

Will stage and exhibition design save contemporary theatre?

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Abstract

In the last fifty years, two main factors have pushed theatres and music venues to change.

Foremost is an inherent trend to new forms of theatre and music production. Traditional forms of musical production are currently being overtaken by a new aesthetic sense and different forms of fruition, in which musicians and players (likewise listeners and spectators) demand new technical potential and layout.

The second factor is a combination of new visual and acoustic contemporary scenarios, in which we are surrounded by images (television, cinema, advertising, industrial design, graphic design, fashion) and sounds (jingles, ring-tones, signature-tunes), an uninterrupted visual and incessant wallpaper music background.

This new tendency entails that the traditional task of theatres (a *medium* role in aesthetic terms) has been replaced, and that if theatres want to survive they must necessarily change.

These changes are slowly taking place in two different ways. On the one hand, theatre has taken refuge in intellectual elitism, becoming increasingly cryptic, closed, narrow and uncommunicative. On the other hand theatre is giving way to the pressure of a new social context and turning towards more catchy and showy performance genres.

In architectural terms, there has always been a correlation between the preordained destination of a building and staple designs required for that function. Today, on the other hand, attempts to change have concentrated largely on

massive technological innovation, which in turn supports a hyper-functional trend culminating in specialist buildings that do not correspond to any particular dramaturgical form.

Keywords: Theatre, Exhibition design, Function, Type.