

**THE NEW SPACE OF AUTHENTICITY**  
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**THE SET-SPECTRUM PROJECT – A NEW APPROACH TO STUDYING  
SCENOGRAPHY**

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**Abstract**

Performance reconstruction can be defined as the process of reviving various acting, performing, and even directing activities. However, it could be argued that the term *reconstruction* here could also mean *interpretation* or a new subjective vision of these past actions. Every performance is a creative process, which is influenced by the numerous factors determined by the time and place of staging, including the element of improvisation. This implies that no performance could be exactly the same every time it is staged or actually performed. Indeed, theatrical artefacts should be used to bridge the gap between past and present theatre practices; however, there is no need to go back to the beginning in a rigorous attempt to recreate the past actions, because, first of all, this is simply impossible and, as this paper argues, also unnecessary.

It should be noted that the recreation of scenographic artefacts differs from performance reconstruction, in that the exact replica of the past set designs is often possible (if analogue materials are available) and sometimes crucial for scholarly analysis. In this case, the bridging between the past and the future is, although not entirely objective, but as close to the original as the performance reconstruction can never be. At the heart of this paper is my original practice-based contribution to the knowledge base – the Set-SPECTRUM educational project, which aims to strengthen the established approach to researching and teaching scenography. It was created with the intention of giving theatre students and researchers a unique opportunity to understand and study one of the finest examples of unrealized modernist stage design – *The Divine Comedy* (1921) by American set designer Norman Bel Geddes – using digital means of presentation. In order to achieve the above goals, I integrated the first fully-navigable 3D reconstruction of the original set within computer-generated educational settings. In this project, I attempt to develop a new and arguably better way to understand the essential elements of this unique piece of scenography, in ways which were not available for scholarly analysis previously.

**Short Biography:**

Iryna Kuksa is just accomplished her PhD in the School of Theatre and Performance Studies at the University of Warwick, UK. Her previous degrees include a BA and MA in Industrial and Graphic Design. Iryna started her studies in the UK in 2001 (Oxford, LSE, Warwick) and, simultaneously with her academic work during 2002-2005, she designed several theatrical performances, which were shown in Oxford theatres. She is also a part-time Teaching Fellow at the Centre for Cultural Policy Studies, University of Warwick, where she teaches two modules (Visual Analysis and Interpretation and Design and Contemporary Art) for a MA International Design and Communication Management. In her research, Iryna focuses on the inclusion of computer technologies in theatre education and design practice. Her research goal is to explore the potential use of cyberspace and computer technologies in evolution of contemporary art and design as well as visual effects that make the most profound impression on the audience.