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A free Zone between Art and Theater

Ida Gianelli

Theater is capable of simultaneously accommodating all languages, of offering itself as a comprehensive territory for all types of representation. On its stage, words and figures burst forth and materialize, and their existence, while tied to a text, is based on the magnetism and fascination of the images. Thus in the presence of theater, many arts are shorn of their nature and left enchanted by its embrace. They are engulfed in the vortex of its enthralling power and harmonized within its flow. Art, too, has succumbed to theater's seductive power and has entered this inevitable chain of fusions. It has allowed itself to be lured by the suggestiveness of the stage and has dissipated as a separate entity, to find other visual spirit. Its infiltration into theater has produced interrogations whose power of involvement has modified the stratification and articulation of the stage. In particular, beginning in the early years of this century with the vital contribution of the historic avant-garde movements, from Futurism to Constructivism, from Dada to Surrealism, the clash between art and theater has produced a metamorphosis in the genetic core, the dynamic and visual nature of performance. The historic tension between these languages has flooded the stage with costumes, sets and lights, with objects and gestures that have transformed the proscenium into paintings and sculptures, both mobile and immobile, magical and incantatory, where the usual relationship between things and actions vanish. For this exhibition we have chosen to focus on art's invasion of the curtain, with the understanding that this relationship has been complex and extremely uneven, and its cognitive value has been amply analyzed. However delving into this subject is an act of coherence for a museum that believes in the stimulating and transforming power of the interweaving between the arts, which corrodes the fixity of the museum setting in favor of a demonstration of errant and therefore regenerating forces, where painting and sculpture can exist on their own, even while linguistically melded with photography, architecture, music, cinema and theater. Thus the theater curtain can be thought of as a free zone between painting and theater, a visual space wedged between the glance, the spectator and the stage, an announcement of the magical, spectacular cavity from which the actors' gesture and breath emerges. It is a crystallized atmosphere in which the perception of a state of mind, more than action, dominates. Thus the proposal of an exhibition about certain perceptual directions, - ranging from Giacomo Balla to Pablo Picasso, from Giorgio de Chirico to Alberto Savinio, from Giulio Paolini to Enzo Cucchi - signifies, for a museum of contemporary art, an insistence on the vitalizing character of the dialogue between the arts, in that it reflects, both in the past and in the present, a tool that has been the site of this fusion: the curtain. However seen from a critical-historical perspective, it is useful to compare the transformations between generations. This gathering of work is indicative since it brings us to the present day and enables us to understand the contribution of contemporary artists who, only in accepting the notion of the relevance of the historic avant-garde, have succeeded in producing work that also reverberates in the future. This is an exhibition of allusions, which are not intended to be enjoyed as an all-encompassing analysis, but should be looked at as proposals for the present. This

is an exhibition that identifies with the life of art and theater, using the work of artists to emphasize and guarantee their continual energetic fabric.