

Costume and Research in Finland

National-level research seminar on Costume Design and related fields

A meeting of researchers based in Finland

Tuesday, March 13th, 2018 at 9.15–18.00

Luentosali A2

Otaniemi Campus

Otakaari 1 (Entrance X), 02150 Espoo

Reviewers-Respondents

Fausto Viana, PhD

Professor of Scenography
University of São Paulo, Brazil

Peter McNeil, PhD

Professor of Design History
University of Technology Sydney, Australia
Finland Distinguished Professor (FiDiPro)
Department of Film, TV & Scenography
Aalto University

Sofia Pantouvaki, PhD

Professor of Costume Design for Theatre & Film
Department of Film, Television and Scenography
Aalto University
Seminar Chair

Programme

9:15–9:30

Welcome & Introduction

Session 1

Chair: Joanna Weckman, Independent Scholar, Finland

9:30–10:00

Tua Helve, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University, FiDiPro *Costume Methodologies* project
What Does Dcontemporary Dance as a Dontext Add to Research into Contemporary Costume Practices?

10:00–10:30

Alexandra Ovtchinnikova, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University
Constructing Mythological Universe by Means of Costume: Understanding Andras Kovacs's Concept Through the Films of the Soviet Poetic School (1960–1980)

10:30–11:00

Heini Kiamiri, MA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University
Princess in a Rose Castle, Green and a Pony. Observations From the Art-based Workshops with Children.

11:00–11:30

Coffee break

Session 2

Chair: Peter McNeil, Professor of Design History, University of Technology Sydney

11:30–12:00

Joanna Weckman, DA, Independent Scholar, Finland
Creating the Other – Ethnic Characters and Make-up Practices in Early Finnish Stage Performances

12:00–12:30

Johanna Oksanen, PhD, Independent Scholar, Finland
Three Theatrical Masks Characterizing Emotions

12:30–13:00

Discussion

13:00–14:30 Lunch break

(lunch offered at Metso restaurant, Otakaari 24, 02150 Espoo, 2nd floor)

Session 3

Chair: Sofia Pantouvaki, Professor of Costume Design for Theatre and Film, Aalto University

14:30–15:00 Fausto Viana, PhD, Professor of Scenography, University of São Paulo, Brazil
A Faust in the Tropics - but not Willing to Sign Anything with Blood

15:00–15:30 Jorge Sandoval, MFA, Doctoral Candidate, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Aalto University
The Body as a Theatrical Device: The Immaterial Body as Costume
(via Skype)

15:30–16:00 Coffee break

Session 4

Chair: Fausto Viana, Professor of Scenography, University of São Paulo, Brazil

16:00–16:30 Sofia Pantouvaki, PhD, Professor of Costume Design for Theatre and Film, Department of Film, TV and Scenography, Aalto University
Costume Studies: In Search of New Methodologies

16:30–17:30 Round Table Discussion

Fausto Viana, University of São Paulo, Brazil, **Peter McNeil**, University of Technology Sydney, Australia, **Sofia Pantouvaki**, Department of Film, TV and Scenography, Aalto University
Discussion with the audience

17:30–18:00 Conclusions

Session 1

Tua Helve

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

What Does Contemporary Dance as a Context Add to Research into Contemporary Costume Practices?

Previous scholarship has offered examinations on costume within dance as an artefact (e.g. Barbieri 2012), in connection with dress fashions (e.g. Steele 2014), as a window to a specific dance practice or a canonised character in dance history (e.g. Malka Yellin 2014), or recently, through design practice (e.g. Bugg 2014). However, to date, costume design within contemporary dance remains a widely uncharted area. My doctoral thesis in progress, *Costume Design Processes and Outcomes in Finnish Contemporary Dance 2000–2015*, investigates professional costume designers from the perspective of processes, inter-relationships (for example with choreographers) and the final costume outcomes (designs) with emphasis on current collaborative, process-based approaches. In this presentation, by summarizing my research process, I introduce the key elements for this research. First, I define my approach to the key terms: *costume* and *costume designer*, *contemporary dance*, as well as *collaboration*. Second, I enquire into the relevance of contemporary dance as the context for this research. With this act, I invite the seminar day attendees to reflect, and join the discussion on my questions: Which aspects can be considered central to costume research within contemporary dance? What does contemporary dance as a context add to research into contemporary costume practices?

Biography

Tua Helve, MA, is a member of *Costume in Focus*, a doctoral candidate at Aalto University, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, and a costume designer. Beyond her doctoral thesis project, costume choices and design decisions within dance appeal to her more broadly, and she lectures on this topic from various perspectives.

Session 1

Alexandra Ovtchinnikova

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Constructing *Mythological Universe* by Means of Costume: Understanding Andras Kovacs's Concept through the Films of the Soviet Poetic School (1960–1980)

My doctoral research *Dressing Poetics: Costume in the Cinema of the Soviet Poetic School (1960-1980)* explores the functions of costume in the films of four directors of the Soviet Poetic School: Sergei Parajanov, Andrei Tarkovsky, Yuri Ilyenko and Tengiz Abuladze. It examines the ways in which costume contributes to the fabrication of the purely mental reconstruction of a *mythical universe*, on the basis of a historical and ethnographic reality in their films. The research highlights the key learnings from a historically significant period in the Soviet cinema (1960s -1980s) which was often defined by the tendency to link national particularity with stylistic experimentation. It demonstrates that costume can be used not only as a device to support the storytelling and make the cinematic experience comfortable, but also as a poetic device that helps create a challenging journey for the viewer's perception while retaining its dramaturgical qualities. In this presentation, I will discuss the concept of *the auteur's private mythology* which Andras Kovacs introduced in 2007 when talking about a particular branch of modernist cinema, *ornamentalism*, which the films that form the focus of my research belong to. I will further elaborate on the central role of folk costume in the construction of these fascinating private mythologies whose aesthetic representation is often grounded in folklore, ancient/primitive cultures, religion, mythology and history.

Biography

Alexandra Ovtchinnikova has completed her MA in Costume Design at Aalto University, Finland. She is currently a doctoral candidate at Aalto University, Department of Film, Television and Scenography and an active member of the *Costume in Focus* research group. She has diverse experience in design, production, and styling for performance (dance, theatre, film etc.) in Bulgaria, Finland and the UK. Her doctoral research reflects her interests in the nature of poetic cinema and costume as one of its elements and in the development of new practice-based methodologies for researching costume design in film.

Session 1

Heini Kiamiri

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Princess in a Rose Castle, Green and a Pony. Observations from the Art-based Workshops with Children

When designing scenography for young children's performance a scenographer needs to understand children's view of the world, their everyday-life experiences and issues important to them. This understanding can be gained through various approaches, which might include reading literature, finding visual images about children's culture, recalling one's own childhood, observing children in their activities and through direct interaction with children. In this presentation, I will investigate the ways scenographers could co-operate with children during the design process of a performance world. By analysing materials created in the art-based workshops that I held with young children, I will consider the challenges and benefits a scenographer can find in collaborative work method with children.

Biography

Heini Kiamiri, MA, is a doctoral candidate at Aalto University, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, and a member of the *Costume in Focus* research group. Her doctoral dissertation investigates child-oriented design process and young children's experience of scenography. Since 2001, Heini has worked widely in the fields of theatre, film and television in Finland designing sets and costumes; she has also taught scenography at Aalto University as a visiting lecturer.

Session 2

Joanna Weckman
Independent Scholar
FINLAND

Creating the Other – Ethnic Characters and Make-up Practices in Early Finnish Stage Performances

The appearance – make-up and costume – of a stage character creates images of the present and past, the nature of the character, her/his state of mind and of the social status, sex and age. Simultaneously, the appearance of the character demonstrates the ideals and values of the production team, the current ideals, values and themes within our society. This presentation highlights the time between two wars – the Civil War (January-May 1918) and the beginning of the Second World War (1939-1945) – in Finland and traces the make-up practices when creating the Ethnic Other on the Finnish stage. I will present my case study, where the two first make-up guides published in Finnish in 1923 and 1932 are compared with the photographs of the contemporary actors. Who were the ethnic characters of the Finnish stage and in what way were they presented?

Biography

Joanna Weckman, DA, is an independent postdoctoral costume researcher, exhibition curator, lecturer and costume designer. Since 2001, she has published on the history of costume design and costumes featuring in Finnish stage and film. Her next exhibition *Filmitähtien jäljillä [Following in Footsteps of Film Stars]* presenting filmmaking in Helsinki and film costumes from the 1930s until the early 1960s will be opening at the end of May 2018 in Helsinki.

Session 2

Johanna Oksanen
Independent researcher
FINLAND

Three Theatrical Masks Characterizing Emotions

During these three years making and working with masks, I have often experienced them as objects with personalities or with a will of their own. Practical crafting work and rehearsing with the masks seem to combine my (the artist researcher's), the director's and the actors' personal experiences to the theories written about theatrical masks. The influence the masks have on me or the actors can sometimes be described as mythical.

The three masks to be presented here are the following Emotion masks: Fear, Rage and Sorrow; they characterize emotions as I see or feel them. In this presentation, I'm going to consider how the personal way of seeing and experiencing the world affects the work of the artist-researcher, director or the actors. By doing this, I suggest that, when seen as a part of human life, the emotions and subjective experiences may be accepted as a part of the material of artistic research.

The examples in this presentation are parts of research material collected from pilot productions of the *'Actor's breath meets mask': Rethinking living cultural tradition through craft practice in design for performance* practice-based research project.

Biography

Johanna Oksanen, PhD, is an Independent researcher in Finland. Johanna works as freelance costume designer and as a teacher of clothing and craft techniques. She is a member of Theatre Tuike and has been actively contributing to the *Costume in Focus* research group as a Visiting Researcher at the Aalto University, Department of Film, Television and Scenography (2016-2017).

Session 3

Fausto Viana

Professor of Scenography

UNIVERSITY OF SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

A Faust in the Tropics - but not Willing to Sign Anything with Blood

A short presentation on the work of Professor Fausto Viana at the University of São Paulo, in Brazil, his published books and his constant search for materials to show and develop with students.

Biography

Fausto Viana, PhD, is a set and costume design Professor at the School of Communication and Arts at São Paulo University (USP). He gained his doctoral degree in Arts (2004) at USP and an additional doctoral degree in Museology (2010) at the Lusófona University of Humanities and Technologies, Portugal. He wrote, among other books, *The Theatrical Costume and the Renovations of the 20th Century* (2010).

Session 3

Jorge Sandoval

Doctoral Candidate

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

The Body as a Theatrical Device: The Immaterial Body as Costume

My research examines the gendered male body as a theatrical device through the articulation of the material body used as costume for the performance of gender in social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. This examination will explore the ways that the body performs gender in non-theatrical settings and how the Internet functions as a trigger for the presentation of the body as a theatrical costume.

The abstract space of the Internet, I propose, enables the body to become a theatrical device for the performance of gender. Interviews created through online platforms are a methodological tool for the examination of the representational body. My research explores the theatricality of the interviewees' gendered bodies against concepts like theatrical costume and performance and identity in social media; a relatively new space for the performance of the body.

This phase of my research examines the views on gender and performance of two openly gay social media users who cross-dress in the ambit of the everyday in a non-professional manner. This presentation will examine their views on identity and theatricality as they describe their presence in the sphere of the mundane, their appearance and the use of their gendered bodies online.

Biography

Jorge Sandoval holds an MFA in Theatre and Interdisciplinary Studies from The University of Regina and a BFA in Art History and Studio Art from Concordia University in Montreal, Canada. He is currently a member of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Lethbridge in Lethbridge, Canada and a doctoral candidate at Aalto University, Department of Film, Television and Scenography, Finland. Jorge actively researches and works with issues related to queer identity, theatre and performance, and the production of space. He has published since 2014 with an upcoming publication, *The RuPaul Effect: The Exploration of the Costuming Rituals of Drag Culture in Social Media and the Theatrical Performativity of the Male Body in the Ambit of the Everyday* (in press) by the University of Alabama Press.

Session 4

Sofia Pantouvaki

Professor of Costume Design for Theatre and Film

DEPARTMENT OF FILM, TELEVISION AND SCENOGRAPHY, AALTO UNIVERSITY

Costume Studies: In Search of New Methodologies

Costume Methodologies - Building Methodological Tools for Research in the Field of Costume Design is a four-year research project (2014-2018) based at the Department of Film, Television and Scenography of Aalto University, Finland. The main objective of the project is to propose methodological strategies to investigate the creation, production and function of costume in live performance as well as in film, television and other camera- or media-based creative projects involving costume. To achieve this, the project also focuses on early career researcher training. The project examines diverse methodological perspectives and methods currently used to research the field of costume design, critically reviewing, revising and adapting non-specific methods for researching costume in performance, testing and examining their applicability. It focuses on a wide range of costume design practices, considering costume as both a conceptual and a material outcome produced through artistic collaborative work. To demonstrate how these arts-related methodologies work, the researchers involved in the project investigate individual case studies, which offer a concrete context for evaluation within different areas of live or mediated performance. This presentation will provide an overview of the project, its key activities and outcomes, and a preliminary critical reflection on the findings of the project to date, inviting the audience to discussion.

Biography

Sofia Pantouvaki, PhD, is a Greek scenographer and Professor of Costume Design at Aalto University, Finland. Her design credits include 80 theatre, film, opera and dance productions in European venues. She is Vice-Head for Research, OISTAT/Costume; Editor, *Studies in Costume and Performance*; Co-Chair, Critical Costume; and Co-Convener, IFTR Scenography WG. She was the WSD2013 Curator for Costume Design; Associate Curator, *Costume in Action*; and Co-Curator, Finnish Student exhibit (Gold Medal PQ15). She lectures and publishes internationally, and leads a research project on *Costume Methodologies*.

Session 4

Round Table Discussion

Fausto Viana, University of São Paulo, Brazil, **Peter McNeil**, University of Technology Sydney, Australia, **Sofia Pantouvaki**, Department of Film, TV and Scenography, Aalto University.

Discussion with the audience .

NOTES

The seminar is organized by:



Costume in Focus
Research Group
Department of Film, Television, and Scenography
School of Arts, Design and Architecture
Aalto University

The seminar is part of the *Costume Methodologies* research project within the Finland Distinguished Professor Program (FiDiPro) funded by the Academy of Finland



costumeinfoocus.com