

# Being Audience | Being Performer

A performative experiment

*"How can we challenge the established expectations and performance formats within dance, circus, as well as theatre, to create art that goes beyond consumption and forces the spectator to take action as part of the development of the performance?"*



**THE** performer/s is/are expected to give his/her best. To communicate something through their medium or to entertain with it. To be worth the money, to be worth the time the audience is investing.

**THE** audience is expected to be open and honest towards what they see. To be present, or to choose not to be present any longer. To comment/communicate back about what they see/have experienced through their own actions. The individual audience members take the form of a collective. In my work I am looking to empower a collective of people free to express themselves; a collective of artists themselves in their own way. This stands in contrast to a collective audience following social pressures and a learned behavior of how to behave in a performance.

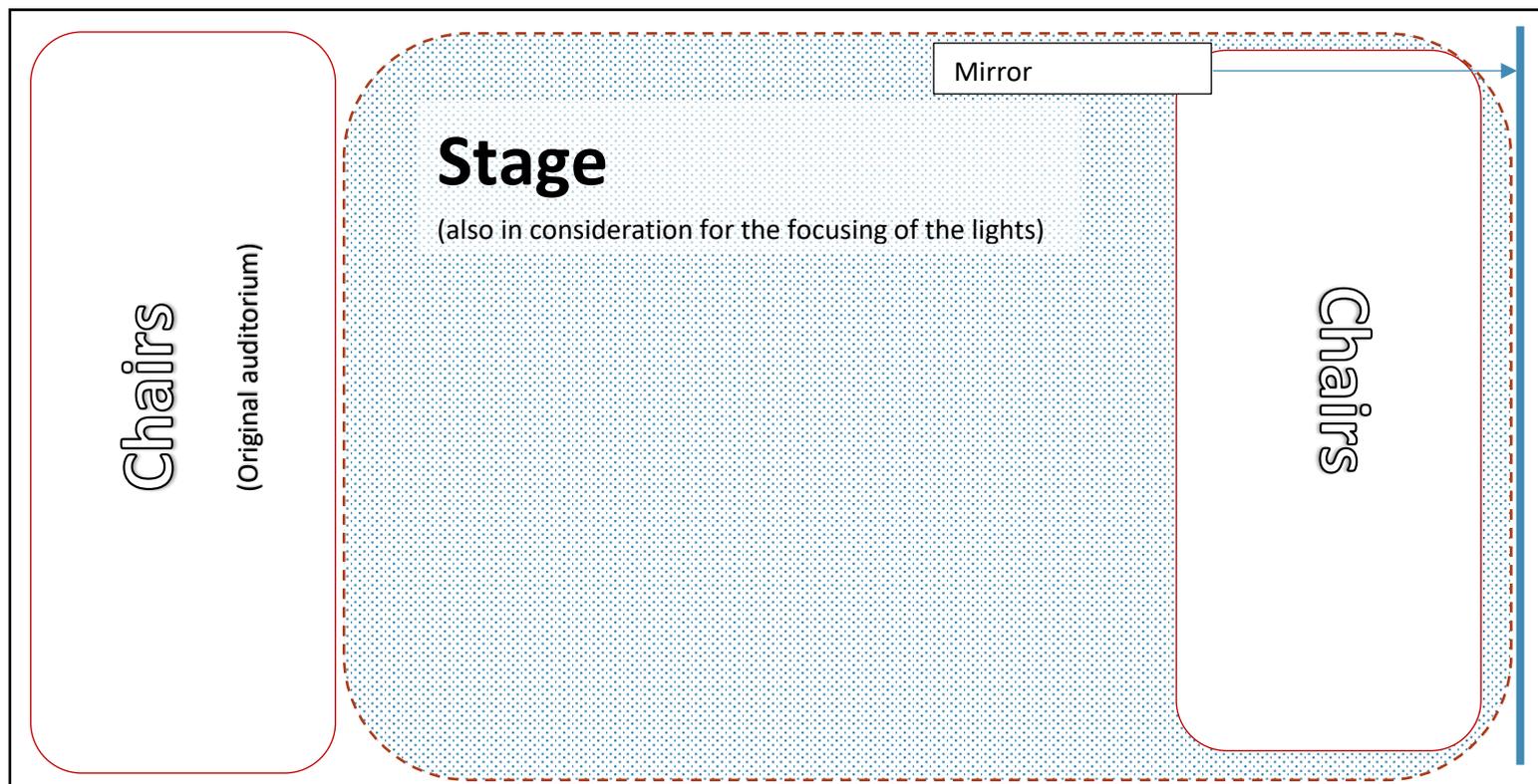
I am asking the question of: *"What would happen if one is asked to play the role of the audience?"*

## The Experiment:

**THROUGH** the simple task of asking the audience to treat their being present as the characterization of a role, I am looking to change their approach and perspective towards their own behavior. By treating them as actors, they are freed of the usual characteristics of an audience and, to an extent, social obedience. The focus switches from the performance on stage, to their own performance in the auditorium.

*“How do I act as an audience member? How am I to react to what I see? How am I supposed to act in relation to how I want to act? What is expected of me as an audience member?”*

## The Structure:



**THE** experiment will consist of three distinguished phases:

### Pre-Talk

The begin of a journey into the woods

The Pre-Talk will be a performative action, following the same appearance as a performance traditionally does. The Audience entering a space, awaiting the beginning of a performance in the original auditorium. A change of lighting signaling the start of the performance, followed by the performer taking the stage. The performer will hold a theatrical monologue, reflecting about the “noises” of the audience, as well as some characters present in every audience. (The person that is the first to applaud; The one that realizes just too late that he/she forgot to visit the toilet; Etc.)

The monologue finishes in an invitation to the audience to join him watching a performance together, playing the role of the audience. Together they will go to a different space (changing perspective to the chairs on the opposite side of the room), initiating the next phase of the experiment.

*“Noises”*: The unconscious actions an audience performs just before and during a performance. For example, the last few words with their friends just before the performance commences, the coughing of some individuals when the lights are being dimmed, etc.

## A Performance

### Inside the forest

The second phase is the performative action of witnessing a performance. The performance being witnessed will be a short piece combining contemporary dance and floor acrobatics. This piece is designed to give space during the performance for the audience to react to what they see in the form of giving applause or other actions the audience wishes to perform. This stands in contrast to performances where the audience only applauds in the very end of the piece once they are being signaled that the performance is over.

This phase finishes with the lights fading to black at the end of the performance.

## Evaluation

### A choice of perspective

With the lights turning back on, the original performer of phase one is taking back the stage, considering the audience to be on stage together with him. This part will start out as a resumé of the previous actions and the journey the audience has taken so far. It continues into a dialogue with the audience about their experiences during “the performance”.

The overall performance finishes by giving the audience the choice to either return into the darkness of the original auditorium or to stay in the light. With choices being made the performer says thank you and leaves the space.

## Short description for the audience:

Being Audience | Being Performer talks about the different characters and roles present in a performance. What does it mean to be audience, what does it mean to be performer? It is asking for a self-reflection upon the roles we so naturally assume. A performative experiment, taking you on a journey into the woods, leaving you with a choice to be made about whom we are and want to be.

## Credits:

*Concept and Dramaturgy:*

Jakob Lohmann

*Performers on stage:*

Marco Pasquale, Jakob Lohmann

*Outside eye and Choreography:*

Maria Susca

*With support of Leggere Strutture and Spazio Danza*