

Overlaps and Intersections: An Alternative Look at Choreography

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Abstract : Architecture, as a discipline, is on a trajectory of extension beyond the boundaries of buildings and, more increasingly, is coupled with research that connects to alternative and typically disjointed disciplines. A “both/and” approach and (expanded) definition of architecture, as depicted here, expands the margins that contain the profession. Figuratively, architecture is a series of edges, events, and occurrences that establishes a choreography or stage by which humanity exists. The way in which architecture controls and suggests the movement through these spaces, being within a landscape, city, or building, can be viewed as a datum by which the “dance” of everyday life occurs. This submission views the realm of architecture through the lens of movement and dance as a cross-fertilizer of collaboration, tectonic, and spatial geometry investigations. “Designing on digital programs puts architects at a distance from the spaces they imagine. While this has obvious advantages, it also means that they lose the lived, embodied experience of feeling what is needed in space—meaning that some design ideas that work in theory ultimately fail in practice.” By studying the body in motion through real-time performance, a more holistic understanding of architectural space surfaces and new prospects for theoretical teaching pedagogies emerge. The atypical intersection rethinks how architecture is considered, created, and tested, similar to how “dance artists often do this by thinking through the body, opening pathways and possibilities that might not otherwise be accessible” –this is the essence of this poster submission as explained through unFOLDED, a creative performance work. A new language materialized through unFOLDED, a dynamic occupiable installation by which architecture is investigated through dance, movement, and body analysis. The entry unfolds a collaboration of an architect, dance choreographer, musicians, video artist, and lighting designers to re-create one of the first documented avant-garde performing arts collaborations (Matisse, Satie, Massine, Picasso) from the Ballet Russes in 1917, entitled Parade. Architecturally, this interdisciplinary project orients and suggests motion through structure, tectonic, lightness, darkness, and shadow as it questions the navigation of the dark space (stage) surrounding the installation. Artificial light via theatrical lighting and video graphics brought the blank canvas to life - where the sensitive mix of musicality coordinated with the structure’s movement sequencing was certainly a challenge. The upstage light from the video projections created both flickered contextual imagery and shadowed figures. When the dancers were either upstage or downstage of the structure, both silhouetted figures and revealed bodies are experienced as dancer-controlled installation manipulations occurred throughout the performance. The experimental performance, through structure, prompted moving (dancing) bodies in space, where the architecture served as a key component to the choreography itself. The tectonic of the delicate steel structure allowed for the dancers to interact with the installation, which created a variety of spatial conditions - the contained box of three-dimensional space, to a wall, and various abstracted geometries in between. The development of this research unveils the new role of an Architect as a Choreographer of the built environment.

Keywords : dance, architecture, choreography, installation, architect, choreographer, space

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