

Sets and costumes for the ballet *Teorema*, a free adaptation of the eponymous novel by Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1999

Choreography by Davide Bombana, music by Pierre Henry, Arvo Pärt, Henryk Gorecki, and Galina Ustvolskaya, produced by Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Florence.

Performances: Florence, Teatro Comunale, 28 and 30 April, 2, 5 and 6 May 1999.

In 2000 Paolini was awarded the Danza & Danza Prize for the set designs and costumes for this ballet.

“The scene that comes into view as soon as the curtain rises neither illustrates nor comments on the action. On the contrary, it traces a perspective, a window opened onto a world that is ‘external’ to the story, a motionless and seemingly final background: a crowded ‘gallery’ of 49 picture frames, placed next to one another, represents a crowd of figures (the same figure repeated to infinity) that vanishes at the horizon.

The frames, however, detach themselves one by one and fall away from the background, which is thus reduced to a structure of empty squares beyond which a room lights up to welcome the arrival of the ‘guest’.

When the time comes for it to disappear, the figure dissolves, taking with it the halo of intense luminosity it had provoked, and leaving in its wake the bare wall, the physical, dark limit of the stage.

Now the structure that supported the background begins to sway and falls to the ground, so that it ends up framing the portions of space, akin to separate islands, that imprison the bodies, i.e. what is left of each of the characters.

Curtain.

Opening scene: all white, intense and uniform lighting.

Apron (250 cm).

Central square (300 x 300 x 80 cm).

Background: panel made up of squares (80 x 80 cm) whose pattern continues onto the panels to either side.

Gradual falling away of the frames (49 frames, 80 x 80 cm) from the structure (about 600 x 600 cm).

Coloured, suffused light for the ‘guest’.

Tearing of white side curtains, the backcloth is bare and dark.

Final scene: the structure falls forward on the stage, already covered by the frames and parts of the costumes which the various characters have abandoned little by little.

More ‘theatrical’, dramatic lights.





Costumes: the characters gradually free themselves from parts of the costumes worn at the beginning, thereby reducing the complete outfits depicted in the original set projects” (G. Paolini, “Teorema”, revised version of the English translation published in *Maggio Danza. Teorema* [Florence: 62nd Maggio Musicale Fiorentino, Teatro Comunale, 1999], p. 33).

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