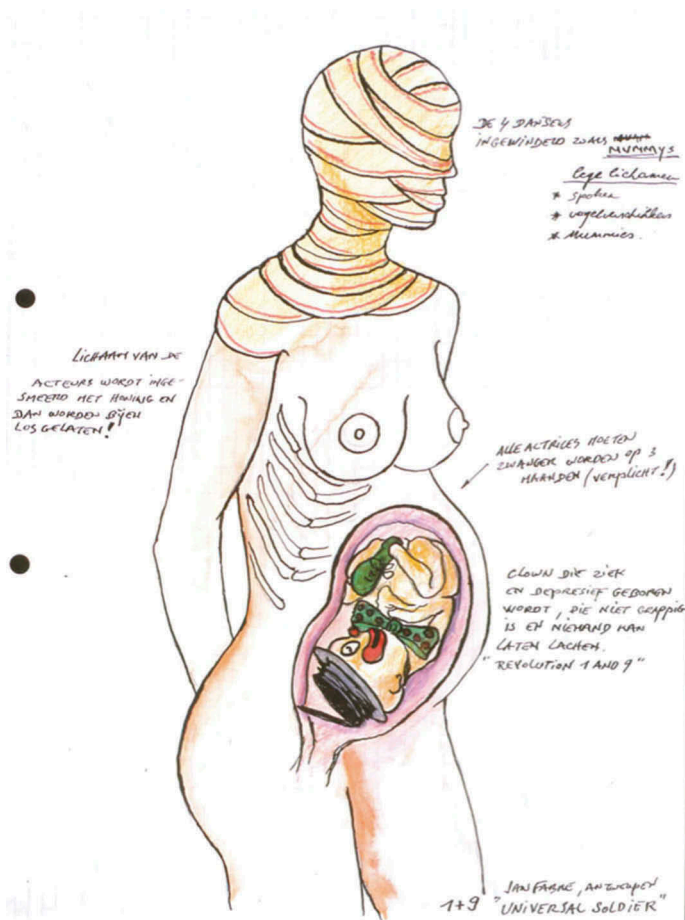


Image 3 Drawing for *Universal Copyright* (1996) by Jan Fabre.

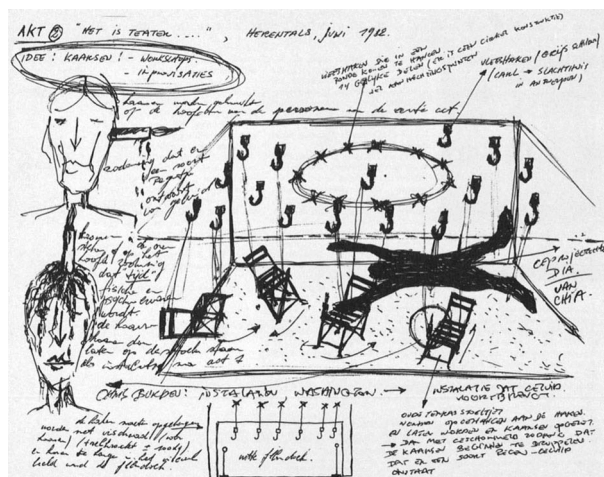


Image 4 Drawing for *It Is Theatre as Was to Be Expected and Foreseen* (1982) by Jan Fabre.

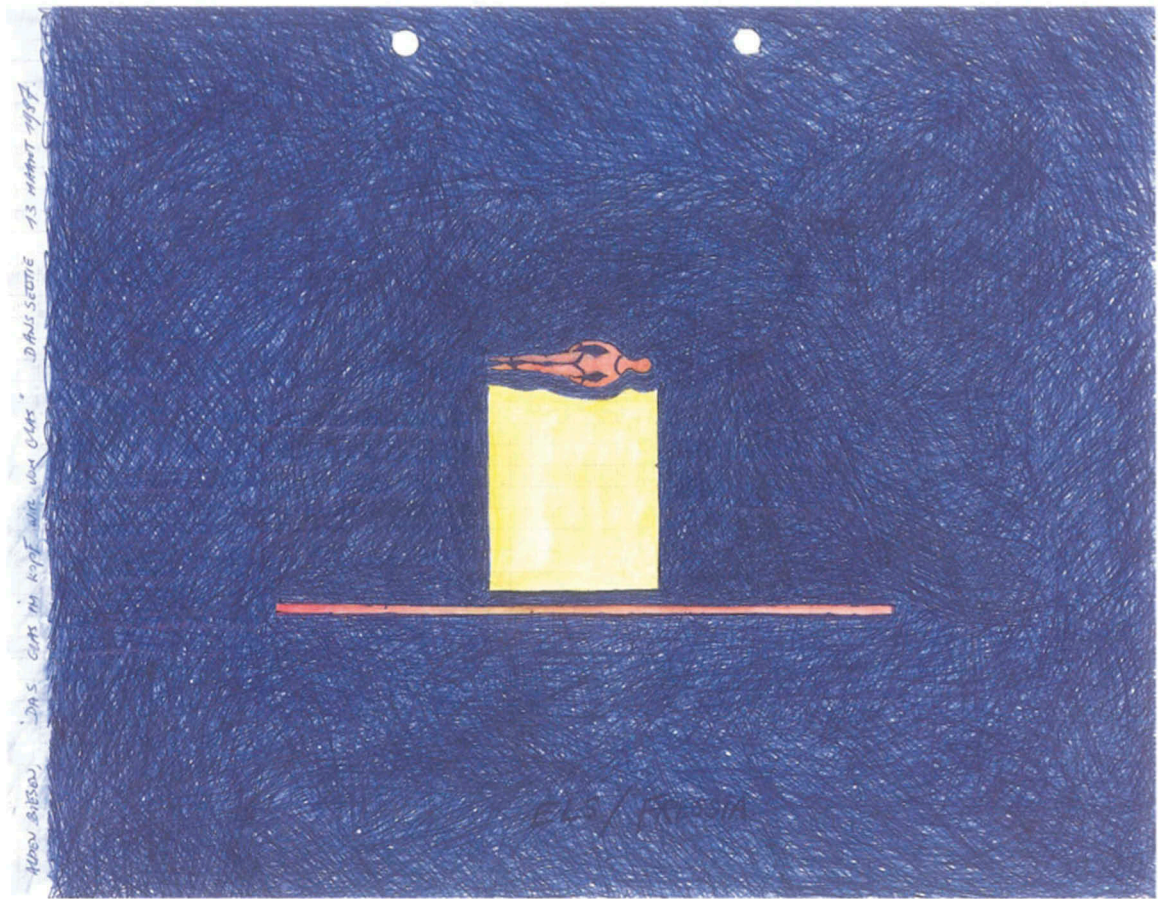


Image 5 Drawing for *Das Glas im Kopf wird vom Glas, de danssecties* (1987) by Jan Fabre.

27. Wilfried Passow, *Max Reinhardts Regiebuch zu Faust I: Untersuchungen zum Inszenierungsstil auf der Grundlage Einer Kritischen Edition*, ed. by Wilfried Passow, 2 vols (Munich: Kitzinger, 1971), p. v, our translation.

In a sense, all these drawings together, as traces of the creative process, constitute a very particular, present-day version of the traditional *Regiebuch*. However, they do not constitute or capture ‘the ideal representation’ of a piece, or *prefigure* the performance, but are rather meant to capture and produce a certain performative energy that is to be materialised into other aspects of the performance – not just the visual elements – and thus, indirectly, affect the spectators. ‘In the drawings reside my nerves, my wrists, my energy, in a performance reside the nerve cells of the performers’,⁴³ Fabre says, evoking how the themes but also the kinetic qualities explored in the drawings are to be transposed and converted in the bodies of his performers through improvisations and physical exercises.⁴⁴ Not aimed at capturing the ideal representation, these genetic documents are also archives of mistakes, erased paths, and cancelled ideas or of impossible dreams, wild ideas, and promises of the pre-performance.

28. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power of Performance: A New Aesthetics* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 31. For an analysis of this 'first performative turn' (a precursor of the 'second performative turn' in the 1960s and 1970s) see pp. 32–37. Fischer-Lichte also links this to a return to more 'ritualistic' or 'primitive' forms of theatre. Erika Fischer-Lichte, *Theatre, Sacrifice, Ritual: Exploring Forms of Political Theatre* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 21–22. It is no coincidence that this 'performative turn' *avant la lettre* can be traced in Max Hermann's writings on the impact of Reinhardt's innovative spatial experiments. First imagined in the margins of the dramatic text in sketches and drawings, new spatial forms (including the *banamichi* stage) or acting styles 'questioned the given medial conditions of the theatre by reinterpreting the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators'. Fischer-Lichte, *The Transformative Power*, p. 33.
29. A selected bibliography of published director's manuscripts (historical and contemporary) can be found here: Marie-Madeline Mervant-Roux and Sophie Proust, 'Bibliographie. Genèses Théâtrales', *Genesis*, 26 (2005), 177–85 (pp. 175–79).
30. Gréillon and Thomasseau, *Scènes de Genèses Théâtrales*, pp. 26–27.
31. Julie Stone Peters, *Theatre of the Book, 1480–1880: Print, Text, and Performance in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 82–83.

Luk Perceval: The Director with the Video Camera

Fabre establishes an ongoing feedback between the drawing and the performance that plays a crucial role in the creative process. In case of the Belgian theatre director Luk Perceval (born in 1957), our second example, the intermedial feedback-loop leaves the page (still the main carrier of the drawing) behind to expand the notion of the director's notes further to include video documents. Perceval left his mark on contemporary Flemish theatre, first with the company he helped establish (Blauwe Maandag Compagnie, 1984–98), and then as the artistic director of the Antwerp municipal theatre Het Toneelhuis (1998–2005). We will refer to one of his most celebrated projects while working with Blauwe Maandag Compagnie, namely the trilogy *Ten Oorlog* ('To war, into battle', 1993–97), an adaptation of Shakespeare's cycle of 'histories' on the Wars of the Roses, co-written by Perceval with the Belgian novelist and playwright Tom Lanoye. The three instalments were first shown separately over a period of several years and culminated in a series of eight-hour long 'marathons' when the piece was shown in its entirety.⁴⁵ In 2005 he left Belgium to become house director at the Schaubühne am Lehniner Platz Berlin. Since 2009 he is the 'leading director' of the Thalia Theater in Hamburg and mainly works in Germany. From the start of his career, Perceval pioneered what would become one of the main features of the theatre artists of the 'Flemish Wave', namely the appropriation of classical repertory through sampling and montage.⁴⁶ Fed up with the 'old-fashioned' subsidised theatre, he furthermore shifted the focus to a more physical style of acting, and tries to bring theatre closer to the spectator's and actor's own environment.

Perceval makes ample use of different documentation forms and social media during the preparation and rehearsal process.⁴⁷ Film and video play a crucial role to the extent that such *videographic* documents are examples of the process-based and hybrid director's notes we are interested in. In contrast to many other contemporary directors of his generation, such as Ivo Van Hove or Guy Cassiers, videotaped images are not part of the *mise en scène* in the final performance. Perceval is not interested in the combination of film with theatrical elements, which appears frequently in the works of other artists belonging to Perceval's generation. However, while Perceval does not explore the juxtaposition of video and theatrical elements, crucial aspects of the performance, especially the acting style and lighting design, are nonetheless affected by the use of the camera during the creative process. Using the terminology developed by Irena Rajewsky to distinguish different subcategories of intermediality, Perceval is not interested in 'media combination' – the combination of 'at least two conventionally distinct media or medial forms of articulation' within one work⁴⁸ – but rather in adapting and referring to other media as an integral part of his non-mediated theatre language. As we will show, the transformation of the video recordings in performance is an example of what Rajewsky calls 'media transposition': the transformation of a given media product or of its substratum into another medium.

In the archives of Blauwe Maandag Compagnie, numerous cardboard boxes filled with VHS-tapes are stored. While the archive contains often

32. Still today, German city theatres work with a *Regiebuch*, most often put together by the director's assistant. Its use is mainly practical: it is an indispensable instrument to allow plays on the repertory to run over longer periods of time or to re-stage these plays in their original *mise en scène* after an interval of months or even years.
33. This expression is used by Richard Schechner to describe how Bertolt Brecht's *Modellbücher* are used by some of his predecessors at the Berliner Ensemble and elsewhere. Richard Schechner, *Between Theatre and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), p. 43. See also Patrice Pavis, *L'analyse des Spectacles* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2012), p. 13; Pavis, *Languages of the Stage*, p. 121.
34. See, for example, the drawings for the dance solo *Angel of Death* (2003).
35. 'I draw in the moment – almost like an intimate diary of gazes, breathings and visions that are conjured up in my mind – and then, during the night, I make new drawings inspired by the sketches of the day. And these nocturnal drawings nourish my inspiration for new actions, improvisations and *mise en scène* for the next day during the rehearsals with my performers. My drawings thus represent a continuous process' (Fabre et al., *Le Temps Emprunté*, p. 371, our translation).

just one tape for Perceval's earliest pieces (mostly full-length recordings of try-outs and premières made in view of future re-stagings), the number of tapes grows exponentially by the mid-1990s when he starts to videotape the rehearsals of *Ten Oorlog*. Because Perceval operates the camera himself (at later stages of his career, an assistant often functions as camera operator), the recordings have registered his particular way of looking at the rehearsal. The camera functions as if it were an extension of his own gaze: he lets it travel through the performance space, often zooming in on an individual actor or on a group of actors. In some cases, Perceval enters the working space himself, as he moves among the actors while filming, undoing the static and frontal perspective that characterises the view from the 'director's seat'. Interestingly, he is not committed to the 'central' action of any given scene (for example, the main dialogue). In many rehearsal videos, the camera focuses on only one of the dialogue partners, on performers or objects in the background, or on isolated gestures, effectively decentralising the dramatic action (see [Image 6](#)).

At night, after the rehearsal, Perceval edits the day's footage, in order to show it to the actors during rehearsal the following day. This process of filming, editing, and then showing the footage at the start of a new rehearsal (which is again recorded on video), serves several functions that should be discussed in order to understand this form of 'note-taking'.⁴⁹

First, Perceval's working method continues the thorough process of rewriting the source text during the preparation and rehearsal of a play. When working on the script for the trilogy *Ten Oorlog*, Perceval wrote to his co-author Tom Lanoye that their adaption of Shakespeare 'should

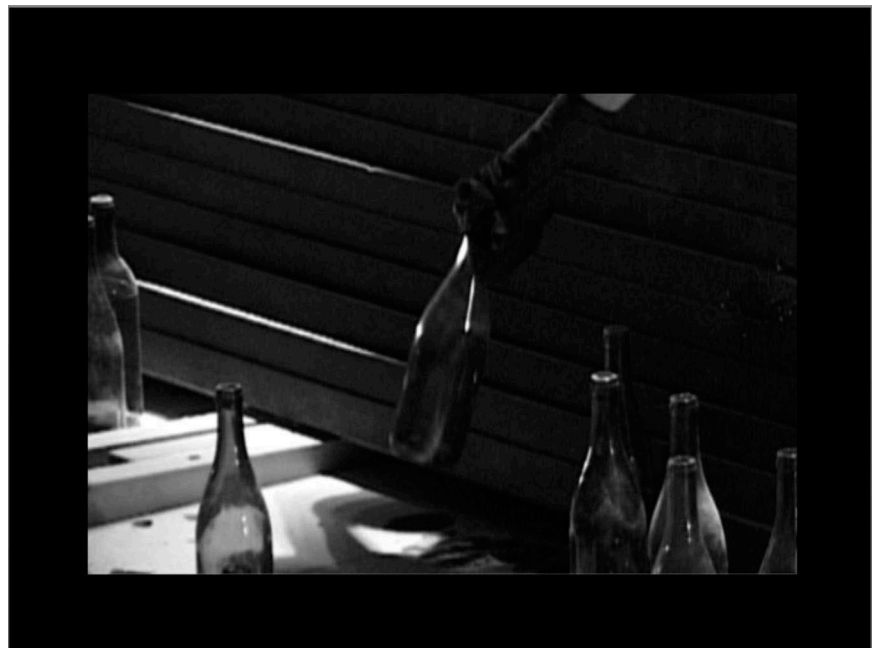


Image 6 Still from rehearsal video of *Asem* (2001) by Luk Perceval.

36. Steve Garner, *Writing on Drawing: Essays on Drawing Practice and Research* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2011), p. 23.
37. Jan Fabre, unpublished interview with Jan Fabre and Miet Martens by Edith Cassiers, Frederik Le Roy, and Luk Van Den Dries, Antwerp, 2013.
38. Fabre et al., *Le Temps Emprunté*, p. 377.
39. Fabre is also very conscious of the fact that certain things are only possible on paper, not on the stage. However, this is not a reason for him not to explore these ideas, if only for the pleasure of imagining them. Jan Fabre, 'Interview'.
40. Coucke et al., *Tekeningen, Modellen en Objecten*, p. 14.
41. Fabre uses this technique in order to produce an idiosyncratic time-space, a kind of dream landscape that should have a magnetic effect on the observer.
42. The second series of drawings Fabre made for *Je suis Sang* (2002) for example are totally different from the first series when the performance was created (2001): they lack didascalia and practical stage-related concerns, are remarkably polished, and were made several years after the première.
43. Jan Fabre, 'Interview'.
44. See also Edith Cassiers, Timmy De Laet, Frederik Le Roy, and Luk Van den Dries, 'Redrawing Bodily Boundaries: A Look into the Creative Process of Jan Fabre', in *Aesthetics and Ideology in Contemporary Literature and Drama*, ed. by Madelena Gonzalez and René Agostini (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2015), pp. 297–320.

meet the short, often fast way of mounting/editing film'.⁵⁰ He tackled the source text in the same way that film reels would be treated in the editing room: with scissors and tape, cutting it first into pieces and then stitching together the passages he wanted to retain in his preferred order. By boldly editing the text, Perceval strives to make it as transparent as possible and retain only what he deems essential. In doing this, he transforms the dramatic text into what resembles a scenario. What is left is a heavily truncated script that remains open to change until the opening night – or even beyond that, as improvisations during the run of the piece might change the text again. Geert Opsomer labelled the resulting text as an 'open text' and contrasted Perceval's open dramaturgy to a dramaturgy in the study room of the author from where the actions of the director and actors were, so to speak, steered to be aligned with the author's intention.⁵¹ What he did while radically adapting and cutting up the 'dramatic text', the video camera allowed him to do for (and to) the 'performance text'.

This edited footage is, second, used as a communication tool while directing actors. With the (edited) recordings Perceval can show exactly what he wants or does not want, without resorting to (possibly vague) spoken instructions that paraphrase rather than show the actor's performance. He argues that 'language is always a detour and often there is noise that disturbs the interpretation of the message. A camera on the other hand, is straightforward and objective in its recording'.⁵² Perceval (as with a number of his actors)⁵³ argues that actors who witness their own acting are then more inclined to critically assess their performance. The edited footage, furthermore, serves as a stepping-stone for the communication between actor and director, as the order of the out-takes structure Perceval's feedback. Zoë Svendsen describes it as follows: '[i]f in the rehearsal room the camera becomes a kind of physical embodiment of the director's attention to the acting, it is also a means by which Perceval regulates his own responses'.⁵⁴

This brings us to a third, more general function: Perceval believes that the filmed image has the power, not only to record but also to *generate* the subtle acting style he strives for, thus having an impact on the resulting performance. Certain characteristics of the filmic medium are to be evoked and imitated in and by the theatrical performance. Irina Rajewsky calls this process 'intermedial reference' and points out that one of the main properties of 'intermedial reference' is its 'illusion-forming quality': when a medium refers to another medium, it does not become this other medium, but generates the *illusion* of becoming another medium or, at least, of incorporating some of its properties.⁵⁵ Put differently, media retain their own ontological integrity, while producing the effect of becoming another medium. When Perceval 'refers' to film in and through performance he is particularly invested in the technique of the cinematic close-up. From the start of his trajectory as a director, Perceval sought to develop an acting style that 'referred' to a specific film corpus, namely the American classical cinema (especially films starring 'Method Actors') that he watched while growing up. To him, the camera allows for a close encounter between actor and spectator, producing an effect of 'truthfulness' and 'authenticity' the theatre was missing.⁵⁶ And the cinematic

45. The piece also toured in a German language version under the name *Schlachten*.
46. See Geert Sels, *Accidenten van een Zaalwachter: Luk Perceval* (Leuven: Van Halewyck, 2005), p. 43.
47. Research in the archive of Blauwe Maandag Compagnie shows that Perceval from the outset was an 'early adopter' of digital media. The 'analogue' method of text editing (re-writing text by hand, editing with scissors and glue) is (in part) replaced by computers with text editing software which also allows for the circulation of text versions via diskettes, flash drives, or email. Today, Perceval makes active use of the web-based file hosting service Dropbox to share each consecutive version during the preparation and rehearsals of a play. Besides these, he shares inspirational images, work in progress, and reflections through his blogs. See his Tumblr site <lukpercevaljournal.tumblr.com> and website Luk Perceval <www.lukperceval.info>.



Image 7 Stills from a rehearsal video of *Asem* (2001) by Luk Perceval.

48. Rajewsky, 'Intermediality, Intertextuality and Remediation', p. 52.
49. For a discussion of some of these functions in the context of Perceval's staging of *Platonov* at the Shaubühne am Lehninerplatz, see Zoë Svendsen, 'Luk Perceval – *Platonov* (2006) – Rules for a Theatre of Contemporary Contemplation', in *Making Contemporary Theatre*, pp. 222–41 (pp. 234–36).

close-up – that was amply used in these films – with its ability to register even the subtlest expression of the actor, was to be an antidote to the declamatory and therefore distancing acting styles of theatre (see [Images 7 and 8](#)). The reference to cinema had to rid the stage of what Panofsky called 'the impurities of theatricality'.⁵⁷

Perceval attests that the many years of using a video camera in the rehearsal studio has left its marks on both his way of working with actors and the resulting acting style during the performance. Even today, although he no longer operates the camera himself,⁵⁸ he often instructs his actors to 'use the space as if they have to relate to a camera' or to 'play as if they want to show the spectator a close-up'.⁵⁹ The effect of this instruction is enhanced even further when actors have indeed seen themselves play in close-up in Perceval's video out-takes of the rehearsals. This again implies a shift of focus from the verbal to the corporeal, stressing the importance of body language, not as the 'large gestures' but as the reluctant and controlled expression of emotion or intention.

50. Luk Perceval, unpublished letter to Tom Lanoye, 9 November 1995. See also Sels, *Accidenten van een Zaalwachter*, p. 238. All translations from Dutch are ours.
51. Geert Opsomer, 'Wat Is Er van de Tekst?', *Etcetera*, 13 (1986), 39–41.
52. Sels, *Accidenten van een Zaalwachter*, p. 321. This footage was also helpful to overcome the language barrier Perceval experienced when he started working in Germany.
53. See Svendsen, 'Luk Perceval – *Platonov* (2006)', pp. 234–36.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 235.
55. See Rajewsky, 'Intermediality, Intertextuality and Remediation'.
56. Luk Perceval, 'Interview with Luk Perceval in the Context of "Belgium Is Happening"/Toneelstof 80', 15 March 2009, <www.belgiumishappening.net/home/interviews/luk-perceval-toneelstof-80> [accessed 18 May 2016].
57. Erwin Panofsky, 'Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures', in *The Visual Turn: Classical Film Theory and Art History*, ed. by Angela Dalle Vacche (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press: 2003 (1937)), pp. 69–84.
58. Although he used to do the filming himself, he now often out-sources it to 'camera assistants'. See Svendsen, 'Luk Perceval – *Platonov* (2006)', pp. 234–36.
59. Luk Perceval, personal communication with the authors, 2013.



Image 8 Stills from a rehearsal video of *Asem* (2001) by Luk Perceval.

This corporeal presence remains crucial for Perceval, which is why it was never his intention to rid himself of theatre and turn to making cinema instead.⁶⁰ Paradoxically, referring to film in the creation process and eventually in the resulting performance ultimately brings him closer to what is at stake in the act of making theatre. Regina Schober has convincingly argued that when the boundaries of a medium are challenged during instances of intermedial exchange, that medium reflects its own medial nature.⁶¹ Echoing Rajewsky, Schober argues that intermedial transposition is not the reproduction of another medium, but a representation of the *effects* of a certain medium in another medium.⁶² Such intermedial translations challenge the boundaries of a medium. At the same time, however, the ontological properties of that medium come into focus allowing for a reflection on its medial nature.⁶³ Similarly, Perceval does not attempt to emulate film, but emulate, on the stage, certain *effects* of the filmic medium, for example the sense of authenticity, proximity,

60. Nevertheless, Perceval has produced several films based on his theatre works. These films were edited versions of the rehearsal footage, making them hybrids hanging between theatre and film, and fine examples of Rajewsky's *intermedial transposition* and *intermedial reference*. See, for example, *Traum im Herbst* (2001). The production of these films remains somewhat of a side project.
61. Schober, 'Translating Sounds'.
62. 'Not the medium itself, but an "imagined" version of the medium, realized by means of another medium, is the outcome of the intermedial translation process.' Schober, 'Translating Sounds', p. 166.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
64. See, for example, the work of Gay McAuley who has published on the possibilities and difficulties of observations of the rehearsal process from an ethnographic perspective. Gay McAuley, *Not Magic but Work: An Ethnographic Account of a Rehearsal Process* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012).
65. Herbert Blau, *Take up the Bodies: Theater at the Vanishing Point* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982).
66. Like any archive, the archive of genetic notes is inevitably incomplete, for many reasons. Two of these reasons are worthy of mention: first, not everything can be saved, not only for practical reasons but also because the *ephemeral* nature of the creative process, in other words its ontological status as an event, cannot be stored; second,

and fine-drawn emotionality captured in the close-up. At the same time, it leads him to something beyond the photographic promise of film to something that is inherently of the theatre: a powerful sense of presence produced by the performers on stage. It is this presence of the performer that escapes any form of translation.

Through this process of filming and editing, Perceval establishes an ongoing feedback loop between the video recording and the live action on stage. This provides scholars with a remarkable perspective on (a part of) the genesis of his performance: the televised images we witness today when we play one of the numerous VHS video tapes found in the archive resemble the images the director saw in the viewfinder of the camera that once roamed the rehearsal studio. We look through the (mediated) eyes of the director. Even if the video images do not capture the 'live' events of the rehearsal, they are indexical traces of the time spent creating through repetition, attempting, and experimenting, trying again and failing again. The eventual theatre performance, we could argue, serves as a record of the creative process. However, it shows us but one possible outcome. The video images also trace what would otherwise be lost: the 'erasures' that inevitably happen during the rehearsal process.

Archive and Promise

Gaining access to the creative process poses many methodological challenges, even more so if the creative process is not (or no longer) available to one of the main methods of genetic theatre research, namely direct observation.⁶⁴ The performance is always 'at the vanishing point', Herbert Blau famously wrote,⁶⁵ but so is the creative process. One important way scholars have counter acted the transitory nature of the creative process is by studying the written traces produced during the preparatory stages leading up to a theatre performance.⁶⁶ The notebooks of the director, the director's book, preparatory notes, and other written process-documents are therefore valuable sources for the theatre historian, especially when studying theatre performances that left no or only few records.⁶⁷ Focusing on these written material traces of the creative process, however, has its limits. First of all, as historiographical sources, these notebooks become part of the same logic of reconstruction that characterised their 'traditional' use in theatre. When we remain within this logic, we risk missing a crucial aspect of these and other process-documents: their embedding in an ongoing, dynamic, and transitory creative process, where the emergence of ideas is key. We have tried to show how director's notes are not 'performance originals' but rather indexical traces of the complex dynamics of invention during the genesis of a theatre play. In the postdramatic director's notes we studied, the notes are neither snapshots of the moment between the general rehearsal nor instruction manuals that control subsequent re-stagings.

But the examples of Perceval and Fabre also point towards a second critical aspect: the hybridisation in contemporary postdramatic performances is reflected in a hybridisation of the director's notes themselves.

archives always determine the way the future will look back on the present. Through selection, artists and companies might therefore try to control this future image of the past to guard a specific legacy of an artist. We should always be aware of this dynamic.

67. See, for example, Corliss Phillabaum, 'Review: *Max Reinhardt: Sein Theater in Bildern*' ed. by Max Reinhardt Research Center; and 'Review: *Max Reinhardt: Regiebuch zu Macbeth* by Manfred Grossmann', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 22 (1970), 111–13. See also, with regard to theatre before the emergence of the director, Jean-Marie Thomasseau, 'Towards a Genetic Understanding of Non-Contemporary Theatre: Traces, Objects, Methods', *Theatre Research International*, 33.3 (2008), 234–49. The director's notebook is part of the limited available documents that constitute (more or less) direct traces of the theatrical event. See Dietrich Steinbeck, *Einleitung in die Theorie und Systematik der Theaterwissenschaft* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1970). We deliberately write 'more or less' as the epistemological status of the director's book as a source for theatre historiography is complex. One could argue that it is a source of the 'intention' of the theatre makers rather than of the actual theatrical event. In other words, it captures the ideal performance rather than the actual performance.

68. Féral, 'Towards a Genetic Study', p. 226.

The postdramatic director's notebook is an 'expanded' notebook that goes beyond the paratextual or didascalic. The activity of drawing in the case of Fabre and of videotaping and editing in the case of Perceval during the creation process and the ensuing intermedial feedback-loop can have a determining influence on the performance's visual language, narrative structure, or acting style. If we take into account the non-textual source-text, the complex and multi-layered transformative dynamics between source- and target-text, and, above all, the effect of the radically different mediality of process-documents on the final product, we can come to a better understanding of performance genetics within postdramatic theatre.

In the examples of Perceval and Fabre, the director's notes reveal their true Janus face, as archives of both the past and the future. These hybrid notes store the very real and lively (but complex) interactions between a wide variety of processes, people, and media during the theatrical genesis. They are indexical traces, capturing not only the 'decision making process'⁶⁸ leading up to a performance, but also the mistakes, failures, or abandoned tracks. At the same time, these genetic notes contain the remnants of what was *à venir* during the creative process. They contain the 'performance promises': the imagined, often unrealised end results of which the actual performances are only some of the many instantiations. Fabre's drawings and Perceval's video footage capture both the actual and the virtual performance to be. A genetic method, applied to contemporary, postdramatic theatre, will only be fruitful when it takes into account not only the actual traces but also the failures and promises of the director's notes.