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THE POETICS OF PERFORMANCE DIAGRAMS

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The Poetics of Performance Diagrams

Elements in Contemporary Performance Texts

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Abstract: This Element considers the concept of performance diagrams and shows their historical, epistemic and aesthetic functions in theatre and dance. In three sections, this Element surveys the architectural model by Vitruvius, the woodcut of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, Aby Warburg's *Mnemosyne-Atlas*, the spells and drawings of Antonin Artaud, the performance *Paradise Now* (the Living Theatre) and the choreography *I Am 1984* (Barbara Matijević). Demonstrating that diagrams can be applied to multiply dramaturgical and performative trajectories, the Element reviews their relevance for performance-making, analysis and documentation. This Element argues that diagrams provide new methodological and analytical tools for theory, practice-based research and archiving, while at the same time enabling reflection on the intersections between poetics and politics. Focusing on the potentiality of diagrams to cut through representation and dichotomies, this Element affirms the visual, corporeal and spatial dimensions of performance-making. In doing so, it elucidates the significance of diagrammatic thinking for performance and theatre studies.

Keywords: diagrams, spatiality, memory, politics, cosmology

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