

**Festivalscapes in Latin America: The Unfolding
of Local, National and Transnational Forces at
the Festival of Mexico (2010) and the
International Theatre Festival of Havana (2011)**

by
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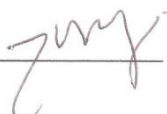
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Declaration of Authorship

I, Jorge Pérez Falconi, hereby declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is entirely my own. Where I have consulted the work of others, this is always clearly stated.

Signed: 

Date: 6 May 2013

Abstract of Thesis

The thesis deals with international festivals and the ways in which they are organised and delivered in their host communities. By taking two case studies, the fmx-Festival de México 2010 (fmx) and the Festival Internacional de Teatro de la Habana 2011 (FITH), I propose to analyse festivals in the light of local, national and transnational forces and show how these forces and the agendas that attend them become visible in festival practices. I argue that those agendas unfold and materialise at festivals through strategically employed symbols, content programming and particular uses of space. My objective is to uncover the ways in which local, national and transnational forces operate, embody artistic trajectories and structure social relationships.

The dissertation works from the global to the national and the local and includes the hybrid processes and outcomes resulting from the realisation of the FITH and the fmx. The theoretical approach is eclectic, drawing from fields such as performance studies, cultural geography, sociology, psychology, anthropology and tourism studies. The combination of theories allows me to propose the term 'festivalscapes' as a tool to explore the materialisation of the various agendas at international festivals. I approach both festivals as multi-layered events that unfold in a dynamic relationship with social and political forces that are manifested in particular spatial, visual, organisational and symbolic elements at each event.

Acknowledgements

At the temporal end of this never ending journey, I recognise that my research is a product of the contexts in which I was immersed and the various relationships established during my PhD studies. Therefore, I would like to express my very great appreciation to the people and institutions that made this project possible.

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Table of Contents

Introduction	10
The fmx–Festival of Mexico: An Overview.....	36
The fmx and its Context.....	38
The Havana International Theatre Festival: An Overview.....	40
FITH and its Context.....	43
Theorising Festivals	45
The Festival Structure	45
Festivals and Their Contexts	47
Festivalscapes	52
Festivalscapes, Social Imaginaries and Ideoscapes	56
Festivals and Space: The Spatial Dilemma	58
Methodology and Thesis Structure.....	62
Chapter 1: Transnational Flows at Festivals	70
The Internationalisation of the fmx and the FITH.....	76
Technology and Innovation in the 2010 fmx.....	88
International Flows at the 2011 FITH	109
International Flows and the Built Environment at Festivals.....	133
The fmx and the Historic Centre: Festivalising the Creative City	134
The Ideological Coded Material of Space at the fmx and the FITH	145
Chapter 2: Embodying the Nation	163
National Spatiality and Festivals.....	165
The National Administration of Space and its Influence on the fmx and the FITH	166
Embodying Landscape at the fmx 2010	175
Nationhood and Festivals Content.....	181
The FITH 2011: <i>Extravagantia</i> and Cuban Identity	182
Cuban State and National Artistic Perspectives at the FITH 2011	191
The fmx 2010 and the Bicentenary of the Mexican Independence	206
Nationhood at <i>Horas de gracia</i>	210
The State of the Nation According to Camelia ‘The Texan’	220
National Hybridity in the fmx and the FITH.....	225
National Hybridity in <i>Charenton</i>	227
The Quest for National Identity in Malinche	234
fmx: In the Name is not the Message	239

Chapter 3: A Glocal Sense at International Festivals	245
Oppressive Locality versus Progressive Locality at the fmx 2010	245
The FITH: A Local Technology of Necessity	263
Environment, Festival Arrangements and Locality.....	273
Space and Audience Interactions at the FITH and the fmx	274
Festivals between Place and Placelessness	283
Defining Locality in Relation to International Festivals.....	303
Conclusions	315
Showcase and Encounter Festivals.....	315
Festivals as Arenas.....	323
A New Concept of Space: New Ways of Thinking about Festivals?	329
Notes	342
Works Consulted	346

List of Tables and Illustrations

- Table 1. List of Workshops and Theoretical Events in the FITH 2011. **129**
- Fig. 1. An actress plays a drum a few moments after her 'birth'. *Hey Girl!* by Societas Raffaello Sanzio at the Theatre Esperanza Iris. Mexico City, 13 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **96**
- Fig. 2. *Telefonías MX* by Argentinian Mariano Sardón. Mexico City, Spanish Cultural Centre, 17 Mar. 2012. Photograph by the author. **99**
- Fig. 3. Dancers at Tropicana on its 70th anniversary. Source: EcuRed. *Archivo: Tropicana 70-anos-05.jpg*. EcuRed, *conocimiento con todos y para todos*. EcuRed, 21 Mar. 2012. **113**
- Fig. 4. Catalina 'explores her body' in a scene from *The Metallic Spinning Top* by Argentinian company the Spinning Top. Hubert de Blanck Hall, Havana, Cuba, 4 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author. **123**
- Fig. 5. Andre and Dorine's son visits his parents in a scene from *Andre and Dorine* by Spanish company Kulunca Theatre. Havana, Cuba, Tito Junco Hall (Bertolt Brecht Cultural Centre), 29 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **125**
- Fig. 6. Baby Universe is analysed by a doctor in a scene from *Baby Universe: A Puppet Odyssey* by Norwegian theatre company Wakka Wakka. Havana, Cuba, Adolfo Llauradó Hall, 5 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author. **127**
- Fig. 7. An aspect of the conference Women in Theatre: Thought and Creation. Havana, Cuba, Ludwig Foundation, 28 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **131**
- Fig. 8. Boundaries of Mexico City Historic Centre. Perimeter A is represented in blue, while perimeter B is indicated in red. Source: Mora Reyes, José Ángel. *Proyecto de Rescate del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México*. Mexico: Adolfo Christlieb Ibar. **139**
- Fig. 9. A street in Mexico City's Historic Centre. Mexico City, 24 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **142**
- Fig. 10. Part of the interior of the Theatre Esperanza Iris. Mexico City, 13 Mar. 2012. Photograph by the author. **153**
- Fig. 11. Audience in the upper levels of the García Lorca Hall of the Great Theatre of Havana. Havana, Cuba, 5 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author. **155**

- Fig. 12. Map of the spaces employed for the Festival of Mexico 2010. The left figure corresponds to Mexico City's Historic Centre; the right refers to spaces outside the Historic Centre. Mexico City, 8 Dec. 2012. Photograph by the author. **169**
- Fig. 13. Cover of the fmx's programme. Mexico City, 11 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **176**
- Fig. 14. Mexico City's foundation. JEDIKNIGHT1970. *Fundacion de la Ciudad de Mexico- Extracto del Codice Duran.jpg*. Mexico, 11 Oct. 2006. **177**
- Fig. 15. Audience waits for the beginning of *Extravagantia*. Pabellón Cuba, Havana, Cuba, 27 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **182**
- Fig. 16. Image from a scene of *Extravagantia*. The performer cracks open the egg and 'learns to fly'. Pabellón Cuba, Havana, Cuba, 27 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **184**
- Fig. 17. The public starts to dance at the end of *Extravagantia*, the FITH's opening performance. Pabellón Cuba, Havana, 27 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **190**
- Fig. 18. Máshenka waits for a client at the beginning of the play *Talcum Powder*. Argos Theatre, Havana, Cuba. 28 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **193**
- Fig. 19. Nudity was a central element in the artistic proposal of *Kings' Night*. Theatre Trianón, Havana, Cuba. 5 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author. **195**
- Fig. 20. Yara 'La China' sells tourist packages to the audience in a scene from the performance *Cubaland*. On the left there is a poster of current Cuban president, Raúl Castro. Theatre El Ciervo Encantado, Havana, Cuba. 29 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **197**
- Fig. 21. Puppets living in a building observe the pollution in the performance *Blue Clouds*, by theatre company Papalote. National Puppet Theatre, Havana, Cuba. 6 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author. **202**
- Fig. 22. Cuban school children attend the performance *Stories with Umbrellas*. Teatro Nacional Guiñol [National Puppet Theatre], Havana, Cuba. 2 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author. **203**
- Fig. 23. The elder brothers walking towards the market in a scene from *Stories with Umbrellas*. Teatro Nacional Guiñol [National Puppet Theatre], Havana, Cuba. 2 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author. **204**

- Fig. 24. The performance *Hours of Grace* in a scene where women hold a wake for Iturbide's wife at Teatro Julio Castillo, Mexico City, 26 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **211**
- Fig. 25. Image from a scene of the opera-corrido *Only the Truth*. Performers acting as wetbacks just before crossing the Mexico-USA border. Compañía Nacional de Ópera, Theatre Julio Castillo, Mexico City, 11 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **223**
- Fig. 26. Scene from the performance *Charenton*. The inmates rehearse a play. Theatre Buendía, Havana, Cuba. 30 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **232**
- Fig. 27. Malinche washes Cortés in a scene from the performance *Malinche-Malinches*. La Máquina Teatro Company. Teatro J. Jiménez Rueda, Mexico City. 18 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **237**
- Fig. 28. Passage *Catedral* located in Mexico City's down town. Photograph by the author. **252**
- Fig. 29. Map of the eleven journeys within Mexico City Historic Centre proposed by the performance *Passages* by Teatro Ojo Company. Mexico City, 27 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **253**
- Fig. 30. Scene from the performance *Far* by Teatro el Milagro Company. Teatro el Milagro, Mexico City. 18 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **259**
- Fig. 31. Audience behind a fence during the closing concert at the fmx, Mexico City. 28 Mar. 2011. Photograph by the author. **282**
- Fig. 32. A scene from the performance *Peace*, by the Turkish State Company. Please note the subtitles above the actors. Havana, Cuba, Theatre Mella, 30 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author. **309**
- Fig. 33. Set for the performance *Huey Mecatl (Oh Great Cord!)*. Mexico City, Ciudad Universitaria, 21 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author. **311**

Introduction

The idea of researching festivals has roots in one of my practical projects. In 2000, my theatre group started a theatre festival in Ciudad del Carmen, Campeche, Mexico, an island located in the Gulf of Mexico. Since then, I have worked as the artistic director of the Festival Internacional de Teatro Carmen (FITCA) for nine seasons. The festival's main objectives were to bring culture and art to our community and to fight against the disenfranchisement and isolation of our local artists. Ciudad del Carmen is located in an offshore oil drilling zone from which nearly 80 per cent of the total oil produced in Mexico is extracted. As a consequence, the city has experienced a huge transformation since the 1970s, and new malls, stores and a lot of 'antros' (local dives) have flourished to satisfy the demand of 'plataformeros' (oil workers) and people working in the oil industry. Thus, the initial purpose of the festival was to create a balance between 'antros' and cultural activities in order to contribute to the formation of a more harmonious society.

In 2000, I decided to bring forward new artistic perspectives to challenge the incipient theatre development in our locality; the idea was to make us think about our own creations. In the development of the project, the desire to turn the event into a vehicle of change and possibilities was equally important. Such possibilities included having new theatrical approaches not based on collecting money, but rather on liberating consciousness; understanding our world with a different logic based on respect and recognition of differences between cultures; and changing our society, step by step, into a better world characterised by justice and dignity.

There were also some issues and processes that I now perceive to be fundamental in the development of festivals, but was only vaguely aware of at the time. These include the way in which the festival structure affects the event; the way in which festivals contribute to the creation and performing of identities; the interactions between festival structure, performances and people; and the way in which a festival organisation can help to spread local, national or international agendas through the display and development of its activities. These concerns, which come together in these ephemeral events called festivals, are what now constitute the core of my investigation.

Festivals have been studied in various ways. In his 2010 article entitled 'The Nature and Scope of Festival Studies', Donald Getz analysed a large-scale literature review of 423 articles published in the English-language scholarly press, classifying the articles according to their themes and proposing to divide festival studies into three major discourses 'namely the roles, meanings and impacts of festivals in society and culture, festival tourism, and festival management' ('Nature' 1). Getz states that 'Within event studies, festival studies is . . . emerging as a distinct sub-field, in large part because festivals occupy a special place in almost all cultures and have therefore been well researched and theorized by scholars in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology' ('Nature' 1).

According to Getz, discourse on the roles, meanings and impacts of festivals in society and culture has been mainly developed within anthropology and sociology ('Nature' 4). This discourse encompasses themes such as myth, ritual, ceremony and celebration in relation to festivals and political debates over festivals' impacts and meanings ('Nature' 4). This

approach understands festivals as rituals or celebratory practices. Festivals as rituals include diverse forms of symbolic exchange between various participants, ritual offerings and/or marking of cycles or transitions (Turner, *Celebration* 7–32; Turner, *Dramas* 23–59; Gusfield and Michalowicz 417–435). The emphasis in this field of research is on the social and symbolic components of the festivals rather than the needs of clients and stakeholders. Thus, the ceremonial aspects are highlighted, as are the ways in which particular communities invest their resources and symbolic meanings in the events. The religious and ritualistic aspects of festivals also become important.

For Alessandro Falassi, a festival is a special occasion to celebrate or commemorate the historical bonds of a community, and the symbolic meaning of the event is closely related to the values that the host community recognises 'as essential to its ideology and worldview, to its social identity, its historical continuity, and to its physical survival, which is ultimately what festivals celebrate' (2). In this respect, festivals reveal much about the culture in which they function. Victor Turner has emphasised the need for cultures to set aside special times and places for the development of festivities (*Ritual*, 96–120). Furthermore, Mijail Bajtin [Mikhail Bakhtin] has explored the unleashing of social tensions, the profane and the social inversions of daily life into licentious behaviours and dynamics at carnivals (Bajtin 7–57).

Falassi et al. have also considered fairs, parades, processions, heritage commemorations and arts festivals, among other events, within the type of celebratory practices embraced by festivals. The festive aspect of festivals is especially stressed in this field, and various scholars have studied how

festivals produce joy, entertainment and wonder among spectators (Burr 84–98, Getz, *Event* 30–35; Picard 46–70; Falassi 2). From a sociological perspective, these events reflect the values of their communities.

Getz identifies the second discourse on festival studies as festival tourism and classifies it as an important element in event tourism ('Nature' 5). 'Festival tourism is an instrumentalist discourse in which festivals are viewed as tools in tourism, economic development and place marketing' (Getz, 'Nature' 20). Thus, festivals are treated as commodities. According to Getz, within this discourse scholars have studied consumer behaviour, that is, people's motivations for attending festivals and the links between quality and audience behaviour ('Nature' 5). According to Getz, 'Dominating this discourse has been the assessment of economic impacts of festivals and festival tourism, planning and marketing festival tourism at the destination level and studies of festival tourism motivation and various segmentation approaches' ('Nature' 5). Getz claims that 'the term "festivalization" has been coined to suggest an over-commodification of festivals exploited by tourism and place marketers' ('Nature' 5).

Festival tourism deals with the services and experiences provided by festivals and the development of strategies to attract visitors. Thus, numerous investigations have been conducted in which factors such as satisfaction, loyalty and social impact have been measured (Getz, 'Nature' 1–47; Lee 56–64; Wood 167–179). Within this field, the relationships between the consumer (the public) and the product (the event) have been analysed and various strategies have been developed to market events and their host locations. More recently, a new perspective within the realm of festival

tourism has been implemented. The emphasis in this pathway is on festivals as markers of social and cultural life influenced by new dynamics of international travel and tourism (Picard and Robinson 1–31). According to Steve Brown and Jane James, governments and other sponsor agencies are ‘increasingly defining events as successful only in terms of ever-increasing attendance and in terms of the event’s ability to return a profit’ rather than in terms of social meaningfulness or authenticity, which is what this new approach emphasises (54).

The third discourse on festival studies refers to festival management and involves the strategic planning of festivals as events. According to Getz, this discourse ‘focuses on the production and marketing of festivals and the management of festival organizations’ (‘Nature’ 20). This approach is mainly informed by event management studies and ‘is dominated by generic . . . concepts and methods (covering the full range of management functions, but specially marketing)’ (Getz, ‘Nature’ 6). The study of festival management is also related to the tourism sector because management can be applied to brand a particular destination, improve its image and attract visitors to generate social or economic revenue. In this respect, the research on event tourism related to consumer motivations and evaluations, combined with the literature on event and festival impacts, is pertinent to festival managers, inasmuch as festival managers ‘might want to know how assessments are conducted and what they contribute to strategic planning’ (Getz, ‘Nature’ 5).

Since the early 1990s, as a consequence of a growing industry that is focused on festivals and mega-events, the management of festivals has evolved and developed (Yeoman et al. xix). In this respect, the study of

festivals has been related to the policies and management of the products and services that the events sector requires for the realisation of its productions. The objective of this field of research has been to provide guidance for those working in the events industry. In this sense, festivals can be instruments to promote villages, towns or cities; the image of a destination 'can be enhanced or damage by the success or failure of a festival or event' (Yeoman et al. xix). In this discipline of study, emphasis is placed on the operability of the event. The issues analysed in this field are usually the role of sponsorships, events administration, the process of design and creation of festivals, visitor management, service quality, information and communication technology in relation to festivals, marketing and revenue and politics and policies (Yeoman et al. xx; Getz, *Event* 89–97). This entrepreneurship approach to festivals supplies knowledge for the planning of events and measures the impact of festivals in terms of profit or 'surplus revenue' (Getz, *Event* 93).

Getz recognises that, although the three major discourses on festival studies have been growing in recent years, there are some gaps in festival research, mainly in bringing together the three lines of enquiry discourses in order to produce more meaningful research. For example, Getz mentions that the discourse on festival tourism 'is firmly situated within a positivistic, quantitative paradigm in which consumer behaviour approaches prevail, leaving little room for understanding the cultural and social roots of antecedents and constraints, especially in different cultures and for specific social groups' ('Nature' 20). Getz also notes that the discourse on festival

management has not made good use of the classic discourse based on anthropology and sociology ('Nature' 20).

It is important to note that the core journals analysed by Getz come from the event management and tourism sectors; nonetheless, the research conducted by Getz provides an initial panorama of the actual state of festival studies. In addition to the three major discourses on festival studies proposed by Getz, I must mention the recent work on film festival studies and the research on theatre festivals that has been disseminated through journals (different to those of tourism and management), and/or compiled in chapters of books, or published as part of anthologies that expand the discourse on festivals and offer useful methodological questions.

In relation to the broad range of film festivals, Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist argue that the work of scholars 'aims to explain, theorise and historicise film festivals and, in doing so, point to the emergence of a new academic field in which knowledge of festivals is considered essential for our understanding of cinema and media cultures: film festival studies' (179). According to de Valck and Loist

Drawing on different research traditions and methodologies, film festival studies is an inherently interdisciplinary field. In this way the new field is emblematic for the move made by film studies towards the much more broadly defined media studies in the last two decades. Film festival studies, then, sits somewhere halfway between these institutionalised fields. In a clear departure from film studies, the field of film festival research takes a cultural studies approach, reframing interests in film aesthetics, art and the role of national and festivals as

sites of self-identification and community building. It acknowledges above all the political and economic context of film production and distribution and understands film festivals both as players in the film industry and, conversely, as events in which various stakeholders are involved. (180)

de Valck and Loist suggest that academics 'should understand festivals as sites of intersecting discourses and practices' in which different axes converge (179-80). The six axes proposed by de Valck and Loist are the aesthetic discourse, 'which treats film as an art work;' the economic continuum from production to distribution, 'which is organised along flows of capital;' the institution of the festival itself, which is 'the very heart of a festival', and which is 'operated by people, in need of funding, and functioning according to certain mechanisms;' the axis of reception, 'which includes audiences, exhibitions, and the construction of specialised public spheres;' the politics of place, 'in which the festival's meaningful and often strategic relation to local or national parties is defined;' and the film festival circuit and history, which covers, first, the way festivals 'are connected with each other in the network of festivals that is the international film festival circuit with its constant flow of culture and capital', and second, 'the timeframe of historical development and change taking place in the festivals and the festival circuit' (180-81).

Additionally, the research of theatre festivals carried out by Karen Fricker and Jen Harvie is particularly useful in providing a context for my study. Karen Fricker's work on Robert Lepage and festivals provides insight

into the structures for the production of performances through festivals and the distribution of such performances in the international festival network.

According to Fricker,

Festivals are a complex, and undertheorized, field within theatre studies. They are a crucially important site for the production, distribution and reception of theatre productions on local, national and international levels, and yet little work has been done within the academy to analyze the ways that contemporary festivals function, and the meanings they contain and disseminate. (79)

Fricker links tourism and the rise of modern festivals as part of post-war phenomena. Fricker argues that after the Second World War, 'Tourism provided newly formed festivals with audiences seeking enlightenment and self improvement through contact with high culture' (Fricker 79). She adds that 'Through travel, the promise was, we could escape and become better people' (80). Thus, Fricker compares the fantasies of self-fulfillment through contact with different cultures and countries that tourism offered with the project of self and culture building fostered by post-war theatre festivals. Just like the tourist industry has diversified to cope with the increasing needs of tourists in order to provide new experiences and 'dreams of escape,' the festival industry has also specialised as a tool to engage audiences in the tourism market. It is precisely this need to produce performances for the international festival market which has prompted productions such as Robert Lepage's shows. Fricker states that 'While global trade requires replicable products, what Lepage offers is process *as* product, an offer that the festival network has been eager to accept' (84).

Jen Harvie, in turn, offers an insightful analysis of the impact of globalisation on the Edinburgh festivals. Harvie argues that the 'Edinburgh International Festival [EIF] and the Edinburgh Festival Fringe [Fringe] are experiencing globalisation but not in equal measure and not with entirely negative effects' (*Staging* 101). Harvie considers that the cultural effects of globalisation on the Edinburgh festivals are not totally homogenising or culturally limiting but, to some extent, those festivals are also propelling meaningful democratic participation (*Staging* 75-103). She notes that that 'elitism prevents [the Edinburgh International Festival] from being "globalised" and, thereby, reproducing some of globalisation's worst effects' (*Staging* 81-82). It is fairly arguable that elitism functions to prevent globalisation, however, the EIF's commitment to extend accessibility by offering opportunities for new audiences, its outreach programmes and the presence of Scottish performances in the EIF's programming manifest the existence and capacity of local forces at the festival.

In the case of the Fringe festival Harvie notes that 'While the Fringe's market conditions certainly militate against unbounded innovation, however, by no means do they eradicate it. Branding, for example, is not inevitably oppressive, bad, or even uniform' (*Staging* 87). Thus, in spite of attempts 'to control performance – for example, discursively, through reviewers' and marketers' categories, physically, through venue restrictions, and temporally, through scheduling constraints – determining whether work will be "good" or "bad" [at the Fringe festival] maintains a high degree of unpredictability' (Harvie, *Staging* 92).

Another emerging field of study of festival culture is related to the recent research conducted by scholars of the Theatrical Event Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research (IFTR). In contrast to other researchers, this group has proposed an exclusive model of analysis for the study of festivals, which has roots in a 'theatrical event' model whose purpose is to study the sociocultural nature of the 'eventness' of theatre (Martin 1–3). In the book *Festivalising! Theatrical Events, Politics and Culture*, Vicki Ann Cremona considers festivals as 'polysystemic' ensembles in which different spheres or contexts interact (5). Through Willmar Sauter, the group proposes the analysis of festivals as theatrical events in which four particular aspects are considered: playing culture, cultural context, contextual theatricality and theatrical playing (17–25).

Playing culture refers to modes of expression, a non-literary art form which 'corresponds closely with film and other moving images, visual arts, dance, music, etc.' (Sauter 19–20). The description of playing culture also corresponds to the idea of performance studies as utilised by Schechner in *Performance Studies: An Introduction* and Diana Taylor in *The Archive and the Repertoire* because it contains strong physical elements that are 'often handed down from one generation to another, for instance the art of acting' (Sauter 20). In this respect, playing culture presupposes the existence of bodily, oral or other types of knowledge which are not completely 'archivable', but are transmitted in the form of body movements, sociocultural expressions and/or other non-literary forms. For Sauter, during a festival, playing culture is enhanced and receives more attention than usual;

moreover, playing culture 'is not easily controlled by authorities and can therefore be used for subversive purposes' (20).

Cultural context 'describes the societal frames of the theatrical event, namely the socio-political environment in which it is taking place' (Sauter 20). It also has to do with the economics of the festival and the role of public media. Cultural context includes public opinion along with the sponsors' reputation and the political aims of the festival stakeholders. According to Sauter, the cultural context has an effect on festivals and the city in which the event occurs (20–21).

Contextual theatricality entails 'the conditions under which a theatrical event takes place' (Sauter 21). In this sense, the concept embraces aesthetic conventions, division of genres, location, organisational patterns and in general all the structures related to the production of the event except the 'presentation on the stage' (Sauter 21). This aspect of the analysis deals with the selection of performances at festivals, and the style, genre or design of the festival structure.

Finally, theatrical playing 'designates the actual encounter between performer and spectator' (Sauter 22). According to Sauter, this interaction occurs on the emotional, intellectual and symbolic level (22). At festivals, all the former aspects of analysis are activated by the encounter between performers and spectators. That is, the aspects described above condition the interactions at the events. Sauter considers that the four different spheres or aspects of study described above are equally important for the analysis of festivals; there is no hierarchical order between them. Furthermore, these aspects embrace both the auditorium and the stage (17–18).

Although the research carried out by the IFTR and scholars such as Fricker and Harvie is putting forward contemporary understandings of the roles of festivals and contributing to bridge the gaps between the three main discourses proposed by Getz, a lack of study on contemporary festivals still exists. In many cases festivals are studied indirectly, for example, as part of the research carried out over other topics. In other words, contemporary art festivals are rarely the main focus of scholarly study. Thus, academics have a key part to play in clarifying the formative yet complex role of festivals in our cultures, industries and societies.

My study differs substantially from the major fields described above. First, the originality of my investigation resides in the unfolding of the ways in which organisers and participants construct and embody local, national and global forces at festivals. My approach also considers how the festival setting creates frameworks for the production and reception of the events and how these contexts, in turn, condition the festivals' meanings. In addition, this research hopes to shed light on the mediation between festivals and the public, that is, the mechanisms created and displayed to present festivals to a community. Finally, it takes into account the interactions between festivals and space, in other words, the gamut of practices and principles that festivals embody and materialise through objects and space, which then shape and endow festivals with particular characteristics. Thus, I propose to analyse festivals in the light of local, national and transnational forces and show how these forces, and the agendas that attend them, become visible in festival practices. I argue that those agendas unfold and materialise at festivals through strategically employed symbols, content programming

and particular uses of space. My objective is to uncover the ways in which the local, national and transnational forces operate, describe the artistic trajectories they generate and explain the social relationships that they help to create. My investigation will concentrate on two Latin American festivals—the XIV Festival Internacional de Teatro de la Habana (FITH) in 2011 and the fmx-Festival de México (fmx) in 2010—analysing them from the perspective of the global, national and local forces that are perceived to be at play in each case.

On the one hand, during the last ten years the Cuban government has been actively involved in the creation of the Alianza Bolivariana para los Pueblos de Nuestra América/Tratado de Comercio de los Pueblos (ALBA-CTP or Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our Americas). The ALBA-CTP is a strategic political organisation aimed to integrate Latin American countries. This alliance uses the Sucre as common currency and seeks to create, encourage and organise relationships and collaborations between Latin American states to foster anti-USA politics in the region. The ALBA-CTP was founded on 13 December 2004, in Havana, Cuba by Cuban ex-president Fidel Castro and the late Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez. In 2006, Bolivia joined the agreement, followed by Nicaragua in 2007; Dominica and Honduras in 2008; and Ecuador, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Antigua and Barbuda in 2009—although Honduras left the alliance in 2010 (ALBA-TCP, '¿Qué es el ALBA-TCP?').

On the other hand, Cuba is trying to increase tourism, which is currently its main economic sector, by providing foreign tourists with the possibility to experience the island in different fashions. In this sense, Karen

Fricker notes that the tourism industry has resiliently divided into 'specialist areas such as adventure travel, eco-travel, heritage travel, and educational and cultural travel' (81). Moreover, Fricker adds, "Festival going' now forms one of the specialized nodes in the tourism market' (81). Thus, besides the flow of tourists in the last two decades, Cuba has also been receptive to capitalist paradigms such as private ownership and direct sales of private products. From this perspective, it may seem that Cuba's return to capitalism is inevitable. From another point of view, since 1959, when the nation-state embraced socialism as its political system, Cuba began its long-term resistance to the capitalist US politics fostered in the region. In other words, the Cuban Government has maintained its ideological position—by a determined effort or will—for 54 years.

Mexico, in turn, has been immersed in a political crisis since 2006—when the ex-president Felipe Calderón assumed power after a controversial election. During 2006, groups related to ex-candidate Andrés Manuel López Obrador carried out large demonstrations and people occupied iconic avenues within Mexico City to protest against the election's results. The 'war on drugs' launched by Felipe Calderón also led to an increase in violence within the country. Currently, there are large demonstrations taking place in the streets of many Mexican states such as the ones conducted by the Coordinadora Nacional de los Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE) (National Coordination of Educational Workers). The CNTE has manifested that the Reforma Educativa (Educational Reform), a governmental initiative aimed at exercising control over the national educational system, is instead a labour initiative which affects teachers'

employment rights. Moreover, in national newspapers, such as *La Jornada*, *El Universal*, *Milenio* and *Reforma*, it is possible to find daily news about people who have been executed. In Mexico City, where the headquarters of the Federal Government are located, there are also demonstrations against the Reforma Energética (Energy Reform), which is directed to open the exploitation of gas and oil for national or multinational private companies. In terms of foreign affairs, Mexico has maintained a very close relationship with the US government—a relationship that has been described as submissive by some press and politicians.¹

What this thesis will reveal is the way in which the Festival Internacional de Teatro de La Habana and the fmx-Festival de México are, in their realisation, highly resonant sensors or indicators of the socio-political, economic and cultural circumstances as well as geopolitical positioning of the two nations as a whole. This thesis will also include what aspirations Mexican and Cuban governing authorities appear to have for their countries and what the social implications of those aspirations are.

Although there are articles and essays about Latin American festivals scattered in various journals and magazines, research on contemporary Latin American art festivals is scarce in spite of the growing number of festivals in the region. The pioneer international festival in Latin America in 1961 was the Primer Festival de Teatro Latinoamericano (First Festival of Latin American Theatre), organised in Havana, Cuba by Casa de las Américas, an organization founded by the Cuban Government after the Revolution of 1959. In 1968, another pioneering international festival was the Festival Internacional de Teatro Universitario de Manizales (Manizales International

Festival of University Theatre) in Colombia directed by Carlos Ariel Betancourt (Obregón 16). Osvaldo Obregón claims that the first international theatre festivals in Latin America were the 1950 Festival Internacional (International Festival) in Mexico, which was sponsored by the Instituto Internacional de Teatro (International Theatre Institute) (ITI) and the 1958 Festival Panamericano de Teatro (Pan-American Theatre Festival), which was sponsored by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (INBA) (National Institute of Fine Arts) (15). However, Obregón recognises that the First Festival of Latin American Theatre and the Manizales International Festival of University Theatre achieved the continuity and social impact that its predecessors lacked (15).

The objective of the First Festival of Latin American Theatre was 'to show to the Cuban people the most representative performances of the theatre made in the continent' (Conjunto 2). The Manizales International Festival of University Theatre, in turn, was an event created to bring together Latin American groups from the university theatre. According to Obregón, the festival 'became during those years [the 1970s] a Mecca for university theatre' (16). The Manizales International Festival of University Theatre was interrupted in 1973 and restarted in 1984 with a new focus on world theatre rather than university theatre (Conjunto 2, Obregón 16–17).

After those pioneering festivals, new theatre festivals emerged across Latin America. For example, in 1968, Mexico organised a yearlong cultural program, the Cultural Olympiad, within the context of the XIX Olympic Games. The Cultural Olympiad was celebrated for the first time ever with the objective of realising a classic ideal: joining art and sports. Among other

activities the event consisted of a World Art Exhibition, an International Festival for the Arts, consisting of a series of meetings between sculptures and poets from different countries, a World Folklore Festival, a Festival of Children's Painting and a Ballet of the Five Continents. As stated in the *Digitized Version of the Official Report of the Organising Committee of the Games of the XIX Olympiad Mexico 1968*, Volume 4, Mexico was 'anxious to present its contemporary image to the world' (8).

According to the organising committee, the section International Festival for the Arts of the Cultural Olympiad

provided not only a friendly confrontation – a display of what each country is doing in the field of art – but an unforgettable experience for those who had the good fortune of following it step by step. They had the great satisfaction of discovering a common language that seeks – an invariably attains – a higher justification for man's existence. (Organising Committee, *Volume 4*, 210)

During the Cultural Olympiad, The First Festival of New Latin-American Theatre, a section within the section of the International Festival for the Arts, had the double purpose of 'familiarizing the Mexican public with the most significant works of Latin-American theatre and of creating in Mexico City a permanent stage devoted to this repertoire' (Organizing Committee, *Volume 4*, 285).

Likewise, throughout the 1970s, new festivals emerged in Latin America. In 1972, these included the Festival de Teatro Latinoamericano de Quito (Quito's Latin American Theatre Festival) directed by Ilonka Vargas, and the Primer Festival de San Francisco (San Francisco's First Festival)

directed by Domingo Giudice and Marina Pianca. In 1973, these included the Muestra Mundial de Teatro Experimental de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico's world show of Experimental Theatre) directed by Luis Molina, and the Festival Internacional de Teatro de Caracas (Caracas' International Theatre Festival) directed by Carlos Giménez. In 1974, they included the Festival Chicano-Latinoamericano de México D.F. (Mexico City Chicano-Latin American Festival). The subsequent number and type of Latin American festivals grew considerably (Obregón 16).

The first Latin American festivals started a process of the internationalisation of Latin American theatre, opening an opportunity to debate not only about the performances brought to the events, but also to discuss aesthetics and political ideologies. These festivals also allowed Latin American artists to be in contact with other foreign artists beyond their borderlands. Thus, the first Latin American theatre festivals not only satisfied an urgent necessity for expression and communication among the Latin American theatre artists who remained isolated towards the end of the 1950s, but also marked artistic trends (Obregón 18). For example, during the early 1970s, in the Manizales International Festival of University Theatre, theatre made by a single author, either the playwright or director, was partially displaced by the Teatro de Creación Colectiva (Collective Creation Theatre), a model that appeared in the Nancy Festival in France in the mid-1970s (Obregón 17).

The movement towards the internationalisation of Latin American Theatre also marked a new relationship with the theatre made in 'developed' countries, a relationship according to Carlos Giménez that was 'based largely

on incomprehension, opportunism, demagoguery, and paternalism' (61). Thus, in Latin America, during the 1970s two distinct positions emerged in relation to the social meanings and utility of festivals: on the one hand, the idea of festivals for sharing and social exchange; on the other hand, the notion of festivals as markets for the selling of cultural products. Both discourses have been nurtured by socialist and neoliberal ideologies respectively.

By contrast, in Europe the rise of tourism after the Second World War gave birth to the contemporary festival model (Fricker 79). For Jen Harvie, the EIF, founded in 1947, had an international 'agenda conceived in a spirit of postwar reconstruction: to provide a forum in which European artists whose own cities had been devastated by war could continue to perform; and to reconsolidate a valued sense of European identity by bringing together the best of European talent' (*Staging* 78). As Fricker deftly explains, festivals in Europe were a project for the building of self identity and culture (79).

However, Fricker asserts that, at the present time,

The festival market is widely diversified, with festivals varying hugely in size, location, programming focus, and audience makeup. Some, like the Shaw Festival in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Canada, are "destination festivals" located in non-urban areas that require audiences to travel to attend them, while others, such as the Dublin Theatre Festival and World Stage Festival in Toronto, enjoy high percentages of audiences from local areas. (81)

Although there is a diversification in nature and scope of festivals in regions such as Latin America, Europe, Australia or North America, it seems that these events are respectively experiencing the impact of globalisation. For

instance, Fricker recognises the existence of an international festival network, that is, 'a loose association of arts organizations throughout the developed world for which co-producing and/or presenting touring productions forms all or part of their artistic and commercial *raison d'être*' (81); in doing so, Fricker points to the presence of a global force that shapes the production of performances at international festivals.

Furthermore, Harvie argues that the impact of globalisation is felt, despite its specificities, on the EIF and the Fringe. Harvie states that 'The Edinburgh festivals bear the distinctive features of a global marketplace in that they bring together hundreds of different shows, peoples, cultures, and economies for a brief period of time in the compressed space of one city' (*Staging* 75). Moreover, in their book *Performance and Cosmopolitics: Cross-Cultural Transactions in Australasia*, Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo argue that in the broader context of global performing arts, festivals such as the 1994, 2002 and 2004 Adelaide Festivals, in Australia, market indigenisation and Asianisation as key strategies for forging Australian theatre's current cosmopolitan credentials. Gilbert and Lo also claim that festivals of this type intend to provide spectators with a taste or sample of different cultures but without actually engaging with their aesthetic, commercial, political and ethical dimensions (112-30).

France's Festival d'Avignon (Avignon Festival), founded in 1947, also experiences marketisation. At the present time, the Avignon Festival consists of two strands, the main festival and the fringe, known as the "In" and the "Off" respectively, that is, the official festival and the less rigid one that grew out of the official festival. The importance of the Avignon Off Festival, like

many other contemporary international festivals, resides not only in the number of people who come to see a particular show, but also in the opportunities for programmers to attend and commission that performance for other festivals. According to theatre artist Martin Porter “The Avignon Off Festival has become the main “shopping window” for French theatre “promoters””(27 Jul. 2012). Unlike the EIF and the Fringe, the Avignon Festival suffers, of course, from the disadvantage of language, that is, English as the global language disadvantages French. Though the city is in the heart of one of the most popular regions in Europe for English-speaking tourists, the Festival d'Avignon has admitted in past to difficulties in attracting this demographic. On its webpage, the province of Marseille states that

The [Festival d'Avignon] has been attempting to combat [the lack of English speaking spectators] by including a generous component of visually-oriented events as well as by inviting English-speaking artists and providing an English-language newsletter and multi-lingual synopses to many of the productions. (Marseille-Provence, ‘The Festival d'Avignon’)

In this case, the needs to overcome the language barrier and promote the Festival in the international spheres may indicate a further implication of the globalisation of festivals. The attempt to produce performances that are easily ‘readable’ in different contexts and cultures may explain the proliferation of this type of visually and gesturally-driven theatre in the international festival network.

Thus, the impact of globalisation on festivals across the world is felt in many different ways; however, globalisation neither means total

homogenisation of the festival structure nor the absence of different models of festival organisation. For instance, the London International Festival of Theatre (LIFT) does not merely bring international productions to London for the entertainment of audiences but also aims to have an impact on British theatre. Harvie argues that 'LIFT's directors present dialogues between visiting and local artists, hold post-show discussions for audiences and visiting companies, develop site-specific work, and create opportunities for local artists and audiences to collaborate with visiting artists' (*Staging* 126).

Moreover, even The New York International Fringe Festival (FringeNYC), one of the largest multi-arts festivals in the USA, intends to cultivate its host community. The Present Company, founders of the FringeNYC, mention in their Web page that

We believe that as the artists of off-off Broadway, we are called to create, develop, and produce new American theatre. Unbound by the constraints of larger institutions, we allow ourselves to approach each new theatre piece individually; constantly evaluating the way in which a project wants to be created, developed and produced. We challenge ourselves to discover the group of theatre-makers, timeline, production scale, and venue which best serve each new undertaking. ('Who We Are')

Furthermore, Harvie states that 'although the exponential growth of the EIF's budget and audiences suggests it has experienced globalisation, its programming suggests this has not resulted in either its increased democratisation or the kind of Americanisation generally associated with globalisation' (*Staging* 78). In relation to the Fringe, Harvie notes that

although 'its program does appear to have been at least somewhat Americanised', the festival provides opportunities for innovation (*Staging* 78-89). Thus, what the examples above expose is not only the vast variety of contemporary international festivals and the particularities of each region, but also the diverse ways in which those events deal, contest or embrace globalisation. Festivals form complex structures where competing discourses are at play.

In relation to Latin America, the contemporary theatre scene is vast and varied. Festivals, whether large or small, incorporate the work of a wide range of artists. For example, the Mexican and Cuban theatre landscapes include socio-political theatre, numerous companies that engage with violence in different types of formats and a range of musicals and commercial theatre. One feature of Latin American theatre is the fact that it functions with minimal resources—a theatre based on the body, voices and few scenographic elements. In the particular case of contemporary styles, Mexican and Cuban artists have been employing physical and devised theatre, community theatre, clown, puppets and to a lesser extent new technologies to advance their creative processes. A recurrent tendency in contemporary Latin American theatre is the adaptation of myths and classical European texts as performances that deal with the current social reality. This adaptation involves different modes of engagement with the story, shifting of contexts and social issues to deconstruct, contest or endow the adapted text with new meaning.

The varied theatrical landscape of Latin America has been fostered through gatherings and festivals operating in multiple social contexts.

Currently, there are many important theatre festivals across Latin America, for example, the FITH and Mayo Teatral (Theatrical May) in Cuba, the Festival Internacional de Teatro de Manizales (Manizales International Theatre Festival) and the Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro de Bogotá (Bogotá Iberian-American Theatre Festival) in Colombia, the Festival Internacional de Teatro de Caracas (Caracas International Theatre Festival) in Venezuela, the Festival Internacional de Buenos Aires (Buenos Aires International Festival) in Argentina, and the Festival Internacional de Londrina (Londrina International Festival) in Brazil.

In the myriad of contemporary festivals in Latin America, the FITH and the fmx represent two major organisational models employed in the Latin American purview. In 1996, in an interview with the Cuban *Conjunto* journal, Octavio Arbeláez, the artistic director of the Festival de Manizales in Colombia, claims that there are two types of festivals: the showcase festival and the encounter festival. The showcase festival generates opportunities to observe a great number of important international companies. Consequently, rather than creating favourable circumstances to discuss and exchange artistic proposals in a particular festival context, the showcase model prioritises the capacity for exhibiting performances from a wide range of countries. Showcase festivals are usually large in scale and involve high budget productions.

In contrast, encounter festivals are characterised by their ability to foster exchanges between festival participants. This implies a give and take being carried out at all levels, not only among artists participating in the events but also between artists, audience members, organisers and the rest

of people involved in the festival, such as critics and technicians. The encounter model aims for a rewarding forming and informing of local artistic communities through the international gathering brought about by a particular festival.

I chose the fmx and the FITH because they have contrasting contexts and conditions of production. They are performed in countries that maintain different social systems. In 1959, Fidel Castro declared Cuba a socialist country. However, Mexico has been following the postulates of capitalism since the colonial period. FITH represents a model of organisation which prioritises the debate and the interchange among festival participants, while fmx emphasises innovation and avant-garde. The FITH is based on the solidarity of international groups, while in the fmx the international companies receive payments. The 2010 edition of the fmx is particularly important for my analysis of the impact of the nation on festivals, because it coincided with the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution and the bicentenary of Mexican independence. Concentrating on only two case-studies may be said to limit the scope of my research; however, via their acute differences of context, divergent points of emphasis and differing engagement with transnational forces, these events encompass two sides of a socio-political tension that is representative of a dilemma prevalent to different degrees in Latin America as a whole.

As representatives of the show and encounter models respectively, the FITH and the fmx serve the overall conceptual aims of my thesis. The show and encounter models have provided me with a point of departure for my analysis. However, although they are beneficial for my research by providing

frames of references for my analysis, these models also present some limitations. For example, they do not allow a full understanding of the social contradictions and interactions found at each festival. While FITH and fmx follow the paradigms of the encounter and show models, it is the detailed attention to the mutability of their particular contexts and the specific implementation of each festival in their host community which will help to define each event respectively. In my opinion, it is the complexity of the festivals' various interactions, their contingency and intertwinement, which is ultimately the most telling factor for analysis. Thus, my research explores the contrasting contexts and social conditions of both countries in order to analyse their impact on the FITH and the fmx. Consequently, the analysis of both events can help to clarify artistic trends and social interactions in the Latin American purview.

The fmx–Festival of Mexico: An Overview

The actual fmx is an annual event that emerged in 1985 through the initiative of the Festival de México en el Centro Histórico, A.C., a non-governmental organisation. Initially, the festival's name was Festival de Primavera (Spring Festival), but it has been renamed three times since then. In 1988, it became the Festival del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México (Mexico City Historic Centre Festival). In 2003, the name was changed to the Festival de México en el Centro Histórico (Mexico City Festival at the Historic Centre), and, in 2010, the festival acquired its current title, the fmx-Festival de México. According to its organisers, 'All those names were considered since the beginning as a transition which would lead to the last one: fmx–Festival of Mexico' (fmx-

Festival de México, 20 Feb. 2012). These name changes suggest that the festival has sought to position itself as a contemporary event that brings innovation and unique work to the Mexican artistic milieu.

In 1985, the fmx, formerly the Spring Festival, began as a local festival created mainly to support the renewal project of Mexico City's Historic Centre. The Spring Festival mobilised government, private organisations and citizens to produce an event with the central objective to rescue the Historic Centre of the city from deterioration. In fact, part of the money collected through the organisation of the festival was destined to restore art works that belong to museums and churches of the Historic Centre.

Although the claim is no doubt arguable, according to its organisers, fmx-Festival de México is 'the most important cultural celebration in Mexico City, and one of the most audacious and inventive platforms for the Arts in Latin America' (fmx-Festival de México, 20 Jul. 2012). The fmx's expansion has been achieved due to a strategy based on the diversification of activities and the quest for private and governmental sponsors. While it presented mainly street theatre and music during the first festivals, for instance, jazz, blues, salsa, boleros and electronic rock, the event now includes other genres and styles such, opera, massive rock concerts, dance, literature, art restoration, children activities, conferences and workshops. The wide range of activities offered has allowed the festival to engage a vast range of audiences such as youth, children and the elderly of a diverse social status. A special characteristic of the fmx has been a programming largely based on recognised foreign artists.

The number of diverse activities has also provoked the need for more spaces. In response, the festival has established links with venues and sites managed by both governmental organisations and the private sector in order to deal with its increasing needs. While the Spring Festival took place in churches, squares and streets of Mexico City's downtown, the fmx 2010 unfolded in more than sixty premises including streets, squares, museums, cultural centres, theatre venues, historic buildings and churches. Actually, the activities have spanned new venues and sites beyond the Historic Centre. The festival has also included massive free events, for example, rock concerts at public squares such as Mexico City's main square.

The fmx and its Context

The fmx looks to differentiate itself from the Festival Internacional Cervantino (FIC), which takes place in north Mexico. According to its organisers, the FIC is the biggest festival not only in Mexico, but also in Latin America. Both the fmx and the FIC have an exclusive selection of artists. Each festival's special programming distinguishes one event from the other and endows it with original features. The festival organisers' quest for originality creates differences between both events; for instance, the artists who are hired in one festival are not in the other. The competed context illustrates the necessity of foregrounding each festival as something special and exclusive. In addition to their unique programming, the time and place where each of these festivals takes place also differs. While the FIC occurs every October in Guanajuato, Mexico, the fmx happens every March in Mexico City. The FIC is organised by the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Conaculta), while

the fmx is organised by a private organisation. In having different programming, organisations, times and places, the two festivals look to provide experiences distinct to their particular publics.

There are smaller festivals in the Mexican states. These small-scale festivals often take advantage of the presence of many international artists during the FIC and the fmx and bring them to their particular locations. In this manner, these modest events become international festivals in their own right. Consequently, small international festivals can be considered appendices to the large-scale international festivals. At the same time, they constitute an opportunity for the local audiences of the Mexican states to observe international companies that they would not be able to see otherwise. The small festivals do not represent real competition with the large-scale events. In fact, in many cases, the organisers of the large-scale festivals act as representatives of the international companies; they profit by selling performances already programmed for their large-scale festival to the smaller festivals. Nonetheless, for the organisers of the small-scale international festivals, there is the possibility of making a deal with the international companies directly, which represents lower costs for their organisations. In any case, there is always a difference between large-scale international festivals and the smaller events in terms of their scope, variety and number of performances.

Finally, there is the Muestra Nacional de Teatro (National Showing of Theatre), an event that reached in 2012 its 33rd edition. In contrast to the fmx, the National Showing of Theatre programmes national groups only. This festival is co-organised by the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (National

Institute of Fine Arts) (INBA) and one Mexican state each year. The event includes performances, workshops, exhibitions, conferences and round tables that provide its creators and the Mexican public a space for interchange. The National Showing of Theatre also assembles festival programmers to foster the mobility of national performances and cultural products in both the national and the international spheres. A final difference between the fmx and the National Showing of Theatre is that while the groups apply to attend the National Showing of Theatre by sending CVs and videos of their performances, in the fmx, the companies are invited by the festival organisation directly.

The Havana International Theatre Festival: An Overview

The Festival de Teatro de la Habana (Havana Theatre Festival) first occurred in January 1980 under the artistic direction of Marcia Leiseca (Garcia 23). Currently, it is an event that takes place every two years in Havana, Cuba, and some of the Cuban provinces. In its inception, the festival was dedicated to showcasing the diversity and strength of Cuban theatre, but it later came to include foreign companies and gradually developed into an international event that sets national and international aesthetics alongside one another. Its name has also changed. Although the event is still called the Havana Theatre Festival, the 'international' tag has been used to present the festival since its 10th edition (Alfonso, *Festival de Teatro de La Habana*; Blanco, '10 Festival de Teatro de La Habana').

The selection of the national companies present at this festival is determined by a committee that includes members of the Department of

Culture. After each festival, this committee travels around the country over several months to observe the performances produced in Havana and the Cuban provinces. Then, the committee comes to a final decision a few weeks before the festival opens again. In order to be selected, the theatre groups need to create a performance in the period between two editions of the festival; although, according to some groups, this is not always the case. For the 2011 edition, some groups were selected that did not perform in the period between two festivals, but rather some years before. Despite these inconsistencies, the committee's objective was to include the groups that have achieved the best scope and the highest aesthetic level during the supposed period. One way or another, the organisers managed to include a representative panorama of theatre created on the island.

The FITH has a double purpose: it tours national companies in order to reach audiences beyond the groups' places of origin and brings foreign theatre companies to Cuba. The inclusion of a great number of national companies has been a constant feature in the history of the festival. In this sense, it is possible to assert the existence of a national festival within the framework of an international event. Put another way, the Cuban companies see FITH as an opportunity to showcase works from the provinces in the capital and vice versa. This characteristic, which has been present since the festival's inception, mitigates the lack of interchange between province and the capital at other times of the year. In 2009, in an article entitled 'Cruces y contextos de la escena actual' ('Crossings and contexts of the current scene') in the journal *Conjunto*, Marta María Borrás indicated that 'a big part of the theatre that is created outside of Havana is rarely available to the audiences

of the capital; the same happens in each of the provinces where the programming of the foreign proposals is limited' (72).² Consequently, FITH is used by the Cuban national artists as an opportunity for exchange not only between foreign and national companies, but also between national companies of the capital and the provinces.

As early as 1980, Carlos Espinosa Dominguez, in the article 'La sorpresa de una muestra' ('The Surprise of a Festival'), wrote about the positive functions that the festival had achieved in

taking stock of the labour carried out by our theatre artists in the last two years, and of making possible the urgent encounter and widening of horizons. Even though five performances are by far not enough to give a panorama of what is at present happening in the European stage—such a pretension is out of the scope of the organisers' purpose—the event ... worked as a small showcase to assess with a lot of precision some of the theatre currents that coexist today.³ (94)

Despite the inconsistencies in the current festival's curatorship and organisation, Cuban theatre artists such as Omar Valiño, Norge Espinosa and Osvaldo Cano agree in their assessment of the importance of FITH as a meeting point to compare the work of national artists to theatre made in other latitudes.⁴ It is precisely the idea of a space of encounter that pervades the structure of this festival and leads to the adoption of certain mechanisms to connect distant realities. The festival has worked as a nodal point to bring together national theatre currents and to connect these practices with international ways of making theatre. On the one hand, the festival is a

showcase due to the increasing parade of national and international companies; on the other, it is an instrument to weigh up the Cuban theatre and to allow it to encounter other theatre currents.

FITH and its Context

In Cuba, FITH's main competitors are the Temporada de Teatro Latinoamericano y Caribeño Mayo Teatral (May Theatrical Season of Latin American and Caribbean Theatre)—so titled in 1998 but better known as the Mayo Teatral (Theatrical May)—and the Festival de Teatro de Camagüey (Camagüey Theatre Festival), the Cuban national festival of theatre. Mayo Teatral takes place every two years, alternating with the FITH. This festival pursues the integration of theatre created throughout the Latin American continent. Thus, one of its main differences from FITH is that the former does not programme performances from other parts of world, but only from Latin America. Furthermore, in comparison with FITH, just a small number of Cuban companies are present at Mayo Teatral. Mayo Teatral has also a small format, with just a quarter of the performances of FITH. Artists like Norge Espinosa and Omar Valiño think that this concentration is beneficial for the artists and the public because it allows a better curatorship and a strict selection of the best performances and companies (Espinosa, 'Personal'; Valiño, 'Personal').

The Festival Nacional de Teatro Camagüey (Camagüey's National Theatre Festival), in turn, is a smaller annual theatre festival that only includes national performances in its programme. The Camagüey's National Theatre Festival takes place every two years in the Camagüey province

located in central Cuba from which it takes its name. Until 2010, the event was a contest in which awards for best performance, actor and director were given. This feature marked an important difference between the FITH and the Camagüey's National Theatre Festival. In 2012, according to Freddy Núñez Estenoz, artistic director of the Camagüey's National Theatre Festival, the ending of prize giving precluded 'uncertainty among the participants as to whether they deserved to be prized or not, even if the jury's verdict were fair' (Radio Cadena Agramonte, 6 Sep. 2012). In this respect, it is worth mentioning that in most Latin American and Caribbean theatre festivals there are no prizes awarded.

The last addition to the circuit of international theatre festivals in Cuba is the now Festival Latinoamericano del Monólogo (Latin-American Monologue Festival), formerly, the Festival Nacional del Monólogo Cubano (Cuban National Monologue Festival), which takes place in Cienfuegos, a province 245 kilometres from Havana. Until 2010, the Latin American Monologue Festival was a national event. In its 2012 edition, the festival continued to give awards but included performances from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Uruguay and Spain. Thus, FITH is the biggest theatre festival in Cuba and brings together characteristics of the other three, namely, national and international elements. However, each of these events is structured in a different way and thus has a different effect on audiences and artists.

Theorising Festivals

The Festival Structure

According to Henri Schoenmakers, a festival is a coherent whole, an event consisting of single events that 'are organised and presented within the bigger structure of the festival according to thematic (e.g. Shakespeare festival, intercultural festival), discipline or genre-based (e.g. opera festival, festival of silent film) or other principles (e.g. cultural capital of Europe)' (28). Thus, relationships between single events form a festival structure. This structure provides a context for the reception of the performances and gives a rationale for the combination of the individual activities. The festival structure employs an integrating principle that links the smaller events and gives them coherence as part of a complete entity. In other words, there is logic behind the assembly of the smaller events that compose a particular festival structure.

In analysing the principles behind festivals, Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo—who studied Aboriginal representation at the 1994, 2002 and 2004 Adelaide Festivals in Australia—coined the term *panoramic logic* to describe festivals that attempt to give a sampling of a broad range of cultural products. This logic, they claim, is common to high-profile international events and 'tends to stress the overview or snapshot rather than the details' (*Performance* 112–113). They also introduce the concept of a *curatorial imaginary*, 'the complex of explicit and implicit curatorial assumptions . . . behind each festival' (113). From these statements, we can conclude that each festival employs specific assumptions or ideas—both explicit and

implicit—and that the management of each festival emphasises particular artistic or social themes and viewpoints.

Accordingly, festivals contain underlying ideas that centre on the organisers' planning. The assumptions behind each festival can be said to link and sustain its activities and endow festivals with a sense of personality or ambience. Moreover, these notions are displayed for particular audiences or communities through performances, space and actions. The organisers' concepts and intentions become visible through aspects like spatial arrangements, programmes, advertisements and types of events. For this reason, the organisational or structural logic of festivals and their impact on the public is of paramount importance. The curatorship is likely to affect the execution of the festival as well as the promotion of its goals and ideas. Likewise, the festival structure creates a framework that enables people to read the performances and events in a certain way or to pay special attention to some enhanced characteristics, such as a particular topic, a political statement or a social issue. Consequently, events can take on a variety of forms depending on the festival organisers' objectives, the order and number of performances, the countries that participate and the themes, to name only a few possibilities. These variables produce dramatically different festivals. For example, the quest to represent local or national identities can lead to the inclusion of more local performances or to the enhancement of folk events within a festival. However, the inclusion of local and folk events does not guarantee that identity can be found or achieved. The reception of a play, and thus the reception of a festival, also depends on the context in which it is performed.

In this way, the festival structure not only encompasses performances, but also embraces the smaller planned and unplanned events that are brought together by festivals. These include a range of activities such as workshops, conferences, post-show discussions and even receptions, parties and protests. Here, the structure that ties all the smaller events together is imagined as a mobile network, a series of relational actions that incorporate and materialise diverse 'philosophies', that is, the series of values, attitudes and ideas that are adopted and embodied by organisers and participants during a festival. In this sense, the festival structure encompasses a set of associations and interactions between local, national and global forces that are represented by artists, politicians, organisers, audiences and others. The production-reception dynamic of a specific festival event brings various kinds of interactions into play, not only between local, national and transnational forces, but also between the diverse groups and sociocultural contexts that are activated by the implementation of a particular festival. Thus, the festival structure moves and transforms according to political, economic, cultural and artistic trajectories, which become visible through the development of specific practices and products in particular spaces.

Festivals and Their Contexts

Festivals always take place in a specific context. This context can be understood as the environment, as well as the social, political, artistic and economic conditions under which the festival occurs. In this sense, it is constructive to connect Arjun Appadurai's idea of neighbourhoods located and produced against a background of forests, oceans, deserts or social

formations with the placement of festivals in a context (*Production* 183). For Appadurai, social formations like neighbourhoods produce their own contexts. For example, they transform forests into fields of cultivation, and they create markets and places for religious worship. In order to preserve their integrity, social formations react not only to natural forces or objects, but also against other social formations. Additionally, neighbourhoods form part of the context of other social formations; they need other social formations in order to be located and to assume positions (*Production* 182–188).

Similarly, festivals produce contexts, react to contexts and are part of the context of other events. First, festivals produce contexts because they generate frameworks, dispositions, activities and performances, they create atmospheres and settings and they adapt places to suit their needs. Festivals can transform locations through performances and spatial interventions made to accommodate particular events. In this sense, the framing that a festival organisation proposes in order to receive performances can change the conditions of perception, and as a consequence, the performances' meanings. Secondly, festivals also react to contexts by functioning in relation to other events: they contrast with and are positioned against other activities. Festivals generally aim to be original and different in order to set themselves apart from other events that take place in the same context. Thirdly, festivals are also the context for other events. A festival, as a series of events that occur at the same historical time, can be part of the background in which another specific event is inscribed. They can serve as an instrument against which to measure other events. Furthermore, festivals can share contexts,

establish communication networks and share operational frames with other events in order to be more effective. For example, sharing or co-producing performances, promoting interchange between organisations or co-organising discussions about festival administration at specific conferences or roundtable meetings can work to improve the success and functions of festivals. Hence, rather than study festivals and contexts separately, it is more useful to explore the dynamics that particular festivals elicit in their host communities and the social relationships that they foster. This approach involves examining how different local, national and transnational trajectories relate to each other at these events.

In order to avoid repetition and attract spectators, festivals organisers might contrast their selection of events with the kind of performances and events that are normally staged in the city. By the same token, festivals can react to their regional context by offering performances and activities that have not been presented or created in other cities or venues within their landscapes or scope of influence. This quest for exceptionality is a way to avoid a lack of public interest in the case of fierce competition with local events or where other cultural offerings are strong. The fact that festivals look for uniqueness also indicates that they need to set themselves against other events in order to assume particular artistic or political positions, as festivals are part of the landscape of a city or region. These positions also refer to the local, national or transnational forces festivals represent or embody, that is, the ideological or social goals that a particular festival fosters, for example, the defence of human rights, the promotion of a particular type of art or the gathering of a specific kind of audience.

Positionality also entails relations of power as the strategy to preserve power and obtain its benefits (Foucault, *Governmentality*, 87–104). In the case of festivals, positionality includes the relationship of the events to the local, national or transnational spheres of power needed to preserve their realisation.

In their positioning in relation to other events, festivals bring to the foreground some specific characteristics, for instance, the promotion of cultural products or specific political goals. This process, in which specific characteristics are emphasised, constitutes the *principle of foregrounding*. The *principle of foregrounding*, according to Schoenmakers, allows festivals to attract special attention and distinguishes one festival from others (30–31). This principle encompasses festivals' attempts to foreground the importance of particular choices. In addition, in order to maintain a festival's distance from regular activities, the organisers can work towards incorporating added value to the event, for instance, by programming events that develop topical themes or by developing a particular social aspect of their community. Thus, festivals are not only *foregrounded* against quotidian local activities and events, but also against other festivals and events in their regions and around the world.

It can be inferred that in some cases, festivals are developed mainly for the benefit of the artists, while at other times they are developed for the benefit of the public, and sometimes for the commercial sponsors. For example, Ruben Szuchmacher, the former artistic director of the Festival of Buenos Aires in Argentina, claims that his festival was organised for the benefit of the artists. He thinks that an event that takes place once a year for

just 10 days leaves the public without the possibility of developing links with the ideas and proposals brought forward by international companies (Szuchmacher, 17 Mar. 2010). In order to fill this gap, but also to dissociate the Festival of Buenos Aires from other festivals that invest all their resources in showing international performances to Argentinian audiences, he proposed a festival design with performances and workshops exclusively for Argentinian artists.

Szuchmacher's rationale was that international companies come to Argentina for only a short period, while Argentinian artists spend the rest of the year working with Argentinian audiences. Thus, for him, it was better to instruct the Argentinian artists in foreign theatre trends because they are the ones in charge of transmitting the knowledge obtained from international companies to the public during the rest of the year. In doing this, Szuchmacher gave a special character to his event and marked its difference from other festivals.⁵ What this points out is that in the quest to be different, festivals react to the context formed by other events around them. This differentiation—the festival's originality—functions to attract audiences and may guarantee the festival's success in the competing context of artistic events. Accordingly, by marking its uniqueness, each festival delineates its social project and aesthetic strategies.

Festivals' structures work in different directions: They are moving frameworks, processes and interactions that display different techniques in order to achieve a defined objective or trajectory. The festival structures embody ideas and mark space and time. The arrangements implemented by festivals are not something fixed but rather transient associations brought to

function in a specific time-place. The festival event is not only *placed* against various backgrounds, these backgrounds and the festival structure are correlative: they both construct each other through different forces and influences. Contexts and festivals act in a mutual, although not necessarily democratic way. Festivals' structures more closely resemble moving influences—directional emphases in constant change. This entails considering festivals as trajectories or fluxes rather than acts within stable frameworks or actions contained in a series of inflexible constructions. Similarly, contexts are not a set of given circumstances, but forces, influences and techniques exerting pressure on festivals in order to make them follow a determined course.

The interaction of contextual forces at festivals produces diverse narratives and sociocultural landscapes. In this respect, it is essential to study the mechanisms employed by festival organisers to propel and maintain one narrative over the others, as well as ways of resisting these dominant trajectories. This also entails discerning the way in which diverse agendas shape each particular event, and the social relationships that are fostered in the process. What follows is a description of the way in which I propose to study the presence of local, national and global flows at festivals, how different social groups articulate and experience them and the outcomes of these interactions.

Festivalscapes

International festivals are the result of the interactivity of a constellation of forces at many levels that run inwards and outwards. Thus, within an

international festival, it is possible to find national cultural politics, transnational ideologies and local interests. Put another way, global cultural flows are experienced at the local level. At international festivals, the festival organisation, its planned trajectory meshes with other local, national and global agendas that affect the festival's composition. Hence, the event is altered and permeated by different, coexisting narratives, which, in turn, generate 'festivalscapes'.

Festivalscape was first coined by Yong-Ki Lee, Chong-Ki Lee, Seung-Kon Lee and Barry J. Babin in a 2008 article that defines festivalscapes as the festival environment atmosphere (56–57). This atmosphere, in turn, affects visitors' emotions, satisfaction and loyalty (57). As a consequence, a particular festivalscape has an impact on the festival's business outcomes. This notion of festivalscapes is largely related to the retail atmosphere that affects consumers' attitudes and behaviours (57).

However, my definition differs substantially from that concept. I see a festivalscape as the constellation of contrasting trajectories and flows impelled by local, national and transnational practices and discourses at a festival. Its constitution can vary radically from event to event due to the different ways in which distinct trajectories can be articulated in a specific festival.

In 2003, Appadurai proposes the existence of five dimensions of global cultural flow 'which can be termed: (a) ethnoscapas, (b) mediascapas, (c) technoscapas, (d) financescapas, and (e) ideoscapas' (*Disjuncture* 31). Ethnoscapas refer to the people who move between nations, such as 'tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest-workers, and other moving groups';

technoscapes involve technology which is often linked to multinational corporations; financescapes entail global capital, currency markets, stock exchanges and commodity speculations; mediascapes point to the narratives or images of the world produced and distributed by electronic and new media; and ideoscapes relate to official state ideologies and counter-ideologies of communities or social groups (Appadurai, *Disjuncture* 31-35). These terms 'stress different streams of flows along which cultural material may be seen to be moving across national boundaries' (Appadurai, *Disjuncture* 44).

Appadurai argues that these cultural flows are 'the building blocks' of imagined world landscapes that help to explain the actual state of global culture and economy (*Disjuncture* 31). He indicates that the suffix 'scape' 'allows [us] to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these landscapes, shapes which characterize international capital as deeply as they do international clothing styles' (*Disjuncture* 31). Appadurai also states that these five dimensions of global cultural flow are

deeply perspectival constructs, inflected by the historical, linguistic, and political situatedness of different sorts of actors: nation-states, multinationals, diasporic communities, as well as subnational groupings and movements (whether religious, political, or economic), and even intimate face-to-face groups, such as villages, neighborhoods, and families. (*Disjuncture* 31)

Drawing on Appadurai's definitions, I argue that festivalscapes characterise festivals and help to delineate their heterogeneous composition by foregrounding the specific type of configuration achieved by each particular

festival during its realisation. By employing the term festivalscapes, I propose to study how the different cultural flows—either in the form of people, technology, money, imagined worlds, or ideas—converge at contemporary international festivals and are materialised and performed. Particularly important to my analysis are the terms mediascapes and ideoscapes, but I will also employ the notion of ethnoscapes tangentially.

My concept of festivalscapes embraces three important aspects. First, festivalscapes are embedded with ideologies that entail contradictions and generate diverse social landscapes. A festivalscape comprises the diverse local, national and global narratives present in a particular festival in a historically situated context, narratives which are embodied and become visible through spatial dynamics, participants' actions, cultural products and the use of imageries displayed in an event. Secondly, the different narratives that make up a festivalscape create mutable structures, that is, spatiotemporal constructions, which are regulated by multiple socio-historical forces. As a consequence, festivalscapes are also historically contingent—part of a specific time-place. Thirdly, the notion of festivalscapes involves the multiplicity of experiences that festivals can generate; the variety of artistic or political accounts, for example, depends on positionality and particular journeys undertaken by specific individuals or groups of people at specific festivals.

Festivalscapes take shape through the combination of diverse spatial, visual, organisational and symbolic elements unfolded at each particular event. For this dissertation, I distinguish at least two fields of analysis, social imaginaries and space, as important elements through which the multiple

forces that shape festivals can acquire a concrete form and become visible in the festival's activities. To show the way in which particular festivalscapes unfold and operate, I will start by providing a theoretical basis for the use of space and social imaginaries; then, I will 'dissect' the local, national and transnational trajectories of fmx 2010 and FITH 2011.

Festivalscapes, Social Imaginaries and Ideoscapes

Festivals are imbued with different social imaginaries. According to Manfred B. Steger: 'Social imaginaries are deep-seated modes of understanding that provide the most general parameters within which people imagine their communal existence' (12). There is an allusion to Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' in this concept. However, an imagined community is formed by diverse social imaginaries pertaining to the different social groups that conform to the nation. While the concept 'Imagined Community' in Anderson's sense relates to the nation, the notion of social imaginaries is connected specifically to social groups. Consequently, social imaginaries are not attached to a specific place or contained within the nation's boundaries, but reflect the set of notions, values and imageries of a particular community, which can be real, virtual, or both; for example, the social imaginaries of a Muslim community in London, or the social imaginaries of a virtual community of Manchester United fans around the world connected through the internet. Social imaginaries can create national, local or global affiliations and constitute the metaphors and imagined links that tie together individuals of the same community, real or virtual, local or global. At the same time,

social imaginaries can help to explain the different local, national or transnational flows present at a particular festival.

Social imaginaries can be meaningfully associated with Appadurai's ideoscapes. Appadurai states that 'ideoscapes are also concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter-ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it' (*Disjuncture* 34). For instance, ideoscapes are composed of particular interpretations, images and ideas about concepts such as freedom, liberty, democracy and I would add art, which help to construct the ideological narratives of a particular community. Ideoscapes also recognise the relativity and changeability of those ideological terms that tie together a local, global, national or diasporic community and the necessity of context and conventions to mediate and translate the meanings of one community for another. Ideoscapes imply power relationships and can be useful to explain the constellation of narratives at festivals.

In essence, at festivals, national, local or transnational agendas are embedded in social imaginaries and ideoscapes. In turn, these social imaginaries and ideoscapes promote specific trajectories and visions of the world that support particular social and artistic claims. Trajectories, in this sense, imply intentions and ideas that become real actions. The social imaginaries and ideoscapes of the different communities participating in a festival are integrated differently in each specific event. Accordingly, each festival requires a logical structure—a rationality that functions to mobilise the principles behind its flow, its instrumentality and organisation, a way to

assemble and foster the diverse social imaginaries and ideoscapes that the festival activates. The logic behind each festival encompasses the principles governing the festival structure, as well as the intended political, artistic, economic and social aims pursued by the organisers. This organising principle also refers to the dynamics, tendencies and circuits that nourish the festival structures and put them in motion. Put another way, a trajectory entails the local, national or global forces towards which the event inclines.

Festivals and Space: The Spatial Dilemma

Space conditions movement and has a direct impact on us. It gives us dimensions to act upon—scales, textures, colours and forms. Directing our bodies and shaping the distribution of people, space gives us patterns of motion and even rhythms. However, we can also transform space according to the way in which we conceive it. Space has multiple ‘imaginings’ which result from diverse purposes. A way of conceiving space is in fact a specific way of seeing and defining human actions.

International festivals integrate and foster different conceptions of space which, in turn, generate diverse social relationships. The multiple ways of conceiving space can be defined as our situated ‘geographical imagination’. This term ‘refers to the way in which space is conceived [and] implies that a representation of space has an impact on how people see and act in the world’ (Morgan 326). Hence, the conceptualisation of space has implications for the ways in which we construct our social relations and can have an impact upon the shaping of festival structures. The ‘placement’ of festivals in the host cities’ space produces a series of tensions between the spatiality of

the host city and the possible uses brought about by the participants in the events. By considering some theories behind the use of space, I will explore the ways in which the organisation of the fmx 2010 and the Havana International Theatre Festival 2011 are 'placed' in their host cities and interact to form different festivalscapes. I assert that different conceptions of space at festivals construct contrasting interactions between individuals. In order to explore the tensions arising from the specific geographical 'placement' of festivals in host cities, it is important to set out the theoretical frameworks that are relevant to my thesis.

Geographical approaches to the analysis of performance are emerging as a productive sub-field within theatre studies. In his book *Space and the Geographies of Theatre*—a compilation of essays about geography and Canadian theatre—Michael McKinnie explains that 'at the simplest level, geographical research seeks to analyze the spatiality of human and non-human phenomena over time' (vii). McKinnie groups the essays in his book into three wide fields: First, environmental geography, which 'is primarily concerned with the spatial organization of human activity and the relationship between this activity and the ecology of the physical environment'; second, political geography, which 'is primarily concerned with the relationship between political units, institutions and groups'; and third, cultural geography, which 'focuses on the relationship between place, subjectivity, representation, and power' (ix–xi).

Festivals incorporate 'geographical imaginations' on the scales McKinnie describes; in other words, they embrace particular spatial relationships and ways of managing space. The particular concepts of space

are either implicit or explicit in the curatorship and displayed in the dynamics brought about by the placement of festivals in their host cities. McKinnie's ideas allow me to set a context for the application of geographical schemes to the study of festivals.

I argue that festivals and geography can be related in various ways. I distinguish at least three important connections between festivals and geography, which I describe below. However, although this study separates the different relationships between festivals and geography into three important areas, this does not mean that the aspects analysed in the next chapters are disconnected or isolated fields. On the contrary, at festivals, the borders between the three spatial categories are porous—they usually work in combination or are interdependent.

First, festivals can have an environmental impact on their host cities and communities, interfering in their ecology by generating pollution or modifying their landscape. Festivals can also incorporate the landscape into their promotion or include it in their programming as a way to make local or national claims. In this sense, I will analyse how landscape is embedded, or better yet, employed by festival organisers to make claims of national or local affiliations and, in some cases, authenticity. The incorporation of rural and urban landscapes as markers of national or local identities entails a specific way of using the space and its resources to market festivals. This analysis falls into the area of environmental geography described by McKinnie.

Second, the use of space at festivals is also related to socio-political dynamics. In other words, festivals are influenced by the constant interchange of local, national and transnational agendas embodied by diverse

institutions or groups, which foster specific ideas regarding the development and use of space. The fact that some international festivals take place in major metropolitan, cities while others occur in rural or remote areas exposes a spatial relationship between regions and micro-regions, between hubs and periphery and between different geographical spaces around the globe. That is, there is a territoriality of festivals expressed in the way they are connected and positioned in relation to other festivals, to the institutions or organisations they approach for support and to the companies they invite to participate. Moreover, a geographical representation is also manifested in the diverse places of origin of the groups brought to festivals. This territoriality reflects particular geopolitical relationships, a kind of geopolitics of festivals. In general terms, I will explore how the fmx and the FITH are representative of different geopolitical positionings of countries in Latin America. This approximation relates to the area of political geography outlined by Mckinnie.

Third, festivals use the built environment of cities, that is, streets, parks, squares or venues, which already have ideological burdens incorporated. In this sense, festivals have the possibility of reinforcing or challenging the preconceptions attached to those spaces. They can alter the meaning of performances by reframing and providing them with new spatial relationships. In this thesis, I will analyse how the complexities of artistic production, reception and circulation are spatialised at festivals. For example, I will explore how the changing sites of performance employed by foreign companies invited to the FITH and the fmx condition the production

of meaning at both festivals. This approach fits into what Mckinnie depicts as cultural geography.

The following chapters will be devoted to analysing the presence of global, national and local agendas at fmx 2010 and FITH 2011. The information and evidence is arranged by topics rather than by festivals. Thus, in each chapter there are included issues from both FITH and the fmx. The objective is to provide an idea of how the diverse local, national and transnational forces unfold, sometimes in dissimilar ways, at both festivals, rather than narrate the events chronologically. However, two different festival stories are woven into the whole thesis and the differences are compared and explained when possible.

Methodology and Thesis Structure

To complete the presented research, I gathered data through the following means: field trips to Mexico and Cuba; observations and descriptions of spaces and environments, audiences and artists; interviews with artists and festival organisers; attendance at performances and other events such as workshops, round tables and conferences; and research on the Internet and at libraries in Cuba and Mexico. Once I had gathered a significant amount of data about both festivals, including data from newspapers, brochures and ephemera and TV and radio interviews, I divided the information into three main categories: the local, the national and the transnational. Although these categories are inevitably enmeshed at festivals, I employed relevant theories to define each category as distinct. In other words, theories about globalisation, nationhood and locality help me to clarify what type of data

should be integrated into each category. In this way, I discovered that there were some common patterns for each of the categories in both festivals.

I then established fields of analysis for each category, including space, content, festival organisation and structure and social and artistic symbols. The purpose of this division was to analyse and compare how social flows engender objects and practices in both festivals, and how these elements and practices construct, embody and reflect local, national and transnational forces at the FITH and the fmx. The aim was to uncover and explain the way in which these forces unfolded and shaped both events.

My rationale for the selection of particular performances for analysis through the thesis was driven by a need to construct a sense of the local, national and transnational in each festival. The selection of events that I attended was also informed by the desire to obtain multiple perspectives. I attended performances, conferences, workshops, round tables, presentations and informal chats and meetings at each festival.

In order to analyse the category of the local from the range of multiple performances and sections programmed in each festival, I chose, for instance, performances and groups such as *Pasajes (Passages)* by the company Teatro Ojo in the fmx, the Estudio Teatral de Santa Clara (Theatrical Study of Santa Clara) and the performance *Talco (Talcum Powder)* in the FITH, because they better expressed the social conditions of local artists and performances in both festivals. That is, I discovered that there were meaningful connections between the theories about locality put forward by scholars such as Arjun Appadurai and Doreen Massey with the facts and evidence brought forward by the performances named above.

I also employed performances like *Horas de gracia* (*Hours of Grace*) and *Únicamente la verdad: la auténtica historia de Camelia 'la tejana'* (*Only the Truth: The authentic story of Camelia 'The Texan'*) to talk about nationhood in the fmx, because, among other reasons, they were produced by the Mexican nation-state to celebrate the bicentenary of the Mexican Revolution and included themes related to Mexicaness. Regarding national contents in the FITH, I utilised the opening performance *Extravagantia* in order to explain how both Cuban identity and festival values came together and were reflected in the realisation of the event. However, I also employed other performances, for example, *Nubes azules* (*Blue Clouds*) by theatre company Papalote, or *Historias con sombrillas* (*Stories with Umbrellas*) by the National Puppet Theatre, to demonstrate the impact of socialism on children's theatre in Cuba. In general terms, those examples evidenced the impact of the Mexican and Cuban nation-states on the curatorship and content of the fmx and the FITH, respectively. Considering productions such as *Malinche-Malinches* and *Charenton* was also useful to explain the creation of new national identities or ideas of nationhood as a product of cultural hybridisation in both events.

In relation to the category of the transnational in the FITH, I noted that the great majority of the foreign performances in the FITH's programming were imbued with social topics. Thus, I selected, for example, *Andre and Dorine* by Spanish company Kulunca Theatre or *The Metallic Spinning* by Argentinian company the Spinning Top, because they manifested not only transnational issues that have an impact on multiple countries such as conservatism or the lack of historical memory, but also expressed the idea of

international solidarity pursued by the FITH's organisers. This evidence showed that international solidarity was a driving force in the conceptualisation of the FITH. In the case of the fmx, I chose groups and exhibitions composed of foreign artists who were promoted via festival ephemera, newspapers or other means as the 'carriers' of avant-garde innovation, many of them Western artists known for working with cutting-edge technologies. The breadth and variety of Western artists featured in fmx programming demonstrated the presence of a global force that, through the employment of technological means, distributed an image of the world and shaped the fmx structure.

My analysis also included the observation of spectators and the analysis of the spaces in which both festivals developed. That is, the categories of the local, national and transnational also manifested in the attitudes of patrons and in the urban and natural environments in which both festivals took place. For example, the analysis of the festivals' spatialities helped me to explain the ways in which nation-states control and manage the administration of space and the implications of this process for the construction of nationhood. Thus, the careful consideration of these aspects through venues and organisational patterns has enabled me to demonstrate that local, national and transnational forces were also embodied in artists' social conditions, models of festival organisation and the urban and natural environment of the host cities.

The theories that inform my analysis are multiple. I employ insights drawn from cultural and performance studies, geography and psychology and theories about globalisation, nationalism and locality. My approach is

eclectic because I selected what seemed best from relevant festivals studies, various sources, discourses and theories to set out the idea of festivalscapes. I provide an interdisciplinary theoretical basis for my investigation with conceptual discussions disseminated across the whole thesis. The reason for using different theories corresponds to the various aspects analysed in the thesis. I apply theories about globalisation, nationalism and locality to define, frame and categorise the various aspects of festivals analysed in the dissertation. I use cultural and performance studies to analyse the representation and inclusion of content and symbolic features of the local, national and international at both FITH and the fmx. I employ theories drawn from cultural geography and psychology to analyse the uses of the space at festivals and to explain what I see as the materialisation of the different forces in the spatial purview at festivals.

To show the operation of local, national and transnational forces at the fmx and FITH, the dissertation has been structured into three chapters. In the first chapter, entitled 'Transnational Flows at Festivals', I analyse the main international flows that had an impact on FITH 2011 and fmx 2010. I explore Western technology as a central element in the fmx's curatorship and the role it played in relation to the idea of innovation and avant-garde embraced by the festival. From this, I contend that the uneven access to technology between Western and Latin American artists functions to distribute Western artistic models in the international festival circuit and to implement Western aesthetics in the fmx 2010. In contrast with the fmx, I state that the presence of international companies in the FITH was achieved due to the construction of a net of solidarity in the international purview imbuing the festival with

social topics. The chapter employs the theories of Doreen Massey and Rick Knowles to explain how a particular Western way of conceiving theatrical space has been disseminated in Cuba and Mexico, affecting the type of events hosted by both festivals. I contend that the venues have a coded ideology that affects the dynamics of the performances programmed as part of the festivals, and analyse the ways in which the idea of global urban development prompted by the notion of the 'Creative City', led to a partial gentrification of Mexico City's Historic Centre—a project in which the fmx has played an important role.

In the second chapter, 'National Influences', I analyse the role of the nation state in the design and organisation of both festivals. Employing the theories of Benedict Anderson, Arjun Appadurai and Michel Foucault, I describe the impact of the nation-state on the FITH and the fmx. I argue that nation-states operate not only in the administration and distribution of space at both festivals, but also in the way in which landscape has been embodied as a symbol of national identity in the festivals' contents. First, through the analysis of national themes in some performances, I explain the use of the fmx to celebrate the bicentenary of Mexican independence and the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, contending that some performances provide a reading of some historical events which favour and legitimise the ideology of the actual Mexican government, while others express the current state of the Mexican nation. Secondly, in the FITH, I describe threads in the festival's programming that reflect and react to the cultural development promoted by the Cuban government and argue that these tendencies coincide and respond to the social imperatives of the socialist nation. Thirdly, I

analyse how the mixture of disparate cultural elements in Cuba and Mexico prompted the notion of a national hybridity and affected the way in which nationhood was embodied in some of the festivals' performances.

In the third chapter, 'A Glocal Sense at International Festivals', I argue that locality is achieved through social interactions and propound the idea of multiple localities coexisting, distinguishing between a progressive and an oppressive locality. I analyse locality at festivals at three levels. First, I explain the marginalisation of local artists not only in terms of programming, but also in relation to the use of space, stating that the economic conditions of local groups lead to a particular mode of making theatre with simple scenographic elements. Secondly, by evincing the opportunities to connect and develop projects with foreign artists, I explore the festivals as an opportunity for local artists to be empowered and compare their work with theatre made in other countries. Thirdly, I explore the utilisation of the natural and urban space as a provider of local identity, and I argue that local landscape is incorporated into the promotion of the festival as part of a more integral experience that encompasses not only the enjoyment of artistic activities, but also the access to the natural and built environment of the host city. This leads me to suggest that Mexico City's and Havana's landscapes are endowed with a performativity that permeates and characterises the fmx and FITH and provides both festivals with a sense of personality or ambience. Finally, by giving an account of the way in which the international meeting of festival programmers in the fmx 2010 was used by a local company to promote one of its performances in the international arena, I argue that it is

possible to employ the concept of transculturation to explain how marginal groups can benefit from international festivals.

The study of international festivals has always posed many challenges. One of the main challenges has to do with the impossibility of attending all the performances and events programmed. Scholars, like festival participants, are forced to design particular journeys, each providing distinctive experiences of the event—experiences that can deliver different understandings of the same festival. Thus, this research represents one, and only one, selection out of many possible journeys. My hope is to contribute to festival culture by adding diversity to the field and making overt the plurality of voices emerging from these events.

Chapter 1: Transnational Flows at Festivals

In this section, I hope to shed light on the impact of transnational flows on fmx 2010 and XIV FITH 2011. This entails, among other things, analysing the presence of these forces in the international performances, the spatial arrangements and curatorship of the events that form part of my case studies. My intention is not to demonise globalisation, but to describe, understand and point out its importance in the shaping of festivals and theatre communities. A pertinent definition of terms employed through the thesis such as internationalism, globalisation and transnationalism, is therefore mandatory.

In this work, internationalism refers to a cultural exchange between nations as traditionally constituted entities. It entails the complicated story of cultural exchange, both private and state-sponsored, between and among nation-states. According to Constance DeVereaux and Martin Griffin, internationalism 'can be considered as a sub-genre of diplomacy, but nonetheless one that many nations took seriously' (1). Internationalism means mutual recognition between nation-states but does not always entail a democratic exchange. In an international cultural interchange some nations have the possibility of controlling the identity and significance of the culture thereby 'exchanged' (DeVereaux and Griffin 2).

Globalisation, in turn, relates to the integration of economies, and social and political systems across national boundaries and includes the mobility of people, ideas, products, and capital. '[G]lobalization, especially in the cultural sphere, is seen as an intimidating force serving (as a first priority) the corporate and (as a second priority) the political interests of

powerful nations—the United States in particular’ (DeVereaux and Griffin 2). Globalisation often carries negative connotations ‘embodied in such terms as the "Coca-Colization," "McDonaldization," and "Americanization" of cultures: processes that are seen as serious threats to cultural identity’ (DeVereaux and Griffin 2). Thus, the image of a globalised world is one in which distinct cultural identity no longer exists.

Transnationalism, in turn, suggests something more fluid, beyond the concept of nation but without the negative connotations of globalisation. In this thesis, transnationalism encompasses the flow of culture into and out of the nation, in opposition to the concept of culture locked within national boundaries. This notion emphasises the supranational/sub-national territories on which cultural activity can take place. In this sense, culture is not essentially a product of single nation states; better yet, it does not only respond to the interests of the nation-states. On the contrary, transnationalism has to do with the ways in which mobility, politics, and cultural identity become intertwined at different loci.

International contemporary festivals can be considered as forming part of a global phenomenon of cultural interchange as they grow in number and importance across the planet. From one perspective, international festivals can represent a homogenising practice, where the same patterns of production are repeated in different places in the world. From another vantage point, international festivals allow marginal cultures to connect and create nets of resistance; they propose new strategies and artistic pathways.

Both viewpoints are propelled by two apparently contradictory discourses about globalisation. In the first instance, the compression of time

and space encouraged by the increasing interactions of our contemporary global world is considered to be homogenising cultures. In this view, the world is shrinking; at the very least, this is evident in the new capacity to get into contact with different people across the planet at faster speeds. According to this view, this greater capacity for interaction is also unifying cultures; for example, globalisation is contributing to the rapid spread of one single language, English, across the world. Globalisation is also considered an agenda that contributes to the plundering of cultures and eroding of nation-states. In this sense, and despite the emergence of new nations, in Africa for example, nation-states are becoming more permeable and less powerful entities than they once were. In the second instance, the growing interchange is also producing an emergence of multiple interconnected communities. From this perspective, increasing flux is creating new social imaginaries and communities, such as the new virtual communities on the Internet. In this way, marginal communities can have a voice and produce networks of resistance. For example, some indigenous communities have created links with other communities in order to defend their lands and rights from the relentless pursuit of multinationals. However, the apparent contradiction between the two notions resides in the idea that globalisation embraces both the discourse of a single global village and also the notion of many dispersed global communities.⁶ That is, globalisation is not a unidirectional process; rather, it entails contradictory forces operating in various ways.

In the case of international festivals, the global, national and local flows are entwined, and the trajectories that those agendas support are not operating or moving in one direction; rather, they involve multiple

contradictions. Thus, global forces operating at festivals can have different outcomes. First, global influences on festival structures can have a positive or negative impact; that is, globalisation does not necessarily imply a negative influence/effect, nor does localisation inevitably entail good causes. Secondly, the fact that the speed and amount of interchange in our contemporary world creates an increasing connectedness means neither that an authentic and democratic exchange is being achieved, nor that this exchange is totally homogenising cultures. According to Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner:

It would be a mistake to theorize the global as merely homogenizing, universalizing, and abstract in some pejorative and levelling sense in opposition to a more heterogeneous, particularizing, and concrete local sphere. Such a discourse labels the global in advance as a purely negative and oppressive force while assuming that the local is more positive and commendable. Globalizing forces such as human rights can be progressive in some local contexts, and indeed the local has often been the site of the most oppressive, patriarchal, and backward forms of domination against which more global and universalizing forces have progressive effects in eroding domination and oppression.

(13)

The above paragraph shows the danger of generalising assumptions regarding global, national or local forces. For example, the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights has urged the Mexican government to ‘immediately implement all necessary measures to comply with the new judgements made against Mexico . . . with regard to violence against indigenous women’ (Amnesty International, 6 Dec. 2010). The Mexican

government had been constantly denying the violation of human rights in the case of two Mexican indigenous women raped by soldiers from the Mexican army in the municipality of Ayutla, Guerrero state, in 2002. The action taken by the Inter-American Commission for Human Rights can be regarded as a progressive impact of a global force on a blinkered national attitude. On the other hand, the Mexican Supreme Court has authorised the Mexican government to provide contracts with economic incentives to the private sector, that is, transnational corporations, in order to explore and drill Mexican oil (Aranda 29). In this case, although there is a perceived gain for the Mexican government, global forces can be seen as oppressive, because they do not benefit the population but contribute to the plundering of Mexican natural resources by transnational corporations.

In the case of Cuba, international pressure and dialogues and agreements with the Cuban Catholic Church made the government liberate a group of 75 dissidents who had been imprisoned for demanding a change of government and freedom of expression on the island. The dissidents were arrested in 2003 during the government of Fidel Castro in what it is known as the Cuban Black Spring (EFE, 23 Mar. 2011). They were charged with acts against Cuban independence and its economy and threatening national stability (EFE, 23 Mar. 2011). The international profile of the European Union and organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Reporters without Borders and Amnesty International can be seen as a positive global force that contributed to the dissidents' liberation. On the other hand, the economic blockade imposed by the US government on Cuba has had a negative impact on the country's economy, producing a scarcity of products and exacerbating

the social conditions of Cubans among other issues (Prensa Latina, 11 Jun. 2008). In this respect, the economic blockade can be regarded as an imperialist tool implemented to weaken the Cuban system.

Globalisation as a tool of imperialist domination not only unfolds through economic and technological dynamics, but also through art and culture, that is, through the flow of ‘metaphors, myths, symbols and spatial arrangements’ between cultures—transactions in which international festivals can play a primordial role (Steger 19). From this standpoint, international festivals can be instruments that reproduce and distribute a cultural system of production and reception, usually that being a Western cultural model, to the rest of the world. Cultural globalisation in this sense is a mask that covers the imperialist domination of Western governments. However, while it is possible to recognise injustices in the appropriation and distribution of local cultures by transnational cultural enterprises, it is also possible for local cultures, perhaps to a lesser extent, to create global networks of resistance, such as when local communities use transnational structures to distribute a political view (Steger 21; Taylor, *Archive* 104–105). In any case, it is important to acknowledge the political implications of cultural transactions and the social relationships that are produced due to the global dynamics when studying festivals.

International festivals, in my opinion, can no longer be considered the creation of one single community. Instead, festivals are composed of the articulation of different social imaginaries and ideologies that pertain to different communities, which are real and virtual, local, national and global at the same time. At festivals, dissimilar ideologies mix and bring into existence

cultural objects, symbols, performances and actions. That is, global, national and local social imaginaries are materialised in a single space-time, posing contradictory perspectives. International festivals connect distant spaces and articulate discrepant cultural claims. In this fashion, international festivals are always under construction and in the process of becoming because the interactions of contrasting local, national and transnational flows are always changing. The trajectories impelled by transnational forces at festivals are not always pure, and, in many cases, they work in relation to other local or national forces.

What follows is a 'dissection' of what I consider the most significant transnational forces operating at both FITH and fmx. This dissection will determine their constituent elements, essential features and the relations they produced.

The Internationalisation of the fmx and the FITH

During the 1980s, after a period of change in the Mexican economy from private to state ownership, the government restarted a process of privatisation. From 1982 to 1988, with Miguel De la Madrid as president, the Mexican government liquidated 294 companies, realised 72 fusions and 25 transfers and sold 155 enterprises that were under the jurisdiction of the state. Among those enterprises were some subsidiaries of two finance companies: Nacional Financiera (National Finance Company) and Somex, acronym of Sociedad Mexicana (Mexican Society) (Sacristán 55). In January 1986, Mexico joined the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), a

trade system based on negotiations between countries tending towards the reduction of import and export duties.

From 1988 to 1999, the Mexican government privatised economic sectors, such as telephony and the iron and steel industry. On 1 January 1994, with Carlos Salinas de Gortari as Mexican president, the country officially joined the Tratado de Libre Comercio de América del Norte (TLCAN) (North American Free Trade Agreement) (NAFTA). That same day, the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN) (Zapatista Army of National Liberation) emerged in the state of Chiapas in southeast Mexico. The Zapatista movement, a political-military organisation composed mainly of indigenous people, demanded of the Mexican government work, land, housing, food, health and independence, among other things.

From 2000 to 2012, Mexico was governed by the Partido de Acción Nacional (PAN) (National Action Party). For the first time in 70 years, a different political party to the Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI) (Institutional Revolutionary Party) occupied the presidency. In spite of this change of party, during that period, the Mexican government increased the privatisation process by making constitutional amendments to denationalise the state economy, for instance, the railway system and satellite communication. In 2012, the PRI again won the elections, meaning Enrique Peña Nieto, the current Mexican president, will govern until 2018. In spite of the different presidents and the two political parties that have been in power, the Mexican government has not only continued with the process of disincorporation of the public sector, it has also been fostering a free-market economy and a political openness to transnational flows.

However, the discourse of modernity and development fostered by the Mexican government has been stained by the national social reality. On the one hand, the Mexican government has been proclaiming the modernisation of the country and advocating the need of transnational economic flows for the nation to construct an image of prosperity and as a way to obtain international recognition. On the other hand, the social reality has been exposing a country immersed in poignant social problems and socio-economic inconsistencies between the diverse communities that compose the nation. For example, whilst the country was hosting the 1968 Olympics and the government was promoting friendship and peace, Mexican soldiers and paramilitary groups were massacring students. While the government announced in 1994 that we had entered the 'developed world' by joining the TLCAN, new social movements like the Zapatista movement emerged to show a social reality contrary to that announced in the governmental discourse of modernity and development.

In 1985, the fmx emerged against a background of social contradictions brought about by the denationalisation of the Mexican economy. Since its inception, the fmx has been linked to the process of privatisation and gentrification of an important zone of Mexico City: the Historic Centre. The former Spring Festival was created to accompany a process of modernisation and restoration in that area. The event has played an important role in the rebirth of cultural activities and the renewal of the Historic Centre; it has contributed to the beautification of that district by making it more accessible and desirable to tourists and speculators. For instance, the festival has historically put an accent on the programming of

activities destined to attract tourists, such as gastronomic events, tours within the Historic Centre and activities for children. The fmx was also realised every March, the month of the Holy Week and a period of vacation, until the 2012 edition when the event was moved to May.⁷

The evolution of the event has been marked by the adoption of national themes and emerging artists to international ones in the last editions and by programming popular and traditional performances during the first festivals to including the avant-garde and innovation in the last ones. For instance, in 1994, with Francesca Saldívar as the festival's first artistic director, the event incorporated a fare of classical music, Bach, Hayden and Handel, interpreted by Mexican musicians. The festival also offered a selection of Mexican artists and handcrafters that created works with materials such as clay, paper, metals, glass and wood. The visual arts section, composed of sixteen different exhibitions, was created by diverse Mexican ethnic groups and backed by the Fondo Nacional para el Fomento de las Artesanías (Fonart) (National Fund for the Promotion of Handcrafts). The 1994 edition also included Latin American harpists from Paraguay, Venezuela and Mexico (Téllez, 'México, Paraguay y Venezuela unidos por el arpa'). Furthermore, the 1994 edition had the sun and the moon as a central topic, which suggests a reference to Tonatiuh and Coyolxauhqui, Aztecs gods of the sun and the moon, respectively. This emphasis on Latin American and Mexican themes and artists is a characteristic that has been changing.

In 1998, Roberto Vázquez, the artistic director of the XIV Festival del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México (XIV Mexico City's Historic Centre Festival), writes:

As happens in the old European cities, Mexico City hosts its Historic Centre Festival. Over the course of thirteen years this festival has not only contributed to the cultural promotion of national and international artists of outstanding quality, but also illuminated with its events ancient palaces, stately mansions, temples, squares, and streets. These spaces have been the framework to enjoy . . . music, dance and theatre performances, visual arts, and gastronomic activities. (Vázquez, 'XIV Festival')

Vázquez's comparison between old European cities and Mexico City indicates a tendency towards European models. In fact, in the 1998 season the festival curatorship had nationalism and universality as a theme, paving the way for the festival's internationalisation (Rodríguez, 'Festival'). In the 1998 edition, gastronomy, an important component of the festival, emphasised the creativity of Mexican food and its links with international cuisine ('XIV Festival'). That same year, the organisers joined forces with the Feria Internacional del Libro del Palacio de Minería (Mining Palace's International Book Fair) and the Semana Internacional del Libro de Arte en el Museo Nacional de Arte (International Week of the Art Book in the National Museum of Art) in an attempt to grow and deliver a bigger event that allowed the festival to reach more audiences. In these circumstances, the 1998 programming included foreign artists, such as the German tenor Peter Schreier, the Bologna Chamber Orchestra with the flautist Andrea Griminelli, and the show, Five Continents, which was created in collaboration with 'a very important number of Embassies accredited in Mexico' (Vázquez, 'XIV Festival').

Although the trend of including popular activities continues today, the festival has also incorporated more avant-garde events. For example, in the 1998 edition, there were popular genres such as *danzón*, *mambo* and *salsa* and a fare of classical music, ballet and opera, but the festival also programmed a fashion parade of 100 models in the Chopo Museum, which was designed by national avant-garde visual artists (Rodríguez, 'Festival'; Vázquez, 'XIV Festival'). In 2002, with the aim to expand and reach young people the festival created 'Radar', a section devoted to sound experimentation, and it incorporated techno music into the programming with an event entitled 'Tecnogeist'. According to the organisers, Tecnogeist was 'a free massive party of electronic music' (León and Olivares, 29 Mar. 2002). In 2008, artistic director José Wolffer created Animasivo, a section that fostered the use of brand new technology to produce contemporary animation. Wolffer also declared that from 2008 the festival's main characteristic was its contemporary relevance; that is, the event 'offer[ed] to the public the staging of brand new artistic manifestations that deal with contemporary issues, and artistic works that have a spirit of adventure, but leaving a space for traditional and more consolidated manifestations' (mzr/cvtp, 6 Feb. 2008).

In recent years, besides the promotion of a prestigious image for the Historic Centre—a site where culture, art and modernity mix together—the festival has been influenced by the quest for equilibrium between tradition and innovation; whereby, innovation has been largely associated with Western artists that mix art and new technologies. In 2009, the festival presented the avant-garde European company Volksbühne from Berlin,

Germany, with an adaptation of *Ivanov* by Anton Chekhov. That season also included the Australian company Chunky Move, which presented *Máquina Mortal* (*Mortal Machine*), a performance in which laser beams and video projections played an important role. The fare of avant-garde art also included a colloquium about science fiction, virtual reality and cyber culture with experts such as Christopher Priest, Mark Dery, Michael John Harrison, Chris Nakashima-Brown, Bruce Sterling and Linda Nagata (Palapa 5).

Currently, the fmx reproduces the idea of modernity desired by the organisers and the Mexican government; it is open to transnational flows of art based on technology and innovation. The fmx has tended to offer a programming or selection criteria based on creativity, innovation, themes, interpretative quality and the artists' global relevance. In fact, many of the fmx sections look to provide audiences with innovation and global modernity. For example, the Radar section continuous to deliver the innovative musical manifestations that are occurring globally, Radical Mestizo emphasises new mixtures of traditional music and folk elements with modern instruments and elements, Animasivo fosters the use of new electronic means and tools in animation, and Ars Electronica includes workshops, conferences and exhibitions in which brand new technology and electronics constitute the core of the artistic productions. The government's desire to embrace economic development, reach 'first world status', and obtain international prestige is reflected in the fmx—a festival that, in spite of the existence of manifest social inequalities within Mexico, distributes and shows an image of an international/civilised/modern country; the festival

has served to embellish the historic centre while people such as hawkers or peddlers have been evicted.

One of the primary drivers of the fmx's growth has to do with the incorporation of international events. The fmx has brought together internationally recognised artists to attract different parts of the national public as well as a global audience. In order to obtain international recognition, the fmx has adopted a showcase model, that is, a parade of international artists presented as if they were products in a department store. José Wolffer, the 2010 artistic director of the fmx, considered the fmx to be an ambassador, a sort of radar with which to locate and catch what is happening in the international artistic purview (Wolffer, 'Personal'). The festival introduces Mexico to the new artistic manifestations occurring globally. In this sense, the festival takes risks by including brand new things, but it can also be considered a marketing oriented event that looks to expand its scope by introducing cultural products that fit the festival's clientele, for example, people fond of pop artists, children and youth.

The fmx 2010 inclination towards Western artists follows a process of internationalisation of the festival. From programming only dance, theatre and music, the event has grown and diversified through the inclusion of various genres and styles and the addition of new sections or sub-festivals. In this process of diversification and expansion, Western artists have played a major role. Thus, it is possible to infer that acquiring Western narratives—that is, the ideas, artistic customs and practices of Western civilisation—has been seen as a marker of success, a way to attract notice and legitimisation in the international festival circuit. In the latest editions, the festival's

programming has inclined towards Western internationalisation to construct its image of modernity. That is, the festival's social trajectory has been a way to catch up with some artistic models of production that originated in the Western world.

In contrast with the fmx, the expansion of the FITH has occurred in a different fashion. It emerged as a national type of festival in 1980 (García Abreu 25). The FITH has roots in a series of fringe events that started to emerge in the 1960s around the world, for instance, the first Latin American Theatre Festival in Havana in 1961, the demand for a free festival in Avignon in France in 1968, and the emergence of the Festival de Manizales in Colombia in 1968. In the 1960s, Cuba was embarking on a post-revolutionary project with Fidel Castro as its visible leader. The festivals held in Latin America at that time fostered a shared social project imbued with democratic ideas. However, in the 1970s and 1980s, the ideals of these international meetings began to change. In relation to the globalising profile of the Festival of Manizales, Augusto Boal asserted in 1972 that 'now the presence of other continents will provide the festival with a higher "stature". That is, it is intended that the "universal", abstract [type of] art dominates. The visiting groups come to colonise us' (Conjunto, *Fulgor* 3). Even though the FITH can be considered a reaction to the proliferation of a global type of festival, its objectives have also become blurred with the passing of time.

In its beginnings, the FITH's intention was to show the diversity and vigour of the Cuban theatre. This national event was also a contest for Cuban theatre groups and an award was given to the best performance, a characteristic that has now disappeared. The FITH has evolved into a

showcase type of festival that incorporates groups of other countries and performances of diverse artistic languages. In this way, the nationalist type of festival has been substituted by a space of encounter and confrontation between national and foreign artistic expressions. As a result, the festival's scope has also been enlarged. The current festival is held not only in Havana but also in the great majority of the Cuban provinces. Within the city, the expansion has also been manifest; the festival actually incorporates new venues, the majority of which are old houses that have been adapted to serve as theatres. For example, the present home of Argos Teatro, one of the companies present in the festival, was previously a lodge. Thus, in this case, the festival's growth involved the transformation of old buildings into theatres to cope with the spatial demand.

The FITH has always been a festival managed by the Cuban state. The policies to use old houses as theatres in order to expand the theatre movement and the creation of the FITH form part of the same national political strategy. In the 1960s, to impel its social project, the nation-state needed to reach a broader audience and find places for Cuban artists to perform. Currently, many of the converted spaces have been incorporated into the festival circuit. The FITH has also distributed the events that form part of its programming to other spaces in some of the Cuban provinces, and it has incorporated a diversity of theoretical events, workshops and conferences.

Currently, the international groups that come to the event are mainly independent companies that share similar political views with the Cuban state. Furthermore, a large number of organisations, for example, The

American Friends of the Ludwig Foundation, the Havana Film Festival in New York and the USA Engage, and personalities from other countries such as Oliver Stone, Diego Armando Maradona and Harold Pinter, have historically shown steady support of the Cuban state. This means that hit performances are almost absent from the FITH; in contrast, many companies perform a socially committed type of theatre. In this manner, the international links of the FITH work in two directions. First, the festival organisers bring non-commercial independent groups. Secondly, in spite of the Cuban government's political views, the FITH tries to establish cultural bonds with a wide range of countries as a way to diminish the effects of the economic blockade imposed by the USA.

In the first instance, the kinds of companies that apply to come to the festival usually include social political issues in their work. For instance, in the 2011 call for entries, the festival organisers expressed their desire to integrate companies inclined towards a theatre of resistance in opposition to a theatre that responds to the interests of the global market. Additionally, considering that international theatre companies have to pay their own expenses, then the reasons to attend this gathering have to come from a social commitment to the festival's ideology. This also expresses why international hit performances are almost absent from the festival.

In the second instance, the political links of the Cuban state play an important role in drawing in the rest of the international companies. That is, as an act of solidarity, the nation-states that are sympathetic to the Cuban government can help to pay for their own national companies to be present in the FITH. For many companies, the process to be included in the FITH

entails dealing with their respective embassies or national cultural institutions. In this sense, some embassies and institutions can be more willing than others to donate funds to ensure the presence of their nationals in the FITH. This happened with the Turkish National Company in the 2011 edition.

At the same time, nongovernmental organisations and famous theatre personalities that support the ideology of the Cuban state or that are against the blockade have supported the festival with their presence. For example, in 2008, Harold Pinter was awarded the International Medal of Friendship by the Cuban government to recognise his long-standing support for Cuba and its people. In order to receive this recognition, his widow and a group of English actors formed by artists such as Andy de la Tour and Harry Burton mounted excerpts of Pinter's play to present at the FITH 2011.

As such, the FITH attendance of some companies from countries that are manifestly against the politics of the Cuban state can be seen as a way to fight against an imperialist vision by creating networks against the blockade. At the same time, the links with external institutions that receive funds from international bodies, the International Theatre Institute from UNESCO for example, can also be a strategy used by festival organisers to fight against Cuba's economic isolation.

In order to provide a panorama of the impact of transnational flows on the FITH and the fmx, the following sections will deal with the ways in which these forces have shaped both events and the social representations and international profiles that they have contributed to create.

Technology and Innovation in the 2010 fmx

The 26th season of the fmx was celebrated from 11 to 28 March 2010 in Mexico City. Currently, the fmx mixes diverse activities such as concerts, exhibitions, dance and theatre performances, children's activities, workshops and conferences, and it includes a large number of foreign artists. In the 2010 edition, the estimated cost was 35,000,000 Mexican pesos (approximately 1,733,000 GBP). Fifty per cent of the total amount came in cash from the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and the Arts) (Conaculta) and the Secretaría de Cultura de la Ciudad de México (Mexico City Secretariat of Culture), both governmental institutions. The other 50 per cent was obtained from ticket sales, embassies, cultural and private institutions, the festival's board and private sponsorships from some organisations (Wolffer, 'Foro').

The 2010 fmx was composed of eight sections: Opera y Música (Opera and Music), Radar and Radical Mestizo (Radar and Mestizo Radical), Artes Escénicas (Dance and Theatre), Arte Electrónico (Electronic Art), Animasivo (a section devoted to animation), Cinema Global (Global Cinema), XCéntrico (a section of alternative music) and a subdivision of workshops and conferences. Each of these sections was curated by an individual or group with expertise in these specific forms of art.

Opera and Music is a section devoted to classical music, but the 2010 edition included jazz, pop artists such as Ely Guerra and a performance of tangos, boleros and blues. Radar and Radical Mestizo are areas of the fmx dedicated to experimental music. While Radar is a space that looks to showcase the most relevant contemporary and experimental music, including

sound art, Radical Mestizo intends to programme a crossing of music genres that come from different traditions, including mixtures of tango, gypsy music, candombe, rumba and rock. Radar included artists such as Boredoms from Japan and Fat Mariachi from Mexico. Radical Mestizo programmed bands such as Bomba Estéreo and La 33, both from Colombia.

Artes Escénicas, in turn, is a part of the festival devoted to theatre and dance. In the 2010 edition, this segment embraced artists such as Savion Glover, a tap dancer from the USA and Romeo Castellucci from Italy. It included Mexican performances such as *Malinche-Malinches* by the company La Máquina de Teatro and *Horas de gracia* by the National Theatre Company. In addition, Arte Electrónico is a section assigned to the artistic proposals linked to new media and technology. In 2010, this area comprised artists such as Philip Beesley from Canada and Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau from Austria and France, respectively. Furthermore, Animasivo is a section devoted to animation that includes a contest for animation filmmakers, and Cinema Global is a subdivision for film that incorporates both documentaries and fiction. Finally, in a move to expand the scope of the festival, XCéntrico aims to show experimental bands in streets and squares of Mexico City. This section embraced bands such as IG Blech, a brass band from Berlin, Germany; Angelika Niescier, a Polish-German saxophonist and composer; and Non Non Non, a Canadian band that fuses groove, jazz and blues with influences of Jimi Hendrix, the Dave Matthews Band and others (Chilango 43).

According to the general brochure, in its 26th edition, the festival presented 198 artistic events at more than 60 sites in Mexico City. The

number of foreign guests in this year's programme stands out in comparison with national companies and/or events. In its inception, the former Spring Festival programmed mainly Mexican artists, a festival characteristic that has been changing over the years. Of the 198 activities, 51 involved Mexican artists (all from Mexico City), and 147 included artists from foreign countries. Of the 147 foreign productions, 108 originated in Western countries, 28 from Latin American countries, nine were Western co-productions and five came from Asia. The Mexican events represented almost 26 per cent of the productions, while productions originated in Western countries made up more than 54 per cent of the total. This is a striking feature in a festival that changed its name to the *Festival of Mexico* in 2010, the same year the bicentenary of Mexican independence and the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution were commemorated.

If we break down these figures into sections, we will find that in Opera and Music, there were five Mexican productions and six foreign ones; in Radar and Radical Mestizo, four were Mexican groups and nine came from other countries; in Arte Electrónico, seven were foreign and one was Mexican; in Animasivo, 96 films came from abroad and 27 were Mexican; and in Cinema Global, this pattern is repeated, with 26 foreign films and only five Mexican ones. In the case of XCéntrico, we could add one foreign and one Mexican band, although it should be mentioned that the musicians coming from abroad who participated in the street activities promoted in this section have already been included in other sections, such as Radar and Radical Mestizo. The only exception to the dominance of Western European companies in the different activities of the fmx was the section devoted to

theatre and dance, where eight productions were Mexican and only two came from foreign countries—the US and Italy. This may be explained by the fact that it is easier to send a film by courier service than to actually bring the whole production of a theatre performance—including set and cast—to the festival.

In the fmx 2010, there was an uneven balance between national and foreign performances. In spite of the national celebrations of the bicentenary of the Mexican independence and 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution, more than 73 per cent of the fmx 2010 programme comprised productions created in foreign countries. In the brochure presentation and in Radio Trece interviews, José Wolffer, the Artistic Director of the fmx 2010, placed a special emphasis on Mexican projects, but the reality was that only Mexican theatre appeared to be well represented. The inclusion of a great number of Western artists in the fmx 2010 programming suggests the organisers' desire to transform the festival into a first-world event and to escape the anxiety produced by Mexico's cultural underdevelopment, a situation that is in line with the Olympic's attempts to address underdevelopment in the 1968 Cultural Olympiad in Mexico. In fact, Wolffer mentioned that, as an artistic director, his idea was to make the fmx a world-class event (Wolffer, 'Personal'). The festival organisers' desire to be the vanguard of the art world pervades the festival trajectory.

The trend has also been to include a majority of Western groups and events in the whole festival. In the 2011 and 2012 seasons, the number of Western performances and/or events occupied more than 60 per cent of the programme, according to the fmx website (fmx-Festival de México, 20 Jul.

2012). During the 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2012 seasons, Western performances outnumbered national ones in the Dance and Theatre section.⁸ In all the others sections or sub-festivals, Mexican artists also had a small presence compared to the number of foreign performances.

In the 2010 edition, the so-called canonical creators of our era, that is, Western international artists that work with new technologies, such as Romeo Castellucci in the section Performing Arts; Eva Zöllner, in the section Radar; or Fifteen Pound Pink Production, in the section Animasivo, were promoted as models of artistic creation by the festival. The fact that the fmx's curatorship is bent towards Western productions seems to confirm the existence of global cultural flows in the festival. In other words, this type of programme suggests the presence of transnational trajectories that undermine national claims and national social imaginaries. The nation, although present, is diminished in the curatorship, and instead of national values—an exception being the section of dance and theatre—there is to a great extent a pursuit of Western artistic models. The 'brand-new' discoveries in the (Western) art world and hit (Western) performances are used by the fmx's curatorship to catch up with artistic innovation and to give praise to the festival.

From one perspective, Western performances in the fmx programming can be seen as a means of fulfilling the aesthetic desires produced by Western mediascapes in which the Western canon is presented as a paradigm of progress. For example, *Hey Girl!* directed by Italian Romeo Castellucci was repetitively presented in the brochure and newspapers as having the most innovative and controversial European director at the

present time (Soto 32; Flores, Abraham, 3 Mar. 2010). Moreover, journalist Alejandro Flores stated that *Hey Girl!* was ‘one of the main attractions in the twenty-sixth Festival of Mexico . . . that achieved the objective of putting ourselves on a par with the riskiest festivals in the world’ (14 Mar. 2010); and according to critic Angel Vargas, *Hey Girl!* was one of the most relevant spectacles of the fmx 2010 (11 Mar. 2010). In addition, the performance *Bare Soundz* by artist Savion Glover from the USA was also presented as ‘the best tap dancer in the world’ (Soto 30). In the festival brochure, Glover was introduced as ‘the most acclaimed dancer by the critics . . . [and] the greatest tap dancer of all time’ (fmx—Festival de México, 12 Mar. 2010). Furthermore, on the festival’s Facebook page, Glover was offered as ‘the best tap dancer that has ever existed’ (fmx—Festival de México, *Facebook*). In this context, it is important to note that while foreign artists caught the attention of the press, local performances did not receive such treatment.

The impact of global flows on the fmx 2010 can be observed not only by the proportion of Western artists in the programme and in the way media presented Western artists to the public, but also by the inclusion of a type of art inclined towards Western technology in various sections of the festival. In this respect, my analysis will focus upon the festival structure and content in relation to technologies because the employment of particular technologies implies both an embodiment of a series of social imaginaries and a capacity for distributing them.

Technology involves a construction of artistic imaginaries and aesthetic experiences that are intrinsically related to the different socio-cultural-economic contexts in which they are inscribed or practiced. Socio-

cultural and economic conditions play an important role in determining the characteristics of particular artistic practices. For example, technology, in the sense of electromechanics and computational systems, has historically come from outside the so-called 'third world' countries. The lack of technological resources forces 'underdeveloped' nations to produce raw material that later, after being manufactured by multinational companies, is returned and sold in the form of products. For instance, Mexican oil, which is sent crude to the USA, is later returned to Mexico in the form of gasoline, creating economic dependence. In this respect, the lack of technology in 'underdeveloped' countries to produce a number of manufactured goods has been encouraged by imperialist nations to foster the economic dependence of the 'less developed' countries; in other words, imperialist countries can assert their dominion inasmuch as they are the providers of technology. Thus, technology is implicated in the socio-cultural and economic conditions in which it takes place. The same dynamic can be applied to technology in artistic practice.

Chris Salter, in his book *Entangled: Technology and the Transformation of Performance* argues that 'technology as device and world maker has always been immanent in artistic performance' (xv). From the Athenian stage and the use of the device called *deus ex machina* to the effects of electric light on theatre in the nineteenth century and the impact of the Internet and computers on contemporary performance, technology has been modifying the way in which performance is created and perceived. According to Peter Sellars, technology is '[a] pencil, a stick of incense, or a feather. Or a neutron bomb or a brain sensor. Technology itself is nearly neutral; it is the motives of how and why technology is employed that determine the fruitfulness or

devastation of its consequences' (x). In this sense, one of the issues in relation to transnational flows that I want to emphasise stems precisely from presenting and embracing Western technology at various activities of the fmx 2010 as the bearer of innovation and artistic success.

For example, performances included in the 2010 season, such as *Hey Girl!* by Societàs Raffaello Sanzio, propose a theatre based on the use of a kind of technology that is usually beyond the means of many Latin American artists. *Hey Girl!* is a performance based on the concatenation of images regarding the condition of women in contemporary (Western) culture. It resorts to figures, including Joan of Arc, the Virgin Mary, Shakespeare's Juliet and Mary Queen of Scots, to create a dialogue with the protagonist about nightmares and fantasies. According to Romeo Castellucci *Hey Girl!* talks about quotidian/banal situations in a sacred way (Borrero, 6 Apr. 2012). The verbal text is almost absent. Although the scenography is minimal, the performance employs technological devices to create multiple images. The performance starts with a waxy-style body resting above a table. Then, inside this waxy-style body, we see the real naked body of an actress. The scene becomes a birth. The waxy body begins to melt and falls in big drops onto the floor, a process that lasts almost the entire performance. Later, an actress pours some liquid on a sword that is heated with electricity through a slim, almost imperceptible cable and the sword billows smoke. Then, she burns a piece of white cloth with the sword, leaving the imprint of an image of a cross. In another scene, there are mirrors hanging from the ceiling that move across the stage and finally blow up at the moment when two women embrace each other passionately. In the performance, there are also

multimedia devices, such as video projectors that show images and texts on walls at fast speeds, laser-type lights with thin beams that move across the stage and hit the actors' faces, luminescent exit and entrance signs that flicker at the sides of the stage, strobe lights, computer generated sounds and electro-acoustic music.

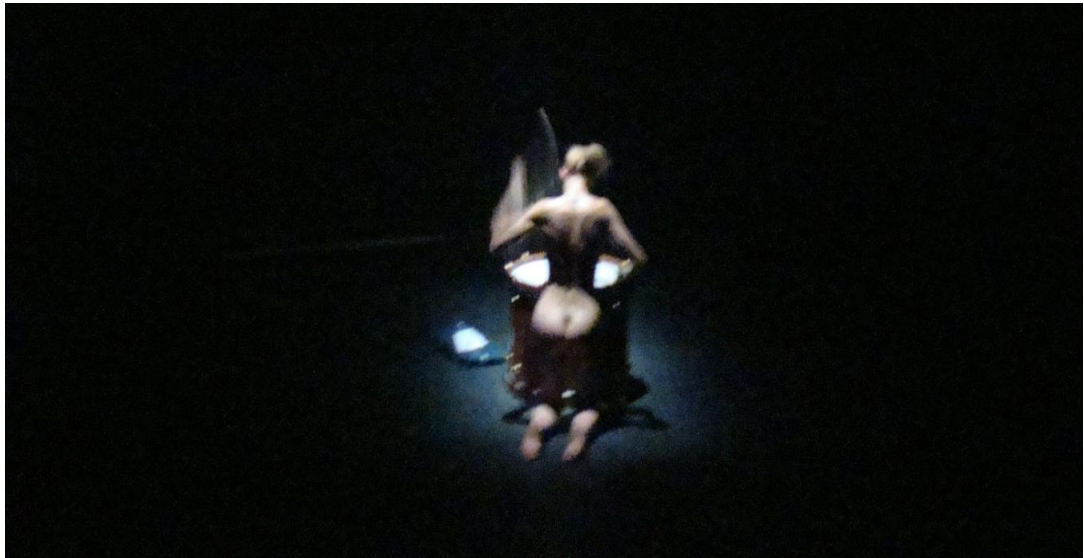


Fig. 1. An actress plays a drum a few moments after her 'birth'. *Hey Girl!* by Societas Raffaello Sanzio at the Theatre Esperanza Iris. Mexico City, 13 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

The kind of theatre created by Societas Raffaello Sanzio can also be considered part of an international touring circuit in which there predominates a theatre that relies on appealing visual elements. In this respect, many international festivals choose international works influenced by the arguable need to provide theatre that does not require a lot of translation—hence the emphasis on image/visual theatre. However, the trap organisers sometimes fall into here is imagining that the visual/gestural is readable across cultures in a fairly simple way.

This new aesthetic, in which there is a predominance of visuals and technology, has been visible in the international festival circuits to the point that it is prevailing over other types of explorations. *Hey Girl!* has the capacity to transmit feelings. In the performance, the actors use their bodies and technology to show sensations, and the performance even explores new ways to elicit emotions from the audience and employs unfamiliar narratives. However, what is worth noting is the importance given to this type of art in the fmx curatorship—an art made with technological means that are not usually available to local or national artists.

For example, ‘dynamic (in)position’, the name of an Electronic Art section in the 2010 season, was devoted to the quest for new artistic means—the use of technology in art and its impact on contemporary society. ‘Dynamic (in)position’ was the outcome of a collaboration between Ars Electronica, a world-renowned festival of electronic arts based in Linz, Austria, and the fmx. Since 2009, the European Community (EC) has contributed 200,000 Euros to the fmx, and part of this money had been employed to create ‘dynamic (in)position’ (Quirarte, 2 Feb. 2010).

The fmx’s blog explains that

“dynamic (in)position” sets out a dialogue among artistic proposals that work with spaces of audiovisual immersion, electrokinetic sculptures and organisms, artificial intelligence (AI) and artificial life (AL), data visualisation, and robotic installations to measure time, or better yet, to visualise fluid and self-generated architectures in real time. Two axes converge in the dialogue of these pieces: on the one hand, the social history of the dynamic systems and the theory of

chaos; on the other hand, one of the most important topics in the study of mathematical systems during the last decades: position and localisation. (fmx—Festival de México, *Arte Electrónico*, 12 Mar. 2010)

In the exhibition *Telefonías MX* by Argentinian Mariano Sardón, the work consisted of a series of plastic tubes connected to a pump to monitor and show telephone traffic in real time. Inside the plastic tubes were bubbles of colours, which were produced by cellular telephone calls originating and received in Mexico City's main square. Dark blue represented calls made, light blue indicated phone calls received and pink and purple colours represented waiting calls and calls that were being made. According to Ana Sol González Rueda, Mariano Sardón intended to materialise, or more precisely, to make visible the processes of digital communication, to make visible the invisible quotidian processes in order to transform the audience's experiences (González, 5 May 2010).

Telefonías was sponsored by Movistar, a Spanish telephone company that is looking to expand its business in Mexico. In other words, the exhibition is a mapping of the data generated by Movistar users in the main square of Mexico City in a virtual world fed by Movistar headquarters. In this work, it was possible to appreciate the telephone traffic in Mexico City's main square by watching the different colours passing through the plastic tubes. However, besides getting a sense of the amount of realised and received calls, what did we obtain as spectators? Under these conditions, it is possible to suggest that Movistar was using artists for advertising.



Fig. 2. *Telefonías MX* by Argentinian Mariano Sardón. Mexico City, Spanish Cultural Centre, 17 Mar. 2012. Photograph by the author.

In another of the performances of ‘dynamic (in)position’, *Hylozoic Soil*, Canadian artist Philip Beesley created a ‘sensitive’ structure that he called ‘geotextile mesh’. This structure consisted of a dense net of proximity sensors, microcontrollers and actuators that responded to the movements of the public with its parts spreading over the whole structure like waves. Thus, the performance produced an electrokinetic environment that transformed according to interactions with the ‘guests’. In his performance, Slava, one of the spectators of *Hylozoic*, states:

There was no sense of what we can describe as a ‘gameplay’, no scripted rules or other such things (at least, I didn’t find any). I don’t want to say that there always should be such things, but I also noticed that such a noticeable purposelessness of the creation was a bit

difficult to deal with for people who interacted with the system. After a few first probing moves, and not being lead to some sort of purposeful experience, many people were leaving, wowed yet slightly confused—“Is this it?” Kids did play with it, although some with their very typical brutality, trying to squeeze or even [tear] apart the “leaves”. (22 Sep. 2000)

The sense of purposelessness, awe and confusion experienced by some spectators may also be part of the ‘strive for effect’ characteristic of the exhibition. Presenting technological devices that have the capacity to move and react embraces the idea of electronic technology just for its own sake. As Lyn Gardner states: ‘Increasingly the technology has become the show, rather than being in service of the show’ (17 Apr. 2008). In the exhibition, as in the festival, there was a sense of an overlapping of innovation and Western technology, a sense that the future of artistic development has to necessarily pass through electronic systems that, again, are currently not at hand for Latin American artists and have a specific geographical origin.

The traditional flows of electronic technology and multimedia inventions from outside to inside the nation are echoed here. By presenting a variety of expensive electronic devices that have a specific geographic origin as bearers of artistic innovation, the fmx embodies and promotes an artistic model. The problem stems from the presentation of Western art as a synonym for progress and innovation and from the different opportunities that Mexican and Western artists have to distribute their works at the fmx and at other international festivals. In this sense, the large-scale display of visual/technological/gestural performances and employment of electronics

fostered by a wide range of international festivals operates to the detriment of other forms of creativity. Consequently, a festival like the fmx that leans towards the technology of 'civilised' cultures and applies Western systems to the event's organisation and curatorship, a festival inclined to imitate the mediascapes of 'civilised' cultures in order to be in the vanguard of the international festival circuit, also contributes, maybe unknowingly, to the homogenisation of festivals.

One of the reasons for the success of this kind of visual/gestural/technological theatre in the international festival circuit is the belief that it transcends the language barrier. As a consequence, the performances become more marketable. However, it is possible to find more obscure intentions. For example, the visual/gestural/technological theatre may arguably be thought of as having a greater degree of abstraction, that is, it can be considered directed to the *senses* rather than to the *mind*, and thus, it may represent less danger for festival organisers unlike performances that include caustic political issues.

For instance, in the fmx 2010 programming, groups or artists, such as Jesusa Rodríguez, that criticised the Mexican government directly, were not included. In fact, Rodríguez's work has never been included in the fmx. The Hemispheric Institute describes Jesusa Rodríguez as a

Mexican director, actress, playwright, performance artist, scenographer, entrepreneur, and social activist, [who] has been called the most important woman of Mexico. Her "espectáculos" (as both spectacles and shows) challenge traditional classification, crossing with ease generic boundaries: from elite to popular to mass, from

Greek tragedy to cabaret, from pre-Columbian indigenous to opera, from revue, sketch and "carpa", to performative acts within political projects. (*Jesusa Rodríguez, 2001*)

During the 1990s, Rodríguez and her partner Liliana Felipe, an Argentinian singer and performer, opened the bar El Hábito (The Habit) and the restaurant Teatro La Capilla (The Chapel Theatre), both located in Coyoacán, a neighbourhood in Mexico City, where protests against the government and the church in the form of cabaret always had a venue. Rodríguez and Felipe supported independent cultural groups and projects and always committed themselves to political causes of national interest, but they focused on gender and Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) issues (Anahi, 2 Jan. 2010). For Antonio Prieto Stambaugh, Rodríguez is 'one of the most important theatre artists in Mexico' (1). Stambaugh also mentions that Rodríguez's 'mixture of humour and sexuality, as well as her critique of political and religious institutions has provoked threats of censorship from conservative groups' (1-2). In one sense, the fmx excludes artists that have a caustic political discourse, but, at the same, it embraces technology as a way to avoid social issues. This does not mean that technology cannot be employed to social ends; instead, it suggests that the fmx's organisers consider that technology does not involve social issues.

Another factor for the success of the visual/gestural/technological type of theatre in the international festival circuit is the spectacularisation of the performances. At international festivals, there is the danger of the spectacle 'per se', the performance deprived of historical and social references. This type of practice, which stresses the visual and spectacular,

seems designed to draw spectators, and it is also prominent in the loops constructed by huge international festivals where 'innovative' work is included. In this manner, generic global festivals distribute the aesthetics of international groups that adopt a Western visual/gestural/technological canon. By contrast, local forms that are based, for instance, on text, simple scenographic elements or a different type of theatre technology can be rejected by international festivals, which implies that they are too specific or that they do not appeal to an international audience. This also seems a tactic to co-opt different aesthetics, inferring that only when local forms of making theatre are adapted to the global market, when they are transformed into cultural commodities can they access the international circuit.

Then, what is the effect of the spectacularisation of the performances on the international festival circuits? One, for sure, can be the spectators' astonishment when watching immaculate executions and flashy performances. Moreover, audiences can be impressed by the companies' international itinerary and their enormous numbers of tours. However, besides the appreciation of technical skills and virtuosity, what does the public get? What do local artists and communities obtain? The spectacularism of theatre in the international festival circuit blurs the promotion of particular cultural models and the economic forces that are behind this aesthetic expansion, a dynamic in which technology plays an important role.

International festivals foster models of artistic creation; they help to distribute social imaginaries through what Appadurai calls mediascapes. 'Mediascapes refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to

produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film production studios) . . . and to the images of the world created by these media' (*Disjuncture* 33). International festivals generate hubs of distribution, work as mediators between industry and artists, and thus, foster certain content. Thus, I argue that some sections of the fmx (for example, Electronic Art and Radar) and some performances (for example *Hey! Girl!*) distributed an image of the world based on Western images of the world, images constructed by linking Western technology with artistic innovation.

Western mediascapes are a normal part of the Mexican artistic landscape to the extent that there is a great predominance of transnational companies and their cultural products. In 2010, according to Lucila Hinojosa Cordoba: 'USA films occupied 56% of the [Mexican] programme, which attracted 90.5% of attendance, while the national premieres only made up 18% of the total programming, representing 6% of the total spectators of cinema' (164).⁹ It can be inferred that the predominance of USA's films in Mexican cinemas has to do with the USA's capacity for producing and disseminating its cultural products globally. In this sense, the control of technological means by certain countries plays an essential role in facilitating the distribution of artistic models of creation.

Appadurai suggests that mediascapes create narratives that are distributed throughout the world (*Disjuncture* 33). These narratives, in turn, create fictional landscapes, but the lines between the real and the fiction are seen as blurred by the people who experience those fictional landscapes. 'The further these audiences are away from the direct experiences of metropolitan

life, the more likely they are to construct imagined worlds which are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, particularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other imagined world' (*Disjuncture* 33). In this respect, the fmx contributes not only to spreading artistic practices based on the use of multimedia technology and visuals, but also to creating social gaps between different cultures. If wielding technology in the form of computer-based or new electronic media is seen to constitute artistic progress, then those who own that technology can be seen as more advanced, creating a distinction between modern and 'traditional' cultures.

Festivals such as the fmx create cultural divides. The fmx accentuates the separation between people living in Western countries and in Mexico; the festival contributes to fostering the flow of Western mediascapes and to seeing Western art as an aesthetic and fantastic object that needs to be seized. The concentration of electronic technology, the owning of the means of distribution, and the control of narratives by Western countries creates an imagined landscape of 'progress'. The Western image of the world, as a fiction, seeps into the reality of third world countries and becomes real actions.¹⁰ The social imaginaries that have the capacity for travelling and being distributed across the globe prompt people to act accordingly and create desires and cravings.

The divides between nature and culture and modern and traditional are social constructs that have the power to reify particular social relationships. In this way, the use of Western technologies in the performances programmed by the fmx, or more precisely, the enhancement of Western forms of art based on the employment of electro-computational

technology by the fmx curatorship, contributes to the construction of an image of Western art equal to 'innovation'.

Thus, the notion of cultural progress achieved through the imitation of a Western developed world can also be posed in a problematic of time. For instance, the idea that our future is the Westerners' present and their past is our future sets countries such as Mexico in a historical queue (Appadurai, *Disjuncture* 29).¹¹ The 'developed' countries are ahead in time, while the 'underdeveloped' countries are always backwards. The 'underdeveloped' countries are equally seen as a free territory that can be conquered by the 'developed' countries, as Doreen Massey also argues in *For Space* (5). Therefore, to be behind seems a natural condition that overrides the social and political implications of this unevenness, an asymmetry that confers to some social groups 'progress' and labels others as 'barbarian'. The so-called 'natural condition of development', with some countries ahead and some behind in time, covers the power relationships and the disparate conditions of access to technologies. To be in the historical queue can entail the lack of means to access and distribute one's culture.

Therefore, it is important to consider two aspects regarding access to technology. On the one hand, technology relates to a transnational aesthetic that pervades new artistic creations around the globe. The type of work that involves electronics and an emphasis on visual aspects is often considered cutting-edge; this, in turn, creates an aesthetic pathway that tends towards the spectacularisation of performance. If the international festival circuit values visual/gestural/technological theatre more, companies that cannot afford the use of expensive technology, such as electronic equipment or the

staging of huge, spectacular productions, can be considered backwards and disdained by the international festival circuit. Hence, the access to electronic technology produces different outcomes and different aesthetics and models. On the other hand, access to technology also influences the distribution of cultural products. As Martín Hopenyahn says: 'If to be out of the net is to be symbolically deprived or deaf, then the asymmetries between to be connected or disconnected produce an almost ontological gap'¹² (Hopenyahn 184). Therefore, to have or not have access to technology is equated to being in or out, to being in the foreground or in the background. For example, transnational companies, including Hollywood, Sony, and MTV, control the circulation of vast numbers of cultural products and are able to distribute the type of art they envisage. A similar analysis can be applied to the circulation of hit performances in the international festival circuit.

In theatre, the companies that can afford travelling expenses—the ones that can disseminate their ideas through festivals, tours and international circuits through the publication of books and magazines and through the creation of websites and videos—have more possibilities to become ideals of artistic creation. They are also more alluring for international festivals because of their international recognition and the marketing they generate. Therefore, a festival that relies on hit performances also attracts a large audience, which, in turn, contributes to the festival's profit.

These issues indicate the penetration of a global narrative (usually Western) in various layers of national life. It is worth noting that this situation is not only happening in Mexico, but also in Cuba, which is

considered a socialist country. Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner argue that the spreading of global dynamics is a characteristic of the modern world and that both Marxists and liberals shared the view that 'the development of a world system of free trade would eliminate nationalism and the nation-state' (5). Accordingly, both capitalists and socialists present globalisation as an inevitable force that would erase nation-states' influence and importance. Although, both Marxists and liberals recognise, to some extent, the injustices of colonisation and economic expansion, they view globalisation as an inevitable process, a process that, in spite of the inequalities it involves, brings new discoveries and prosperity. In this manner, both capitalists and socialists establish the same differences between cultures: the 'barbarian' cultures on one hand and the 'civilised' ones on the other. It is precisely this distinction that seems to be equivocal. 'Civilised' cultures are often presented as the creators and owners of brand-new technology. 'Underdeveloped' cultures, on the contrary, are seen as receivers of that technology. Technology, however, does not designate, by itself, a superior culture. Moreover, the concept of a 'superior' civilisation has always had cultural inflections. In fact, one of the functions of technology in 'civilised' cultures has been to provide tools for imperialist domination.

In these social conditions, it would seem that the fmx wishes to be part of the leading circuit of international festivals, but mistakes progress for imitation. Progress, in this case, is an idea that traverses national boundaries and promotes a Western perspective of innovation. Facilitating the operation of transnational cultural products also works as a way to legitimise the fmx as part of the global world. Legitimation, in this case, means adopting a

Western canon and an 'international' way of producing and perceiving art. Thus, the fmx chooses to be opened to the flows of Western artistic models; it promotes an agenda aimed at catching up with the leading international festival circuits. In fact, the quest for innovation present in the festival is a construction, an imitation of an imagined Western world, which, in turn, nurtures it.

International Flows at the 2011 FITH

The 2011 FITH comprised a wide range of national and international groups and emphasised the juxtaposition of different aesthetics. The general program included 83 shows, 47 of which were performed by Cuban companies—that is, such companies represented more than 56 per cent of the total programming. In contrast, 36 performances were by foreign groups, which represented a bit more than 43 per cent of the total. Additionally, the Cuban companies did not only come from the capital; rather, almost all of the Cuban provinces were represented. Thus, national performances constituted the biggest percentage of activities in the event. During the festival, 23 theatres in Havana and some other venues in the rest of the country were used. The 36 foreign companies present at FITH came from 16 different countries.¹³ The event also brought together various trends and modes of making theatre, for example, children's theatre, cabaret, classic theatre, experimental theatre, puppetry and physical theatre. There were also discussion activities and opportunities for interchange, including workshops, panels, presentations and video projections. In this manner, the event was

opened to the gathering and mixture of different artistic trajectories and topics.

Although Cuba restricts media and internet access to their citizens in order to protect its social system from foreign capitalist influences, there have been alternative channels of exchange between Cubans and foreign cultures. Isolated from the big flows of transnational capital due to the economic sanctions imposed by the USA, and despite the filtering of external influences by the strict governmental control over media, the island is not totally isolated. Regarding theatre, Cuba has been a place of encounters between Latin American artists and the rest of the world since the 1960s. It is worth mentioning that Cuba was the pioneer in developing this type of international encounter in Latin America, for example, in 1961 Cuba held the Primer Festival de Teatro Latinoamericano (First Latin American Theatre Festival). Moreover, these gatherings did not start in other Latin American countries that were thriving economically. On the one hand, this fact highlights the organisers' ability to implement strategies to bring about international festivals in the difficult economic conditions of the country. On the other hand, it shows Cuba as a melting pot in which different external interests have been historically present.

During the course of history, Cuba has been the site of multiple external influences; for example, Spain, USA and USSR have left an imprint not only on its economy and its people, but also on art, education and cuisine, among other factors. In Cuba Spanish people constructed a large number of colonial buildings and introduced the guitar and the zarzuela, a genre that mixes opera and comedy. The USA, in turn, brought jazz music, the

Charleston, Oldsmobile cars from the 1950s, Hollywood films and a love of baseball. The influence of the USSR on Cuba can be appreciated in the circulation of Lada cars, the management of cultural politics and the organisation of the economy, among other elements. Thus, a characteristic of the Cuban people has been their ability to mix and rearrange outside influences.

The limited presence of international theatre companies in Cuba gives particular characteristics to the FITH. For example, the international theatre events take place annually or biannually and, for many artists and audience members, offer the only opportunities to access externally generated performances. Thus, Cuban artists eagerly anticipate these festivals. In 2007, in relation to the XII Festival de La Habana, Marta María Borrás explains that 'spaces like this one are essential, even more if we take into account the scarce participation of foreign groups in our programming, and along with this, the very little connections of the public with diverse foreign aesthetics' (Borrás 71).¹⁴ Thus, the scarcity of links between the Cuban public and foreign theatre currents makes the FITH an oasis for the Cuban world theatre movement. The fact that for many Cuban artists, the only possible contact with theatre made externally is mediated by these international festivals, suggests that the festival is a driving force of artistic trends. In this respect, I distinguish at least two global trends circulating in the FITH 2011: the commercial performance practices destined for the tourist sector, and a socially committed theatre in the international purview fostered by the notion of transnational solidarity.

One of the trends in Cuban contemporary performances practices relates precisely to performances created to satisfy the demand of the tourist industry; that is, performances that take the form needed for the international market. In Havana, it is possible to watch numerous representations of this type of performance in hotels and discotheques including Tropicana, the Cabaret Parisi n, Copa Room, Turquino, Pico Blanco, Continental and Guanaroca. In these groups of Cuban cabarets, Tropicana stands out as one of the most emblematic places for this type of production.

Tropicana is a world famous nightclub founded in 1940, in Havana, Cuba, by a group of entrepreneurs led by Victor Correa (Tropicana, 'Historia'). Tropicana's website states:

Very soon Tropicana became a favorite spot for the most select and affluent in society. The spell of Cuban nights, with starry skies, warm tropical moon, hot and languid music, dazzling women—reputedly the most beautiful of Cuban dark-skinned girls—and its exuberant gardens created in the visitors the feeling of being in an unreal world of exotic splendour. (Tropicana, 'Historia')

In the 1940s, Tropicana was known as 'the Monte Carlo in the Americas' and 'the most famous casino in the world' (Tropicana, 'Historia'). In 1952, after Fulgencio Batista's coup d' tat, Cuba became a paradise for gambling, and new night clubs, brothels and casinos flourished. Cuba was considered 'the island of gambling' and 'the Caribbean Las Vegas', and in this context, Tropicana acquired its nickname, 'A Paradise under the Stars' (Tropicana, 'Historia').



Fig. 3. Dancers at Tropicana on its 70th anniversary. Source: EcuRed. *Archivo: Tropicana 70-anos-05.jpg*. EcuRed, *conocimiento con todos y para todos*. EcuRed, 21 Mar. 2012.

Since its inception, Tropicana has staged large productions, shows where Cuban folklore and dance played a central role. Currently, Tropicana still produces huge performances that, according to its website, overflow with glamour, sensuality and colour in an environment of lusty tropical forest (Tropicana, 'Historia'). Tropicana's productions have been performed in centres such as the Royal Albert Hall, the Monte Carlo Sporting Club in Monaco, the Friedrichstadt Palace in Berlin and the Beacon Theater on Broadway, New York (Tropicana, 'Historia').

At the present time, tourists from many parts of the world visit Tropicana to observe its shows and to drink and dance. The entrance fees range from 75 to 95 CUCs.¹⁵ The drinks and food, which also have prices in CUCs, are very expensive for the Cuban people. Tourists can also buy

Tropicana souvenirs, while Tropicana dancers charge for each photo taken. The shows at Tropicana might remind people of those performed in France at the Lido and Moulin Rouge cabarets but with less nudity. As is usually the case, in Cuban cabaret, the dance and music are the elements that bring together all the other components. Besides constituents of Spanish and African heritage and Cuban syncretism, the spectacles also include circus, singing and flamboyant wardrobes.

The cabaret is not without possibilities for subversion; however, in order to attract profits, cabaret creates a trend in Cuban performance practices marked by the use of showy costumes, dance and folk elements in an exotic setting. Representations of Cuban history, such as its African roots and Spanish colonial life, are 'exoticised' in a show where passion and sensuality predominate. This aesthetic fulfils the expectations of the mass tourist sector and defines a trend in making theatre that is largely influenced by the market. Through these shows, tourists have a sense of Cuba, or more precisely, a sense of what the shows portray as Cuba.

At the XIV FITH, I found this transnational aesthetic trend—which emphasises virtuoso performance, flashy visual design, erotic dance and tropical music and is largely orientated towards the market—in shows like *Broadway Ambassadors* by the USA Company Nederlander Worldwide Entertainment. The activities of Broadway Ambassadors Theatre Company in the FITH included three performances; workshops and master classes for performing art professionals and for students of the Instituto Superior de Arte (ISA) (Institute of Fine Arts), the State run performing arts institute and two conferences focused on how to produce musicals. *Broadway*

Ambassadors took place at the García Lorca Hall of the Great Theatre of Havana. The performance was a full-length concert showcasing the many musical styles that make up the Broadway Songbook. The performance was accompanied by the Gran Teatro de La Habana orchestra, and the audience, which occasionally hummed some melodies, applauded the performers enthusiastically.

Maylin Alonso Chiong offered this description:

Classics like *Chicago*, *Somewhere* and *Dreamgirls* brought the Cuban public to its feet in the course of presentations by the New York theatre company, Broadway Ambassadors, in its first appearance in Cuba in fifty years. Luba Mason (*Chicago* and *Will Rogers' Follies*), Capathia Jenkins (*Caroline* and *The Loving Glance*), Norm Lewis (*Porgy and Bess*, *The Little Siren* and *Side Show*) and Evan, four of the most prestigious voices of Broadway, took a spin through more than 100 years of the industry with titles such as *Les Misérables*, *The Wizard of Oz* and *The Phantom of the Opera*, which drew applause and cheers at Havana's Gran Teatro. (14 Nov. 2011)

In one of the conferences called 'How to Make Musical Theatre in the USA', the producers of *Broadway Ambassadors*, who are also the producers of musicals such as *Cats* and *Mamma Mia!* claimed that they were interested in coming to the island for two reasons: first, to weigh up the reception and Cubans' curiosity about the Broadway art form in Havana, and secondly, to recruit Cuban talent to Broadway (Nederlander, 2 Nov. 2011).

Robert Nederlander Jr., one of the owners of Nederlander Worldwide Entertainment, described theatre made in Broadway as an expensive and

easily adaptable artistic form for the entertainment market (Nederlander, 2 Nov. 2011). From the perspective of Marc Aronoff, a producer of *Broadway Ambassadors*, the popularity of Broadway resides in its versatile character, which is highly adaptable to diverse cultures and local markets (Hernández, *Embajadores de Broadway en Cuba*). In an interview conducted by Alonso Chiong for Cubanow, Nederlander also notes that:

We think that the interchange should flow in both directions. We have seen a great talent in Cuba. It has been really fascinating for us to experience it in the short time we have been here, and we would really like to present other productions in this country or take Cuban original works to the Broadway public. We believe it would be marvellous. (14 Nov. 2011)

Nederlander Worldwide Entertainment is one of the biggest operators of theatre and music in the USA. It has headquarters in Detroit, Chicago and San Francisco in the USA, and the company has established a circuit of theatres in China 'with the purpose of bringing first-class dramatic and musical productions to major Chinese cities, including, in part, Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Suzhou, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Xi'an, Wuhan, Tianjin, etc.' (Nederlander, 'About Nederlander').

Although performances such as *Broadway Ambassadors* are scarce in the FITH programming, the performance is relevant to explore the impact of global flows on the festival. The presence of *Broadway Ambassadors* in the FITH can be read in two ways. First, in the last years, USA-Cuba relations have been opening up. Back in 1960, all USA businesses in Cuba were nationalised without compensation. In response to Castro's reforms, the USA

broke off diplomatic relations with Havana and imposed a trade embargo, which had an impact on cultural interchanges.

However, according to the BBC News, in November 2010, the American Ballet Theater visited Cuba for first time in 50 years (11 Oct. 2012). Moreover, in January 2011, Barack Obama's administration relaxed restrictions on travel to the island for some groups of USA citizens (mostly students, academics, members of religious organisations and artists) with the purpose of increasing contact between the peoples of both countries and supporting Cuban civil society (EFE, 2 Nov. 2012). Thus, presenting Broadway Ambassadors Theatre Company in the FITH can be understood as a way to fight against the economic blockade imposed by the USA through artistic initiatives and it is also indicative of a thaw taking place in US-Cuban relations.

The great acceptance shown towards *Broadway Ambassadors* by the Cuban public can also be meaningfully linked to the deep-rooted tradition of shows like those ones held in Tropicana and Cabaret Parisi n. The enjoyment of *Broadway Ambassadors* may also be associated with nostalgia for the time in which there were lots of casinos and the island was economically driven by the USA, in other words, capitalist nostalgia. Furthermore, since the First World War, mediascapes such as Hollywood cinema have also contributed to the distribution of USA models, fashions and lifestyles in Cuba, facts that suggest a liking for USA commercial cultural products.

Secondly, the goal of Nederlander Worldwide Entertainment when attending the FITH was also to 'prepare a Cuban show to present it on Broadway' (EFE, 2 Nov. 2011). Rob Nederlander noted that his company was

looking to introduce original Cuban works to their diverse audiences and clarified that they were not looking for a Cuban *show* specifically, but for some of Cuba's theatrical activities that can be transferred to the New York public (Hernández Helen, *Embajadores de Broadway en Cuba*). Aronoff also explained that they were trying to discover Cuban talent, work with Cuban artists and take them to Broadway (Hernández Helen, *Embajadores de Broadway en Cuba*). Consequently, *Broadway Ambassadors* also had the objective of expanding Nederlander Worldwide Entertainment's scope of influence and businesses, which manifests a form of imperialist exploitation of cultural resources.

Two things emerged from the considerations above. First, the lavish type of theatre made in Broadway contrasts with the limited-resource type of theatre made on the island. However, it can carry weight when Cubans decide which artistic pathway to take. In the 1990s, the 'dollarization' of the Cuban economy brought about differences between those who had access to this currency and the people who did not. At some point, there were at least three currencies coexisting on the island: US dollars, the national peso and the CUC. At present, the country only uses the CUC and the national peso. Although the use of the CUC is open to everybody, there are issues in relation to its access. For example, the amount of CUCs that common Cubans can obtain is reduced in comparison with foreign tourists. Local citizens are paid most of their wages in national pesos; they also pay everyday expenses in national pesos. CUCs are largely bound to buy luxury products or products that are scarce in the common markets.

Consequently, CUCs are mostly used by foreign tourists or Cuban people who work in close contact with the tourist industry. Cubans working in the tourist industry, such as 'jineteras' (female sex workers), have a greater probability of getting CUCs because of their contact with foreign tourists.¹⁶ Furthermore, tourist guides can also sell, on the sly, illegal rum or tobacco, making profits of 10–40 CUCs per day. In the majority of cases, these services—the selling of products unlawfully, including sex or rides in unlicensed taxis—are officially forbidden. Nonetheless, being in contact with foreigners can make a difference in Cubans' lifestyles because CUCs give them access to a number of products that are otherwise out of reach. Arguably, the economic situation and scarcity of some products makes them even more desirable. In relation to theatre, the desire to get off the island to ameliorate their economic situations puts pressure on Cuban artists to produce stereotypical performances with images of rum, tobacco and sensual women in the form of Broadway musicals.

Secondly, Cuban artists seem to be raw material for the Broadway entertainment industry. If the producers of *Broadways Ambassadors* offer them a place in one of their productions, it is at least partly because Cuban talent is comparatively cheaper and more profitable. The quality of Cuban dancers, singers and actors, together with their cheap labour, results in a very attractive proposition for the foreign cultural industry. The different economies produce huge gaps. For example, in 2011, a Cuban actor in a company like Espacio Teatral Aldaba (Aldaba's Theatre Space) earned 15 CUCs per week approximately (Borges, 'Personal'). In comparison, although it is really impossible to determine what the 'typical' Broadway actor makes,

according to the Actors' Equity figures for 2003, the minimum salary for a performer in a Broadway play or musical was 1354 US dollars a week (Kuchwara, 14 Aug. 2003). Thus, the differences between economies produce significant profits for the foreign organisations that hire Cuban artists.

Even though the idea of a 'civilised' Western culture as the pinnacle to which art or theatre should aspire has been eradicated in Cuba to a certain extent, the desire for foreign imports has been incited by tourism. Under Cuban social conditions, the restrictions enforced by the government regarding travel outside of the island incite an even greater desire for the foreign world. In this context, for Cuban performers, Tropicana or Broadway Ambassadors' shows represent an opportunity not only to get in contact with foreigners in Cuba, but also to travel to foreign countries. For Cuban artists, being hired by international organisations is also attractive because overseas work normally offers much more than their normal salaries on the island even if the payment is a bargain for employers. Put another way, the economic situation, together with the image of the foreigner who carries lots of CUCs disseminated by the tourist industry, gives an impression that the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence. Furthermore, the ideas of a better and fantastic world outside the island are also fostered in the country in the form of Hollywood cinema. In this sense, one element to consider when studying the global influences on the FITH is the importance of international tourism in the construction of the public's taste and in the ways of making theatre by Cuban artists.

However, not all Cuban artists are trying to imitate an aesthetic shaped by the international market, nor is the quest for new aesthetics non-

existent. There was another transnational trend in the XIV FITH that contrasted with the type of entertainment theatre made for the tourist sector, a tendency that promoted socio-political issues. The XIV FITH's goal was to move towards an 'urgent theatre', a theatre that conveys social and political concerns. Thus, the majority of the performances were connected to the notion of a festival as a site of social debate; only on limited occasions were there attempts to include hit performances. In contrast with the fmx, the FITH can be conceived as an encounter festival; that is, a festival that fosters the interchange of ideas and techniques.

Due to the economic limitations of the festival organisation (in part because of the economic blockade and partially on account of the government's bureaucracy), the festival depends, to a large extent, on the solidarity of foreign companies and organisations. The restrictions imposed by the economic conditions also limit the presence of foreign companies at the FITH and leave the festival's curatorship susceptible to the ups and downs of international institutions and groups. The Cuban government pays the expenses of national companies but FITH does not pay any kind of expenses to bring foreign theatre companies to the festival. Subsequently, international groups have to look for support to cover the costs of their travel. On many occasions, the funds have come from national institutions or organisations, but, if this is not possible, the companies pay for their own plane tickets, accommodation and food. Consequently, it is possible to claim that foreign companies subsidise the festival to a great extent by exploiting their own labour. This generates peculiar circumstances in the festival's

formation and drives the organisers to work hard to be able to bring and host foreign companies.

Cuban artists' exposure to international events is also influenced by restrictions in the festival programming of international companies that are the result of politics. Because the Cuban government is opposed to some capitalist global flows, for example, the presence of imperialist forces in the form of American multinationals dominating and controlling Cuba's economy, the FITH has historically been a site where marginal companies from Latin America and the rest of the world have had a place. Many international companies that come to the island oppose globalisation. Moreover, one of the FITH's achievements has been to include a series of international proposals that explore socio-political issues, which differs from the type of theatre usually represented in the tourist sector. In this sense, through international solidarity, the 2011 festival's organisers were able to gather an important number of foreign companies that brought contemporary social issues to the fore.

For example, in the 2011 edition, the play *El Trompo Metálico* (*The Metallic Spinning Top*) by the Argentinian Company El Trompo (The Spinning Top) critiqued the intellectual and cultural practices of a conservative family in Argentina. The performance also exposed the mental colonialism and racism that penetrates the conservative clusters of Argentina. *The Metallic Spinning Top* tells the story of Catalina, who lives with her intransigent parents in a worn-out mansion. In order to transform her into the perfect daughter, she is cruelly forced to experience various types of intellectual and cultural practices every day. Catalina's mother represents ignorance. The

father is a white conservative who embodies an old aristocracy that treats the family as an institution. Catalina doubts, questions and challenges her parents. One day, after reading a Chinese tale, she decides to leave.



Fig. 4. Catalina 'explores her body' in a scene from *The Metallic Spinning Top* by Argentinian company the Spinning Top. Hubert de Blanck Hall, Havana, Cuba, 4 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Catalina represents not only the impetus of the youth, but also a low class subject that rejects the falsehood of the dominant classes in Argentina. Catalina's parents impose a very strict education on her, an old model of behaviour coined by a social class that intends to set itself up as the owner of the absolute truth. Every year she receives a metallic top as a gift; her father suggests she should be like it: an object that realises the same mechanical action until the time to stop arrives. While Catalina's parents are increasingly oppressive, she embarks upon a series of actions that contradict the cultural project of their parents; whilst the habits promoted by her conservative

parents impel a dominion over the body and its functions, Catalina's sexual awakening prompts her to experiment with her body. Catalina's desire to be free leads her to read books, dance and masturbate, actions that go against the kind of encyclopaedic and repetitive education provided by her parents.

The play works through metaphors to foster social issues. Catalina's ways of experiencing and knowing the world differs from the cultural models inherited by the Argentinian conservative groups. Hiding from her parents, Catalina discovers a new world by reading Chinese tales. The child is not any longer a child: she questions, explores her body, realises that her parents are wrong and finally leaves the social system that is devouring her. Catalina symbolises rational thought and adventurous spirit in a dogmatic world and change in an immutable environment; in other words, she expresses the need for social change and justice, elements that represent a danger for rigid social systems.

In turn, the performance *Andre and Dorine* by Kulunca Theatre Company from Spain, portrays how Alzheimer's disease affects an elderly couple. The performance is the product of a creative collaboration of Basque artists. Andre and Dorine, the main characters, have been married for many years but the relationship is monotonous. However, the monotony ends when Dorine develops Alzheimer's disease. Andre tries to restore Dorine's memories in a lot of different ways; he writes their love story as his last gift for Dorine. In his writing, he goes over his first memories: the first glance, the first night in bed, their first son. When Andre finishes the love story, emotions stir inside him, but Dorine's Alzheimer's puts an end to the happy

feelings. Alzheimer's disease becomes an all-consuming occupation that devours memories and identity.



Fig. 5. Andre and Dorine's son visits his parents in a scene from *Andre and Dorine* by Spanish company Kulunca Theatre. Havana, Cuba, Tito Junco Hall (Bertolt Brecht Cultural Centre), 29 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Here again social issues constitute the core of the performance. Through Alzheimer's disease the play reflects on historical memory and amnesia in Spain. Andre and Dorine are urged to start their relationship again; they are prompted to reinvent themselves in order to cope with the Alzheimer's disease and the pressures of their daily lives. In order to do so, they have to try to regain their memories, remembrances that not only have been vanishing because of Alzheimer's disease, but also due to their monotonous day-to-day existence. In this case, the performance questions human beings' capacity for living without memories and, as a consequence, without identity. Is it possible to cope with current problems if we do not

have memories? How do we deal with people who are not able to preserve their cultural identities? The pain produced by Alzheimer's is inflected by oblivion, by not knowing who we are, by the lack of identity. At the social level, what is the play trying to convey? Maybe it is trying to convey that we should not forget where we come from and not forget our past and memories in order to live in harmony with ourselves. Maybe it is trying to convey that we should not forget where we come from—our historical memory—so we can tackle the present adversities of our contemporary world. Our identities are located in a past that seems so distant; however, we have to dig in our past to remake ourselves.

Baby Universe: A Puppet Odyssey, staged by the Wakka Wakka Company from Norway, aimed to create environmental awareness. Diana Barth, in a review for the *Epoch Times*, writes:

In the play, various mothers are nominated to care for a new kind of offspring. It is the hope that out of many, at least one will survive to thrive and help create a new form of life and viable environment when the current universe dies.

In this case, one mother is depicted. She is presented with an embryo, called Baby Universe, to be nurtured and birthed, and hopefully brought to maturity. There are pitfalls along the way, as the present elements, including the Sun, Moon, Jupiter, Saturn, and so on, in trying to prevent their own deaths, try to destroy the new kind of life that Baby Universe represents.

On several occasions, Baby Universe is almost annihilated, but with the help of his mother he manages to survive. (15 Sep. 2010)



Fig. 6. Baby Universe is analysed by a doctor in a scene from *Baby Universe: A Puppet Odyssey* by Norwegian theatre company Wakka Wakka. Havana, Cuba, Adolfo Llauradó Hall, 5 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Baby Universe is an eco-performance that tries to create awareness about the destruction of our planet. Through the means of a radio station located in a bunker within a containment area, the only surviving human beings broadcast programmes about how verdant and beautiful life used to be on earth. In an apocalyptic setting, the planets, a gang led by a burnt out sun, are trying to sabotage a scheme hatched by scientists who are trying to birth a new universe. The sun and his gang want to get rid of the surviving human beings because they represent a cancer-like annoyance. Baby Universe becomes the only hope to save the last human beings, who are by then a rare specimen.

David Rooney notes in a review that ‘in a world where conventional reproduction has become obsolete, these infant-like creatures [that is, Baby Universes] covered in stars are entrusted to lonely, semi-life-size women crowned by floating halos that evoke Renaissance Madonnas’ (6 Feb. 2010). The performance provides material for an ecological debate. The performance not only fosters a belief that science can save and prolong human life beyond our planet, but it also presents nurture as a crucial element to the healthy development of our universe—Baby Universe’s nurturing phase is realised with the tenderness and special care of its loving surrogate mother. In this context, the performance suggests that both nature and science are important for the hale and hearty development of human life.

With the inclusion of performances such as *The Metallic Spinning Top*, *Andre and Dorine* and *Baby Universe: A Puppet Odyssey*, the festival emphasises the need for an ‘urgent theatre’. As the organising committee states in the festival’s web page: ‘[In opposition] to a worldview that functions with the irrationality of the market, the theater encourages the encounter of ideas that put at the center the defense of life’ (XIV Festival de Teatro de La Habana, ‘Un Festival para el Teatro Urgente’). Thus, the festival relied heavily on social issues as a way to construct the idea of international solidarity.

In line with the ideas of international solidarity and promotion of social issues, the FITH 2011 also provided opportunities for the exchange of views and discussion between the different groups that participated at the festival, such as the seminars and Q & A sessions, activities that were scarce in the fmx 2010. In the FITH 2011, there were a total of ten workshops and

thirteen theoretical events (see Table 1). The FITH also prioritised the interchange of social and political visions, such as the exchange of specific acting techniques, as in the case of the conference and workshop related to making musicals in the USA, or in the discussion about national theatres in conferences.

Table 1

List of Workshops and Theoretical Events in the FITH 2011

Workshops	Theoretical Events
Introduction to Commedia dell'Arte	Woman in Theatre: Thought and Creation
Theatre as a Driver of Growth and Formation of Critical Thought: From Social History to Collective Narration	Cultural and Artistic Management
Pinter in Cuba	Management Strategies and Organisational Culture
Multimedia and Interdisciplinary Event of Theatre History: The 'Untitled Event'	Talk about the performance I'm looking into your eyes
Master Class for Actors	National Theatres
Vocal Technique for the Actor	Working with Pinter
The Actor Process	An Outlook of the German Stage Design
How to Make a Musical in the USA	How to Make Musical Theatre in the USA
Sample of Works from the Workshop of Stage Design	Thinking Theatre from the Collective
	Test Tube: An Emergent Zone for Participation
	Theatre Circuits and Development Strategies Linked to the Emergent Theatres
	Stage Design for Puppet Theatre and Technological Development: Other Pathways, New Challenges
	Crossroads in the Latin American Theatre of the Havana Theatre Festival

Source: XIV Festival de Teatro de La Habana. *Cartelera Ktorce Festival de Teatro de La*

Habana. La Habana, Cuba: Festival de Teatro de La Habana, 2011.

Furthermore, the FITH created opportunities to discuss theatre from the point of view of theatre groups. That is, theoretical events—such as Theatre as a Driver of Growth and Formation of Critical Thought: From Social History to Collective Narration; Thinking Theatre from the Collective; Test Tube: An Emergent Zone for Participation; Theatre Circuits and Development Strategies Linked to the Emergent Theatres; and Stage Design for Puppet Theatre and Technological Development: Other Pathways, New Challenges—included topics related to emergent or marginal theatres, the difficulties that they face in creation, and the strategies that these emergent groups or marginal artists can employ in order to operate efficiently. Moreover, two theoretical events—National Theatres, and Crossroads in the Latin American Theatre of the Havana Theatre Festival—were specifically created to debate Latin American theatre currents and share different experiences of theatre production and creation in other nations.

The incorporation of these workshops and conferences in the FITH, in turn, conditioned the type and quality of artistic and social mixtures at the festival; instead of a civic parade, the combination of different artists and cultures at the FITH 2011 involved a genuine interchange of artistic practices. In the round tables, each company contributed from its perspective to find the common needs and possible responses to the problems they face, instead of adhering to one dominant cultural norm. Thus, the FITH 2011 emphasised the social and cultural implications of the gathering by fostering the crosspollination of groups and aesthetics rather than showcasing cultures.



Fig. 7. An aspect of the conference *Women in Theatre: Thought and Creation*. Havana, Cuba, Ludwig Foundation, 28 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Even with the relative lack of contact with international theatre movements, or maybe due to that lack, the FITH has been able to cope with the global flows of culture and capital. In general terms, the festival can be considered a site of resistance against hegemonic cultural practices. However, commercial shows, such as *Broadway Ambassadors*, have started to appear in the festival structure. Furthermore, the economic needs of Cuban artists are also prompting them to take a commercial course, and this, in turn, can make the festival deviate from its social objective. In this respect, the festival's mission is to participate in the needs of Cuba's culture by promoting theatre as an art 'that continues to defend the possibility of human exchange' (XIV Festival de Teatro de La Habana, 'Un Festival para el Teatro Urgente').

International solidarity has played a primary role in the construction of the event, because it has allowed the Cuban government to construct and reinforce a network of countries and theatre companies sympathetic to the

Cuban political causes. Solidarity has allowed the festival organisers to create a stock of foreign companies willing to come to the island paying for their own travel expenses, accommodation and food. For Cuba, this organisational model is beneficial. It produces revenue for the country in hotels, restaurants and transportation, and the event situates Havana as a world theatre centre.

However, the solidarity of foreign companies is not totally aligned with the festival's idea of political solidarity with the Cuban social system. The groups' motivations for attending the festival are diverse. The interviews I conducted at the festival expose different perspectives. While some artists thought that the festival was an event to connect with artists from other parts of the world in order to be able to tour other countries and obtain economic and artistic benefits, others considered that their goal was to meet the Cuban people and discover how they survive in conditions of crisis. However, other artists mentioned that the event was an opportunity to enjoy an exotic country, its beaches and its people (Nederlander, 2 Nov. 2012; Domenech, 'Personal').

In any case, the FITH's conditions are also conducive to a certain aesthetic of rough and ready scenographic elements, which, therefore, shapes what international companies bring to the festival. For example, because the festival organisation is unable to pay for the transportation cost of foreign companies, the kind of company that travels to the FITH usually employs simple scenographic elements, that is, elements that fit easily in suitcases or in luggage that can be transported without difficulty. This aesthetic of rough-and-ready scenographies agrees with the type of Cuban theatre that is based

on a scarcity of stage elements, which I will analyse in the section titled ‘The FITH: A Local Technology of Necessity’.

The FITH, as a mediator between national and international theatrical movements, favours certain models of artistic production and reception. Thus, the inclusion of certain groups that emphasise social topics and the aesthetic of scarcity and rough and ready scenographic elements, contribute to define some courses and models of creation of theatre makers on the island. The FITH, even with its flaws, has remained a site of encounter and rich artistic interchange. In contrast with the fmx 2010, the FITH 2011 created opportunities for genuine exchange and discussion among artists, theorists and the public.

International Flows and the Built Environment at Festivals

When a festival is held in a particular place, it inevitably makes contact with the built environment of that particular location. This contact produces a symbiotic relationship. The built environment is a material condition of the event’s production and reception; as such, it influences festivals and their performances. By the same token, festivals alter the way we see or conceive of an environment. For instance, through performances and other activities, festivals can challenge the quotidian dynamics of a particular building and, consequently, its social meanings. Festival settings, such as the type and characteristics of a particular venue, can also modify the spatial conditions of the performances and thus create new dynamics of production-reception.

At both the FITH and the fmx, the transnational forces that shape the events have an impact on what activities happen, and how, in a specific

expanse of land. Global flows are also manifested in terms of space and in how the different spaces employed by festivals fill up the imagination of people. For example, the fmx and the FITH not only represent Latin America but also incorporate ways of conceiving space in their realisation. Festival's environments imbue events with certain spatial characteristics that are not necessarily explicit. The spatial conceptions that festivals incorporate have to do with the socio-historical implications of their location, where location is understood as the act of placement as well as the particular geopolitical context and the relationships that this setting represents. Thus, location also encompasses one festival's placement in relation to other festivals, institutions or countries.

My objectives in the following sections are to show how what I identify as transnational agendas are operating in the spatiality of the FITH and the fmx and to provide an account of the dynamics and social relationships that the operation of those forces produce at both festivals. What follows, then, is an analysis of various ways in which global forces have shaped the spatiality of both events.

The fmx and the Historic Centre: Festivalising the Creative City

The landscapes of cities that host festivals usually undergo constant changes. New restaurants, cafes and hotels are created and a range of economic activities emerges directly or indirectly from festival events and the cultural development of cities. In this respect, the link between the renewal of Mexico City's Historic Centre and the birth of the fmx deserves special attention. The fmx contributed to a project of appropriating and developing a space in the

Historic Centre, a development that can be connected to concepts such as the 'creative class' (Richard Florida) and the 'creative city' (Charles Landry), which emerged in Euro-American urban planning. These notions involve processes of erecting structures and producing cultural activities in order to attract investments. In this light, festivals can mask the gentrification of a particular zone in a city by appearing to bring 'prosperity' and 'liveability' to that area.

The term creative class refers to the cluster of workers distinguished by their creativity, such as architects, artists, educators, IT professionals and so on, who contribute, with their mobility and talent, to the creation of bohemian and liberal cities. In other words, the creative class is a knowledge-based social group rather than labourers or service-based working people (Florida, *The Rise* 45–67). Florida weighs up this 'creative class' according to their tolerance towards gay people and immigrants (*The Rise* 327–381). Landry, in turn, proposes the development of environments sympathetic to interculturalism and tolerance in order to achieve a creative city (109–111). In his view: '*The Creative City* describes a new method of strategic urban planning and examines how people can think, plan and act creatively in the city' (xi). It also involves mechanisms that create civic pride, and, through the use of arts, trigger new urban developments (xiv).

Both concepts encompass the construction, use or renewal of the city infrastructure *creatively* to bring confidence and investments. According to this view, cities should embark on creative urban growth that would allow them to attract a knowledge-based creative class, so that those cities would become better places in which to invest and live. The construction or renewal

of cafes, boutiques, clubs and theatres, among other spaces, are important urban developments because they help fulfil the needs of the creative class. In this sense, arts and festivals also constitute essential elements to complement these agendas; for example, international festivals can provide towns with the status of creative cities. In short, better cultural planning fosters more investments and profits. However, in relation to this phenomenon, Jen Harvie argues that 'while creative policy and practice produce some important benefits, their social risks are enormous' ('Liveability' 6). Harvie explains that Florida does not advocate social tolerance of gays, lesbians, varied ethnicities and even cultural workers chiefly because to do so is socially or ethically good in its own terms. Rather, he sees such tolerance as positive because it attracts the highly desired creative worker who generates prosperity and economic growth ('Liveability' 6). On the positive side, Harvie describes the fostering of cultural workers and tolerance towards diverse sexualities and ethnicities.

The creative city concept reflects a neoliberal ideology in relation to the use and development of space in world cities. It aims to transform space in order to commoditise it and maximise profits rather than restore cultural agency to communities. Furthermore, the mobility of the creative class contrasts with the immobility of the service-based class that operates in urban developments. While the creative class can choose where to live, the lower-class workers are either sent away from the creative city or hired as workers to service this creative class. This phenomenon exacerbates the situation of the lower classes and produces gentrification.

In addition, pop-ups are important elements in the urban project of creative cities. Harvie defines pop-ups as spaces

such as shops, offices, workshops, factories or flats which are temporarily out of use because, for example, they are un-rented or awaiting renovation, development or demolition, and which are given over for another temporary and often creative use. Most frequently, they are used as restaurants or boutiques . . . often during periods when there is likely to be more demand for their fare—for example, in the lead-up to Christmas, or during a festival . . . ('Liveability' 8)

Harvie also argues that these types of places make the neighbourhoods more attractive to residents. Although it is arguable that all types of pop-ups contribute to gentrification, they can be used for that purpose because they 'make [urban space] productive for speculative investors to move in as private developers' (Harvie, 'Liveability' 12). Since festivals are sometimes used to fill pop-ups and other similar spaces, they also can be instruments in the urbanisation of the creative city, functioning as tools to gentrify a zone and bring the creative class on board. In a way festivals are one big pop-up.

It is possible to find connections between the policies implemented in 1985 to rescue the Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México (Mexico City's Historic Centre) (CHCM) and the urban development proposed by Florida and Landry to attract a creative class. The fmx has contributed to the renewal of the CHCM, which was previously a red zone (a red-light district), by filling renewed spaces with art events and activities and converting it into a better place to invest and live. The fmx has aimed to promote Mexico City as one of the so-called world cities, characterised by tolerance and creative

atmospheres. In this sense, the rescue of the Historic Centre adopted an established pathway of urban development that followed global patterns.

Florida himself claims:

I adore Mexico City. Now imagine it as a critical hinge-point or hub in a truly integrated North American economy. It is already a huge mega-region. It has incredible energy, culture and diversity. As a real hub and part of a continental structure stretching say from Toronto and NY, Vancouver to Los Angeles, Miami to Mexico City and beyond ... The possibilities are endless ... A question I always ask myself when evaluating a truly global city is: Would my friends and colleagues move there? A 21st century Mexico City, creative and connected, could be a powerful draw. (Florida, 21 Jun. 2008)

Although Mexico City cannot be considered a knowledge-based city, because its residents face huge problems on a daily basis, such as insufficient services, lack of security, pollution and traffic congestion, some spots in the city are ideal places for the creative class. The transformation of some zones, like the renewal of CHCM, can be thought of as an attempt to bring urban development and liveability to the creative class.

The fmx started as a small event in the town centre of Mexico City. The former Festival de Primavera (Spring Festival) was part of a bigger project of redevelopment and economic growth implemented by private and public organisations, such as the federal and local governments and media entrepreneurs. By means of an advisory council, whose prominent head figure was the tycoon Carlos Slim, the project, which was called *Rescate del Centro Histórico* (Rescue of the Historic Centre), aimed, among other things,

to diversify the tourist industry by redefining the traditional use of space in the historic centre (Mora 20–24). The CHCM is one of the most visited sites for national and international tourism in Mexico. In 1987, it was declared a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. The area given this status spans 9.7 square kilometres, 668 blocks, approximately 9,000 pieces of land, and more than 1,500 buildings (Fideicomiso, *Programa para el Desarrollo Integral del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México*).



Fig. 8. Boundaries of Mexico City Historic Centre. Perimeter A is represented in blue, while perimeter B is indicated in red. Source: Mora Reyes, José Ángel. Proyecto de Rescate del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México. Mexico: Adolfo Christlieb Ibar.

The Historic Centre was considered an authentic red zone. The deterioration of its buildings, the lack of investment in the properties, the lack of laws regarding its conservation, unemployment, hawkers, beggars, delinquency and prostitution, together with the destruction caused by the earthquake of 1985, all contributed to its negative reputation. In these conditions, the zone needed to undergo substantial changes. In 1980, a

presidential decree was implemented to stop the physical and social worsening. The Historic Centre was divided into two zones: perimeter A and perimeter B (Coulomb 6). Perimeter A contained the concentration of historic buildings constructed between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries (Rivera 60). Perimeter B included monuments of the nineteenth century and popular housing (Escalante 36).

After the earthquake of 1985, construction and renewal of housing was a priority to cope with the huge demand. Developers, in turn, saw the need for housing as an opportunity to make profits. The building of houses took place mainly in perimeter B. Later, in 1991, Mexico City's government put into practice the plan *Échame una Manita* (Give me a Hand) to restore perimeter A. This plan was basically an attempt to fit out commercial and service buildings. There were also incentives for people willing to sell their properties and for the restoration of buildings. Nonetheless, the plan was criticised, because its works consisted only of *fachadismo* (*façadism*), meaning that the repairs made to the buildings only consisted of painting or reconstructing their façades (Fideicomiso, *Échame una manita* 23). In contrast, the premises involved in commerce, culture and tourism were given special attention because they could provide dividends to the investors. For example, the government or private investors would invest in the renewal of a building only if they could obtain the second and third floors to sell or rent. In other words, in exchange for the restoration work, the owner had to donate the upper floors (Mora 19).

In 2001, a new attempt to revitalise the Historic Centre took place. The former president of Mexico, Vicente Fox Quesada, and Mexico City's

Governor, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, set up a consultative board of directors to lead a new renewal project. Carlos Slim, currently the richest man in the world, according to Forbes, was named head of the board. In the urban aspect, the project involved the installation of surveillance cameras on street corners, the placing of lights in the zones considered dangerous, special security for tourists, tax incentives to investors, cleaning and transport services, improvements of the sewage system, including setting up water faucets to restored buildings and the expansion of housing to buy and rent. The project also involved the creation of employment, a bilingual police force, tourist information units and a special office to deal with the procedures of renovating the buildings in the zone (Gómez Flores, 14 Aug. 2001). In relation to cultural projects, there was the renovation of Casa Vecina, a centre for contemporary art research and production—that is, a pop-up.

The process of revitalisation again prioritised incentives for the investors and developers, exacerbating the poor conditions of the population that inhabited the zone. The restoration project facilitated the buying of properties by reducing taxes for sellers and giving tax exemptions of up to ten years for buyers. Carlos Slim himself bought several floors of the Latin American Tower, a building considered for many years the highest glass tower in Latin America and valued at an estimated 25 million US dollars in 2002 (Grajeda, 6 Dec. 2002). From this tower, he led the urban renewal operations for the Historic Centre, but he also opened new offices for one of his businesses, INBURSA, an insurance company (Grajeda, 6 Dec. 2002). People who had no money to invest were under pressure to sell or to be

penalized, as they faced a revaluation of the premises and an additional cost in property tax (Mora 24). In this way, the site was transformed.

There was a time when the residents of Mexico City only visited the Historic Center under duress. Once dirty and dangerous, since 2002 this part of the city has taken on a new lease of life, to the point where it is now a trendy place to live, work and play. Today there are plenty of good reasons to visit downtown Mexico City! (Pro México, 'Negocios—An Auspicious Encounter between the Public and Private Sectors')



Fig. 9. A street in Mexico City's Historic Centre. Mexico City, 24 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

Clearly, the rescue of the Historic Centre to construct a better place to live, work, shop and be entertained has promoted gentrification. The outcome of those policies are the creation of monopolies that control rents

and premises and disadvantage the original marginal people, such as hawkers, prostitutes, beggars and local dwellers. When a new coffee shop or pop-up was opened, the presence of the people who lived in the surrounding area was reduced. For example, the hawkers that had taken over the zone to sell a range of products were removed. After being evicted in the interest of the Historic Centre's revitalisation, their opportunities were scarce: either they could work for the pop-ups and new businesses established in the zone, or they could leave the zone to look for better opportunities. Thus, the rescue of the Historic Centre followed the ideal of the creative city. The improvement of the zone is, indeed, a type of gentrification.

Art and culture have played an essential role in this movement. Since its inception, the fmx has supported the renovation project of the Historic Centre. The festival has functioned to foster a series of cultural activities such as movies, theatre and visits to museums and galleries, which enhance liveability and investment. Every year, the festival fills the streets and squares of the Historic Centre with artistic events, making the zone suitable for a creative class. As happens in other world cities, by bringing that arty atmosphere to the Historic Centre, the fmx masks the appropriation of the central city spaces and thus helps to make a profit out of this renovation. In a historical cultural centre destined to attract tourists and promote investment, the role of the festival is of paramount importance.

However, the developers have had to appropriate space and distribute it in particular ways to deal with the inhabitants of the town centre. They have had to deal with social groups, such as the hawkers of that zone, who were suspicious of private corporations, on the one hand, and the people who

were making the historic buildings their business, on the other. The fmx, in turn, has had to negotiate its 'placement' in relation to the historical and ideological flows that run within and throughout the city. In this manner, through artistic events and with the aim of bringing about cultural development, the festival has indirectly supported the privatising project. The traditional use of space in the Historic Centre has been transformed, and the fmx has contributed to this transformation by helping to develop a historical-cultural space administered by the private sector.

Nonetheless, the restoration has not brought about a total appropriation of the zone; rather, it has brought constant friction. Hawkers banned from the first zone of the Historic Centre frequently return, occupying other places in the city. The main square is witness to numerous demonstrations carried out by social organisations that have seized the square as the heart of their protests. For example, various unions and farmers' organisations protested in January 2010 against the rise in prices and low salaries and in July 2010, there were demonstrations by the members of the Sindicato Mexicano de Electricistas (Mexican Union of Electricians) to protest against the closure of their source of employment, the extinct Compañía de Luz y Fuerza (Light and Power Company). Thus, the landscape of the Historic Centre is never still but evolves according to social events. In this sense, the space is neither a fixed entity nor a vessel to receive human actions, but it is an important element in the construction of social meanings.

The fmx was created to save the city centre from deterioration. Behind this idea was the objective of making a profit out of the spaces after their

refurbishment. The festival, primarily rooted in the city centre, was promoted as bringing new life to this part of the city; this masked the deals and trade-offs being sealed. As well as contributing to gentrification, the fmx made an incursion into the normal life of a community. The festival is a project that obviated the sense of belonging inhabitants in the Historic Centre had; an event that contributed to the commodification of the space of that zone without taking into account the attachments to place and social conditions of those persons. The fmx has not yet addressed the marginal people that live in the zone. On the contrary, its emphasis has been precisely on the international avant-garde in international artistic innovations. The festival has helped to attract the creative class; its trajectory rests on the principles of the creative city. For whom was the Historic Centre rescued? What needed to be rescued? Certainly, it was not the marginal people.

Besides the application of transnational patterns of spatial arrangements to the organisation and development of cities and events, the impact of global flows can also be appreciated in the type and quality of the venues in which a particular festival takes place. Physical space has certain features that endow performances with specific attributes and condition the development and meaning of events. The following section will deal with the impact of the ideological coded material of space on both FITH and fmx.

The Ideological Coded Material of Space at the fmx and the FITH

According to Ric Knowles, the meaning that a performance acquires in a particular context depends on the performance's 'ideological coded material conditions in production, circulation, use and reproduction' (*Reading the*

Material 16–17). For Knowles, ‘the geography of performance is both produced by and produces the cultural landscape and the social organization of the space in which it ‘takes place’, and to shift physical and/or social space is to shift meaning’ (*Reading the Material* 63). In addition, Knowles argues that ‘The material conditions of production shape the meanings of the plays that we write about and teach as dramatic literature. These conditions include theatre and stage architecture, which silently inscribe specific and ideologically coded ways of seeing’ (Knowles, *Reading Material* 60). Hence, spaces are not only inhabited by memories, they also contain ideologies. From this vantage point, the built environment defines the event. In other words, the specific characteristics of the space condition the performance. The size of the rehearsal space, for example, has an effect on the types of movements, the extension of the displacements and the height of the scenography. Consequently, the material conditions of the space also shape the execution of festivals. In this sense, I argue that the material conditions of some venues in which the FITH and the fmx developed are intrinsically related to the processes of colonisation and globalisation.

For Doreen Massey, the history of colonisation, and, as a consequence, globalisation, can be understood as ‘the experience of exploration outward from Europe and of the discovery of lands and people other than Europe’ (*Imagining* 29). Colonisation is ‘a story told from the point of view of Europe as protagonist’; therefore, ‘globalizing that story enables an understanding of its positionality, its geographical embeddedness’ (*Imagining* 29). Correspondingly, narrating history from a Eurocentric point of view constitutes a project for imagining cultures and assigning them bounded

territories. “Places” come to be seen as bounded, with their own internally generated authenticities, as defined by their difference from other places which lay outside, beyond their borders’ (*Imagining* 29). In this manner, separations and divisions are used not only to mark differences between people, but also as ways of organising people and, as Massey suggests, ways of ‘organizing space . . . controlling it . . . and conceptualizing it’ (*Imagining* 30). Massey argues that there are ways of imagining globalisation that have an ‘unwitting innocence about positionality’, which leads some scholars to accept it ‘as an inevitability’ (*Imagining* 27). Massey also proposes to examine two core themes in globalisation: first, the power relations embedded in the social spheres and systems that ‘our conceptualizations are constructing’; and, secondly, the ‘power-geometries of time-space’ (*Imagining* 27–28).

In our contemporary world, globalisation implies unrestricted spatial mobility and a growing capacity for interactions but advocates pay less attention to the ways in which these processes implicate power relationships. Not everybody can afford mobility and there is uneven access to technology and to the means of distribution of ideas and artistic projects. Without taking into account the power relationships that are generated by this interactivity, it is impossible to discern why some ways of producing and receiving art are permeating particular places more than others. In this light, international festivals are increasingly becoming sites for the global distribution, access and recognition of artistic practices, an issue in which space strongly affects the course of the events or the nature of things.

The hegemonic discourses that gave birth to colonisation, nation-states, and, more recently, to globalisation, were and are particular ways of

narrating history. Thus, in the line of artistic globalisation, there is an origin and a destination. While some countries are the providers of spatial models, other countries are the receivers. Whereas some countries propose and execute spatial developments, the rest are free territories. Furthermore, there is also the embedded notion of distance and positionality: first-world vs. third-world festivals. Thus, the distance in geographical terms can give way to an artistic 'gap'—a gap that needs to be filled with artistic projects, such as festivals.

Massey's ideas draw our attention to a trend. The history of theatre is usually an account of a Western theatre, or more precisely, an account of theatre from a Western perspective. The word theatre has a specific geographical origin that incorporates a Western spatiality. In spite of new attempts to forge narratives about theatre that embody different histories, for example, the book *Theatre Histories* by Phillip B. Zarrilli, Bruce McConachie, Gary Jay Williams and Carol Fisher Sorgenfrei, the way in which theatre has been mainly taught in Latin America holds European theatre as the core of performance production in the world.¹⁷

In line with the Western account of theatre, the construction of venues in Mexico and Cuba can be seen as moments of colonisation. However, in contrast to the notion of colonisation as a 'natural process of development' or as something needed in order to bring development, colonisation represents an explicit form of violence and exertion of organised power. The exertion of power implies directionality: a group that exercises the power and another that receives that power—in this case, a group that develops space and another that adjusts to those developments. In this respect, a way of

producing and receiving theatre has been expanded through a hierarchical process of spatial development, through *spatialities* that have a specific geo-historical origin affecting the way in which both the FITH and the fmx develop.

The cultural development of Mexico and Cuba suggests a hierarchical positioning and a distribution of an ideology materialised through space. Indeed, the construction of venues in those countries was the result of a process of colonisation. In Mexico, theatre was used as an instrument of spiritual colonisation that helped Spanish conquerors to dominate indigenous people (Toriz, 'El Teatro de Evangelización'). The Teatro de Evangelización (Evangelisation Theatre) was intended as a type of 'rational colonisation', part of the project of Renaissance humanism that would provide indigenous people with religious education and knowledge. The space in which the first evangelisation plays were staged was symbolically the atrium of the colonial Spanish churches.

As the plays evolved, the spaces of representation also changed. However, the construction of new venues in Mexico was done in the fashion of European ones. In Mexico, at the end of the sixteenth century, the first *corrales de comedia* (open-air theatres) were constructed. These theatres were made in the image and likeness of the Spanish open-air theatres. Although theatrical manifestations were not only restricted to purpose-built venues, these other types of performances were also held in palaces, streets and squares, that is, constructions built by Spanish conquerors (Vásquez Meléndez, 'Fiestas Cortesanas'). After the Mexican revolution and the access to the power of Creoles, new theatres were built. In many cases, these venues

were copies of European theatres. Thus, many of the venues—erected during the evangelisation period and at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries—resemble a Western type of theatre. For example, in Mexico City, the Palacio de Bellas Artes (Palace of Fine Arts), a symbol of national culture, is a combination of the Neoclassical, Art Nouveau and Art Deco styles that came from Europe (Vargas Mendoza, 'Palacio de Bellas Artes México'). The construction of this venue started in 1904 under the supervision of Italian architect Adamo Boari, and it was finished in 1934 by Mexican architect Federico Mariscal.

In Cuba, there is a similar process but with its specific particularities. Theatre was also brought to the island by Spanish conquerors. The first Christian festivities of Corpus Christi in the sixteenth century are considered the context for 'the appearance of the first stage manifestations in the island' (En Caribe, 14 Jul. 2010). Accordingly, the first national venues were also constructed to resemble European theatres. In 1776, one of the first Cuban venues, the Teatro Coliseo (Coliseum Theatre), was inaugurated in Havana. This space was built as a copy of the Teatro alla Scalla in Milan, Italy, which has a neoclassical style (En Caribe, 14 Jul. 2010). In Cuba, the emergence of the nation-state led to the construction of new theatre buildings to symbolise the new epoch and prosperity of the new social classes. However, these constructions, for example, the Teatro Sauto in Matanzas and the Great Theatre of Havana in Cuba, also bear a resemblance to European theatre spaces.

What this indicates is that in spite of the presence of other spaces in which to perform, such as squares, streets and marquees, there has been a

predominance of a Western type of venue in Mexico and Cuba that still persists today. In both countries there is a reverberation of a specific spatial concept; a Western idea of theatre seeps into the spaces of Mexico and Cuba, conditioning the dynamics of the production and reception of performances, and, as a consequence, shaping both FITH and fmx. On the other hand, the expansion of a spatial model represents a geopolitical positioning that implies power relationships. In other words, in both Cuba and Mexico, there has been a vertical development of theatrical space dictated by Western countries. The flow of an architectural design from Europe to Latin America exposes a hierarchical scattering of a notion of space.

The fact that Spanish constructions were used as instruments of colonisation exposes a way of embodying power relationships through space. The construction of churches, and later theatres, worked as a geopolitical strategy of the colonial powers, a strategy that is taken up by the nation-states. In short, the institutions that had the power transformed the space to their needs. As a result, an artistic model, a way of producing and receiving theatre, has been realised through its materialisation or embodiment in space. What is often seen as a normal or natural development of art, and particularly of theatre, has indeed been constructed or, more precisely, imposed from a particular historical perspective. Both the FITH and the fmx are somehow inheritors of Western spatial dynamics; that is, both festivals employ the spaces created in the fashion of Western theatrical spaces and have to tackle the realisation of their events in those types of venues, which are now administered by their respective nation-states.

In other words, theatre, as a concept that travels from Europe to the rest of the world, involves the spreading of a Western spatial notion of producing and receiving art in the rest of the world. This notion of theatre has not travelled alone but in the form of theatre constructions and spatial arrangements brought to Mexico and Cuba by Spanish conquerors. In this logic of colonisation/globalisation, buildings, such as the Great Theatre of Havana and the Theatre Esperanza Iris, in countries such as Mexico or Cuba can be seen as tools to spread a particular theatre concept through the arrangement and conceptualisation of space.

From a total of 60 spaces used during the 2011 FITH, only the Bertolt Brecht Cultural Centre, the Theatre Mella, the Theatre Triánón and the García Lorca Hall of Great Theatre of Havana in Old Havana have been built specifically to host performances. The rest of the venues used in the festival were old spaces adapted by theatre companies to function as theatres. Similarly, at the fmx 2010, there were three purpose-built venues designated to host the theatre performances: the Teatro de la Ciudad Esperanza Iris (Esperanza Iris City Theatre), the Teatro Julio Castillo (Julio Castillo Theatre) and the Teatro Julio Jiménez Rueda (Julio Jiménez Rueda Theatre). Among the most important venues that received international performances in the fmx and the FITH were Mexico City's Theatre Esperanza Iris and the García Lorca Hall of the Great Theatre of Havana, respectively. These venues exemplify the so-called Italian design space used extensively at international festivals.

The theatre 'Esperanza Iris' was constructed in 1918 and named after Esperanza Iris, an operetta singer from the Mexican state of Tabasco

(Secretaría de Cultura, 'Teatro de la Ciudad de México, Esperanza Iris'). The architects, Capetillo Servín and Federico Mariscal, based the theatre building on Teatro alla Scala in Milan, Italy (Ortiz, 26 May. 2010). After its opening, the theatre was the most important cultural venue in the city and hosted international stars such as Enrico Caruso and Anna Pavlova (Secretaría de Cultura, 'Teatro de la Ciudad de México, Esperanza Iris'). In 1976, the theatre became the property of Mexico City's government, which changed its name to Teatro de la Ciudad (City Theatre). However, in 2008, Mexico City's government added 'Esperanza Iris', giving it its current name: Teatro de la Ciudad Esperanza Iris (Secretaría de Cultura, 'Teatro de la Ciudad de México, Esperanza Iris').



Fig. 10. Part of the interior of the Theatre Esperanza Iris. Mexico City, 13 Mar. 2012.

Photograph by the author.

The Gran Teatro de La Habana (Great Theatre of Havana) is a building located on Paseo del Prado Avenue, very close to the Capitolio, within the zone designated as Old Havana. The building is adorned with marble and has a sumptuous decor. Built in 1837 as the Gran Teatro Tacón (Great Tacón Theatre), the theatre actually hosts the Cuban National Ballet (Cuba Absolutely Team, 'Gran Teatro de La Habana'). The theatre was initially built in the German neo-baroque architectural style (The Cuba Experience, 'The Great Theater of Havana'). In 1914, the building known at that time as the Palace of the Galician Centre was demolished to make room for the current complex. The actual space opened its doors in 1915. In 1985, it acquired its current name: Gran Teatro de La Habana, reserving the name Teatro García Lorca for its main stage (The Cuba Experience, 'The Great Theater of Havana'). The main stage has seating capacity for 1,500 people, and the complex contains rooms for rehearsals, conferences, video projections and galleries for visual arts. 'Since its opening its opulence made the theatre the cultural place of the Havana aristocracy, where they used to go to let everybody see their fortune and power' (The Cuba Experience, 'The Great Theater of Havana').¹⁸

In both the Great Theatre of Havana and Theatre Esperanza Iris, the visibility from the top levels was poor and the view fragmented, the stage was partially blocked, and the actors were seen almost from an aerial perspective. It was difficult to see the actors' faces and gestures from the top levels, while the stage-level seats afforded a sense of mastery on the part of the viewer. The actors' bodies, which from the top level were like little dolls, were seen well from the stage level.



Fig. 11. Audience in the upper levels of the García Lorca Hall of the Great Theatre of Havana. Havana, Cuba, 5 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Clearly, the space has an order, a coded ideology, and the theatres have implicit social hierarchies. The Great Theatre of Havana and Theatre Esperanza Iris perpetuate an aristocratic ideology that involves the separation of audience by social status. This spatial arrangement bestows some segments of the public with privileges, while discriminating against others. The space contains and rejects people at the same time. In this sense, it resembles a heterotopia: 'We think we enter where we are, by the very fact that we enter, excluded' (Foucault, *Of Other* 26). Space incorporates a social order, a distribution of people, and it situates the audience in social classes; at the same time, it conditions the act of performance enjoyment, that is, the modes and circumstances of reception by the public.

The foundation of both Theatre Esperanza Iris and the Great Theatre of Havana is intimately linked to the emergence of nationalism in Cuba and Mexico. The construction of these buildings embodies and represents the prosperity of a social class at that moment, and, even though they are distant

from each other, they are similar types of spaces constructed in the fashion of European theatres. Moreover, the same international artists, such as dancer Anna Pavlova and singer Enrico Caruso, have been hosted by both spaces (The Cuba Experience, 'The Great Theater of Havana; Secretaría de Cultura, 'Teatro de la Ciudad de México, Esperanza Iris').

Although contexts and relationships have changed, there is something that pervades the spaces, something that echoes the same spatial arrangements, cultural products and social relationships. History repeats itself, or more precisely, unfolds in cycles. What travels through history is not only the material structures provided by the design of the space, but also the dynamics of production and reception encapsulated in the spatiality of the constructions. Venues embody particular human relationships in their inception. In the construction of the Great Theatre of Havana and Theatre Esperanza Iris, a Western way of producing and receiving theatre is implied. The materiality of the space involves specific social relationships. A particular concept of space that was created in Europe resonates not only in Mexico, but also in Cuba, and perhaps even farther due to colonialism.

Knowles considers that spaces such as the proscenium stage represent an ideology. For him, the proscenium design in a theatre implies the use of a perspective attributable to an aristocratic order that emerged in the seventeenth century: the seat with the best perspective, as well as 'the best seat for being seen by the rest of the audience', was literally 'that of the king, prince, or duke' (Knowles, *Reading the Material* 63).

During the fmx 2010, the Theatre Esperanza Iris hosted international artists, including theatre artist Romeo Castellucci from Italy, the tap dancer

Savion Glover and jazz musician Charles Gayle from the USA, as well as the Zinco Big Band and the pop singer Ely Guerra from Mexico. The performances staged in the Theatre Esperanza Iris as part of the 2010 fmx were conceived to suit the so-called Italian-design space, that is, having European constructions as a model. As a consequence, they established a specific type of relationship between audiences and artists. During the performances hosted by Theatre Esperanza Iris, the architectural design proposed an intrinsic kind of dynamic in which the audience was considered passive while the artists were active. Whereas the actors were lit, the audience remained in the dark. There was a particular site for the performers and another for the audience. There was also the idea of the imaginary fourth wall at the front of the stage, which separated the fictional from the real. Moreover, there existed the use of a perspective based on the duke or king's positionality, implying that a segment of the public had better visibility than the others. Theatre Esperanza Iris also employed different entrances for different groups of spectators. The people with the best perspective had special doors in the first level, while the rest of the public had lateral doors, which provided access to the upper levels. Thus, the architecture of the theatre space affected the way in which people interacted. The built environment, in this case, had an aristocratic bias and treated certain social groups more favourably.

The Great Theatre of Havana also drew in different types of audiences while preserving its elitist air. The FITH 2011 mixed hit shows with the aristocratic history of the Great Theatre of Havana. Two of the three performances that took place in this venue as part of the 2011 FITH were

Broadway Ambassadors from the USA and *Suite Flamenca* by the company Antonio Gades from Spain. These performances reinforced the ideological burden of the space with their internationalism and visually charged artistic formulae. The ticket prices for the events hosted in this venue were more expensive; this marked a difference with other Cuban spaces, for example, the old houses adapted to function as theatres. The international quality of the events worked along with the aristocratic past of the venue to imbue performances with a type of artsy-snobish elitism that helped to construct the idea of these spaces as exclusive.

The Great Theatre of Havana and Theatre Esperanza Iris encompass an ideology that implicitly asserts that they were not created to host bricklayers or farmers. However, this situation seems particularly strange in the FITH because it contrasts with the socialist ideology of the Cuban government. The space calls for a classy type of audience and endows performances and people with social status while the Cuban socialist system defends the abolition of hierarchies. The ideological coded material of the Great Theatre of Havana creates social divisions while the Cuban social system fosters citizen equality. Even when the Cuban socialist system claims social ownership, social classes are imbued in the concept and development of that venue. In this sense, the presentation of the Antonio Gades Company from Spain expresses another way in which socialism related to the coded ideology of the Great Theatre of Havana.

The performance of Antonio Gades Company in the FITH 2011 *Suite Flamenca* was composed of seven of the traditional flamenco dances that Gades performed during his life. According to Michael Eade:

From 1959 until his death Gades was an outspoken supporter of the Cuban revolution. When he and the famous singer Marisol married in 1982, after having their three daughters, it was in Havana with Alicia Alonso and Fidel Castro as sponsors. These two sponsors summed up Gades's life: dance and communism. (22 Jul. 2004)

Gades is also recognised as the man who introduced all the drama of theatre to the flamenco dance. In the 1970s, Gades started an artistic movement that would prompt him to forge his particular choreographic style. Tintes Flamencos explains that 'in Spain flamenco dance was "sold" in a way that caused rejection because it meant to "prostitute the flamenco's culture"' (Tintes Flamencos S.L., *Antonio Gades*). According to Gades, it was necessary to eliminate all the glitter, the sequins and the virtuositities to bring to light the essence of the dance (Tintes Flamencos S.L., *Antonio Gades*). Thus, Gades proposed a flamenco dance for the masses in line with the socialist postulates for the arts of the Cuban government. Antonio Gades also maintained a close relationship with the Cuban state and with Fidel Castro, who, on 6 June 2004, decorated him with the prestigious Order José Martí for his love and unswerving friendship and fidelity (Eaude, 22 Jul. 2004).

Consequently, for the realisation of the FITH, the Great Theatre of Havana also hosted international artists that worked in close relationship with the Cuban state or contributed to the improvement of Cuba's relationships with other countries and the people of other countries. It was evident that the Cuban government needed international allies to maintain its social system. In this case, Gades' favourable opinion of the nation in the international purview won his company a place in one of the most important

theatres in Cuba. However, *Suite Flamenca* was also shaped by the hierarchic coded ideology of the Great Theatre of Havana. In other words, the principles on which the performance was based responded to the idea of a flamenco dance for the masses, but that endeavour was partially blurred by the intrinsic spatial dynamics of the theatre. A performance for the masses turned out to be a show for the elite due to the coded ideology of the Great Theatre of Havana. This situation suggests that similar spatial designs can make different performances look alike.

Through the process of rehearsals, theatre companies incorporate into their performances a specific kind of spatial dynamic, a spatial embodiment that may look to be reproducible in other theatre spaces around the world at different festivals. That is, beginning in the rehearsal process, there is an implicit awareness of spatial requirements, for example, an awareness about the distribution of artists and audience, whether there is a need for curtains, the type of scenography and props that fit in that particular space or the amount and type of lights and other equipment needed for the performance in that specific place. If theatre companies are eager to perform in the Great Theatre of Havana, then they must adapt their performances to the spatial requirements of this venue. A theatre space such as the Great Theatre of Havana contains an ideology that is connected to a series of spaces with the same architectural patterns around the world, spaces that, despite their many particularities and differences, embody a theatrical concept based on the king's perspective, the separation of audiences by purchase power, the dividing of the 'fictional' and the 'real' and the use of the proscenium stage, among other elements. In this sense, although the two performances hosted

in the Great Theatre of Havana, *Broadway Ambassadors* and *Suite Flamenca*, had different social objectives, they both seemed to have similar ones. In this way, the spatial design of the Great Theatre of Havana had an impact on *Suite Flamenca*.

The Great Theatre of Havana and the Theatre Esperanza Iris represent a trend in global theatre. It is curious to observe that a great number of international festivals have the proscenium as the essential type of spatial arrangement at their main venues. The international festival circuit has tacitly adopted a Western type of space. In other words, a specific concept of space and the social relationships it bears has been disseminated widely at various international festivals. The following venues embrace the proscenium stage as their main spatial design: The Festival Theatre and The Edinburgh Playhouse in the Edinburgh International Festival in the UK, the Arena di Verona in the Verona Opera Festival in Italy, the Dunstan Playhouse the Adelaide Festival Theatre and Her Majesty's Theatre in the Adelaide Festival in Australia, the Theatre Jorge Eliécer Gaitán and the Theatre Gilberto Alzate Avendaño in the Festival Iberoamericano de Teatro de Bogotá (Bogotá Iberian-American Theatre Festival) in Colombia, the Guy Butler Theatre St. Andrews Hall and the Victoria Theatre in the National Arts Festival in South Africa. This situation has an impact on the type of theatre produced for international festivals.

However, festivals have the possibility of using the space in a different way in order to challenge its implicit ideology. History suggests that the Great Theatre of Havana hosted romantic plays that challenged the ideology of the Spanish dominant classes, that is, the plays of the nineteenth century like *El*

becerro de oro (*The Golden Calf*) by Lorenzo Luaces, which set the action in Cuba and included Cuban characters, versus Spanish plays that took place in Spain or Paris with foreign characters (Pérez Ascencio 30–37). According to Antonieta César, the Theatre Tacón (now Great Theatre of Havana) facilitated the birth of theatrical romanticism in the island, an event that led to confrontations between Cubans and Spanish people. These confrontations contributed to the formation of the pro-independence ideology that led to the first war for Cuban independence (22 Dec. 2011). Thus, a venue thought to foster Spanish plays became a space to display Creole plays, a situation that exposes the multiple relationships that can be produced from the interaction between the festivals' settings, the ideology associated with their locations or venues, and the performances brought by festivals. As I will explain later, in Chapter 2 and Chapter 3, these changing interactions reveal that the meaning of space is always under construction.

Chapter 2: Embodying the Nation

The concept of nation has usually been associated with a particular territory that has defined boundaries and a given population. However, nationhood does not always exist the way we might think it does. According to Benedict Anderson, a nation 'is an imagined political community—and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (6). It is imagined because in the mind of each individual belonging to that particular community dwells the image of their communion despite people never knowing or meeting most of the community members (6–7). The nation is imagined as limited because, apart from its size and elastic boundaries, it recognises the existence of other frontiers where other nations lie (7). Nationhood is also sovereign because it emerges against the hierarchical order and legitimacy of the divinity and the dynastic realm (7). Moreover, a nation is imagined as a community because it is conceived horizontally; that is, all citizens within the nation's boundaries are considered the same, in spite of the inequality that could exist within. The nation looks for comradeship and fraternity, which can lead people to kill or die for 'such limited imagining', for example, when defending their homeland in a war (7). Thus, sharing the same human conditions bestows upon this social formation a feeling of community.

However, in spite of their quest for unity, nations contain dualities, or more precisely, tensions. Nations and neighbourhoods are opposed because nation-states look for the homogenisation and standardisation of neighbourhoods, while neighbourhoods, in contrast, want to produce their own particular contexts. In this way, neighbourhoods look to be different rather than the same; that is, through diversity neighbourhoods destabilise

the hegemonic control of nations, and through difference they look for their survival within the nations' bounded territories. Consequently, neighbourhoods represent anxiety for nation-states, but they are also the source of subjects (workers, teachers and soldiers) to nurture the nation-state system (Appadurai, *Production* 190). A nation is a single 'imagined community', but it is also the sum of all its neighbourhoods.

The fact that there exists a constant battle to maintain the unity of the nation implies the employment of various strategies thought to gain control over the citizens or to distribute a particular ideology to assert that unity. Nation-states have to display a wide range of strategies to imbue that sense of community among their citizens, a sense of national unity which is often a construction that stems from the perspective of the particular social groups that hold the power in the national structure. In other words, the multiplicity contained within the nation calls for strategies to bring the disparities together under the umbrella of national unity. In this respect, culture, art and by extension festivals can be instruments that help to construct that sense of community.

In the following sections, I will analyse how national issues have been embedded in the fmx 2010 and FITH 2011. My analysis of the impact of the nation-state on the FITH and the fmx takes three pathways. First, I analyse the employment of the space both as an important tool for the nation-state to distribute and organise the events and as a way to embody national identities. Secondly, I explore the influence of national cultural initiatives in the organisation of the events and their contents. Thirdly, I examine the

hybrid process of national identity formation through some performances included in the FITH 2011 and the fmx 2010.

National Spatiality and Festivals

Nation-states very often control a huge percentage of the theatre buildings in their countries through their cultural secretariats and also have a socio-political strategy to develop culture and art in their territories. Nation-states exert their power by regulating the types of performances programmed in the venues under their administration and by distributing national cultural policies through the spaces they manage. In this sense, the organisation, distribution and use of the theatres under the control of the national cultural apparatus can be deemed as essential in facilitating a nationwide artistic vision.

The relationship between the festival structure and the space administered by nation-states can be set out in two ways: First, the influence of the nation-state on the festival structure in relation to the employment, distribution and location of performances; secondly, the incorporation of space into the festival organisation as a marker of national identity, that is, the embodiment of landscapes and their characteristics as an attribute of nationhood. In this respect, the natural and built environments at the FITH and the fmx are employed as a way to characterise festivals and their nationality. I shall start by developing the first notion.

The National Administration of Space and its Influence on the fmx and the FITH

According to the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, in Mexico there are 594 theatres distributed in 32 federal entities, of which 131 are located in Mexico City (*Sistema de Información Cultural*). A great quantity of these spaces are managed by the Mexican government through governmental institutions such as Secretariats of Culture and Cultural Centres; in fact, the Instituto Mexicano de Seguridad Social (Mexican Social Security Institute) (IMSS) administers more than 70 venues across the country, which represents the biggest theatre infrastructure in Mexico (Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, *Sistema de Información Cultural*). In Cuba, according to the Consejo Nacional de las Artes Escénicas (National Council of Theatre and Dance), there are 33 theatres, 40 venues or spaces adapted to function as theatres and 54 alternative spaces (Cubaescena, 'Escenarios-Teatros'). In this case, all theatres, spaces adapted to function as theatres, and alternative spaces, are managed by the Cuban government through the Department of Culture and subsidiary institutions.

Besides theatres, the fmx 2010 and the FITH 2011 also programmed performances in the streets and squares. Although, streets and squares are usually considered public spaces in both Mexico and Cuba, they are, to some extent, controlled by the nation-states, that is, governments could grant or deny permits for presentations in such sites. In the fmx 2010, the majority of the performances were held in purpose-built theatres, while in the FITH 2011, the spaces that hosted a great percentage of performances were old buildings adapted to serve as venues. This gave particular characteristics to

the distribution and location of performances in both festivals and made a national impact on the festivals structures.

For example, the Mexican government manages the Theatre Julio Castillo, which hosted *Únicamente la verdad: la auténtica historia de Camelia 'la tejana'* (*Only the Truth: The authentic story of Camelia 'The Texan'*); the Museo de la Ciudad de México (Museum of the City of Mexico), which received the Singing Children of the Historic Centre; the Theatre of the City 'Esperanza Iris', which presented performances such as *Hey Girl!* and *Bare Soundz*; the theatre Jiménez Rueda, which programmed *Malinche-Malinches*; and even the Historic Centre squares in which the fmx developed some activities. This suggests that the Mexican nation-state, through its cultural apparatus, shaped the fmx structure by programming plays alluding to the bicentenary in the spaces under its administration. That is, the Mexican government lent their spaces to the fmx, but at the same time these spaces functioned to distribute performances produced by the Mexican state through its subsidiary institutions such as the National Council for Culture and the Arts and the National Institute of Fine Arts. All the theatre performances with content related to Mexicanness in the fmx 2010 not only were hosted in the spaces under the Mexican government administration, but were also sponsored by the Mexican government.

The Compañía Nacional de Teatro (National Theatre Company) (CNT), commissioned and produced *Horas de gracia (Hours of Grace)* by Juan Tovar, a play based on a polemic personage of the Mexican independence, Agustín de Iturbide. The Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and the Arts) (Conaculta), through the programme

México en Escena (Mexico on Stage), sponsored *Malinche/Malinches*, the third part of director Juliana Faesler's *Mexican Trilogy*. The Compañía Nacional de Ópera (National Opera Company), the Coro y Orquesta del Teatro de Bellas Artes (Chorus and Orchestra of the Fine Arts Theatre), and the fmx coproduced *Únicamente la verdad: la auténtica historia de Camelia la Tejana* (*Only the Truth: The authentic story of Camelia 'The Texan'*).

Furthermore, the location of the fmx in Mexico City's Historic Centre also complies with a governmental strategy to develop that zone and lure investments. Since its beginnings, the fmx has been attached to the renewal of the Historic Centre as discussed in Chapter 1. This suggests that the Mexican government donates funds to the festival organisation because it is consistent with its national project of development. Through the lending of particular spaces in the Historic Centre for the realisation of the fmx and the concentration of the festival activities in that zone, the nation-state affected the event. In a way, the government uses the fmx as a tool of spatial development for the zone, that is, the support given to the festival yields benefits to the government.

Locating the festival in Mexico City's Historic Centre endows the fmx with a series of socio-political dynamics. The location of the event involves alliances and rejections; for example, the adoption of the Historic Centre to the detriment of other zones foregrounds the importance for the government of that particular location. In locating here, the fmx also takes positions in relation to the other districts in the city and in relation to the spatial histories those zones maintain. Choosing the Historic Centre represents a political

stand because the fmx embraces a particular area at the expense of other areas.

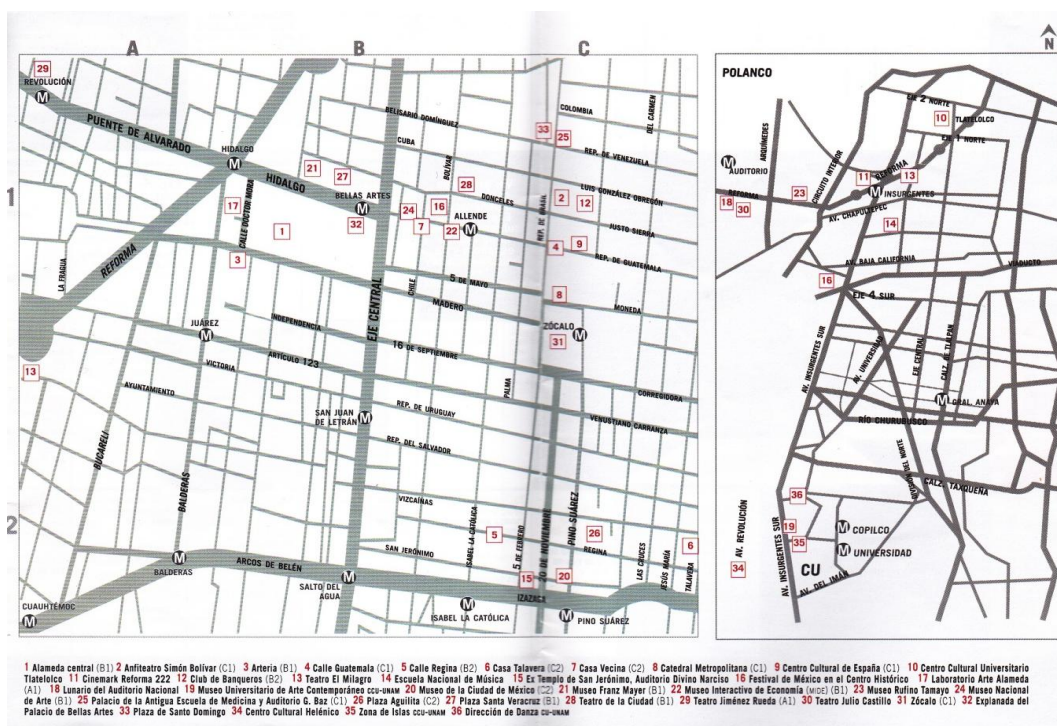


Fig. 12. Map of the spaces employed for the Festival of Mexico 2010. The left figure corresponds to Mexico City's Historic Centre; the right refers to spaces outside the Historic Centre. Mexico City, 8 Dec. 2012. Photograph by the author.

The development of the fmx is also in line with Mexican cultural policies oriented to enhance the international profile of Mexican art. The Mexican Programa Nacional de Cultura 2007–2012 points out in the section 'Culture and Tourism', that the first objective is 'to promote and consolidate the existent markets of cultural tourism and impel new routes and tourist itineraries in Mexico' (Mexico, *Consejo* 150). The second objective of the same section states that the aim is 'to promote cultural tourism as a tool to propel regional development, preserve the [cultural] heritage, generate investment and contribute to fighting poverty in zones with tourist attractions' (Mexico, *Consejo* 151).

Mexican policies value the interchange between the nation and other countries but also facilitate the commoditisation of Mexican culture by branding a particular conceptualisation of being Mexican in the global market. According to those policies, many Mexican cultural activities need to be turned into tourist attractions. In fact, the section devoted to culture and tourism in the Programa Nacional de Cultura 2007–2012 promotes cultural development by making Mexican art a profitable commodity. The Mexican government, through its cultural policies, is proposing an international Mexican profile to operate within international cultural frameworks. In many occasions, these cultural policies have led to clashes with local communities who refused to permit the using of ancient ruins, for example, the use of ancient ruins for concerts and other cultural tourism activities. In this context, it seems that international festivals are used by the government as cultural capital, as a way to legitimate itself internationally. The support of major festivals in Mexico, such as The Festival Internacional Cervantino (Cervantes International Festival) and the fmx, has been a strategy to position Mexico in the global market, that is, to create a transnational cultural market and develop tourist centres to enhance Mexico's international profile.¹⁹

An important difference between the fmx and the FITH that affects the distribution of performances in both events and the national impact on each one is that in the latter, all the pop-ups (the old places converted into small venues) are backed by the Cuban government, while in Mexico those spaces are owned or rented by independent companies. For example, one of the venues employed by the fmx 2010 was the Theatre El Milagro (The Miracle

Theatre), which received the performance *Lejos (Far)* by Mexican artists Mauricio Jiménez, Daniel Giménez Cacho and Laura Almela. The Miracle Theatre is run by a group of artists in an independent organisation founded in 1991 and devoted to the promotion, publishing and investigation of theatre and art. That is, the administrators of that space can choose the type of artists they programme. Moreover, in the Mexican pop-ups, the independent companies earn their salaries by selling performances, organising activities or renting their own spaces. In contrast, the Cuban government pays the actors that work in the pop-ups. In other words, the government permits or denies the use of the space for the independent companies. In this sense, the Mexican pop-ups are the places where one is likely to find performances that do not conform to the expected government's standards or line.

As an event totally managed by the Cuban government, the FITH is an instrument with which to address the political agenda of the nation-state. During the festival, three types of spaces were used. First, purpose built venues such as the Teatro Trianón, the Great Theatre of Havana, the Cultural Centre Bertolt Brecht or the Teatro Hubert de Blanck. Secondly, the FITH employed spaces adapted to receive performances that were not designed to function as theatres in their inception, that is, abandoned houses that were renewed to function as venues; for example, the Sala Adolfo Llauradó (Adolfo Llauradó Hall), the Sala Buendía (Buendía Hall), the Sala Sótano (Basement Hall) or the Sala Argos (Argos Hall). Finally, the third group comprised spaces such as streets and squares that hosted performances and theatrical interventions. All the activities programmed in all those spaces during the

FITH were decided by a committee that depends on the Cuban Secretariat of Culture. The committee, whose visible head is artistic director Bárbara Rivero, deals with all the issues related to the festival, such as the call for entries, the selection and organisation of the events and the spaces in which they are presented (Bonilla, 'Personal'). Thus, the Cuban nation-state explicitly exerted its power not only by deciding what type of activities should be programmed, but also by designating the spaces that should be used.

Furthermore, there are differences in the working conditions in both countries. In Cuba, the lack of money and materials to renew the pop-ups has made it very difficult to use them. As a result, it is possible to find two or three groups working in only one venue. By contrast, those emerging spaces in Mexico are only employed by the group in charge, the same one that completely decides what to do with the space. This means that while the Cuban state exerts a rigid control over the pop-ups in the FITH and maybe over the groups' content and aesthetics, emerging spaces in Mexico are more flexible regarding their programming. The existence of different administrative models in the Cuban and Mexican pop-ups also signals that there are specific tensions and contradictions in each country instead of establishing that the working conditions in Mexico are better. For example, it seems to me that it is easier to get a space for an independent company through the Cuban government, rather than saving all the money needed to buy and equip a small venue in Mexico.

The way in which a festival distributes performances in the different spaces assigns them specific attributes. Different venues have different

prestige and even different personalities and ambiances. By distributing audiences according to spaces, prices or genres, festivals establish differences between spectators and arguably denote that some people matter more than others. Furthermore, by providing important venues to some artists, festivals contribute to the enhancement of particular groups and aesthetics. The act of locating performances, in turn, suggests uneven relationships between the groups involved in a particular festival. In this regard, both the FITH and the fmx assigned renowned prestigious theatres, such as the Great Theatre of Havana and the Theatre Esperanza Iris to foreign companies, and they assigned less pompous venues to the national performances. By dictating how audiences and artists should be distributed in space, festivals are also stating the type of relationships they wish to create with the public, the artists and the aesthetics. Selecting areas in a city or venues in a neighbourhood implies dealing with the historical spatiality of those particular sites. This issue also refers to both artists and audiences and their accessibility to spaces, which venues or spaces welcome certain people while excluding others and the type of audience the festival targets or rejects.

The distribution and marking of spaces is also an important dynamic for the survival of nation-states as power entities. Appadurai argues:

The nation-state relies for its legitimacy on the intensity of its meaningful presence in a continuous body of bounded territory. It works by policing its borders, producing its people . . . constructing its citizens, defining its capitals, monuments, cities, waters, and soils, and by constructing its locales of memory and commemoration, such as the grave yards and cenotaphs, mausoleums and museums. The

nation-state conducts throughout its territories the bizarrely contradictory project of creating a flat contiguous, and homogenous space of nationness and simultaneously a set of places and spaces (prisons, barracks, airports, radio stations, secretariats, parks, marching grounds, professional routes) calculated to create the internal distinctions and divisions necessary for the state ceremony, surveillance, discipline, and mobilization. (*Production* 189)

In this respect, the construction of a cultural apparatus to manage the cultural space of a nation is a way to produce nationhood, create distinctions and support particular aesthetics. The administration of spaces is also strategic in order to define artistic fields, to embody and represent national unity and to 'create and perpetuate distinctions between rulers and ruled' (Appadurai, *Production* 189).

Thus, space becomes decisive in the exercising of national power. The nation-states use and distribution of the space are tactics to achieve that power. If to govern means 'to govern things', then space is one of the elements to achieve it (Foucault, *Governmentality* 94). Nation-states have a *modus operandi* that brings hierarchies into being. In this sense, there exists a 'pedagogical formation' that runs upwards and downwards (Foucault, *Governmentality* 92). Artists need to learn how to get grants, spaces and scholarships and learn how the cultural apparatus works in order to be able to access its resources. This learning *how* sets specific power relationships. When the Cuban and Mexican nation-states teach artists how to behave, how to look after their cultural institutions or how to become part of the national cultural system (for example, through scholarships and other types of

support), they are also encouraging artists to use spaces in one particular way; at the same time, they are implicitly distributing a particular aesthetic. In this respect, the use and control of space is paramount to be able to deny or restore people's agency. For example, the artists in Cuba and numerous Mexican artists are not the owners of the spaces in which they work. In this sense, they can be considered 'out of space'. This being 'out of space' has several disadvantages. For instance, the artists' participation in decision making is restricted; as a consequence, their agency and social mobility is reduced.

Embodying Landscape at the fmx 2010

Local, national or transnational ideologies can be embedded in space and vice versa, space can be incorporated in local, national and transnational agendas. In this view, the incorporation of landscape in the fmx can be seen as a way to provide identity to the festival. In the fmx, the embodiment of landscape functions as a marker of national identity. That is, the fmx includes a series of environmental references through performances and publicity material as elements or images that symbolise national affiliations.

For example, in the fmx, there are representations of the Mexican landscape in the festival's programme, specifically in the image the organisers choose to promote the festival. The promotional image, which appears on the festival's brochures and posters, among other forms of advertisement, contains a watermark of a photograph of Emiliano Zapata. Zapata, an essential figure of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, is also recognised for having taken huge portions of land from the landowners and

distributing them among farmers and villagers. The colours of the image are green, white and red, which are also the colours of the national flag. In addition, the promotional image of the 2010 festival is a bird's-eye view of Mexico City's downtown area. This portion of land, the territory where the festival was born, is essential to the publicity of the event; it locates and defines its identity to some extent. The birth of the festival is intimately related to the renewal of this space; therefore, it is worth noting the historical implications attached to this place.



Fig. 13. Cover of the fmx's programme. Mexico City, 11 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

According to the *Mexicayotl Chronicle*, Huitzilopochtli (a god of war, sun, human sacrifice and patron of the city) demanded that the Mexicas, who were Aztecs and not Mexicans, march towards new territories to find a place to found their realm. This realm was to be established in a place where there was an eagle standing over a cactus and devouring a snake. Thus, the foundation of the nation had to do with particular spatial symbolism and with the necessity of finding this particular spot where those memorial actions could take place. The site where Mexico-Tenochtitlan was founded is currently located in the main square of Mexico City's Historic Centre in the same zone in which the fmx takes place. This is also the zone that the fmx uses as its promotional image in posters, programmes and websites. The fmx 2010 incorporates a specific landscape to situate or identify the personality of the event in terms of national identity. Through the incorporation of a historic place, such as Mexico City's downtown, the festival aims to represent Mexico.

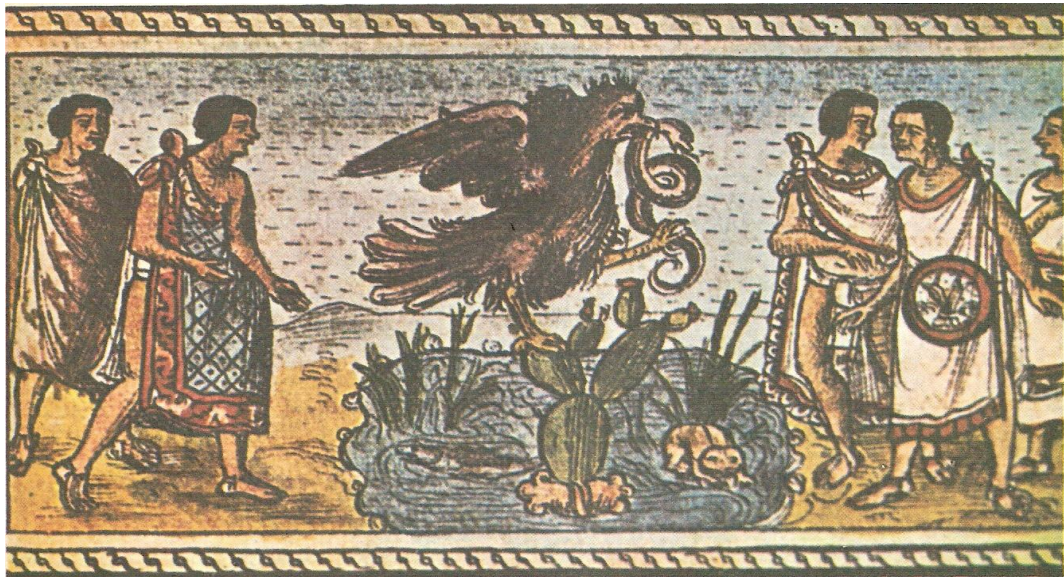


Fig. 14. Mexico City's foundation. JEDIKNIGHT1970. *Fundacion de la Ciudad de Mexico- Extracto del Codice Duran.jpg*. Mexico, 11 Oct. 2006.

The incorporation of the national environment as an identifier of Mexicanness was present in two performances that formed part of the fmx programme: *Únicamente la verdad: la auténtica historia de Camelia 'la tejana'* and *Malinche-Malinches*. *Únicamente* reappropriates the border zone between Mexico and USA to situate Camelia's legend. The so-called opera-corrido²⁰ included explicit references to the Mexican landscape. The performance space was composed of four elevated corridors that created a cube within which the orchestra was set. The inferior and superior corridors were connected at some moments by a moveable bridge, which represented the border crossing. The set was complemented with changing images and videos of Chihuahua's landscape, a state on the Mexico-US border, projected on the background (See Fig. 25). This border zone is also characterised by the constant flow of immigrants and an inclination towards smuggling and violence. Thus, the inclusion of this rural landscape in the performance makes reference to some of the actual Mexican realities and to the social relationships created as a product of those realities. If the landscape can define a nation to some extent, then this border zone with its dry environment and metaphoric bridge made of dreams and nightmares exposes the fragile fabric of the Mexican social landscape.

In the case of *Malinche-Malinches*, the representation of the Mexican landscape is always changing. At the beginning of the performance, the scenography evokes the Tlatelolco buildings. This Mexico City neighbourhood is localised in the same zone where a complex of Aztec ruins named Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Square of the Three Cultures) rests. In addition to the Aztec ruins and modern buildings in this place, it is possible to

find Spanish colonial churches. The coexistence of these types of construction is also a symbol of the Mexican mixture, a mixture that has been historically represented by Malinche. In the performance, the Tlatelolco buildings became the interior of a flat and later a street market and a maize field. Corn, for example, has always been related to Mexican identity. This plant has been grown and cooked in many diverse ways by Mexican indigenous people since prehistoric times. Furthermore, in the Mayan cosmology, man himself is created from maize. Thus, the incorporation of a maize field works as a symbol of identity anchored in the landscape; the maize fields represent Mexican rural identity.

In the fmx, the embodiment of the Mexican landscape spanned national performances, the site where the festival was born and mainly took place, and the promotional image of the event. These allusions confirm the introjection of the Mexican landscape into the festival's imagery. The fmx looks to demonstrate its attachments to Mexico City's Historic Centre and to reveal its identity through linking natural environment and event. The inclusion of landscape allegories in the imagery of the event incorporates national ideologies that forge and display the festival's identity. Thus, landscape functions to foreground uniqueness and manifest national identity. The land, the territory in which a festival takes place, is essential for its organisation; it helps to define its identity and allows the making of local or national claims.

The embodiment of environment works as a tool to brand the event and helps to mark the festival's identity. In this regard, the geographical situation (the imaginary sites where some of the performances that are

programmed in the festival develop) and the companies brought to the event, can all claim local, national or global affiliations. The allegories of particular places or landscapes, that is, the physical elements of those specific sites, are transformed into mythical elements of particular communities, and as such they are imbued with ideologies and symbolic properties. In this situation, landscape becomes a tool for embodying identity.

On the other hand, a contrasting issue regarding the relationship between festivals and their environments has to do with the impact of festivals on their surroundings. Neither the FITH nor the fmx seem to be addressing questions of climate change or resource depletion or, more precisely, introducing a number of initiatives to mitigate the effects that the placement of events have on their environments. Recycling is not a fundamental strategy of governmental policies in Cuba and Mexico. The concentration of activities in one place, and, as a consequence, the intense pollution generated by these events, has not been a fundamental part of the analyses of festivals yet. Thus, in the fmx and the FITH, the amount of waste to landfill, the cost of energy and the ways to reduce consumption at performances and other events, for instance, printing on responsibly sourced paper and the reduction of paper usage overall, have yet to be considered. Although it is difficult to measure these concerns, it is possible that these festivals have a negative impact on their cities. For example, it is plausible to observe an increase in the pollution generated by the waste and transportation used by festival participants even though the increase in traffic and noise is relatively small in a huge metropolis such as Mexico City. However, the demand of a series of services that involve the use of natural

resources such as food, water, oil and gas, among other supplies, puts pressure on the festivals' environment. In this sense, both the fmx and the FITH seem to be lacking a plan about how to sustainably accommodate and tackle an increasing demand for services brought by their development.

Nationhood and Festivals Content

One essential aspect in the relationship between a nation and theatre has to do with the support that is given by governmental institutions to the development of theatre. The type of theatre and performance content supported by national institutions is varied and includes a wide range of initiatives. One niche in which the nation's influence on theatre may be manifested is the support given to famous plays from nationally recognised playwrights. This backing has a historic connotation. National playwrights are considered, to some extent, as the founders of a theatre where the ideas and images that gave birth to the nation and their citizens are expressed; their plays are regarded as milestones of the theatrical growth in their nations and the carriers of the principles upon which nationhood is built; their plays express the nostalgia for the founding moments of the nation.

In this context, the festival content supported by the Mexican and the Cuban nation-states embody different ideas of nationhood. Whilst Cuban plays emphasised nationhood as a product of solidarity and diversity, the Mexican plays reflected about Mexicanness. The following section will be devoted to analyse the different ways in which Cuban and Mexican productions in the FITH 2011 and the fmx 2010 pondered nationhood.

The FITH 2011: *Extravagantia* and Cuban Identity

Since the FITH is an event totally organised by the nation-state, the 2011 festival's opening performance, *Extravagantia*, was a symbol of the particular views and strategies of the Cuban nation-state behind the organisation of the event. *Extravagantia* was about cultural diversity and solidarity. In general terms, *Extravagantia* seemed lavish compared with Cuba's economic situation. The performance took place in the Pabellón Cuba, a unique building in Havana's modernist district Vedado and a product of the revolutionary period after 1959.



Fig. 15. Audience waits for the beginning of *Extravagantia*. Pabellón Cuba, Havana, Cuba, 27 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Extravagantia started with a procession in the landing of the stairs located almost at the entrance of the site. The procession moved through the space, and, after crossing a tunnel that divided the space into two, it arrived at the main stage. Curiously, the main stage was a warehouse-type section at the centre of the massive building. Then, some performers dressed in black

and white, like Harlequins from the Italian carnival, danced a small introductory piece. After that, one of the Harlequins brought a big egg to the stage. From inside the egg another dancer came out. This performer was partially naked and had something similar to claws attached to his fingers; he represented a bird learning to fly. While he was dancing, two singers stood up on a stage at the end of the huge room and accompanied the dancer's movements. When the dancer finally 'flew away', a chorus of actors dressed in black and white started to recite a fragment of *Electra Garrigó* by Cuban playwright Virgilio Piñera. Later, Barbara Rivero, the artistic director of the festival, delivered a text about the solidarity of the foreign groups and the urgency of a theatre with a socio-political message. Then, music and dances started again along with two aerialists hanging from pieces of cloth attached to the ceiling. Next, there were fireworks that illuminated the sky. Finally, dancers and actors mixed with audience members and started to dance along the space; the opening performance became a party.

Extravagantia directed by Cuban artist Antonia Fernández was achieved thanks to the efforts of various theatre companies that work in Havana. Each group brought elements of past works, such as costumes, puppets, stilts or musical instruments, to create a kind of carnival procession. In this sense, there are three aspects behind the elaboration of this performance that can also be acknowledged as central in the organisation of the whole FITH.

The first aspect is the idea of solidarity promoted by the festival organisation. In *Granma*, the newspaper of Cuba's communist party, journalist Amelia Duarte De La Rosa explains that *Extravagantia* was created

by members of the association of Cuban companies, such as Vivarta Teatro, the marionette company Hilos Mágicos (Magic Strings), Gigantería (Giantess), the Escuela de Pantomimas del Cuerpo-Fusión (the Mime School of Fusion-Body), the dance group BanRarrá, the show company P.M.M. (Spanish acronym of For Better World), the Circo Nacional de Cuba (Cuban National Circus) and the students from the University of Arts of Cuba (ISA) (7). The spectacle was also witnessed by Culture Secretary Abel Prieto, Gisela González, president of the National Council of Theatre and Dance, and Bárbara Rivero, president of the festival's organising committee. In this manner, the performance was the result of the solidarity of many Cuban groups, a joint effort among Cuban companies, public institutions and schools.



Fig. 16. Image from a scene of *Extravagantia*. The performer cracks open the egg and 'learns to fly'. Pabellón Cuba, Havana, Cuba, 27 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Cuban solidarity has been a governmental policy that embraces not only art but also other fields, such as health and education. For example, in

1999, the Cuban government created the Latin American School of Medicine (ELAM) to promote the professional advancement of youth without means of support from places such as Central America and Africa. Furthermore, Fidel Castro, the former Cuban president, in his famous speech entitled 'La historia me absolverá' (History Will Absolve Me) states that the 'Cuban policy in America would be of close solidarity with the democratic people of the continent and [that] the politically persecuted of the bloody tyrannies . . . would find . . . generous asylum, brotherhood and bread'. Accordingly, solidarity has been a tool to promote the international profile of Cuba and to preserve the Cuban social system—a strategy to defend the Cuban political system against the threat of the USA.

The 2011 FITH's opening performance is a clear example of the solidarity promoted by the festival's organisers—it works in consonance with the festival's call to promote an art of resistance, a theatre able to defend humanity and the world. According to the speech of the FITH's artistic director, Bárbara Rivero, 'In Havana an urgent call has been sounded for theatre in the sense of dialogue and reflection on the major challenges facing humanity today, such as violence, hunger, unemployment, ecological disasters and the need for peace' (Diaz, 31 Oct. 2011). In an interview with Mireya Castañeda, a reporter from Cuban newspaper *Granma*, Rivero also emphasised 'the solidarity [that] these artists [foreign companies] have shown to their Cuban colleagues' and 'she made the point that despite the world economic situation, all the groups have assumed the entire cost of their travel to Cuba and their stay here' (Castañeda, 27 Oct. 2011). Although differences in relation to the participation of Cuban companies may exist

within the elaboration of the event, the idea of joining the efforts of Cuban artists to produce *Extravagantia* works in tune with the idea of solidarity fostered by the festival organisation internationally.

From inside the country, solidarity is evident in the inclusion of the great majority of the provinces in the festival's programming. In an interview with Mireya Castañeda, Barbara Rivero argues that they had '50 works from different Cuban groups, from all of the provinces. This means that there has been development, growth in theatre across the country' (Castañeda, 27 Oct. 2011). In comparison with the fmx, the FITH had a larger percentage of national groups. Moreover, in the Cuban festival, almost all of the provinces were present, and there was a variety of aesthetic points of view. Thus, in the FITH 2011, the national theatre seemed to be buoyant and well represented. In international terms, solidarity was evident in the participation of sixteen countries with thirty-two companies from abroad; the majority of the groups covered their own tickets and accommodation.

The second aspect that *Extravagantia* brings forward is the cultural diversity of Cuba. The performance was a combination of various genres and styles, such as ballroom dancing, the traditional Cuban Conga music, circus, mime, aerialists and marionettes, all of which represented a rich national mixture. In this respect, historical migrations from Africa, Europe, USA and the Caribbean have left an imprint on Cuban culture. For example, after the extermination of the indigenous population in Cuba by Spanish conquerors, the need of a labour force to work in the plantations and other Cuban sites boosted the slave trade on the island. Black people coming from Africa

arrived in Cuba and mixed with other people from France, Haiti and the USA, among others.

The blend of different cultures and the mixture of profane and religious elements coming from diverse sources prompted the transformation of Cuban music and dance. For example, new salsa music is a combination of *son, conga, rumba, mambo* and *cha-cha-chá* rhythms with jazz and rap from the USA and other elements. *Son, conga, rumba, mambo* and *cha-cha-chá*, in turn, are the result of mixtures between the contredanse (a genre of dance for several couples developed in France and introduced in Cuba towards the end of the eighteenth century), the African music employed in religious rituals brought to Cuba by black slaves, and the Creole contredanse carried out to Cuba by Haitian immigrants. Essential aspects of the African music that remain today are the employment of drums, multiple rhythms, and chorus features that originated in African religious ceremonies in which the chants were directed by a social leader or shaman. As a result of the cultural mixture, many characters and events that transcended time and language barriers were embedded in Cuban culture and are now an important part of Cuban folklore.

The 2011 FITH opening performance mixed, among other elements, text, classical and tropical music and the 'dance of the little evils', a traditional Cuban dance, which according to del Dania del Pino Más is the seed of Cuban Theatre (28 Oct. 2011). According to Magdalena Pérez Asensio, a careful analysis of these first manifestations of folklore and black culture in the island reveal eminent similarities between the 'dance of the little evils' and the Greek tragedy (25-26). The 'dance of the little evils' also provided Cuban

theatre with a distinctive black character (Pérez 26). One of the important figures in Cuban folklore is precisely ‘the little evil’ or *Ireme*. The *Ireme* is a symbol of ‘Cubanity’ that can be found in paints, posters and handcrafts. The *Ireme* represents nature and has its origins in Calabar, an African region in what is now the southeast of the Republic of Nigeria and part of Cameroon (Caseira 3). ‘The little evil’ is a reincarnated spirit, a personage of the Abakúa Secret Society, in which he is an indispensable element in the dramaturgy of the *Ireme* ritual (Caseira 2). The Calabarís (‘from Calabar’) created the Abakúa Society in Cuba, a species of male secret society that was concerned with the emancipation of slaves (Castellanos 205). In spite of the existence of many similar societies, the Abakúa is only localised in Cuba. The members of the Abakúa Society are called *ñáñigos* (Castellanos 205). According to María Eugenia Caseiro, the *ñáñigos* were ill-treated, but they finally managed to take their ‘little evils’ to the carnivals to celebrate and dance (2).

In *Extravagantia*, this quality of Cuban culture, its ability to mix and rearrange cultural influences, is manifest. According to del Pino, ‘In a world in which the coexistence of trends, styles and ideas is increasingly more quotidian, to appeal to a heterogeneous performance like *Extravagantia* constitutes a pertinent strategy to call for participation’ (28 Oct. 2011). In this respect, director Antonia Fernández conceived a spectacle that, far from proposing to follow a dramatic thread, showed the integration of diverse elements.

Finally, the third aspect contained in *Extravagantia* that expresses both Cuban culture and FITH’s organisation has to do with the party atmosphere present not only in the performance and the festival, but also in

Cuban national culture. For Jorge Mañach, an essential characteristic of Cuban people is the 'choteo', a word that, in general terms, can be described as the attitude Cubans have to not take seriously things that are usually taken seriously (198). This fun-loving and boisterous characteristic of Cuban people may stem from what Mañach calls a 'native spirit of independence that conquered [Cubans'] public liberties' (230).

Music is another important element to express the festive character of the Cuban people. Cuban music is intrinsically related to social mingling and partying, which can be deemed as essential components of Cuban identity. In Cuba, many of the dances that had their origins in the religious elements of African cultures have been incorporated in the repertoire of artistic groups and in the *bailes de salón* ('ballroom dances'). Ballroom dancing is an essential element in Cuban life not only as a way of socialising but also as a marker of Cuban identity. Actually, Cuba has numerous ballrooms, where a great variety of ballroom dancing styles, such as *salsa*, *chachachá*, *son*, *danzón*, *rumba*, *mambo* and *casino*, are danced.

A festive atmosphere pervaded *Extravagantia*. Conga music and a party were important elements for the procession that took place in the opening event. The name of the performance itself denotes a work in the sense of an extravaganza, that is, a multidisciplinary spectacle containing elements of burlesque, parody and cabaret that has divertimento as its central purpose. Additionally, the festive aspect of the performance was manifest in the employment of fireworks at the end of the event and also in the transformation of the performance into a real party after the fireworks.

The FITH 2011 also had *party* implicitly in its name. In fact, for some people the opening performance was conceived as the inaugural party of the festival. Furthermore, in many Cuban magazines and websites, for example, *EcuRed* or newspaper *Granma*, the festival was presented as an international party of theatre in Havana. However, this international gathering also had other social objectives, for instance, the call for an ‘urgent theatre’ imbued with social topics, international solidarity, or the need for peace. Some of these social objectives correspond with the politics implemented by the government after the Cuban revolution. In this respect, I shall now analyse the cultural imperatives of the Cuban nation-state after the revolution and how the actions implemented by the Cuban government to spread art and culture in its nation have been reflected and/or contested in the FITH.



Fig. 17. The public starts to dance at the end of *Extravagantia*, the FITH's opening performance. Pabellón Cuba, Havana, 27 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Cuban State and National Artistic Perspectives at the FITH 2011

The Cuban performances that were part of the XIV FITH reflected a variety of issues. Among them, there were topics related to current national issues that can be grouped into various themes. These themes evidence the influence of national events on the festival's content and curatorship.

First, there was a trend towards including homosexual topics in one segment of the Cuban performances. For instance, Cuban performances such as *Talco (Talcum Powder)* by Argos Teatro, *Las pericas (The Parakeets)* by Teatro Ensayo Gestus, and *Noche de reyes (Kings' Night)*, a Cuban version of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, directed by Carlos Díaz included homosexuality as a central component. This tendency corresponds to the recent abolition of the homosexual prohibitions established during the Cuban revolution.

On 31 August 2010, Fidel Castro recognised that he was ultimately responsible for the persecution suffered by homosexuals in Cuba after the revolution of 1959 (Lira 26). Five decades ago, many homosexuals were marginalised and sent to work in agricultural-military fields through the Military Units to Help Production (UMAP) and were accused of being counterrevolutionaries. According to Vicente Echerri:

When in the mid-1970s Castro's revolution decided to create its "new man", a virile subject eager to give his life for that feverish project, the homosexuals represented a nuisance. Those prejudices assigned [homosexuals] a natural lack of heroic vocation. Homosexuals' view of the world. . . made them naturally inflexible for the Herculean task that the construction of socialism would involve.²¹ (3 Mar. 2012)

Since the 1990s, homosexuality has been decriminalised, and transsexual surgeries have been performed for free since 2008 (Lira 26). Actually, there has been a trend of openness to discuss homosexuality on the island. For example, in May 2011, many cities across the country celebrated the event called *Día Mundial contra la Homofobia* (*International Day against Homophobia*). Its objective was to debate the rights of sexual minorities. This willingness to include homosexuality in the public debate had an impact on the FITH's curatorship.

Nonetheless, homosexuality is treated differently in each performance. *Talco* by Cuban playwright Abel González Melo and performed by the company Argos Teatro, shows the marginal life of a transsexual in Cuba and draws a parallel with the current political situation in Cuba. The action takes place in an old cinema in Havana. The piece presents a narrative conceived in two parts—one happens in the present and the other in the past. The second part goes back one year to clarify some aspects in relation to the behaviour of the four characters. Javi is the administrator of the place; he is a prostitute and a drug dealer. Máshenka is the box-office clerk; 'she' is a transvestite who helps Javi with the 'businesses'. Zuleidy is from Guantánamo, a Cuban province; she comes to Havana to work for Javi as a prostitute. Álvaro is a client; he likes films and buys drugs.

As with the old building in which the characters live, the social system is also breaking apart. In the play, there are sordid relationships. Máshenka the transsexual is Zuleidy's father, and Javi, Máshenka's business' partner and lover, is Zuleidy's pimp. Drug dealing and prostitution are presented in *Talco* as the only options for marginal homosexuals and transvestites in Cuban

society. In this context, a homosexual is a pariah, an antisocial element bound to destruction. The play is showing that bigotry puts pressure on people to establish decadent relationships. The social fabric is breaking apart due to the intolerance and discrimination shown towards marginal people.



Fig. 18. Máshenka waits for a client at the beginning of the play *Talcum Powder*. Argos Theatre, Havana, Cuba. 28 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

In contrast, *Las pericas* has a hint of *The Maids* by Jean Genet. It was performed by three males dressed as women in a pre-revolutionary context. The play was written by famous Cuban playwright Nelson Dorr in 1961 when he was fourteen years old and was performed by the Ecuadorian company Teatro Ensayo Gestus (Castañeda, *Las Pericas*, 12 May 2011). The play narrates the story of three sisters, Serafina, Felina and Panchita, who oppress the fourth sister, Rosita. The four sisters are cloistered in a house, and their contact with the outside world is limited to sporadic visits to the church. This creates bizarre situations and a freakish family unit, which is an allegory of the social class divisions and the power relationships between the

oppressors and the dispossessed in Cuba. In the play *Rosita*, the oppressed sister has a son named Armandito. Armandito lives in a slum; this fact makes Serafina, Felina and Panchita believe that he is a robber. The three sisters conspire against Armandito and order his execution. However, at the end of the play, Rosita kills her three sisters. In *Las pericas*, Nicolás Dorr makes evident the ideological divisions of the Cuban social classes brought about by the revolution of 1959; the oppression of the lower classes and their claim for justice.

Employing transvestism, the play also criticises the habits of the Cuban dominant classes. In an interview with journalist Mireya Castañeda, Nicolás Dorr recognised the inversion of gender roles in the performing of *Las pericas*: ‘The new trend now is that the parakeets are played by men. The Venezuelans started that in the ‘80s, and the Uruguayans and Spaniards have done it, and now, the latest performance in the Hubert de Blanck Theater, owed to the Ecuadorian Teatro Ensayo Gestus group’ (Castañeda, *Las Pericas*, 12 May 2011). Here, the inversion of gender roles functions to condemn social appearances. On the one hand, the interpretation of female characters by male actors is a way to criticise social functions and reassert homosexuality. On the other hand, as Dorr himself proposes, his work contributes ‘to cooperate in some way with a problem that is being approached nationally and an issue which we all need to address, that of diversity and respect for diversity’ (Castañeda, *Las Pericas*, 12 May. 2011).

Noche de reyes, which is based on *Twelfth Night* by William Shakespeare, became a carnival of excesses with nudity as a central element. In fact, the Shakespearean text was a mere pretext to show a brash and very

unique vision of Cubanism. The play vehemently mocked Cuban clichés, for example, Latin American soap operas and films such as *Fresa y chocolate* (*Strawberry and Chocolate*), among others. In relation to *Noche de reyes*, Pedro Enrique Villareal Sosa stated that ‘the art of transvestism, a common place in the work of Díaz [the performance’s director], is recognisable in the characters that look to represent contemporary vernacular archetypes, [characters] that go from the handsome, the female mulatto or the santero [a species of shaman], to the homosexual . . .’ (Villareal 7).



Fig. 19. Nudity was a central element in the artistic proposal of *Kings’ Night*. Theatre Triánón, Havana, Cuba. 5 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author.

From another perspective, *Noche de reyes* is also a mockery of Shakespeare’s play, or in the words of Villareal, a ‘disdain-tribute towards the English play’ (Villareal 7). Villareal maintains that this aggressive attitude of the performance towards the Shakespearean play may be read ‘as a marked decolonised intention’, that is, a way to recreate Cuba’s own world (Villareal

7). In this bizarre Cuban world, created by *Noche de reyes*, homosexuality is presented as part of the Cuban collective imaginary and identity. In the performance's body language, vulgarity mixes with a 'Frenchified' text, and naked bodies perform sexual acts, producing 'a morbid deviousness that generates in the Cuban spectator a hilarious identification' (Villareal 7). On the one hand, this new inclusion of homosexuality in the FITH shows the superimposition and mutability of Cuban cultural mixture—transvestism is also a way of transculturation, a way to 'cubanised' the Western text. On the other hand, homosexuality insists on some kind of national identity—one constructed through impudence. Finally, *Noche de reyes*, by being explicit about homosexuality, also works to upset those who still maintain the social view of the government during the period of homosexual prohibition. Thus, the intention seems here to go against social prohibitions by being permissive and obscene through images of homosexual intercourse and excessive debauchery.

The second theme in Cuban theatre at the FITH had to do with criticism against Cuban policies. This theme, however, was limited in the festival. *Cubalandia* ('*Cubaland*') was the only play that included a more or less direct criticism against government policies. *Cubalandia* develops in the contemporary context of the renovation of the Cuban economy, a process in which emerged the *cuentapropista* (a type of peddler). The only character of the play, Yara La China, has all the necessary protections to start her business as *cuentapropista*: a photo of Fidel Castro, another of Raúl Castro and a fetish to protect her against any kind of sorcery. As a background, there is a huge Cuban map on which 'The double currency is betrayal' is written. Yara offers

tours in the two Cuban currencies, the CUC, a convertible peso with a similar value to one dollar, and the national peso.

In Cuba, the new economy develops between the CUC and the national peso. In this context, the performance makes a keen critique of the economic situation in the island by ironically showing that it is possible to obtain profits and luxuries in Cuba working as a *cuentapropista*. In each of her tours, Yara La China explains and displays strategies to recover the expenses and always obtain profits. To illustrate her itineraries, she shows a map of the island—her business is the country itself, and her potential clients are poor Cubans. This situation creates an ironic play that contrasts with Cuban reality. In Cuba, the great majority of tourists are foreign people, and the possibility for travelling is almost impossible for many Cubans due to the low salaries.



Fig. 20. Yara 'La China' sells tourist packages to the audience in a scene from the performance *Cubaland*. On the left there is a poster of current Cuban president, Raúl Castro. Theatre El Ciervo Encantado, Havana, Cuba. 29 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

According to a review by Jaime Gómez Triana:

Yara La China is a Cuban who trades cheap products and dares to do almost everything to get a living. Her features confront us with the total dissolution of the moral subject. The reference is, without doubts, *Mother Courage*, by Brecht, a human being stretched to the limit so we are aware as spectators of her human nature not so distant to ours. (23 Oct. 2011)

The new regulations implemented by the Cuban government and its actual leader Raúl Castro brought the partial legalisation of this kind of peddler. This measure, intended to mitigate the economic situation of the population, has also been a way to collect new taxes. Before the legalisation, the *cuentapropistas* had been working as outlaws in the illegal market. For many Cubans, being able to sell their own products or services has been an exhaust valve to lessen their critical economic situation.

However, in *Cubalandia*, the national initiative is seen as merely palliative. Thus, with Cuban ironic inventiveness, as it is shown in the play, *cuentapropistas*, take advantage of the situation, and regardless of the law's limitations, the shortage of products and the lean salaries, they travel around the country and arrange bizarre businesses with Cuban poor people, obtaining substantial profits. In this respect, the performance uses a sharp ironic strategy to criticise the scarcity of goods in Cuba and the solutions proposed by the government, for instance, the implementation of taxes and the legalisation of *cuentrapropistas* as the social plan for Cuban scarcity.

Cubalandia suggests numerous questions over the relationship between Cubans and their social system. On the one hand, the opening of new

forms of non-state work in Cuba points to a privatisation process that works against the postulates of a socialist revolution. On the other hand, the precarious economic situation in Cuba may lead Cuban government to opt for extreme measures. As Gómez Triana states, 'to sell a country is without doubt, a desperate act of survival' (23 Oct. 2011). Other plays implicitly concerned with politics were *Talco* by Cuban Abel González Melo and *Las pericas* by Nicolás Dorr.

Talco depicts the marginal lower classes. In the play, economic interests, violence, and betrayal help to recreate a crude landscape of contemporary Cuban society. *Talco* is a portrait of marginalised characters. In this sense, the play suggests that, in contrast with the government socialist perspective, Cuba is also a place where there are huge social contradictions. *Las pericas*, in turn, is an allegory of the Cuban social classes and of dominant-oppressed relationships. In the play, the four sisters represent the dominant class, and Armandito the oppressed one. *Las pericas* was first staged on 3 April 1961, a few months before Fidel Castro's famous speech on June 30 of the same year entitled 'Words to the Intellectuals', in which Fidel demanded an art that facilitated the revolutionary process. In this sense, the play is an antecedent of the struggle between intellectuals who defended the revolution with their political committed plays and those artists who asked for more freedom of creation and expounded plays that were considered absurdist and against the postulates of socialism.

Finally, the third theme present in the XIV FITH regarding Cuban theatre was civic education. This subject matter was mainly included in children's theatre. Children's plays, for example, *Historias con sombrillas*

(*Stories with Umbrellas*) by the company Pálpito, and *Nubes azules* (*Blue Clouds*) by Teatro Papalote contained a civic message that corresponds with the ideology of the Cuban government.

In 1961, artists and representatives of the recently created Cuban government held a series of meetings. The meetings dealt with freedom of expression for Cuban artists in the context of the revolution, and some artists expressed their fear that the brand new cultural institutions could be a way to shrink artistic liberty or diminish the creative spirit of artists (Castro, 'Palabras a los Intelectuales', 30 Jun. 1961). In his speech, better known as 'Palabras a los Intelectuales' ('Words to the Intellectuals'), Fidel Castro sets the Cuban revolution before artistic practice:

The Revolution must . . . act in such a way that the entire sector of artists and intellectuals who are not genuinely revolutionary find a place to work and to create within the Revolution, and so that their creative spirit will have an opportunity and freedom for expression within the Revolution, even though they are not revolutionary writers or artists. This means that within the Revolution, everything goes; against the Revolution, nothing. Nothing against the Revolution, because the Revolution has its rights also, and the first right of the Revolution is the right to exist, and no one can stand against the right of the Revolution to be and to exist. No one can rightfully claim a right against the Revolution. Since it takes in the interests of the people and signifies the interests of the entire nation. (30 Jun. 1961)

The above lines marked a divide about the role of cultural institutions in Cuba. On the one hand, in the 1960s, after the triumph of the Cuban

revolution, the government impelled the creation of new cultural institutions, such as the National School of Arts, the National Cultural Council and others that later gave way to the Cuban Ministerio de Cultura (Ministerio de Cultura de La República de Cuba, 'Triunfo'). Those institutions allowed the expansion of artistic practice and education in all the provinces of the island (Ministerio de Cultura de La República de Cuba, 'Triunfo'). The Cuban government boosted culture and art through the prism of the Revolution and created projects such as the Campaña Nacional de Alfabetización en Cuba (National Alphabetisation Campaign in Cuba), a project aimed at reducing illiteracy. It implemented free art and education in cooperatives, farms and other isolated places. On the other hand, in order to protect the revolution, the government exerted control over the type of art to be developed for the Cuban people. For example, one of the current functions of the Cuban Cultural Secretariat is 'to orientate, control and supervise the politics of national and international promotion of Cuban art and the presence and circulation of international cultural expressions' (Ministerio de Cultura de La República de Cuba, 'Misión'). In this context, theatre for children has also been a niche through which to distribute the ideology of the Cuban government. That is, the Cuban cultural policies influenced a segment of theatre for children in Cuba.

In this respect, *Nubes azules* urged audiences to fight against the factories that pollute the environment by looking for mechanisms to diminish pollution. The performance narrates the story of a neighbourhood that is affected by two factories whose chimneys expel smog. The neighbours decide to confront the situation, but nothing works well—the blue clouds turn into grey ones, and even the moon and the sun suffer the consequences of

pollution. Only when some scientists arrive and—together with the neighbours—convince the factories to transform themselves into modern towers with antismog systems, the grey clouds return to blues ones.



Fig. 21. Puppets living in a building observe the pollution in the performance *Blue Clouds*, by theatre company Papalote. National Puppet Theatre, Havana, Cuba. 6 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author.

In a world where pollution is one of the bigger concerns, ecological education is mandatory for future generations. The production of *Nubes azules* is part of the Cuban school theatre project. Pollution in the play is seen as the effect of a neoliberal agenda in which huge multinationals fill sea and rivers with toxic waste. The action against pollution is a joint effort between scientists and neighbours or, from a socialist perspective, the coordinated action of the population. Another meaningful example is related to the attitude of the neighbours, who are upset by the cough and the soot provoked by another kind of pollution—the noise of protests. However, the noise pollution does not solve the situation, or in other words, the protests do not

lead to solutions, they increase the problem. *Nubes azules* is a theatre imbued with the government's ideology, which functions as both a vehicle for social formation and entertainment for those children who will be the future of Cuba.



Fig. 22. Cuban school children attend the performance *Stories with Umbrellas*. Teatro Nacional Guiñol [National Puppet Theatre], Havana, Cuba. 2 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author.

In *Historias con sombrillas*, the play's main idea remained closer to the need to respect old people because they are a source of wisdom and experiences. The performance tells the story of seven elder brothers that go to the market on a Sunday afternoon carrying umbrellas. Eduviges, the leading sister, proposes that all of them should wear sunglasses, foreshadowing the idea that they will get lost. In this journey, the brothers arrive at a theatre, whereupon Fortunato, one of the brothers, starts to present a story about an African tribe that wishes to kill the elders. Both stories—the one of the elder brothers and the other of the African tribe, played with puppets—interweave. Then, thanks to the wisdom of the eldest

member, the African tribe can surpass a terrible threat, the lack of food, and survive. The performance ends when the elders can find their way back by flying with the umbrellas.



Fig. 23. The elder brothers walking towards the market in a scene from *Stories with Umbrellas*. Teatro Nacional Guiñol [National Puppet Theatre], Havana, Cuba. 2 Nov. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Historias con sombrillas poses a debate about what is just and what is not in the relationship between elder people and youth, an issue that is at the centre of both stories. Here, the relationship between the Cuban regime commanded by old people and the play's message about old people as the source of experience and wisdom is also interesting. The respect for the elder can be transferred to the relation of youth and government. One of the objectives of the play is to make Cuban children aware that the people in positions of power are experienced and wise. Indirectly, the love and respect for the elders in the play represents love and respect for people in power. In this context, the message of the play is that in a situation of crisis, like the

actual Cuban economic situation, one should listen to the old people who are very experienced. In other words, the impetus of young people should be filtered through the social system's wisdom.

Finally, plays such as *Cuando el Che era Ernestico* (*When Che was little Ernesto*), which depicted the life of 'Ché' Guevara as a small child, confirm this trend. The play is about a little child who became a world hero and an icon of the Cuban revolution. The performance shows the spectators how Ché Guevara had glimpsed ideas for a better world since he was a little boy. His father is presented as the driving force behind Ché's progressive and thoughts of solidarity. For instance, when Ernestico was young, he pretended to liberate Spain from Franco. Thus, Ché Guevara is idealised as an essential character of the Cuban Revolution.

The figure of Ché Guevara is important in constructing the Cuban government's socialist imagery. In a review of the performance, Zoe Cuéllar explains: 'Since we were very young, we were taught to love, admire and have Ché as a model due to his revolutionary ideas of independence and sovereignty for the nations that lived (and live) the oppression of imperialism' ('Cuando Ché era Ernestico . . . otro héroe manipulado'). Thus, the performance can be considered as a part of a strategy to generate empathy between children and Ché and to create a dialogue between the new generations of youth and Ché. In this way, the Cuban state helps to construct its social system and to foster the principles in which the nation bases its ideology. The figure of Ché embodies the ideals of the Cuban revolution.

At the 2011 FITH, the national trajectories that shape the festival become visible in different Cuban performances that formed part of the

event. In this section, the presence of nationalist contents in the FITH expresses the influence of the nation-state on the festival structure, a configuration that responds to the Cuban social context. I shall now deal with the ways in which some Mexican plays in the fmx 2010 reflected on nationhood.

The fmx 2010 and the Bicentenary of the Mexican Independence

Since 2006, when the former Mexican president, Felipe Calderón, deployed the army in the streets to fight against the drug cartels, the violence in the country has been continuously increasing. In fact, in 2010, the atmosphere of violence led to the cancelling of national celebrations in some parts of the country. Back in 2008, during the celebration of the declaration of independence in Morelia in the state of Michoacán, a drug cartel apparently realised an attack with grenades in the main square of the town, killing seven and injuring 132 people (Castillo, 7 Sep. 2010; Gómez, 19 Sep. 2010). From then on, the celebration in Morelia was cancelled. In 2010, the celebrations for the declaration of independence in 14 cities in Mexico were also suspended (Pérez, 13 Sep. 2010). Moreover, former Secretary of Education Alonso Lujambio declared that due to the limited room for some activities, televised events represented a very attractive alternative to enjoy the party within the family, an invitation that, according to Maria Josep Siscar, oozed fear (Siscar, 15 Sep. 2010).

In addition, Siscar explained:

Mexico celebrates today the bicentenary of its independence and the centenary of its Revolution soaked in a profound social crisis due to a

wave of violence and endemic poverty. However, the Mexican president, Felipe Calderón, is determined to make “an extraordinary party to put ourselves on a par with the best celebrations in the world”. In order to achieve it, the government has prepared a lavish ceremony in the Capital, organised by the Australian Ric Birch, who was the executive producer of the inaugural shows of the Barcelona and Sydney Olympics. (15 Sep. 2010)

In this context, for some journalists and intellectuals there was nothing to be celebrated. For instance, Pablo Ordaz a journalist from the Spanish newspaper *El País* published the article ‘The Saddest Bicentenary in America’, alleging that there was nothing to be celebrated because Mexico was immersed in a moment of extreme violence caused by the drug cartels (15 Sep. 2010).

In spite of all the critiques, the Mexican government facilitated festivities and supported projects that had to do with the desire for showing Mexican pride. On 15 September 2010, the former Mexican president, Felipe Calderón Hinojosa, shouted three times ‘Viva Mexico!’ and officially inaugurated the festivities for the 200 years of Mexican independence and the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. Although, the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution would not be until 20 November that same year, the Mexican government prepared a celebration that included both commemorative dates. The festivities included fireworks, parties, Aztec ceremonies, parades, concerts, shows, films, exhibitions, the construction of new monuments to celebrate nationhood, an edition of commemorative coins, sport activities and even the presentation of a Coca-Cola collection of

32 bottles dedicated to the commemoration of the Mexican independence and Revolution. The principal festivities were developed in Mexico City, but there were also activities in the 31 states of the Mexican Republic.

Although the final sum of money for the festivities has not yet been clarified, the Mexican government's waste of money on the festivities was widely criticised. In 2010, Alonso Lujambio, in his appearance before the Mexican congress, stated that for the party-night of 15 September alone, which included the ceremony of the proclamation of Mexican independence, the cost amounted to 700 million Mexican pesos (33,988,300 GBP approximately) (Sánchez, 17 Sep. 2010; Ballinas, 21 Sep. 2010). For the Estela de Luz, a monument to commemorate the bicentenary, the cost was one billion Mexican pesos (48,551,500 GBP approximately) (Albarrán, 2 Feb. 2012).

The commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution and 200 years of independence prompted the fmx organisers to include more Mexican artists for the 2010 season. According to José Wolffer, the artistic director of the fmx 2010:

There is a clear line [in the festival's programming] due to the context in which we are now, the celebration of the Bicentenary of the Mexican Independence and the one hundredth anniversary of the Mexican Revolution... We thought that the natural step was that this edition had, even more than other years, an emphasis on Mexican artists. There is a marked presence of Mexican artists and activities... Taking advantage of the fact that the world gaze is directed towards

Mexico, we look to offer to those people a large showcase of what Mexican artists are doing right now. (Quirarte, 2 Feb. 2010)

Although the national presence in the fmx was scarce compared to foreign artists and activities, the fmx 2010 celebrated the bicentenary of Mexican independence by including in its programming various events related to the commemoration. For example, the Universidad del Claustro de Sor Juana (University of the Cloister of Sister Juana) in conjunction with the fmx developed the *Menú del Bicentenario (Bicentenary's Menu)*, a contest to present a historic investigation and a recipe of a contemporary Mexican dish with the purpose of giving a boost to national gastronomy.

Wolffer stated that 'the Bicentenary presupposes a series of programming trends, [from which] the most relevant is to give an incentive to Mexican creativity, art, and inventiveness, and this initiative [*Bicentenary's Menu*] is totally in line with that objective' (Bitácora Cultural, 'Editarán el Menú del Bicentenario'). Sergio Autrey, president of the board of directors of the fmx, added that they were looking to involve restaurants in this initiative to ask them to prepare a specific menu and host artists who would have dinner with the restaurants guests (Bitácora Cultural, 'Editarán el Menú del Bicentenario').

The fmx 2010 also integrated in its programme a recital by Los Niños Cantores del Centro Histórico (The Singing Children of the Historic Centre) that included 'corridos',²² music from the Yaqui²³ and Seri²⁴ indigenous groups, popular songs from Latin America and the festival section *Animasivo*, which contained a series of short animations by Mexican filmmakers under the theme '2110: Projecting the Future'.

The Theatre and Dance section of the fmx 2010 encompassed the great majority of the performances that alluded to nationhood. *Hours of Grace* by Juan Tovar, *Malinche-Malinches* directed by Mexican Juliana Faesler and *Only the Truth: The Authentic Story of Camelia 'The Texan'*, were all performances supported by the Mexican government to commemorate Mexicanness. These three performances were an opportunity to observe the different ways in which nationhood was conceived and/or represented. In this respect, the following sections will be devoted to the analysis of ideas of nationhood embodied by performances supported by the Mexican government for the fmx 2010.

Nationhood at *Horas de gracia*

In line with the National Council for Culture and the Arts, the fmx 2010 supported activities, including opera, theatre, music and gastronomic contests, related to events that gave birth to the nation, and thus reinforced the idea of nationhood for its citizens. One of the performances that precisely addressed the emergence of the Mexican nation and explored moments of great significance for the nation in the fmx was *Horas de gracia (Hours of Grace)*.

The play was produced by the National Council for Culture and the Arts (Conaculta) through the National Theatre Company (CNT) as part of a series of performances dedicated to commemorate the bicentenary of Mexican independence. In the production, Agustín de Iturbide is presented as the personage that brought the unity that no other insurgent could achieve for the Mexican nation. The action is set in 1824 at the moment Iturbide, the

first emperor of Mexico, is given a period of grace before his execution by a firing squad. During these hours he meets Santa Ana, his successor in power; Iturbide considers his trajectory and the events that led him to that situation and eventually obtains his own conclusions about Mexican independence. Iturbide was a Creole of Spanish descent, who allowed the creation of a Constituent Assembly in order to be crowned Mexican emperor and achieve the independence of Mexico from the Spanish empire. In the play, Iturbide has control of the army, through which he aims to exert control over the assembly members. However, the assembly members sentence him to death later.



Fig. 24. The performance *Hours of Grace* in a scene where women hold a wake for Iturbide's wife at Teatro Julio Castillo, Mexico City, 26 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

According to Juan Tovar, the author of the play, 'one of the two Napoleons that emerged during the revolution of independence has a hint of a tragic figure; the other is a head to toe villain. One is as bad as the other, but maybe the dialogue between them will allow us to clarify, to some extent, the

vicissitudes of the national destiny' (fmx, *Horas* 3). Presenting two important figures of the Mexican revolutionary past as a couple of bad rulers has important connotations. First, the assertion implies that Mexican independence had been managed by an elitist power struggle. That is, Iturbide takes power because he wants to be crown emperor and not because he wants to change the social conditions of the Mexican marginal classes. Secondly, it is inferred that the actual Mexican government is the inheritor of those power struggles between Assembly members and presidency—practices that continue as far as today.

Be that as it may, the staging of the play brings a different reading of the events. In the production, there is nostalgia for the monarchy and for the dissolution of the assembly powers in order to govern efficiently. The director of the play, José Caballero Betanzo, suggests in an interview that 'the melodramatic and Manichean image generally attributed to Iturbide deserves a revaluation because as a tragic character he conceives the way in which it is possible to realise and culminate independence' (Paul 4a). In this manner, in the actual production, but not in the text, the message is that the assembly members are a hindrance to governing efficiently, and the debate and dialogue prompted by the assembly members are instruments to create intrigue and conspire against an effective (monarchic) type of government. The performance presents Iturbide as the person who knows how to unite opposing ideas and to whom Mexicans owe the foundation of the nation. The text, however, exposes Iturbide's revolutionary independence as a Creole independence. In other words, Iturbide's independence does not take into

account either indigenous communities or the Mestizo population. It is an independence that functions to change power among elites.

The nation-state's influence on festivals and performances is not always evident. The vindication of Santa Anna and Iturbide made by José Caballero and his team seems to be free from governmental pressures. In fact, the decision to stage Iturbide and Santa Anna as heroes points to an agreed-upon idea between artists. For instance, Everardo Sánchez, who performs the young Santa Anna in the play, mentions that 'I do not see [Santa Anna] as a villain; nowadays history [books] describe him in that way, but in his times, people sought him out in order to govern the country. He got re-elected eleven times, but not all those times did he desire to be president' (Notimex, 24 Nov. 2011).

The government's influence on the production is felt in other ways, however. In this case, José Caballero's artistic practice adheres to the type of cultural work fostered by the government. Caballero has been the artistic director of the National Theatre Company from 2003 to 2007, and a member of the Sistema Nacional de Creadores de Arte (National System of Art Creators) in three periods: 1994–1997, 1997–2000, and 2008–2011. As the artistic director of the National Theatre Company, he developed the Programa Nacional de Teatro Escolar (National School Theatre Programme) (Bañuelos, 27 Jan. 2007). Caballero's work as a member of the National System of Art Creators and his post as the artistic director of the National Theatre Company depended on the Mexican government through its cultural apparatus. In other words, the main public cultural institutions in Mexico (the National Council for Culture and the Arts, and the National Institute of

Fine Arts) administer the National System of Art Creators and the National Theatre Company. *Horas de gracia* was produced precisely by the National Council for Culture and the Arts through the National Theatre Company. *Horas de gracia* was one of the performances supported by the Mexican government through the project Segundo Ciclo de Teatro Mexicano en el Bicentenario de la Independencia (Cycle of Mexican Theatre in the bicentenary of the independence), which aimed to commemorate Mexican independence.

Caballero's work in the National Theatre Company and the National System of Art Creators evinces his proximity to national cultural organisations and public funding destined for culture and the arts in Mexico. In fact, most of his more than 60 productions made in Mexico have been sponsored by public institutions. Although the nation-state did not set out the use of the festival as a way to spread a particular vision of nationhood, its influence was felt in the type of artistic directors that the National Theatre Company hired to direct the performance for the celebration of Mexico's bicentenary. The reinterpretation of the play in terms that favour the current elitist power shows that nation-states can use festivals to spread a particular vision of nationhood, that is, 'the sort of ideas and values of a political system or social formation' (Steger 11–12).

Horas de gracia was used to commemorate the bicentenary of Mexican independence, just at the very moment the Mexican army was in the streets to fight against the drug factions and there was an escalation of the parliamentary debate about the violence that the war on drugs was bringing to the country. It has been mentioned in many articles that the 'drug war' has

been a stratagem to achieve legitimisation after a controversial election result in 2006 and as a means to distract Mexican citizens from the fraud that led Felipe Calderón to the Mexican presidency.²⁵ Posing drugs and drug cartels as threats to the Mexican citizens while presenting the actions undertaken by Mexican government, props up the Mexican government as the guarantor of social order.

The war on drugs of the former Mexican president, Felipe Calderón, can be seen as a means to restore the social order and bring peace and harmony to national citizens—if the Mexican government is fighting against an evil thing, then it must be a good government. However, *restoring the social order* also helps to impose the government's ideology. For example, instead of a brave action of the Mexican government to stop drug dealing, the deployment of the army in the streets has also worked to criminalise social protests and prompted soldiers to abuse their authority by torturing and killing common citizens.

For the actual Mexican nation-state, the war against the drug cartels involves many deaths, but these deaths are not seen as fruitless—they are necessary for the nation's security. Felipe Calderón's strategy to end the illegal drug trade has been criticised by the Mexican parliament. It is possible that the inclusion of issues related to the debate between assembly members and the emperor in *Horas de gracia* was also a way to highlight the actions undertaken by the nation-state in order to legitimise the presidency. Moreover, the presentation of the assembly members as a hindrance in the performance can also be taken as a critique of the Mexican parliament,

because it voices non-favourable opinions on the war on drugs launched by the Mexican president.

National unity and the concepts encompassed by nationalism can be interpreted differently by different political systems or even distinct political groups. The apparent cohesion that Iturbide constructs is based on the ideals of Creoles and not on the inclusion of native communities. Thus, the vindication of Iturbide as a national hero seeks to contribute to the current government's idea of nationhood; *Horas de gracia* becomes a kind of epitome of nationhood. It foregrounds the principles on which the nation is based. The inclusion in the fmx of a performance, chosen by the National Theatre Company to commemorate Mexican independence, which boasts of the foundation of the nation according to the government's view, implies that festivals can be adapted to fulfil the nation-state's ideology. From this perspective, the fmx can be considered to be a tool to disseminate the nation's vision.

It can also be inferred that the Mexican government exerted its influence on the fmx structure by subsidising the event. Although, the fmx does not directly depend on the Mexican government—a non-governmental organisation, The Historic Centre Association, is in charge of the event—50 per cent of the funding for the 2010 season came from governmental institutions (Wolffer, 'Foro'). Consequently, the Mexican nation-state left an imprint on the fmx not only through choosing artists and performances to commemorate Mexicanness, but also by providing the event with subsidy. The \$17,500,000 Mexican pesos (944,160 GBP approximately) given to the

fmx by the Mexican government meant that the festival should hold a perspective consistent with the values of the state.

In the fmx, the rhythms and norms of the government bureaucracy put pressure on the festival. Moreover, the government, as a principal sponsor, has input in the decisions and the form of the event. The greater amount of money a sponsor invests the greater its influence becomes. For instance, the government supported the festival by producing a specific type of performance, such as *Horas de gracia*, which adhered to the government's views about the Mexican independence. In this respect, Nikos Papastergiadis notes, 'We should be mindful of the fact that the logic capital and the myth of the nation share the same dream of cultural unity' (51). That is, the money given by the government for the arts can be used to support the nation-state's ideological claims of unity.

In the particular case of *Horas de gracia*, a performance sponsored by the Mexican government through the National Theatre Company, was an opportunity to apply the knowledge of *how to* use art and culture to encourage the growth of particular national ideologies or aesthetics. From this vantage point, festivals are strategies to distribute a political vision. Michel Foucault states that people in power need the knowledge of *how to* maintain control in order to prevent or neutralise the threats that can put their power in danger. Foucault, describing the relation between the prince and his principality, asserted:

The objective of the exercise of power is to reinforce, strengthen and protect the principality, but this last understood to mean not the objective ensemble of its subjects and territory, but rather the prince's

relation with what he owns, with the territory he has inherited or acquired, and with his subjects. (*Governmentality* 90)

Foucault later adds that the tasks of the prince are first 'to identify the dangers' and second, 'to develop the art of manipulating relations of force that will allow the prince to ensure the protection of his principality, understood as the link that binds him to his territory and his subjects' (*Governmentality* 90).

Foucault's 'governmentality' can be applied to the relation of nation-states and international festivals. For instance, in 2010, many countries in Latin America (for example, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Paraguay, Venezuela and Chile) implemented celebrations for the commemorations of 200 years of independence. These celebrations included festivals and the creation of specific performances, with the purpose of commemorating the histories and heroes that gave these nations their *unity* and *freedom*. For the nation-states, festivals represent an opportunity to apply cultural strategies that foster a sense of national unity, show national pride or promote a nation-state vision over culture and arts.

The display of national cultural products in the fmx, even if scarce in comparison to foreign performances, suggests the use of the fmx to foster official versions of culture. For the Mexican nation-state, the fmx 2010 not only functioned as a platform to commemorate Mexicanness and induce a feeling of nationhood, but also as an art of planning and directing national cultural movements. In this way, the Mexican nation-state shaped the fmx's content. All the performances supported by the Mexican government in the fmx, that is, *Horas de gracia*, *Malinche-Malinches*, *Nezahualcóyotl*, *Moctezuma*

and *Únicamente la verdad: la auténtica historia de Camelia 'la tejana'* worked to commemorate the bicentenary of the Mexican independence and/or the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution. In this sense, Wolffer noted that 'only very rarely has the Festival of Mexico articulated its programming around a topic; however, for this 2010 edition, year of the bicentenary of Mexican independence and the 100th celebration of the Mexican Revolution, there was a feature that brought together all the activities: the quest for national productions' (HBL, 12 Mar. 2010). Sponsoring the fmx implied the inclusion of certain artists and particular topics. Moreover, as explained in Chapter 1, the fmx did not include events that struck against the principles and ideology of the Mexican nation-state. In this respect, *Horas de gracia* functioned as a site of nationally appropriated ideologies and contributed to the nation's propaganda.

The presence of national imaginaries in the fmx can also be tracked through topics and performances associated with the actual state of the nation. In contrast to the governmental vision of art and culture, a festival can be imbued with themes prompted by the country's political or social situation and reflect over the issues that the national populations have in common. In the following case, not the imagined links between people, but the real problems in common are the ones that tie together a nation. In other words, the shared troubles create a sense of community. In this respect, the theatre produced by the nation employed traditional stories to reflect upon its social problems.

The State of the Nation According to Camelia ‘The Texan’

One of the performances in the fmx 2010 that dealt with the present national difficulties was *Únicamente la verdad: la auténtica historia de la Camelia ‘La Tejana’* (*Only the Truth: The Authentic Story of Camelia ‘The Texan’*). *Únicamente la verdad* by composer Gabriela Ortiz and librettist Rubén Ortiz was coproduced for the fmx 2010 by the National Council for Culture and the Arts and the National Institute of Fine Arts, through the National Opera Company. However, according to the performance’s brochure, thanks to the support of the Guggenheim Foundation, the performance was previewed on 8 August 2008, at the University of Indiana in Bloomington. In other words, the performance was in its inception a product of a foreign institution.

This *opera-corrido*²⁶ is based on the legend created by the popular *corrido*, *Contrabando y traición* (*Smuggling and Betrayal*) by the Mexican band Los Tigres del Norte in which a woman is associated with the murder of a drug trafficker. The *corrido* symbolises a contemporary myth inscribed in the imagination of the Mexican population—the growth of drug dealing and its consequences in the quotidian life of the Mexican communities. The performance takes place in Ciudad Juárez, a city in the Mexico-USA borderlands in Chihuahua State. This city has jumped to the international attention due to its level of violence, drug trafficking and huge numbers of deaths. In *Únicamente la verdad*, there are multiple versions of Camelia’s legend.

One of the versions comes from *Alarma*, a sensationalist newspaper of Ciudad Juárez, in Chihuahua. This particular account tells that Eleazar, a drug trafficker and Camelia’s lover, gets laid on some railroad tracks and is

decapitated when the train crosses over his head. The second story is created by TV Azteca, which is one of the most important dealers in TV transmission in Mexico. TV Azteca presents a Camelia from Tamaulipas, Mexico, as the head of a drug-trafficking gang. In the form of an interview, performed as an opera duet, Camelia presents herself as innocent of drug trafficking, although she forms a relationship with Emilio Varela, a drug trafficker. Due to her connection with Emilio, people link Camelia to drug trafficking. However, she always denies this fact. Camelia also mentions that she did not kill Emilio Varela. Her alibi is that at the time of the crime, she was in a different city. In this description of the events, she hates men on account of being raped when she was six years old. According to Camelia 'men are completely useless'.

In the third version, one of the members of the band Los Tigres del Norte, who happens to be the author of the *corrido* and is dressed as a Norteño²⁷ character, says that *Camelia la Tejana* is an invented story that does not have any kind of relationship with real life. The author also mentions that Emilio Varela is his cousin's name, that Camelia is a friend of his and that she is not from Texas. He adds that the reason he wrote the lyrics to the song was to give women their place in society and because Los Tigres del Norte are also feminists, an assertion that paradoxically contrasts with all the macho-cowboy-style disguises they are wearing. Finally, he mentions that *corridos* always talk about men that smuggle drugs to the *other side* (USA), but they do not refer to women's actions. In his opinion, women are always victims, and, thus, they intend to 'claim the right to women because they can be bad too' (sic).

The fourth account of Camelia's legend narrates the story of *Camelia la Tejana* from the perspective of the blogs and internet forums. The version is constructed from diverse and disparate extracts and commentaries that were circulating on the Internet at the time. These comments are part of the Mexican imaginings brought about by the actual situation of violence and drug trafficking within the country. For example, they describe military confrontations between different gangs and between gangs and police forces or soldiers. Fragments of the comments were projected on a screen and depicted the use of weapons such as AK 47s and hand grenades in combat. Additionally, some other comments described the utilisation of mortar shells and even missiles in the confrontations. The fifth and final version of the performance, which also has a hint of the first version, describes Camelia as a tall, slim, more or less thirty-five-year-old prostitute, who is native to a place near El Paso, Texas in the USA. She sells herself in the squares of the town to the highest bidder.

In *Únicamente la verdad*, mass media creates different stories based on the same subject. As mentioned earlier, Camelia's legend splits into five different versions narrated by the different mass media, including TV Azteca and Internet. This fact suggests the impossibility of knowing the absolute truth. However, in spite of that impossibility, the performance incorporates actual situations and topics that work to give us a sense of the actual state of the nation. In *Únicamente la verdad*, we have a series of descriptions of Mexicanness.

Únicamente la verdad reflects the violence, treachery, torture, executions and drug components of contemporary Mexican life in some

locations. Camelia's legend is based on a red note from the sensationalist newspaper *Alarma* in Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua. The story of Camelia is also a particular account of the cultural transactions at the border zone Mexico-USA, a facet of the drug on wars and a mixture between myth and real events. In fact, *corridos* very often contributes to generate legends because they narrate events in the country that do not appear in the Mexican mass media.



Fig. 25. Image from a scene of the opera-corrido *Only the Truth: The Authentic Story of Camelia 'The Texan'*. Performers acting as wetbacks just before crossing the Mexico-USA border. Compañía Nacional de Ópera, Theatre Julio Castillo, Mexico City, 11 Mar. 2010.

Performances such as *Only the Truth*, based on stories about drug dealing, make clear the penetration of drug trafficking in Mexican culture. However, while drug trafficking is widely condemned, it is also an alternative occupation and/or lifestyle for many young people who lack other

opportunities of subsistence. Correspondingly, the performance also reflects the aspirations of many Mexican youth, that is, their cravings for opportunities, money and agency denied by the social system.

Finally, the performance implicitly promotes an idea of Mexico as a niche for international drug trafficking, a vision that contrasts with the idea of the exotic and folklorist country promoted by governmental policies.²⁸ The facts that, in 2004, Gabriela Ortiz was commissioned to create *Únicamente la verdad* by a transnational institution such as the Organisation of American States, and that it was first staged at Indiana University in 2008, reflect the way in which actual Mexican art is usually considered internationally; that is, as an art related to violence (Roca, 22–24).

In these circumstances, the use of drug dealing and violence in this performance suggests a new way to foster Mexican art in the global market. According to Patrick Lonergan:

It is often suggested that globalization is rendering the category of nation obsolete, and that it leads to cultural and social homogenization . . . however . . . the national—an essentialized category that is applicable to the life of the state in its entirety—may operate as a mode of differentiating the state in a global marketplace.

(60)

Therefore, what seems important for the Mexican-state in this relationship between national cultural products and transnational institutions is the branding in the international purview of particular notions of ‘Mexicanness’. From this perspective, drug smuggling and violence, as attributes of Mexican authenticity, function to brand Mexico in the global marketplace.

In this section, I have analysed different ideas of nationhood embodied in some Cuban and Mexican performances brought about by the FITH 2011 and the fmx 2010. In the case of the fmx, the first idea of nationhood corresponded with the incorporation of national themes in *Horas de gracia*, for instance, the foundational moments of the Mexican nation; and the second one involved the representation of the actual state of the nation, a representation which included violence and drug smuggling. In the following section, by contrast, I will explore the hybridisation of cultures as a marker of Mexican and Cuban national identities.

National Hybridity in the fmx and the FITH

Cultural mixtures are not new phenomena and have existed in many parts of the globe. Think, for example, of the representations of Jesus being carried by the Greek gods at the beginning of Christendom in Rome, or think even of the combination of pre-Hispanic Gods with Christian Saints in the first churches built after the conquest of Mexico. In Mexico, these hybrids have also existed in less material forms, such as the Teatro Evangelizador (Evangelisation Theatre), which employed indigenous languages, such as Náhuatl, to present stories from the Bible. The Teatro Evangelizador was used by the Spanish friars to spiritually conquer the indigenous people after the military conquest. In Cuba, there has also been a process of hybridisation of cultures. African slaves, Spanish conquerors, French royals and indigenous people from the Yucatán peninsula, among many others, have contributed to the creation of hybrid identities.

According to Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner: 'Given that there have been centuries of colonization, there is no pure or 'authentic' [sense of] local that is untouched by global developments' (*Articulating* 9). That is, rather than authenticity, what predominates in today's world is hybridity. At present, in spite of its inequalities in access, the new media has increased significantly the level of interactions between individuals around the globe, also contributing to the production of new cultural hybrids.

Nation-states deal with cultural differences within the nation's boundaries. Although nation-states try to impel a common vision that aims to unify cultural diversity within the national borders, they are composed of different cultures and heterogenic visions. Very often nation-states look to homogenise, to impose a one-sided vision over the diverse types of cultures that constitute them; within a nation there is a fusion of disparate social imaginaries. Then, nationhood can also be thought as a process of cultural hybridisation, a series of actions directed to incorporate different concepts of nationhood. Hybridity in this case functions to unleash new national imaginaries.

In the following sections, I argue that cultural hybridisation has provided new ways to imagine nationhood. The following sections deal with the contradictions, mixtures and tensions that produced hybrid conceptions of nationhood at fmx 2010 and FITH 2011. In the case of the FITH 2011, the hybridisation of cultures in Cuba has favoured the combination of African, indigenous and Western cultural elements. I argue that this hybrid Cuban identity has been expressed through the free adaptation of *Marat-Sade* by Peter Weiss, staged by the Cuban company Theatre Buendía. In the case of

the fmx, first, I examine how the hybridisation of national identity is manifest in the performance *Malinche-Malinches*; secondly, I explore the spatial dualities contained in the name 'Festival of Mexico' and propound the existence of different conceptions of national space coexisting within the same festival structure.

National Hybridity in *Charenton*

Historically, Cuba has been exposed to different human migration flows and has had to accommodate different cultures. For example, the Haitian Revolution (1791–1804) caused the first French migration wave towards Cuba. From 1803 to 1809, more than twenty seven thousand immigrants arrived in Santiago de Cuba, the majority of them royal French people coming from Saint Domingue in Haiti (Leyva, 20 Nov. 2009; Vázquez Cienfuegos 215). In 1809, French people migrated from Cuba to USA due to an order of confiscation of properties dictated by the Spanish Crown, but later, after the peace treaty between France and Spain in 1814, the former French residents went back to Santiago de Cuba with another wave of French immigrants who came from the USA (Leyva, 20 Nov. 2009; Vázquez Cienfuegos 218).

According to Beatríz Varela Zequeira, between 1847 and 1873, 125,000 Chinese people arrived in Cuba, and, during the twentieth century 150,000 more (mainly Chinese male immigrants) established themselves in Havana and Santiago de Cuba (Varela, 9). In the beginning of the twentieth century, a new wave of immigrants came to Cuba. According to Julian Alienes y Urosa, between 1902 and 1930, Cuba became a country of immigrants (38–39). More than 600,000 people (Spanish, citizens of the USA, French, Jews

from east Europe, Syrians, Lebanese, Palestinians, Chinese, Japanese, Puerto Ricans, West Indians and people from the Yucatan peninsula) settled in Cuba in order to achieve a better standard of living (Alienes y Urosa, 38–39; Díaz Castro, 30 Jan. 2007). At present times, Cuba receives a flow of international tourists that come from different parts of the world.

The waves of immigration towards the island suggest that Cuban national identity is a melting pot in which multiple cultures have been integrated. In Cuba, there has been a process of hybridisation of cultures to the point that cultural hybridisation conveys national identity. For example, the incorporation of Africans as a legitimate citizenry in Cuba fostered the construction of Cuban nationhood and new concepts of national identity such as the Cuban Creole. Many cultural elements of the Cuban Creole are characterised by the participation of the black and white populations. For instance, *son* and *rumba*, two traditional Cuban rhythms, were developed from instruments brought by Spanish conquerors such as the piano, the guitar and drums and singing introduced to Cuba by African slaves.

One of the Cuban plays staged in the FITH 2011 in which it was possible to appreciate a process of cultural syncretism was *Charenton*. During the FITH 2011, Cuba's Theatre Buendía revived *Charenton*, a performance that was first staged by the company in 2005 to celebrate the group's twenty years of work (Teatro Buendía, 9 Sep. 2012).

Theatre Buendía and many other companies that formed a group of experimental leading companies were established in the 1980s when the Cuban Revolution was buoyant. According to the Theatre Buendía web page, the company was founded in 1986 by actress, teacher and artistic director

Flora Lauten. Theatre Buendía is known for its commitment to classics and adaptations of classic texts whose themes reflect the struggles and challenges of contemporary Cuban society. Theatre Buendía's director Flora Lauten and playwright Raquel Carrió contextualise Western and European classics in a uniquely Cuban setting with an ensemble of actors who have trained with Lauten through the ISA in Havana.

Charenton was inspired by and is a very free adaptation of the modern Western classic *Marat-Sade* by Peter Weiss. The plot was not linear but was a series of scenes put together and connected by Marat's ideas about power, a social revolution that would bring right and justice to the population. *Charenton* is set in an insane asylum where the inmates are staging a play. The director of the asylum has put out an edict saying that the official line must be obeyed, but the feisty residents have a wholly different set of ideas. By putting on the play, the inmates have the opportunity to criticise injustices in the social system.

In *Charenton*, a hybrid national identity was manifested in terms of performance style. The visual and sound elements of *Charenton* were taken from Cuban culture, specifically from Cuban *Santería* (a combination of Catholic and Yoruba religious systems that is often associated with witchcraft); for instance, wooden spoons, structures tightened with ropes, pieces of cloth, and live music played an important role in the performance. The stage was dark with candles and dim light was used through the whole representation, which points to the secrecy that accompanies *Santería* rituals. Other resources, such as masks, stilts and smoke also contributed to the dark environment fostered by the performance. From one perspective, it is

possible to assert that *Marat-Sade* by Peter Weiss was 'cubanised' by Theatre Buendía.

According to director Flora Lauten in a documentary directed by Enrique Pineda Barnet, the staging of the performance began through a process of exploration with sounds (Pineda, 9 Mar. 2010). The first thing Lauten brought to rehearsals was cooking utensils with which the actors started to explore sounds (Pineda, 9 Mar. 2010). In the performance, the character Charlotte produced the sound of the sea by rubbing a wooden cooking spoon against the floor. In other cases, the characters reproduced the sound of the bells of the revolution by hitting pots with spoons and even made the sound of the guillotine by scrapping pots and cooking utensils. Thus, sounds created with the use of props in the performance functioned not only to illustrate routines of the world in which *Charenton* develops, such as meal times or executions, but also to create the atmosphere of the places from which the characters originate, such as the sea or the forest.

The fact that *Charenton's* characters are born from nature indicates proximity to the Cuban Yoruba religion and shows another way of integrating *Marat-Sade* into the Cuban context. Similarly to the *Orishas*, gods of the pantheon Yoruba, *Charenton's* characters also come from nature. The character Charlotte comes from the sea. In Yoruba religion, the goddess *Yemayá* is the ocean and the loving mother. In Cuba, the Yoruba religion is a mixture of Catholic and African religions, and, therefore, it is an example of Cuban cultural hybridisation. Yoruba religion was brought to Cuba by African slaves from Nigeria, Togo and Benin, but it later combined with Catholic saints and gave rise to the Cuban Yoruba also known as *Lucumí* or *Santería*.

In Cuban *Santería*, the *Orishas* are also the gods from whom people ask for help during a witchcraft ritual. The hybridisation of cultures has also been symbolised in *Charenton* through the combination of opera music and a ritualistic sense of rhythm drawn from African traditions. In *Charenton*, music that has roots in African instruments, rhythms, shouts and strong voices, such as *son* and *mambo*, is mixed with classical tunes and/or opera style.

The employment of a Western performance to talk about national issues suggests that *Marat-Sade* by Peter Weiss, as many other cultural elements that had a foreign origin, was assimilated by Cuban national culture. The 'cubanisation' of *Marat-Sade* by Theatre Buendía functions to display national problems. *Charenton* is a Cuban adaptation of a Western play, that is, a hybrid that fuses Cuban and French Revolutions, a European context in Cuban settings. In *Charenton*, there is a mixture of times: while *Marat-Sade* is set in the past, the performance refers to Cuban contemporary situations. Moreover, there is a mixture of fiction with reality in the double play of theatre within theatre, and in the use of a Western play to talk about the Cuban Revolution. The mixture of times and places functions to uncover national reality through fiction. By employing a Western play, Theatre Buendía exposes a closer problematic, the failing of the Cuban Revolution.

In a 2010 review of *Charenton* during the Latino Theatre Festival in Chicago, Timothy McGuire wrote:

The play takes place in 1793 and depicts the last days of Jean-Paul Marat. Marat believed and fuelled the French Revolution, and four years later he is haunted by the many deaths brought . . . by the

Revolution. Marat and Sade engage in a political dialogue about the virtues of the Revolution. Marat still desires a peaceful equality and Marquis de Sade wants equality through [the] guillotine. Through the play the French citizens speak of the hardship of their lives since the Revolution's victory. We witness the complexity of a failing Revolution, a revolution fuelled by . . . people who had the desire for equality and social harmony, and the feelings of the people after it [led] to a life of starvation, loss of their brothers and dictatorship so shortly after the euphoric sense of victory. The parallels between the Cuban Revolution and Cubans['] current living situation are brought forth humanly, tugging at your heart and provoking your mind. (McGuire, 19 July 2010)



Fig. 26. Scene from the performance *Charenton*. The inmates rehearse a play. Theatre Buendía, Havana, Cuba. 30 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

In *Charenton*, the French revolutionary Marat is also considered the most radical and bloodthirsty personage. Marat's characterisation provokes a

rejection of this personage due to his radical extremism. Although Marat's ideas are worthy in terms of their quest for right and justice, the way in which those ideas are implemented is limited. This may be read as a critique of the Cuban government.

Charenton not only tackles the French Revolution, but also deals with the Cuban Revolution. It is possible to draw parallels between the ideals pursued by Castro's Revolution and the ways in which Marat's revolutionary dreams have been blurred in time. *Charenton* shows that Cuba's revolutionary ideals were fuelled by values such as fraternity, justice and equality, but, at the same time, it expresses that the practical implementation of the Cuban revolution betrayed or contradicted the initial revolutionary ideals.

In an interview with journalist Carlos Espinoza Domínguez, Osvaldo Cano, the director of the theatre school at ISA, said:

Through *Charenton*, Theatre Buendía tests the company's capacity for dialoguing with reality and history, with the local and the universal. *Charenton's* creators lead us through a seductive pathway inhabited by contradictory icons which constantly question us and induce analysis and reflection. Then, we flow into the old certainty in which opposites touch each other and become inevitably counterproductive. Conceptual depth, skilfulness, visual beauty, contrasts, coherence, sharpness, rhythm, lush confabulation, seductive plot . . . these are some of the attractive features of the Buendía's staging. (Espinoza, 9 July 2010)

Theatre Buendía infused its adaptation of *Marat-Sade* with Cuban sensibilities, rhythms and points of view. In this often-musical piece, the combination of opera and Cuban rhythms, such as *son* and *rumba*, gave in some moments a sense of melancholy and implied humour and lament in others. In *Charenton*, the dissatisfaction produced by the failing of Marat's Revolution led the inmates to follow the Marquis de Sade and his desire for sex. Thus, Theatre Buendía also seemed to suggest that it might be smarter to concentrate your life on more personal kinds of happiness, such as sex and self-expression, rather than on a social revolution. In this sense, the performance was also a free-wheeling and eclectic work.

In *Charenton*, I have analysed how the performance elements conveyed Cuban identity. In this case, national culture has been embodied in the adaptation of a Western text. Now, I shall explain how the festival incorporated hybrid concepts of nationhood, both in terms of festival's content and in the diverging conceptions of space contained in the festival's name.

The Quest for National Identity in Malinche

Mexico and Mexicanness embody multiple concepts. According to Ruth Hellier-Tinoco:

Mexico and Mexicanness are constructs created, shaped, and performed through discourse, photographs, dances, places, peoples, words, bodies, colors, foods languages, music, texts, films, journeys, stones, and memories. Mexico and Mexicanness are a sense of national belonging, a notion of authenticity, an expectation of difference, a

collective identity, a real soul, a tourist destination, an amalgam of past and present, a crossing of borders, an impression of death, an optimism for the future, an imagined community, a question of hybridity, a folkloric culture, a trace of pre-Conquest civilizations, a confidence in diversity, an idea of otherness, an indigenous presence, a desire for tradition, a history of superimposition . . . (3)

As many other nations, Mexico is also a mixture of voices. In the fmx 2010, the performance *Malinche-Malinches* offers an example of this amalgam of cultures and the contradictory quest for Mexican identity.

Malinche-Malinches tries to vindicate Malinche, an indigenous woman who was the translator for Hernán Cortés during the Conquest of Mexico. Malinche is presented as a victim of her circumstances. The performance portrays her with some kind of agency. She is able, to some extent, to look for better circumstances according to her time and possibilities. The performance starts with a series of alternating monologues performed by all the characters in different parts of the stage. The monologues give an account of the diverse problems that confront women in Mexico: difficult childhoods, the struggle for survival, internal conflicts. In this manner, quotidian situations of Mexican women are interwoven with Malinche's story.

Malinche is approached from three perspectives that traverse time and space and therefore imply a hybrid process of identity formation. The first perspective presents her as a victim of her socio-historical circumstances, as a slave that is sold. Malinche comes from a tribe subjugated by the Aztecs. In other words, she is a deprived marginal woman. Here, a relationship is established between her condition as a subjugated gender

from a subjugated tribe and the circumstances in which she decided—or, more precisely, was forced—to become a translator for Cortés. Her characterisation intends to vindicate the historical character: she, not Cortés, conquers the New World through her diligence, good performance and efficiency in her role as translator. To support this perspective, the play gives examples of some translators, men and women, who preceded Malinche but did not perform as well as she did. The performance suggests that factors that contributed to the failure of those translators include negligence, avarice or simply bad translations. The first perspective foregrounds the mixing of cultures, the union of disparate entities and concepts of the world personified by Cortés and Malinche and, as a consequence, the birth of a new race.

The second perspective of Malinche's story in the performance is related to the notion that Mexicans are *hijos de la chingada*. *Hijos de la chingada* has many meanings and could be translated with different senses. 'sons of a bitch' could be the intended meaning, although *chingada* also refers to a raped woman or a woman in unfortunate conditions. Different meanings of *chingada* are explored in the play, including rape and outrage, woman and bitch. Malinche is the *chingada*; here, the term embraces the notion of Mexicans being the product of a cultural raping. However, in the performance, the term *chingada* is also managed in contradictory ways. For example, the expressions *¡eres un chingón!* ('You are fucking good at something') and *¡ya chingamos!* ('We won!' or 'We fucked them up!') represent the success of Malinche as a character that could fight against her marginal condition. The notion of *la chingada* as a violated woman and other variations employed in the performance, such as *¡ya te chingaste!* ('You're

fucked up!') or *¡déjate de chingaderas!* ('Stop talking crap!'), are also used to suggest women's conditions from the pre-Hispanic period until the current time.



Fig. 27. Malinche washes Cortés in a scene from the performance *Malinche-Malinches*. La Máquina Teatro Company. Teatro J. Jiménez Rueda, Mexico City. 18 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

In one scene, for example, while Cortés rests on a sofa, Malinche performs multiple chores such as vacuuming, going shopping, taking care of the baby and answering the telephone. Throughout her work, Cortés does not move at all; he rests without turning a hair. In this manner, past and present are connected. Even when Malinche tries to escape from an oppressive situation with the Aztecs, she finds herself in a similar situation with Cortés: the Spanish people took her children and used her as a slave. Yet, at present,

she remains as a *slave* of domestic chores. Cultures, times and languages may have changed, but the oppressive conditions remain. In this sense, the plot contains a mixture of times, spaces and situations that function to reveal the hegemonic discourse of a patriarchal society, a discourse that historically reinforces male dominance and female subordination. In other words, through hybridity, the story echoes and uncovers the unevenness of male and female relationships in the pre-Hispanic, Hispanic and contemporary periods.

The third aspect involving hybridity in the performance is the figure of Malinche as traitor. In this account, Malinche warned Moctezuma about the Spanish conquerors and convinced him to avoid fighting. This situates Malinche as the symbol of cultural betrayal par excellence. As a result, she is condemned to be historically repudiated by the Mexican population. Malinche represents disloyalty and, by extension, women's treachery at different levels. In the Mexican social imaginaries, for instance, in popular music, the betrayal of love is usually performed by women. Accordingly, a treacherous Malinche deserves to be punished, separated from her children and sold as a slave.

Alternatively, *malinchismo*, a derivative of Malinche, also refers to the desire and preference for foreign people and things. In this formulation, Malinche is a hybrid character that symbolises the rejection and attraction of the foreign at the same time. On the one hand, *malinchismo* works as a stimulus to protect national identities. For example, the derogatory expression '*no seas malinchista*' ('don't be a xenophile') denotes a person who gives preference or priority to foreign things; thus, it is a critique of foreign elements. On the other hand, *malinchismo* also represents a way to *mejorar la*

raza ('to improve the race'); therefore, miscegenation is a way to lessen the difficult economic situation of the population through cultural hybridisation. As a victim of her time and circumstances, Malinche is both a traitor and a historical antihero who looks for vindication. She is a complex symbol of cultural mixture. She represents the Mexican and also symbolises the desire for the foreign.

Thus, Malinche represents hybridity, although not a happy one. Malinche is a symbol of a painful national mixture: the birth of a 'new race' and the difficult process of acceptance and identity creation. On the one hand, Malinche represents the national openness to the flows of transnational corporations—an economic and systematic rape and appropriation of the country. On the other hand, Malinche symbolises the internal and unresolved conflicts of the Mexican identity within the country, the struggling and differences between the communities that integrated the Aztec empire, the communities created with the advent of colonisation and the new communities that are emerging as a result of globalisation. The contradictory flows that shape the Mexican contemporary imagination are posed in *Malinche-Malinches* as a complex issue. In Malinche, the quest for identity is always evolving in an arena that contains disparate contents and not a unidirectional political discourse.

fmX: In the Name is not the Message

A bizarre example of a spatial contradiction in the fmX can be found in the title of the festival. In 2010, the former Festival de México en el Centro Histórico (Festival of Mexico in the Historic Centre) changed its name to

simply fmx–Festival of Mexico. However, the different communities that inhabit Mexico's borders were oddly unrepresented; the Mexican performances that formed part of this year's programme came only from Mexico City. In this sense, there is a contradiction between the social groups that comprise the Mexican nation and their representation in the fmx.

According to José Wolffer the brand new title of the fmx was a marketing strategy in order to attract new audiences. Wolffer also stated that the designation 'Festival of Mexico' was introduced in 2003 when the festival's title changed from Festival del Centro Histórico de la Ciudad de México (Festival of Mexico City's Historic Centre) to Festival de México en el Centro Histórico (Festival of Mexico in the Historic Centre) (Wolffer, 18 Mar. 2010). However, in 2010, the organisers decided to take out the 'geographical precision' of the Historic Centre to brand the festival and make the title more alluring (Wolffer, 18 Mar. 2010). The simplification of the name looks to impact the public and have presence in the world of computers and Internet users. Making the name short and easier to remember also allows the festival to be in tune with brand new technology, such as new social media outlets like Facebook and Twitter. Besides, the change of title contributed to redefine the festival's logo, position the festival in both the national and international purview and thus generate the desired festival's brand.

Nonetheless, other factors may have fuelled the transformation of the festival's name. Taking out the *last name* of the festival, or in Wolffer's words, that 'geographical precision' suggests conflicting interests between the local government of Mexico City and the federal government; that is, the change of name suggests a strategy to keep the funds of the federal government for the

festival without renouncing the support of Mexico City's government. The conflict between Mexico City's leftist government and the federal government's right-wing perspective may have established political differences and struggles that had repercussions in the festival title.

Two of the principal sponsors of the fmx are the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (The National Council for Culture and Arts) and the Secretaría de Cultura del Distrito Federal (Mexico City's Cultural Secretariat), which form part of the federal government and Mexico City's government, respectively. Having a name that geographically positions the festival as an event associated with the local government or associated with a zone that is under the political influence of Mexico City's government leaves out the federal government. In other words, although the federal government was sponsoring the festival, this support was not reflected in the festival's name. In order to keep a balance between the local and federal government, a name that referred to both parties was needed. Thus, the reference to the Historic Centre had to be removed to show the fmx as an endeavour of both national and local governments to support art and culture in their respective ambits.

The word *Mexico* in the social context of the country refers to Mexico City; however, the word also refers to Mexico as a nation. In a personal interview, Wolffer mentioned that initially the idea was to take the name of Mexico as representative of the city and not of the whole country, although he recognised the national implication of the designation (Wolffer, 18 Mar. 2010). Although Wolffer articulated the festival's need to include the new artistic manifestations that are emerging in Mexico and acknowledged that his task as artistic director was to provide the festival with a balance in order

to give opportunities to both foreign and national artists, the fact is that the curatorship provided more space for foreign expressions. Of course, the inclusion of Mexican artistic manifestations in the festival represents a way to address local agents, but foreign and national artists are not treated equally, or more precisely, they do not have the same importance in practical terms. As we saw in Chapter 1, there is an uneven representation.

Although the festival's change of name is linked to the quest for global and national recognition, this transformation is also a strategy of marketing that not only fails to address the artistic manifestations of the groups of the Mexican states, but also imposes the spatial imagination of the capital City on the rest of the country. Therefore, two competing conceptions of national space seem to apply here—or, more precisely, two different way of imagining the nation exist: civic nationalism and ethnic nationalism. In her book *Theatre and Nation*, Nadine Holdsworth explains that civic nationalism refers to 'the nation as a territorial entity and . . . how national citizens are equalised and united by common laws and institutions managed within the nation-state' (16). By contrast, Holdsworth states that '[e]thnic nationalists . . . emphasise the uniqueness of ethnic groups established through a common history and a shared cultural heritage passed down through the generations in a literal and metaphorical bloodline' (16). Thus, while 'civic nationalists define nationality by birth within the territory of the nation . . . ethnic nationalists define nationality on the basis of genealogy' (16).

From one point of view, the name fmx subscribes to the notion of civic nationalism because the title represents all the territories, laws and languages that conform to the nation-state. Nation-states, according to

Appadurai, create homogeneous spaces of nationness, but they do so by controlling the cultural differences of their citizens (*Production* 189). The word *Mexico* in this sense refers to the country, to all the social groups united under the territory of the nation-state in spite of the porous and elastic boundaries of the nation and the issues related to 'endors[ing] the rights of diverse cultural groups within society' (Holdsworth 16). In contrast, the misrepresentation of national plurality in the event promotes the idea of an ethnic nation based on the inclusion of only cultural groups pertaining to Mexico City. *Mexico* in this sense refers to the capital city and the ethnic groups that conform to this city. In this respect, the word *Mexico* emphasises the uniqueness of the capital city; that is, it involves a sort of ethnic-spatial nationalism that imbues the festival with a centralist consciousness. This ethnic-spatial nationalism emphasises the metaphorical 'bloodline' links between Mexico City artists and the particular territory they inhabit. It emphasises an elitist nationalism that not only marginalises indigenous groups, but also leaves out cultural manifestations and social groups that do not ascribe to the idea of nationhood of the dominant group.

Centralism has always been a problem not only in culture but also in politics and economy in Mexico. The Mexican provinces have been historically neglected and their claims blurred in the name of what the federal government calls 'Mexico'. The marginal towns within this nation have a voice only as long as it is filtered and adapted by the central government. The absence of performances from the Mexican provinces indicates that the nation is identified and represented only by Mexico City. From this vantage point, nationalism is a lie, a feigned reality, a way of

appropriating the social imagination of diverse social groups within the nation in favour of power and control.

Although the fmx's name indicates national representation and an emphasis on groups coming from within the borders of the Mexican nation, the truth is that the festival brings in more international groups, and the nation is represented only by companies from the metropolis. Tensions are present: a national festival contains the world, but the nation is not contained in the programming. Therefore, 'Festival of Mexico' is a paradoxical name that claims to represent Mexico, yet misrepresents the richness and plurality of the different cultures that form part of the nation; the fmx embraces not the diversity of the nation, but the homogenising ideals of the organisers. These contradictions expose the power relationships created by the festival.

Holdsworth suggests that the 'sense of an 'elastic nation' offers a useful way of thinking about how the nation stretches to incorporate new social movements, new ethnicities and political changes and the emergence of cultures of hybridity that enrich and irreversibly alter 'indigenous' national cultures' (26). In this respect, the festival's name, fmx, is also hybrid and elastic; it includes and excludes the nation or, more precisely, refers and appeals to different concepts of nation and to different spatial imaginations.

Chapter 3: A Glocal Sense at International Festivals

In this era of transnational exchange, international festivals are closely related to the rapid spread of globalisation. International festivals seem to favour global models of production and blur local artistic traditions, such as community theatre, that may withstand global or national orientation. In this light, it would seem that local issues are likely to be absent from international festivals or contained and filtered out of the festival structure due to the dominance or omnipresence of global and national agendas. To what extent do international festivals produce locality in this context? To what extent do international festivals represent local identities? The purpose of this chapter is not to describe essentialist movements, but to look at the ways in which the different local agendas shape festivals. International festivals take place in local areas and initiate different local responses.

Oppressive Locality versus Progressive Locality at the fmx 2010

Local forces were present at the fmx in at least two ways. First, in the 2010 season, there was an oppressive locality manifested through the categorisation of artists and the distribution of people during the festival. Secondly, there was a progressive locality, expressed through some local groups' implementation of particular artistic projects. Broadly speaking, the fmx 2010 created imbalances and tensions between local, national and foreign companies that participated in the event, instigating the negotiation of the local in terms of status, aesthetics and economies.

An oppressive locality was manifested in the marginalisation of local groups that did not subscribe to the national or international ideals promoted by the festival or in the elitist classification of artists and audience at the festival. However, although some artists were marginalised by the festival's organisation, the fmx also contained a progressive locality that sought to provide means of expression for local people and artists who were working without official support in Mexico City.²⁹ This means that the fmx is a contested site where different localities interact. I shall begin by explaining the first aspect.

The first chapter states that locality can operate as an oppressive power or as a type and source of fanaticism. This means that not all local practices should be considered ethical or progressive. For instance, in Cochoapa el Grande in the state of Guerrero, Mexico, women have been sold for £1500 to £3000 (GBP) because this is the local tradition (Enciso 2). Arguably, there exists an oppressive locality that maintains the status quo of a particular social formation, which in turn, supports and assists oppressive transnational forces. For instance, the selling of women in Cochoapa el Grande can be considered in tune with the wider exploitation of women via the transnational trade in women as sex workers. That is, the selling of women and the transnational trade in women are part of a patriarchal system that finds specific modes of exploitation in both the local and international ambits. This situation exposes a relationship between transnational forces and local communities. Under these circumstances, locality can be considered oppressive because it supports exploitative

behaviours which, in turn, are also promoted by, or more precisely, linked with, organisations operating internationally.

In Mexico, the categorisation of people into highbrow and lowbrow classes and the inclusion–exclusion dynamic are rooted in ancient social hierarchical practices. The Aztec civilisation dominated other tribes by adopting a rigid social class structure. Later, Spanish conquerors centralised their power in Mexico-Tenochtitlan, creating a caste system that categorised people as natives, Mestizos, and non-native Spanish. Following the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821), Spanish descendants controlled the Mexican Republic, and the social divisions remained. The centralisation of power in Mexico City also persisted. Presently, the head offices of the federal government are located in Mexico City. With the passing of time, this centralisation of power has created a disparity among people living inside and outside the Mexico City metropolis. The ascription of different social statuses for inhabitants of the capital city and of the country beyond Mexico City has been linked to the social classifications of Spanish descendants, Mestizo and indigenous people rooted in tradition. The concentration of power and simplistic classification of people into such classes typifies the way in which Mexico's locality is structured.

During the fmx 2010, an oppressive locality was evident in an elitism that segregated local artists from the mainstream of the festival programming. During the event, the support for local companies appeared to be scarce, and companies from the Mexican provinces were absent; for example, only groups from Mexico City represented the whole country at the festival. This was a decision that marginalised artists from the regions

outside Mexico City. Mexico City is regarded as the controller and preserver of the nation's cultural projects and maintains its status as the cultural centre for Mexico as a country.

The marginalisation of local artists who did not belong to the national institutions of culture or did not conform to the global agendas of the festival organisers expresses the existence of a displaced locality, that is, one opposed to the metropolitan localism that supports and distributes the national and global agendas. The clear division between metropolitan and provincial, national and foreign groups at the fmx simultaneously demonstrated the oppressive localism in Mexico City and revealed the elitist politics of the national power structure.

Famous artists were located in more important venues and emergent (local) companies were moved to the periphery. The local artists that were not supported by the national cultural institutions and were, as a result, less commercially successful, were displaced in the curatorship and received less publicity. In contrast, international performances, such as *Hey Girl!* and *Bare Soundz*, were placed in the popular central venue, Teatro de la Ciudad, promoted by the media and clearly referenced in the programme and maps. Moreover, the Mexican performances produced by the main national cultural institutions—such as the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes (National Institute of Fine Arts), the Compañía Nacional de Teatro (National Theatre Company) and the Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes (National Council for Culture and Arts)—were placed in the Theatre Julio Castillo, which is also an important venue. That is, *Únicamente la verdad: la auténtica historia de Camelia la Tejana*, *Malinche-Malinches* and *Horas de gracia* form

part of the official national structure and not part of a local, independent endeavour.

A local performance that was not produced by international companies or national cultural institutions and was consequently restricted in scope by the festival's curatorship was *Pasajes (Passages)* by the Teatro Ojo (Eye Theatre) company. Teatro Ojo is an independent company based in Mexico City that has tried to experiment with different settings by taking its performances out of the physical theatre building. It is a theatre without a theatre where the world is the stage. However, Teatro Ojo's performance of *Pasajes* was neglected (maybe unintentionally) by the fmx organisers despite the fact that it was the only participatory performance at the festival, not to mention the only performance piece that was developed and based in the Historic Centre. While the location for the performances *Bare Sounz* and *Hey Girl!* were clearly indicated in the programme, the program did not indicate the location of the *Pasajes* performances. The fmx web page confirmed a date and location for *Pasajes*; however, different details were advertised on the *Pasajes* organiser's blog page, which created confusion amongst spectators. The correct location and date were those stated on the company's blog. Somewhat ironically, *Pasajes* was performed in the centre of the city, yet it existed beyond the perimeters of acceptable festival performance due to the incorrect announcement of the time and location provided by fmx organisers.

Particular spatial arrangements helped to achieve the marginalisation of local artists whose work did not conform to the standards of the fmx festival organisers. The programming created a spatial separation between the periphery-states and the core-city. During the fmx, the local other, the

local that had not subscribed to the government power structures, could only be valued through the local centre. Consequently, local shows that were not connected to the central hub of the cultural wheel, the national apparatus of culture or the international ideals of the festival organisers, were marginalised during the festival or restricted in their participation.

On the one hand, the concentration of cultural activities and the representation of the local metropolis as the centre of artistry transform the local metropolis into a cultural model, a fantastical community. On the other hand, the envisioned national community blurs the contribution of other local artistic projects within and beyond Mexico City that are not in line with the structures of political and cultural power. In Appadurai's words, 'one man's imagined community is another man's political prison' (*Disjuncture* 30). Local metropolitanism, national structures of power and the festival organisers' international ideals are a metaphorical prison in the sense that they restrict the range of visions that can be shown. This localism contributes to the prevention of new projects and the centralisation of the country's cultural budget in the capital city. This form of localism, which responds to national or global agendas, is not necessarily well intentioned and creates cultural imbalances.

Nonetheless, although marginalised by the festival organisers, Teatro Ojo illustrates that a different type of locality was also present at the fmx 2010. Through a tour of the passages, backstreets and alleys of Mexico City's Historic Centre, *Pasajes* invited the audience and passers-by to learn about local culture and perform specific activities. In one case, the audience was instructed to observe the figure of Barack Obama in the street passage

Santísima; in another, the audience was encouraged to weigh themselves and obtain their body mass indexes outside the entrance of the street passage Catedral. Audience members also had the opportunity to watch a DJ blending electronic music and fragments from the film *Caligula* at a location called the Sex World Capital, among other activities. The eleven disparate journeys proposed by the performance were an invitation to observe and interact with local elements through constructing and participating in different excursions or 'rambles'. *Pasajes* was a piece that presented daily activities as performative acts, whilst revealing the dynamics of the historical centre.

Furthermore, the inclusion of political and social events is a constant feature in the exploration carried out by Teatro Ojo. The group's public interventions are eminently political. According to Juan Manuel García Belmonte, Teatro Ojo has performed in important buildings in Mexico City, such as La Plaza de las Tres Culturas (Square of the Three Cultures); the apartment complex, Juárez; the former building of the Secretary of Foreign Affairs; the ex-prison, Lecumberri; and the passages of Mexico City's Historic Centre (29). The entire group's actions have encouraged audience participation, impacting on the quotidian dynamics of the places where the actions were performed (29). Teatro Ojo focuses on moving theatre into the contemporary circumstances of daily life. The group's artistic practices, due to its members' political vision and/or their lack of access to the circles of power, differed substantially from the foreign groups at the fmx 2010, not only in relation to the locations they used, but also in their aesthetics.



Fig. 28. Passage *Catedral* located in Mexico City's down town. Photograph by the author.

Teatro Ojo employed local places within the Historic Centre as a point of departure to develop *Pasajes'* journeys and actions. For example, the company placed texts from Article 123 of the Mexican Constitution on the walls of the Article 123 Avenue. Legends such as 'Everyone has a right to

decent and socially useful work', contrasted with the homeless individuals who helped to set up the legends. In this intervention, Teatro Ojo made evident the social inequalities found in the Historic Centre. On the one hand, *Pasajes* presented a social law related to the right to work; on the other hand, the law's content was confronted with the crude reality of homeless people living in the zone.

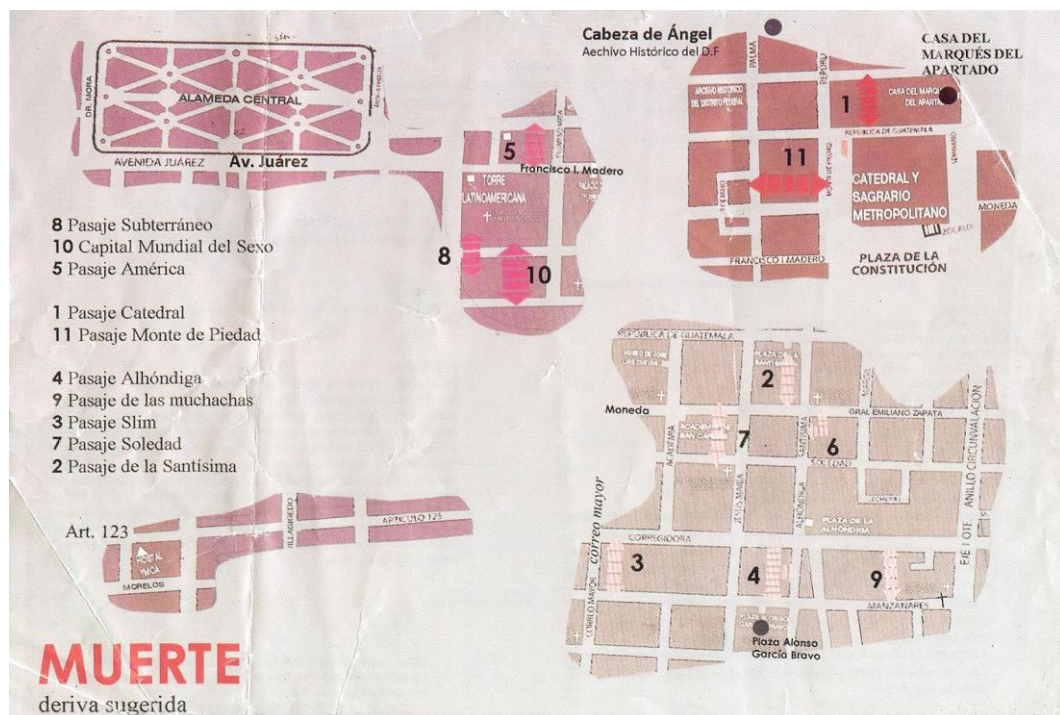


Fig. 29. Map of the eleven journeys within Mexico City Historic Centre proposed by the performance *Passages* by Teatro Ojo Company. Mexico City, 27 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

In another 'ramble', the instructions sent us from the Paseo de la Reforma (Reforma Boulevard) to Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas (Lázaro Cárdenas Axis Road). Reforma Boulevard was originally called the Empress Promenade, because it was financed by Emperor Maximiliano, in honour of Empress Carlota. It was initially built between 1863 and 1867 with the aim of

connecting the Chapultepec Castle, Carlota and Maximiliano's residence, with the National Palace. Reforma Boulevard was constructed having as a model the Champs Élysées, in Paris, France. At present, it is one of the classiest avenues in Mexico and hosts important historical monuments and modern buildings, such as Torre Mayor (Big Tower), the Bolsa Mexicana de Valores (Mexican Stock Exchange) and the Auditorio Nacional (National Auditorium). By contrast, Lázaro Cárdenas Axis Road traverses a dilapidated area within the Historic Centre, a zone with old buildings and destroyed houses. At the junction of Axis Road and May 5 Avenue, there have been confrontations between police forces and demonstrators, for example, the repression of the '#132 Movement' on 1 December 2012 when the President Enrique Peña Nieto assumed power (León Mariana, et al., 2 Dec. 2012). In this formulation, Teatro Ojo makes us cross from a wealthy place to an abandoned zone, a journey that exposes two uneven social worlds cohabiting within the same metropolitan area.

In a different excursion, Teatro Ojo invited people to get their hair cut in the Princess Salon, a traditional hairdresser that charges from \$35 to \$60 Mexican pesos (1.8 to 3.2 GBP approximately). Princess Salon offered haircuts for women, men and children, as well as different styles, for instance, 'straightened', 'layered' and 'pudding bowl.' In this journey, *Pasajes* prompted us to experience the Historic Centre by participating in its local construction of life, and, at the same, it provided us with a sense of the local.

The lack of availability to host a project such as *Pasajes* in the traditional venues that formed part of the festival, together with a strategy of intervention aimed on Mexico City's local dynamics, led Teatro Ojo to display

its artistic projects in marginal and/or alternative spaces. The quest for alternative spaces involved the implementation of different strategies, and, as a consequence, the employment of different aesthetics and dynamics between the public and performers. Teatro Ojo's artistic vision implies an opposition to the venues that historically have maintained an elitist status.

The status and salaries each company received were also indications of the inequalities between local and foreign companies performing at the fmx 2010. This raised some questions: Do Western countries pay Latin American artists less when they perform at Western festivals? Do Latin American festivals pay European artists more than local artists? Due to the difference between Western and Latin American economies, the salary for a European company is expected to be higher than the salary for a Latin American company. This situation creates imbalances between the local and the international companies performing at Latin American festivals and also produces specific methods for dealing with the economic differences. Many Latin American companies are willing to perform for less than 500 Euros per performance in Europe,³⁰ but a Western company, such as the Odin Theatre from Denmark, can charge a Latin American festival 15,000 Euros per day to perform (Barba, 13 Sep. 2008).³¹ Because of such disparities, the companies are often placed in different categories. Western companies tend to be seen as more valuable by the local public, as demonstrated in the fmx. International artistic companies are more expensive and are, therefore, believed to give superior performances. Local companies' performances are regarded as being of lower quality and are therefore considered secondary events. Due to the paraphernalia that usually accompanies popular foreign

productions at Latin American festivals, these performances become aspirational models to local companies, some of which feel the urge to copy their aesthetics. In order to be part of the international festival circuit, local companies may be inclined to use Western technology, such as Societàs Raffaello Sanzio's mirror explosions, strobe lights and video projections in *Hey Girl!* This does not mean that the cultural interchange is a bad thing, but it points to the contrasting ways of producing art and the unbalances and cravings created due to the different social situations.

The economic differences between local and foreign groups also bring other issues into play. For example, an international artist's salary can be negotiated through the festival's organisation committee. In a round table organised as part of the fmx 2010, Rubén Szuchmacher, the former director of the Festival de Buenos Aires, explained that Latin American organisers frequently play the Third World card when negotiating festival content. Emphasising the economic and social problems of Latin American countries, festival directors ask for a discount or reduction in the salary of the Western companies. Organisers also invite Western artists to visit beaches and similar sites as added incentives to participate, giving special importance to the exotic side of the festival's location (Szuchmacher, 17 Mar. 2010).³²

Thus, locality is negotiated in at least two ways. The first negotiation method involves the reduction of payments for foreign companies based on the precarious conditions of Latin American festivals. The local conditions act as a cause of shame and pity, influencing international companies to lower their salaries to support the host country. Additionally, even though the desire to visit new places and help others may be genuine, the idea of the

exotic location may replace or reduce salaries for Western companies that make decisions to come to Latin American festivals. Through this negotiation process, the local community becomes a paradisiacal entity that allures international groups. Although real needs and solidarity manifest themselves in the negotiations between Latin American festivals and international companies, this fact does not eliminate other type of negotiations. The local community is employed as a strategy to improve the festival's scope in Latin America, but this negotiation also establishes social differences between international and local groups.

For example, while the international groups and festivals programmers invited to the fmx 2010 enjoyed special receptions, visits to sites like the ancient ruins and special seating at events that were part of the festival's programming, local artists rarely received such treatment. During the event, flattery of international companies became a sort of concession, benefit or allowance. During the festival's ceremonies, foreign visitors were given gifts and indulged in parties, receptions and tourist trips. In this respect, naive foreign artists and programmers navigated a local territory with complex social relationships. However, we should not understand these activities as if the hospitality shown to foreign artists is unethical or as if the solidarity between theatre groups and the desire to meet people, visit places and conduct exchanges between companies coming from different latitudes is not valid or necessary. In fact, many festivals depend on the solidarity among participants, and this is often the only way to ensure the event occurs.

Nonetheless, it is important to highlight the ways in which Latin American festivals sometimes offer themselves to foreign companies and

produce disparities between local and foreign groups. In order to obtain discounts for international events, in many cases, festival directors present the local as an alluring site where the foreign artists' desires for the exotic can be fulfilled. Some organisers promote the experience of discovering a new world by presenting the local as a place full of adventures and colourful wild life. Moreover, international artists that come to Latin America in the role of passionate helpers to local artists not only dictate artistic models, they also enjoy social recognition. In this respect, international artists are, without problem, taken as Samaritans who bring to Latin American festivals the 'light' of new artistic discoveries such as the use of technology foregrounded by the fmx's curatorship. Arguably, this situation also expresses the moralising and exemplifying purpose hidden in the implementation of the foreign performances at some Latin American festivals.³³

However, in spite of tempting creative models based on the use of so-called high technology, the reality is that many local companies across Latin America cannot afford such elements in their artwork. Instead of success on the international festival circuit, the lack of access to technology may lead to local frustration. But local companies also develop new ways of dealing with national and global fluxes that do not necessarily copy Western canons. The conditions in which such groups work provide them with special aesthetics. Local Mexican groups usually employ cheap and simple technologies making them into a virtue.

For example *Lejos (Far)*, another local production included in the fmx 2010, pursues an aesthetic based on the scarcity of high technological

elements. The play is a love story between a homosexual male and a housewife during the era of fascism in Italy. The play's central topic is the social restrictions from that period, which are compared to the official decrees and prejudices of the current Mexican government.



Fig. 30. Scene from the performance *Far* by Teatro el Milagro Company. Teatro el Milagro, Mexico City. 18 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

The performance *Lejos* worked as an argument in favour of the actors' power to create imaginary worlds using their voices and bodies, and it opposed the glorification of the use of technology. The artists appealed to the audiences' imaginations to construct the set for the performance. Thus, the scenography was created using chalk to paint the different elements of the space, including the windows and doors. This local approach to theatre craft deviated from the technological and spectacular approaches used in the foreign performances at the fmx. For Ann Cvetkovich and Douglas Kellner, 'the local . . . in contrast to the global, describes . . . those constellations of

conditions that are particular and specific according to country, region and tradition and to other determinants, such as the creation and preservation of local subcultures' (Cvetkovich and Kellner 15). The use of simple scenographic elements can be considered characteristic of local marginal groups in Mexico City.

Finally, if the fmx structure embodies a trajectory biased towards international companies, the way in which local groups react to this dominant trajectory can also be deemed a construct of locality. In this sense, the term transculturation is also useful to explain how local artists respond to international festivals trajectories. Transculturation, according to Diana Taylor, has to do with the loss or displacement of one's own culture, but also with the creation of new cultural phenomena, that is, the cultural creative response to the dominant culture (*Archive* 104). Thus, transculturation entails not only the acquisition of new cultural material from a foreign culture, but also the inventiveness and reactions of the local cultures; it is a two-way exchange through the mixing of cultures (*Archive* 104). The process of transculturation not only looks for the homogenisation of the local cultures in relation to the dominant ones but also takes into account the myriad of forms that contest the dominant cultural trajectories. Hence, the local culture is not a passive but an active culture; it engages in the active creation of new cultural structures which become neither international, nor local, but hybrid cultural structures.

For example, the local company Teatro Línea de Sombra (Line of Shadow Theatre) found a way to promote their performance *Amarillo* (*Yellow*) through the use of the fmx festival structure. In this case, the fmx

became an instrument to empower local cultures to ‘negotiate social change and enact new formulations of the “local”’ (MacLeod 235). Teatro Línea de Sombra used the gathering of festival organisers for the fmx 2010 to extend an invitation to attend *Amarillo*. The performance narrates the story of a migrant who intends to cross the border as a wetback to reach Amarillo, Texas. On his way, the migrant experiences a hostile environment, the desert, hunger, dehydration and fear; at the same time he evokes memories. Although *Amarillo* was not part of the festival’s programme, numerous festival programmers attended Teatro Línea de Sombra’s performance. As a result, *Amarillo* has been invited to festivals in Korea, the USA and Canada. The company successfully used the opportunity provided by the fmx to catapult into the international circuit.

Although transculturation refers primarily to the process of exchange/mixing carried out by two or more cultures, it can also be applied to the way local artists react to the dominant trajectories of international festivals. The Teatro Línea de Sombra’s use of the festival platform to attract notice and secure an international tour also expresses a way to exert influence and give a voice to people who are disconnected from the power structures, government organisations, transnational enterprises or international festival committees. As the process of transculturation implies, this type of local response to the dominant trajectories is also thought to restore agency to marginalised individuals or social groups; it is a locality that seeks to expand and improve the lives of those in precarious situations. In this form of progressive locality, local communities can also create

channels of communication with other localities in similar situations, producing global networks and empowering marginal people.

In this manner, the mediation and conditioning of the cultural interchange by the festival structure does not represent complete domination. The set of ideas propounded by the organisers through their curatorship implies neither the total control of the channels of exchange in the festival nor the lack of reaction from the marginal communities present at the event. In fact, the give-and-take in a festival is consummated in multiple ways. Behind the organisers' festival framework, which allows particular modes of interchange, celebration and sharing, the local subjects mobilise and contribute to both deliberate and spontaneous formations within or outside the official festival structures. Festivals' structures do not erase the possible acts of resistance. In other words, the schemas a festival puts forward create conventions, but the implementation of these conventions neither means that the results are totally controlled, nor that the restrictions imposed in these schemas are going to work perfectly. Festivals' structures contain the possibility of being adapted or even challenged in their final outcome.

Consequently, the local is related to the ways specific local groups approach external/internal interests and agendas. If locality is definable as the daily construction and maintenance of a social formation's culture, then it is an unresolved process or a contested location where different movements are present. In fact, locality at festivals is the result of constant interactions between internal flows and external influences. Local not only refers to a particular place, region or condition, but also to the strategies employed by

local theatre artists, including the acquisition, use and transformation of the external influences to combat the uncertainties that endanger their particular social formations, their artistic practice and their own creations.

The FITH: A Local Technology of Necessity

Havana is a metropolis at the centre of the Cuban cultural interchange. Like many other capitals in Latin America, Havana is where the artistic life of the country is concentrated. The most important schools of art, the ISA and the National Art School (ENA), are located there. Somehow, both schools prioritise and encourage a broad, collective style of theatre or theatre groups that look for social transformation instead of cultural business, that is, a theatre that aims to reflect on social problems rather than make profits.

However, when the former USSR ended economic aid to Cuba at the beginning of the 1990s, the country faced an economic crisis and Cuban artists were prompted to look for new modes of subsistence. Many were forced to abandon socially conscious theatre for the sake of finding work as actors or entertainers in the Cuban tourist industry. Thus, although political theatre has been predominant in the Cuban cultural landscape after the revolution of 1959, a type of commercial theatre imbued with Cuban stereotypes has also been present. In this instance, the flow of tourists has also shaped local performance cultures.

In this context, there are two factors that characterise Cuban artistic practice. First, the continuous exposure to external influences has produced a constantly changing social landscape and has encouraged Cuban artists to adapt to external influences with malleable artistic forms to minimise the

effects of Cuba's dire economic situation. Secondly, Cuban performances are characterised by the employment of simple scenographic elements. The economic shortages that started with the fall of the USSR have led artists to use their creativity to solve the artistic problems brought on by scarcity. Thus, the capacity for adaptation characterising Cuban theatre can be thought of not only as a result of the constant mixture of European, African, Latin American, Caribbean or Asian artistic movements, it is also a product of economic necessity.

In one of the round tables organised as part of the FITH 2011, Cuban actress Monse Duany stated, 'one does not choose the methods to act a particular character, one does not think: I should create this character with Stanislavsky's method, that other with Barba's, etc. Instead, everything is organic; one confronts a character with one's whole being'. Duany's declaration illustrates tension between external influences and local responses. If it is true that Western artists have been the source of training for many Cuban artists, it is no less true that the external influences have produced a unique cultural fusion that can be at odds with Western canons. Duany incorporates Western acting methods, but when confronted with the task of creating a character, she uses her whole being and her own Cuban way. As Duany implicitly suggests, artists in Cuba have learned to incorporate external influences and give them a unique twist. However, that unique twist also comes from economic necessity. The disparity between the products or services the Cuban people demand and their scarcity in the Cuban market is significant, creating discontent and anxiety. Necessity has prompted

individuals to be inventive, to find or create products and services that can be substituted for those that Cubans cannot attain.

One night, after watching a play from the 2011 FITH, Roberto, a friend of mine, told me that the problems in Cuba are youth emigration, women not giving birth and old people not wanting to die. He explained that due to the economic problems and the lack of opportunities, young people want to leave the country. During this period of economic shortages, he argued, women are afraid to raise children because they presuppose the additional burden a child would bring. Finally, he mentioned that the majority of the elderly people, to whom the revolution brought new opportunities such as education and homes, want to stay alive to enjoy its favourable results. Although Roberto's description of Cuban people is anecdotal, the reality is that Cubans are confronted with scarcity on a daily basis. In fact, many young people are dedicated to *enganchar* tourists (hook or get somebody in his/her clutches) in order to leave Cuba while others are willing to go into exile.

According to Gabriel García Márquez, Cubans were condemned to die of hunger, so had to reinvent life from its beginnings, that is, to build everything they need in order to survive; they have developed a 'technology of necessity . . . a culture of solitude' (Lira 26). Thus, I argue that the technology of necessity is one essential characteristic of locality in Havana that influences the artistic practice of Cuban theatre companies and shapes the realisation of the FITH. Faced with a constant shortage of food, clothes, and services, Cuban people and artists have developed ways to minimise the prevailing scarcity. For example, some households use pages of books instead of toilet paper or alternative medicines to fight the shortage of drugs, medical

supplies and equipment. Moreover, due to the high costs of oil and the scarcity of petrol, many Cubans have been forced to adopt bicycles as their primary method of transport.

The difficult economic situation has encouraged Cubans to implement new techniques to solve their daily problems. At the local level, the changes involve going from a more complex, costly approach to a less expensive, less sophisticated approach to solve the quotidian problems. In Cuba, the movement of nation-states (either capitalists or socialists) towards modernity, science and technology has been replaced by the quest for local solutions to the scarcity problem. The difficult social conditions have been caused to a great extent by the economic blockade imposed on Cuba by the USA. Holly Kaufman, speaking about the environmental impact of the economic blockade in the CBS news web page, states: 'The blockade is a double-edged sword, cutting down morale on one hand and inspiring creative—and by necessity, environmental—solutions on the other' (Kaufman, 1 Dec. 1993).

In Cuban theatre, the economic shortage is expressed through a lack of materials necessary to make props, sets and costumes. In addition, the majority of Cuban venues are dilapidated and need restoration. In a great number of the venues that formed part of the FITH 2011, the sound and light equipment was out-dated; there were structural leaks, the walls needed painting and the buildings needed structural maintenance. Due to these conditions, many artistic projects have collapsed while others have adapted and thrived due to their ability to deal with scarcity. Not surprisingly, scarcity

has been incorporated in the artistic practice of many Cuban groups as either a theme or as an aesthetic.

The Cuban company Estudio Teatral de Santa Clara (Theatrical Study of Santa Clara) uses scarcity as a tool for artistic creation. Even though this group was not present at the 2011 FITH season, it has participated in almost every festival edition since 1991. According to the Cuban web page *CentroArte*, the Estudio Teatral de Santa Clara was created in October 1989, and, since its inception, it has functioned as an investigative and experimental theatre centre. The studio has paid special attention to the training of actors and the quest for stage methodologies that encourage communication with the audience.

The Estudio Teatral de Santa Clara has its centre of operations in the Santa Clara province from which it takes its name, approximately 249 kilometres from Havana near the centre of the island. The group has created a theatre based on the scarcity of elements necessary to create performances (Pineda 211). Here, deficiencies are turned into creative instruments that help construct a specific artistic language. The group considers the actors' presence an essential element in its artistic endeavour. The artists also seek intimacy with spectators and discard recorded music or scenographic elements that do not come into physical contact with the actors. The group's plots, which are random and lack obvious logic, are created by the company's members; the company also emphasises a handcrafted approach to the staging of performances. Joel Suárez, the artistic director, states: 'Since the beginning we crashed against the pressing reality of scarcity and decided that we neither wanted to replace scarcity nor disguise it; we decided to work

with the leftovers . . . our work is to find another beauty in the leftovers, though this means to subvert what for most of the people could be the beauty canon' (Pineda 213). The use of the leftovers, or minimal resources, in all the company's performances implies a metaphorical incorporation of the shortages that are a part of Cuban daily life. Scarcity is, therefore, both an artistic discourse and social problem.

The issue of scarcity was also a theme in some Cuban performances of the FITH 2011. *Talco*, written by Abel González Melo and staged by the company Argos Teatro, draws a parallel between the places in ruins that are inhabited by people in Havana and the deterioration of the Cuban social fabric due to the economic crisis. As happens with many buildings in Havana due to the lack of maintenance, the old movie theatre in which the main characters live is falling down. The play shows that the lack of materials needed to restore buildings impacts the daily lives of Cubans; conversely, it indicates that the deterioration of the social fabric leads to the collapse of the spaces in which these individuals live. In fact, the performance finishes by linking the deterioration of the building with the destruction of social relationships—a prostitute and a drug addict die from an overdose at the moment the old building falls down.

Talco addressed the miserable conditions in the lower economic strata in Cuba. In particular, one of the objectives of Argos Teatro was 'to deal again with . . . marginality and the spaces inhabited by a series of characters typical of contemporary Cuban society' (Machado n. pag.). The play narrates the story of a *chulo* (Pimp) and a transvestite who decide to start an extra business and hire a prostitute to help them. The pimp and the transvestite

also sell drugs and have sex sporadically with customers to keep the business alive. The prostitute, who comes from a Cuban province, sells her body to improve her economic situation. In the opening scene, she is sucking the pimp's penis on a dirty toilet because he wants to make her vomit a pill containing cocaine that she had swallowed. The performance depicts a sordid place where everything is old and rusty, and this is an analogy for the lack of opportunities in Cuba today. *Talco* offers a crude description of the underground world in Old Havana, a realm full of violence and shocking human relationships.

Thus, the performance exposes the other side of scarcity, that is, the creation of cravings and social problems. The pimp and the transvestite take advantage of the prostitute not only because they need to survive, but also because the pimp wants to acquire foreign luxuries, such as tennis shoes made in the USA. The performance shows the tension between the scarcity of products and the Cubans' desire for those products, the tension between the American way of life and the characters' hopeless state. Such tensions make the characters anxious and lead them to oppress their fellow human beings.

Talco also illustrates the repercussions of the Cuban economic crisis after the 1990s—a period of shortage that the Cuban revolution did not solve. The characters' actions show techniques employed to survive in the underground world and ways to fight scarcity. In *Talco*, it is possible to identify one of the paths that scarcity takes on a local level; scarcity exacerbates exploitation in human relationships; at the same, it functions as a tool to redefine priorities. Human beings, as *Talco* shows, can sell all sorts of things, including members of one's family. Betrayal, corruption and violence

are used to acquire what has been denied by society. From this perspective, necessity creates difficult situations and drives individuals to adopt unethical courses of action. Necessity can lead to egoism instead of solidarity. In this perspective, the other side of scarcity is a matter of survival that affects and characterises the construction of Cuban locality.

The FITH itself can be designated as the festival that deals with necessity. According to Vivian Martínez Tabares:

Founded in 1980 with the [José] Martí slogan, “In theatre as in everything we can be creative in Cuba”, the Havana Theatre Festival, since 1984 an international festival, has had as its main merit survival, even in the worst conditions . . . The impact of the economic crisis of the 1990s prompted the event to open its call for performances to those artists that could come to Cuba by their own means; previously, it conducted a minimal selection from the groups that sent their proposals. The results are an excessive range of performances that express gestures of solidarity from numerous latitudes to accompany us at these difficult moments, and the inclusion of incipient groups that arrive at the festival to try their luck and make efforts to construct an international trajectory. (61)

In this manner, the lack of means and money required to stage an international festival has had an impact on the organisation of the festival. The FITH is a festival constructed through solidarity in a place where there is a need for the exchange of cultural products and a shortage of international artistic circuits. Since it appears that these economic conditions will prevail for a long period of time, the festival is driven to work under conditions of

scarcity. Therefore, the FITH solved its lack of budget by using organisational creativity. Through theatre, the event also helps to fight the economic blockade without investing much money. But the low budget event does not preclude the Cuban state from profiting because when the international companies travel to the festival using their own means, they also spend money at hotels, restaurants and other businesses.

In addition, the economic conditions encourage the FITH to foster social imperatives rather than artistic businesses. In the current Cuban conditions where there is immobility in the local structures, the FITH represents an essential instrument to mobilise and express the needs of the youth. In Cuba, the organisations that promote interaction among local subjects are often rigid official structures. For instance, the Committees for the Defence of the Revolution (CDRs) neighbourhood organisations are grouped into blocks that promote social welfare and report counterrevolutionary activities. The CDRs have been criticised by some scholars as repressive instruments on the micro-local level (Sanchez, 27 Sep. 2010). They are old social and organisational structures that have not evolved at the pace demanded by young people and that do not respond to their actual expectations. As a result, young people, such as students, neither use their unions or associations to express themselves nor create alternative debates; this leads to social immobility. In this situation, the FITH has provided an alternative, through workshops, presentations and round tables, for proposing and discussing themes that are prohibited or situated outside the local official structures.

This youth eagerness to discuss issues and interact with each other outside the official structures of power created a problem during the 2011 FITH. A segment of local artists, the majority of whom were youth, complained about the entrance fee for the Cafés or informal meetings with rum and music that were scheduled at the end of the FITH's daily activities. In 2009, during the previous festival, these meetings were also conducted at the Bertolt Brecht Cultural Centre right after the performances and the rest of the festival activities were finished, but they were free. In the FITH 2011, the entrance fee prompted a group of people to move to the Havana esplanade to celebrate different Cafés; this action separated local and international artists and blocked opportunities for exchange and project development. These Cafés have been used by Cuban artists to meet foreign companies, to discuss artistic matters and to promote artistic exchanges.

It is at the local level where the festival's organisational principles are evident. If the principles on which a particular festival is based, in this case solidarity, are not expressed or achieved in local ambits, the festival runs the risk of being just a facade—a way to fool people and audiences by promoting something that is not totally embraced. Under these circumstances, the scarcity and economic crisis conditions have left an imprint on the FITH and characterised the ways in which locality is constructed.

At both fmx and FITH there were multiple localities negotiating with other agendas, as a result of the various methods used to address the internal and external influences by local communities. During both events, there were localities that either worked with or opposed national and transnational movements. Now, I shall analyse the involvement of local forces in the

process of constructing spatial dynamics at both festivals and in the delivery of a performativity that provides visitors with a sense of place. I argue that local conditions in both festivals are evident in the particular performativity that permeates the festivals' host cities.

Environment, Festival Arrangements and Locality

The second chapter showed the particular way in which Mexican landscape was employed by the fmx to signify national identity. Using McKinnie's ideas, it is possible to assert that the incorporation of the physical and mythical elements of a particular nation's landscape into performances is symbolic of the theatre's use of the natural environment to create its identity (ix). In this case, the natural landscape or environment has provided distinctiveness and, therefore, a certain identity to the country and its artists. However, little has been said about the natural environment's use as a tool to promote festivals, and even less has been said about the employment of both the natural and the created environments in the delivery of a performativity that instils a sense of locality at festivals.

The analysis of locality and space at the FITH and the fmx will be divided in two broad aspects. First, I will explore the relationships between the festival settings and the audience to reveal the promotion of different types of social interactions at the two events. Secondly, I will analyse the spatial contradictions contained in each: on the one hand, the sense of placelessness produced by the employment of generic festival structures and services at different places; on the other hand, the sense of place prompted

by the performative aspects of the natural and built environments, which imbue festivals with local ambience or personality.

Space and Audience Interactions at the FITH and the fmx

In this section, I will evaluate the social interactions generated by the models of spatial organisation implemented by the organisers of both the FITH and the fmx. My discussion begins by describing the relationship between the organisational models of the festivals and the urban environment in order to explore the type of social interactions each event fosters. Then, it is necessary to understand the ways in which social interaction is influenced by the spatial arrangements in which the festivals occur and vice versa, how local communities respond to the festivals' settings. I argue that locality is also manifested through the specific spatial arrangements of the FITH and the fmx.

There is a marked contrast in the interactions generated by the different spatial arrangements at the two festivals. The terms sociopetal and sociofugal are useful to explain these interactions. Sociopetal and sociofugal are concepts coined by Humphrey Osmond, a British psychiatrist. While sociofugal refers to spatial arrangements that promote seclusion, sociopetal refers to spatial arrangements that encourage interactions (23–29). Thus, sociofugal environments keep people apart while sociopetal ones bring people together. Keir Elam argues:

Sociopetality applies particularly to the audience in informal theatre.

In medieval and Renaissance theatre, in folk theatre and recent poor theatres where lack of space necessitates cohesion, the audience is by

definition a unit, responding *en masse* to the spectacle. More formal modern theatres tend instead towards sociofugality: even though necessarily contained within the architectural unit of the auditorium, and thus in theory surrendering his individual function, the spectator has his own well-marked private space, individual seat, and relative immunity from physical contact with his fellows (and even from seeing them). The result is to emphasize personal rather than social perception and response, to introduce a form of privacy within an experience which is collective in origin. (58)

Sociofugality and sociopetality can be applied to both the FITH and the fmx to identify the social interactions brought about by the spatial arrangements and organisational patterns of both events. I argue that the different organisational models employed by each festival led audiences to experience the fmx as a sociofugal event providing private theatre experiences, while the FITH played out as a sociopetal festival that promoted social mingling. I consider sociopetal and sociofugal forces in the FITH and the fmx to be related not only to the locations used during the festivals, but also to the organisational models employed in each event.

Specific landscapes direct festival attendees' mobility as they enable particular activities and experiences. The festival experience is moulded by the environment in which the event takes places. The accessibility of the venues, the available transport, travel conditions and weather, among other elements, affect the way in which the space is navigated and experienced. In other words, the urban planning and the environmental characteristics of the location have an impact on the festival participants' experiences. However,

these experiences are also moulded by the festival organisation implemented in a particular location.

For instance, The Burning Man Festival takes place in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, an area isolated from cities and towns. This arid zone prompts participants to create a kind of creative community. People attend the festival to enjoy the landscape and produce a community where participation is not only encouraged but mandatory. In this temporary settlement, almost everything that happens is created entirely by the citizens. The desert provides the location for this temporary city and gives the event its originality. According to Wendy Clupper:

The Festival is located in a remote part of the United States on a prehistoric lake-bed called a playa. Throughout the week the Festival is held participants arrive daily and the festival space develops organically. Configured into a crescent-shaped pattern divided by unpaved streets, the Festival becomes a makeshift city full of camps with recreation vehicles, tents and shade structures at whose epicentre is a forty-foot-tall wooden man. This Man is the effigy which will be burned on one of the last nights of the Festival in a spectacular convergence of fire and performance created by the multitude of celebrating participants. (221)

At the Burning Man Festival, the desert and its physical characteristics enable the construction of a dream city developed by and populated with the festival participants. The arid, isolated site advances the goal of the festival organisers, which is to remove participants 'from the familiar trappings of the commercial American landscape where one perpetually occupies the role

of consumer' (Clupper 221). The model of organisation works in tune with the environment in which the festival occurs, providing participants with specific experiences.

The FITH and the fmx have similarities regarding the management of the audiences, for example, the separation and categorisation of people in relation to their connection to the cultural spheres of power. At both events, there was an area reserved for VIPs at almost all the venues that formed part of the festivals. Both festivals had special seating for artists and other personalities and both held socially prestigious events in venues with an aristocratic past (such as the Theatre Esperanza Iris in Mexico or the Great Theatre of Havana in Cuba). The designation of special zones within those theatres tended to separate certain social groups and diminish communication between the patrons; however, the models of organisation fostered by each festival produced substantially different social interactions. In addition, although the classification system was somehow similar for both events, the way in which local communities responded to the festival's arrangements differed.

The number and quality of venues used during each festival affected social interactions. In the FITH, from the more than 23 venues used for the festival, only four—the Theatre Karl Marx, the Theatre Mella, the Theatre Trianón, and the Great Theatre of Havana—have areas that divide the audience. That is, the Cuban spaces that have segmented areas for different groups of spectators only represented one per cent of the total. In contrast, six out of ten of the theatre and dance events at the fmx were held in venues that encouraged audience division, including the Theatre Esperanza Iris, the

Theatre Julio Castillo and the Theatre Jiménez Rueda. This means that a greater percentage of performances during the fmx were held in locations that segregated the audience and emphasised social divisions.

In Cuba, the prices for the festival events were the same for everybody, which gave the events a sense of community—everybody was paying the same price for the same thing. In addition, because the FITH did not have tiered seats, access to the theatres was characterised as a game of chance where in order to obtain a seat, one had to arrive early and queue. Sometimes, in spite of the queuing order, a visitor had to push to get inside the theatre along with other people who wanted to enter as well. Furthermore, the majority of the locations in which the FITH was held had low capacities—they were derelict houses or warehouses that had been remodelled into theatres. This fact led to the concentration of people in front of the entrances several hours before the beginning of the performances, so they could get access to the events. The low capacity of the locations brought people together and stimulated interactions because audience members had to compete to obtain available seats.

At the 2011 FITH, the organisational team invited a wide range of people to attend performances and events, including VIPs, organisers, foreign companies, national companies, critics and members of the press, theatre students to help with the organisation and the general public. The festival's organising committee reserved a specific number of seats in each venue for these visitors, excepting the general public, resulting in reservations for 10 per cent of the venues' capacities. However, not all invited visitors were guaranteed a seat and on many occasions venues did not have enough seats

to accommodate all those who assembled in the hopes of seeing the shows. This resulted in crowding and complaints at the venues' entrances about the lack of seating.

This lack of venue capacity also created organisational problems at the local level, raising questions of ownership: To whom does the festival belong? Some students argued that since they were the future of the Cuban theatre, they should have been given free entrance and priority access. The access to international events is primarily for the students' development to enable them to compare their work to other artistic practices. However, the festival was made possible by the foreign companies paying for their hotels, food and plane tickets. Since these companies helped to create the festival by paying for their own transportation to the island and by not charging a fee to perform, shouldn't they be given preferential access to venues to watch other performances? Equally important are the local companies and groups from the provinces that want access to the plays because they could compare their work to that of the international companies. In addition, the press and critics should be given seats because they can deconstruct and help people understand performances through their comments and reviews. Moreover, since the general public buys the tickets and is willing to attend this type of event, it deserves some space because its members are the primary audience and goal of Cuban cultural policies.

As a matter of who gets there, only the reservation of VIPs and organisers were guaranteed, the rest of the would-be audience had to struggle to get into the venues. Filling them to capacity illustrates the success of the festival at the local level; however, marginalising some segments of the

audience could jeopardise the future of the event. If foreign companies, in spite of being important sponsors of the festival, are unable to access some venues and if the idea of being dismissed spreads, they may decide to drop out of the line up or be reluctant to return for future festivals, thus diminishing the scope of the event. In this respect, the solidarity proclaimed by the organisers was not entirely transferred to foreign groups. In any case, in the FITH, the unpredictable seating combined with the informality of many of the venues led to far more physical interactions than during the fmx. Social interactions at the venues were an integral part of the local characteristics of the FITH, which aims to create a communal experience. To some extent, physical contact at the entrances of the Cuban venues instilled a sense of community, but with a competitive edge ironically.

In contrast, the 2010 fmx discouraged social interaction and fostered social distinction. For the majority of the performances, ticket prices ranged from 35 to 400 Mexican pesos or approximately £1.50 to £20 (GBP). The best seats were given to special guests, and a special VIP zone was designated to host famous or important personalities, such as entrepreneurs, artists and politicians connected with cultural ministries. Expensive seats were available for those who could afford the high price. The cheapest tickets were located the furthest from the stage. Additionally, in some venues, such as the Theatre Esperanza Iris, there were different entrances for each ticket category. The deliberate segregation through ticket prices not only prohibited social interactions but also suggested that one part of the audience was more important to the organisers than another. Spatially, the social distinctions were achieved by placing premiums on some zones—the proximity to the

performers and the cultural distinctions, such as social status, wealth and connections, instilled some areas with a sense of exclusivity.

Although the fmx 2010 employed a wide range of spaces that promoted social distinctions, there were some locations that encouraged audience interaction or that were not infused with an aristocratic past. For instance, Teatro el Milagro (The Miracle Theatre) is an independent project created in 1991 in what was a derelict house in the Juárez neighbourhood of Mexico City. The space has a capacity of 130 seats and has supported experimental projects since its inception (Álvarez, 18 April 2008). The Miracle Theatre brought new life to the Juárez neighbourhood, and now it contributes to the development of alternative artistic projects that include groups from the Mexican province usually marginalised by the fmx curatorship. In addition, Teatro el Milagro shares many features with some Cuban pop-ups, such as the transformation of an old house into a performance space. However, in general terms the fmx was characterised by emphasising social divisions.

In the opening performance, the fmx 2010 simultaneously demonstrated inclusion and exclusion practices and the audience classification that reinforced social divisions. While the people in the lobby of the Teatro Julio Castillo waited for the announcement of the beginning of the show, people outside the venue were expecting a ticket to get into the theatre. The two groups were separated by glass windows that surrounded the front of the house but allowed both groups to see each other. Being in the lobby produced a kind of elitist classification. After the performance, this inclusion-exclusion dynamic expanded to an invitation-only cocktail party.

The invitation to the cocktail party and the tickets for the rest of the events that I attended during my investigation were provided by the Festival of Mexico organisation. These admissions were arranged with the organisational team as part of my research beforehand. Otherwise I would not have enjoyed this position of privilege. At the cocktail party, one of the organisers mentioned that this type of inaugural event was used by the art and culture industry managers and executives as an opportunity to network and promote their shows. Many people who held important national cultural posts were present and inclusion in this event was synonymous with having connections with the wealthy and the cultural elite.



Fig. 31. Audience behind a fence during the closing concert at the fmx, Mexico City. 28 Mar. 2011. Photograph by the author.

Even in the public space, which should encourage social interactions, the organisers of the fmx promoted social divisions. For example, during the festival's closing concert, the people in the VIP section could move freely, leave and come back at will and were clearly protected by a fence. Spectators in the zone behind the fence had restricted space in which to move and it was almost impossible to return once an audience member left. In this way, the fmx conveyed that art is a cultural commodity that should be performed for, and governed by, a select group of individuals. In other words, during the fmx, events were considered to be and managed as cultural commodities that promoted social distinction, which contrasted with the FITH that encouraged physical interactions and social encounters but ended up excluding.

The fact that in the FITH the seats were contested, sometimes aggressively, is also an indication of the influence of a socialist concept of space in which everything 'belongs' to everyone. During the FITH, the attendance at events was considered an immersion in a communal process. While the FITH fostered a socially undifferentiated experience, the fmx promoted the acquisition of cultural commodities and, as a result, promoted social distinctions among theatregoers. In other words, the FITH gave people temporary social equality, while the fmx instilled with social status its events. This situation shows that the diverging festival structures provided attendees with different kinds of social experiences and interactions.

Festivals between Place and Placelessness

In the current world, a sense of placelessness is fostered by the increasing pressure of rapid social and economic interactions and the growing

interconnectedness of the world. The idea of placelessness comes from a book by Edward Relph entitled *Place and Placelessness*. Placelessness is the result of 'mass communications, mass culture, big business, powerful central authority and the economic system which embraces all these' (Relph 90). The concept of placelessness can also be related to the idea of villages without a sense of place that Appadurai develops from Joshua Meyrowitz. Appadurai notes: 'The world we live in now seems. . . [to be] calling for theories of rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between groups, on the one hand, and fantasies (nightmares) of electronic propinquity on the other' (*Disjuncture* 27). That is, the modern world provides a sense of detachment from real life due to the constant mediation by electronic means and a dislocation of place and people due to the increasing speed of human mobility. The idea of placelessness even resembles the 'hyper realities' of Umberto Eco, where the fake substitutes for the real and places are no longer real places but simulations.

However, according to Tacita Dean, place differs from space in that the former is incorporated into history and is related to daily life and the passing of events, while space is considered in a more expansive sense as a tool to identify the position of things in relation to other things. In opposition to space, place is more related to belonging, something grounded in the particular. Dean considers place as a phenomenal reality that can be contemplated and experienced and is also a means to trigger memories (11–26). Connections between places and people are created by the passing of events in a place, by daily life and by the memories and history incorporated in particular places.

Thus, the sense of placelessness is related to the changes prompted by globalisation, to the disconnections between people and place brought about by the speeding up of human interactions, travel and the use of electronic means of communication. In other words, in the contemporary world, a sense of belonging is no longer connected to place but to the different affiliations people construct through time and space. This move has an obvious impact on human relationships and festivals. In this regard, the term heterotopia is a useful tool with which to analyse spatial contradictions and tensions at festivals and to explain how senses of place and placelessness emerge at these events.

Foucault describes heterotopias as mirrors, providing a metaphor for the double meanings and contradictions contained in a space, or the reality and the unreality of spaces (that is, the inversion of relations that some spaces designate or reflect). Heterotopias are unreal places because the image that these spaces project and we perceive does not exist. Still, they are also real because the projected image or imagined space materially shapes the way we relate to the actual place. Foucault lists several possible types of heterotopias or spaces that have double meanings. For example, a garden is a heterotopia because it is a real space, which is intended, through its incorporation of plants from around the world, to be a microcosm of different environments. It contains the world in one place and, as such, is both particular and general at the same time. Museums constitute another kind of heterotopia because they are 'linked to slices in time' (*Other* 26). They deconstruct traditional understandings of temporality, either by accumulating slices of time or by putting together in one place objects from

different times. They enclose in one place 'all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes' and styles (*Other* 26). Thus, they exist simultaneously both within and outside of time (*Other* 22–7).

According to Foucault, festivals are heterotopias directed to the temporal. 'These heterotopias are not oriented toward the eternal, they are rather absolutely temporal . . . Such, for example, are the fairgrounds, these marvellous, empty sites on the outskirts of cities that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclitic objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth' (*Other* 26). While the event is momentary, its effects can be lasting. This contradiction here also applies to the fleeting character of festivals in opposition to the continuity of daily life. Foucault also points to the accumulation of times and spaces to festival densities. I shall begin by explaining the idea of placelessness at festivals.

All our actions, to paraphrase Gay McAuley, take place within a space (McAuley 2–3). This notion of space as a container has prompted some theatre practitioners, Peter Brook, for example, to conceive of empty space as a vessel to receive the actors' actions. According to this notion, the development of actions is what gives sense and meaning to space thus relegating space to a subsidiary plane. The idea of space as a container relates to what Doreen Massey describes as the prioritisation of time over space and the reduction of space to representation. These ideas, which Massey derives from theorists such as Bergson, Deleuze, Zeno, Laclau, Lefebvre and de Certeau, present space as divisible and static, where only the temporal is mobile (Massey, *Space* 20–30). Movement is thus considered as passing from one point to another, passing through immobile space (Massey,

Space 23). Actions have duration in opposition to space, which is fixed. Thus space, as something stationary and motionless has the ability to seize the temporal and the action; it can freeze movement and the flow of life, transforming both into an object of study, essentially a representation and a divisible space (Massey, *Space* 25–28). According to Massey, the idea of space as something fixed has led the promoters of globalisation to regard it (and thus the world) as a free territory, as something that needs to be filled or conquered. This has prompted the view of the conquest of space as an implacable force of nature, a natural and unavoidable condition implicit in space (*Space* 4–5). If space is a free territory, it remains empty and open to occupation. Thus, considered as an expanse, space cries out to be filled; its fate is to be conquered.

For Massey, the idea of space as an expanse is an image that has been constructed to promote globalisation and its consequences (*Space* 5). Space is conceptualised as a surface because it can be crossed without taking into account either the people that inhabit that place or their social trajectories. Accordingly, countries such as Mozambique and Nicaragua are not recognised as having their own trajectories but as forming part of the trajectories of more ‘advanced’ countries (*Space* 5). These ‘less-developed’ countries are seen as empty spaces, as vessels that need to be filled or conquered. This concept, according to Massey, ‘reduces simultaneous coexistence to [a] place in the historical queue’: the conquered countries are not only behind in time but also distant in space (*Space* 5). Consequently, the concept of space as an expanse has implications for the way we construct our relationships with different countries, social formations and human beings.

The concept of space as an expanse can be applied to international festivals in order to shed light on the relationships that are established between these events and their host communities. From this point of view, festivals are recipients of human actions; they are open to occupation; they are fixed entities, free territories or showcases, which receive the flows of performances and activities from different parts of the world. Accordingly, the festival structure is immobile, while the contents—that is, the performances and activities that are set in this kind of vessel—are mobile and dynamic; the festival structure is a white canvas, a vessel in which it is possible to place international performances and activities.

To some extent the fmx and the FITH illustrate this spatial concept. As open and free territories, both events asked to be filled. The festival organisers published a call for entries or invited artists and received theatre groups, audiences and stakeholders. Along with performances, the festivals programmes contained a wide range of activities, such as workshops and conferences. Sponsors and organisers fed the festival structures with events. By choosing and depositing performances and activities in the festival structures, the different stakeholders occupied the festivals' 'empty' space. In this formulation, the task of organisers was reduced to selecting and supplying the festival with genres, styles and topics.

Despite the different conceptions of space coexisting within the fmx, the notion of the space as a container to receive Western cultural products dominated the curatorship of the event. One aspect that has made the fmx so popular has been its wide range of events. The events that comprised the 2010 edition were mainly manifestations of brand new technology in art and

the quest for innovation. The festival was constituted in a location struggling to improve its global image. In the fmx 2010, there were operas, children's activities and art exhibitions, but one of the largest and most popular categories was electronic arts. The festival also programmed conferences and workshops designed to provide information and reflect on new media and technology, including how they affect our society. Mexican events represented almost 26 per cent, whereas foreign productions reached more than 74 per cent of the total. Under these circumstances, the fmx represents a tool to bring *progress to backward* places because *innovation* and *modernity* come to places like Mexico—that are behind or in the queue of art discoveries—from Western countries in the form of cultural products. Apparently, Mexicans themselves do not innovate.

The fmx organisational prototype resembles what some academics have called the Event Management Body of Knowledge (EMBOK) (Silvers et al. 185–98). The EMBOK model considers five important domains for the organisation of events: administration, design, marketing, operations and risks. The EMBOK model comes from management, which, in turn, comes from the factory sector. It exemplifies a neoliberal way of tackling the organisation of events to make business. In this model, festivals are considered cultural capital, a tool to obtain profits. Accordingly, they represent transportable recipients of cultural events inasmuch as they embrace the same model of organisation and a similar kind of structure wherever they are located.

The fmx 2010 was a showcase of international performances offered to audiences for cultural consumption. At the event there was a diversity of

'items' for all tastes; in fact, the festival aimed to be a complete global cultural mall. Eight sub-festivals provided art for all ranges of ages: children, teenagers, adults and the elderly. There were also free events and different ticket prices for different cultural products. For instance, while the performance *Pasajes* by Teatro Ojo was free, *Malinche-Malinches* cost £9.50, and the ticket prices for *Bare Sounz* by USA tap dancer Savion Glover ranged between £9.50 to nineteen pounds.

The idea of a festival as a mall that sells different cultural products permeates the international festival circuit. In essence, the festival remains structurally the same in different countries, generating a disjuncture between the distinctive sense of place in which the event occurs and the generic, reproducible event. This model of festivals as vessels to receive human actions promotes the standardisation of festival structures. Rather than foregrounding the connections between locals and place, a standard is applied in different communities without taking into account the particular contexts in which events are placed. In this sense, international festivals are placeless, disembodied of local or national characteristics. The lack of connection between the festival structure and the place in which the event occurs prompts locals to experience a sense of loss or the disappearance of attachments to place; that is, a sense of placelessness.

Nicola E. MacLeod argues: 'While vestiges of ancient ritual remain in communal celebrations, the postmodern and locally decontextualised concept of the festival, which has flourished worldwide in the last 30 years, no longer focuses upon local production and consumption of meaning' (228). The tension that MacLeod brings forward is between place and placelessness

at festivals; specifically, she argues that the problem of placelessness is a result of the dislocation between festival and the host community. The move from a ritualistic practice rooted in links between people and place to an ethereal practice based on the same type of arrangements at different festivals reduces the ties people have with specific places. International festivals replicate in many parts of the world a similar type of convivial consumption (MacLeod 235); they are detached from local, traditional, or socio-political issues and contexts and lend themselves readily to a transnational appropriation of the host cities' spaces. According to MacLeod:

The processes of standardisation related to globalisation are not restricted to tourism and its spaces, but also transform the everyday lives and spaces of "host communities" . . . Transformation is being linked here in particular to processes of "aestheticisation", which provide a helpful approach to explore the growing role of festivals in urban settings. In this sense, the creation and consumption of cultures becomes the key function of postmodern cities competing in a global market. Tourism destinations are no longer simply regions favoured for their natural beauty . . . but are places marketed in term of their connections with events, people and contemporary themes. (227)

The gathering of people with the same tastes—that is, bringing together collectives of people who are linked by a cause, a series of values, a festival's theme, ideas, or even lifestyles—seems more important for global festivals than connections with local cultures. Such festivals produce standard structures of conviviality or models of 'aestheticisation' because they create paradigms not only to make art, but also to experience the events.

In the fmx 2010, along with the cultural products offered in the festival came the rest of the services, including restaurants, hotels, galas and cocktail parties, which complemented the experience. A party atmosphere ensued; the consumerist aspect of the festival had to be celebrated and buying and selling had to be enjoyable. The festival aimed to cast the entire city as arty, fulfilling the audience's expectation for spectacle. The festival's identity is then rooted in the snobbish style of art consumption, an 'aestheticisation' that does not take into account the city's social context. This cultural mall also embodies the sense of placelessness of other global spaces, for example, airport lounges and hotel lobbies.

This sense of placelessness is not only produced by similar types of festival structures but also by the spaces and services provided by the host cities. Mexico City and Havana contain a series of standardised spaces such as malls, airports and theatres that are replicated in distant places, such as London, Brazil or Singapore. The landscapes in which both the FITH and the fmx occur have to be adapted to suit visitors and provide festival attendees with recognisable facilities and services. Thus, the specificity of the landscape of each city—its physical appearance—undergoes changes to be able to host international events. This shaping of place and landscape to global standards contributes to the sense of placelessness at both the FITH and the fmx.

The implementation of an international festival in a particular locality does not guarantee that local needs are going to be covered, or that the social dynamics of the particular locality is going to be taken into account. The fact that international festivals have to respond to the needs of the organisers and sponsors rather than the needs of locals poses a significant problem. Global

festivals intervene in the space of the host cities, bringing particular agendas that do not necessarily address the socio-political contexts in which they are placed. With its emphasis on internationalism, the fmx tends to diminish the value of other possible aesthetics. Since the event is funded by organisations or institutions with political agendas, for instance, the Mexican government, it lends itself to the sponsors' socio-political projects—in this case, the renewal of Mexico City's Historic Centre.

In the first chapter, I explained that the fmx was created to bring a 'creative class' on board with the idea of producing a more 'cultured and tolerant society'; indeed, the Historic Centre's renewal was designed to bring growth and investment. This kind of event 'may attract a particular type of visitor who is actively seeking the company of like-minded people, rather than that of local communities' (MacLeod 231). One of the main limitations of the fmx resides specifically in its dissociation from socially committed agendas. The 2010 edition of the festival did not include performances addressing caustic political issues. Perhaps companies that defend the preservation of human rights, such as those of gays or indigenous people, may be included in future editions to demonstrate tolerance and diversity of opinions, though their political positions are unlikely to be embraced. In the fmx, diversity and tolerance act as a cosmetic to beautify a lifestyle based on consumption, a kind of global festival lifestyle.

However, a sense of local place is never entirely absent at international festivals. The spaces in which both the FITH and the fmx developed, Havana and Mexico City, also imbue their festivals with a sense of singularity, a situation that exposes the heterotopic nature of festivals. One

thing that makes a festival unique is its surroundings. Festivals take place in specific geographic locations that contain particular environmental characteristics and special physical features. These environmental characteristics provide festivals with special attributes that cannot be duplicated. Thus, both the natural and the urban environments bestow authenticity on festivals. Environments function as the background of the event, giving festivals charm and adding a particular atmosphere.

To the geographical factors that contribute to a festival's ambience, I must add the time of the year in which the events develop. Attendees may be interested in specific weather conditions or in a specific season. For instance, a festival held in winter often appeals to a different segment of people than a festival held during summer; dissimilar kinds of weather enable different types of activities in the local environment. This also presupposes different methods for organising the festival's activities.

The weather has spatial implications for the realisation of the events. Expectations of extreme cold or rain will normally lead organisers to restrict the number of outdoor activities in favour of inside events. Weather conditions can cause problems during a festival; for instance, Hurricane Rita provoked the partial cancellation of the FITH 2005. During both the fmx 2010 and the FITH 2011, the activities held outdoors in parks, streets or squares were free of charge; if weather conditions had not been favourable, the festivals would have not incurred an economic loss. Weather, as a property of the environment, together with the physical characteristics of that environment, affects the performativity of the local, its enchantment. In turn,

the performativity of the environment generates a sense of the local culture, which infuses festivals with personality.

According to Paul Makeham:

In a broader sense the physical spaces, architecture and design of cities comprise myriad performative qualities including tension, irony, intertextuality and self-reflexivity . . . Indeed, cities as a whole can be understood as sites upon which an urban(e) citizenry . . . performs its collective memory, imagination and aspiration, performing its sense of self both to itself and beyond. (151–152)

Makeham adds that ‘Performance and performativity are intrinsic to urban life and design. A mobile billboard; an illuminated building at night; a park fountain; an episode of road rage; a store window display; a queue—all of these comprise performative elements’ (152). Thus, it is possible to suggest that the environment performs. The urban landscape and the natural environment have an implicit theatricality that infuses festivals with both enchanting and haunting qualities, causing emotional reactions in the festival participants. In this regard, enchantment suggests captivation, seduction and sensuality, while haunted refers to the disturbing emotions that the environment may arouse.

Havana and its surrounding environment offer festival participants natural beauty, such as pristine beaches, and a relaxing atmosphere. Havana is hot and humid. The rainy season is typically between May and October with the hurricane season being between June and October. The heat and the city’s proximity to the sea give Havana a tropical atmosphere; people stroll in swimsuits or ride bicycles without shirts or wearing few clothes. Plants, trees

and their products, such as tobacco, rum and coconuts form part of the landscape in which the FITH 2011 takes place.

Old Havana, a zone where some of the festival events were placed, stands out due to its baroque and neoclassical architecture. Old Havana has a picturesque look. In spite of it being declared a World Heritage Site in 1982, many of Old Havana's buildings are awaiting renovation (UNESCO 'Old Havana and its Fortifications'). The lack of resources necessary to start the restoration of the buildings and the scarcity of the materials needed for construction work gives Havana a dilapidated appearance that may also be attractive to foreign visitors. In the city, it is possible to see cars from the 1960s still being driven; the walls of buildings and houses are usually rusty and unpainted, and there are old buses and lots of bicycles. It appears as if the city has been trapped in the past. Thus, Havana may be viewed as a vintage site, engendering a sense of nostalgia.

Besides Old Havana, the city has several prominent neighbourhoods: Havana Centro, which tends to be quieter; Vedado, which is the most verdant section of the capital; and Malecón, which is a popular seaside promenade. Along the Malecón, the locals like to congregate and often dance and party, so it is easy to join the festive atmosphere that prevails in the city. In fact, Havana boasts of several salsa clubs and has a swinging nightlife, hardly any commercialization and friendly people. However, traffic can also be chaotic within city limits due to the bicycle riders veering in and out of traffic. Furthermore, Havana's local bus service—called El Camello (The Camel) because it has a strange contraption in its middle—is a crude adaptation of

the popular bendy bus that operates in Western countries. El Camello is pulled along by a semi-truck and is often extremely crowded.

Another particular characteristic of Havana is its conflicting yet coexisting social images. On the one hand, Havana is a sort of social/cultural centre, providing opportunities for encounters and interactions of all kinds, a site for intellectualism and promiscuity to intertwine. On the other hand, Havana can be deemed a dystopia, in which the new society, constructed according to the ideals of a socialist revolution, does not function exactly as anticipated, and inefficiencies and contradictory ills of revolutionary society are revealed. These contradictory images are ironically manifest in the billboards assuring passersby '*Vamos bien*' ('We go OK') while the lack of goods in stores or the *apagones* (power outages) suggest the opposite. These conflicting images contribute to the creation of an atmosphere of intense contradiction, and this sort of intriguing social reality gives Havana a particular sense of place.

The exoticism of the Cuban landscape, its contradictory images, its physical characteristics and performativity, provide visitors with a unique sense of place. Put another way, participation in the FITH also involves experiencing Cuba's environment. Although solidarity is a powerful force that sends international artists to the island, the picturesque landscape, the sensuality of the people, the ambience generated by salsa music, Havana's proximity to beaches and the city's vintage look also act as seductive bait. Unlike those participating in the fmx, the international groups that participate in the FITH do not receive any kind of payment, so the Cuban environment is essential for promoting the festival internationally.

In contrast with Havana, Mexico City has a more urban landscape. It is rare to see somebody with a naked torso there, and people wearing swimsuits on the streets are virtually non-existent. Mexico City is localised in a valley surrounded by mountains, which causes smog produced by factories and cars to be contained within the city. The mountains that encircle the valley act as a barrier that impedes the disbursement of the pollution. Mexico City has a grey environment. Thus, rather than the natural landscape, what may attract visitors is the urban environment, which includes buildings, museums, squares and markets.

The unique characteristics of some places in the city draw visitors in. For instance, the Mercado de Sonora (Sonora Market), a market located at the southeast of the Historic Centre, is a place where not only vegetables are sold, but also all sorts of animals and legal and illegal merchandise such as toys, medicine teas and witchcraft. In this market, one can find articles to produce magic such as amulets, stones with mystical powers, bone powders, black candles and powders to attract money, love, sex or healthiness. This is a place where ancient African voodoo practices, Christian traditions and indigenous cultures gather, providing a specific sense of locality.

Additionally, underneath Mexico City's flesh lie the ruins of the ancient indigenous culture that once ruled over a vast territory of Mesoamerica. The city of Tenochtitlan, which controlled all the important trading routes and collected tributes from the surrounding cultures, was buried by Spanish conquerors. However, some parts of Tenochtitlan, for example, the zone where the Museo del Templo Mayor (Museum of the Great Temple) is located, are now visible to the public. However, despite the

growth of indigenous rights movements in Mexico and the development of theatre alongside these movements in various states, for example, Yucatán, Chiapas and Oaxaca, the fmx shows little trace of these cultures.

Mexico City's Historic Centre has also been renovated, and traditional structures have been restored and adapted to create modern bars, restaurants, hotels, museums and other spaces. Many streets that were once car lanes have been transformed into pedestrian zones. Within the town centre, it is possible to find Aztec ruins, colonial Spanish churches and modern buildings existing side by side. These constructions bear witness to the distinct ideological trajectories, interactions and cultural clashes that have helped to shape the particular social landscape of Mexico City and provide the city with a sense of uniqueness and originality.

The fmx's identity is closely related to its place of origin: the Historic Centre of Mexico City. Every year, the festival takes place in this zone and tries to foster this relationship with the Historic Centre. Organisers usually program activities in historic buildings within the zone, such as the Palace of Fine Arts, the House Talavera or The Old College of San Ildefonso, one of the most important educational institutions of the Colonial period, as a way to frame the colonial and pre-Hispanic personality of the Historic Centre.

As the examples of Havana and Mexico City show, host cities endow festivals with a local performativity that results from a combination of their unique environments and local interactions, a performativity that produces distinct emotional qualities and experiences for festival participants. The festival experience as a whole is attached to the landscape because the environment defines and sets the limits of the event. Festivals are not

isolated events; they are part of a broader experience that not only includes the enjoyment of artistic activities, but also access to the natural and constructed environments, including restaurants, hotels, mountains, beaches and other spaces. The performativity of both Havana and Mexico City, with their advertisements, means of transport, and bodily expressions, among other elements, reflect particular constructions of locality and contribute to a sense of the local.

As MacLeod suggests, 'It would be wrong to assume that a host community's sense of its own authentic culture and identity is inevitably denied by these developments [exclusion of locals and elitism] in the creation and promotion of festivals' (231). In the case of the FITH 2011, the event also included debates about artistic problems and the social dimension of a festival encounter, which connects with local history and geography. Cuban companies such as Teatro Buendía have also used the exposure to international presenters and audiences that the FITH provides to create opportunities to develop projects in other countries. After participating in the Theatre Festival of Camagüey (in Cuba's third largest city) and the FITH, Teatro Buendía has been invited to present work in other festivals and countries. In 2003, the company travelled to Greece, Poland, Italy, Germany, Slovenia and Austria, and it participated in the 3rd International Theatre Festival in Santo Domingo. More recently, Teatro Buendía toured to the 2010 Latin Theatre Festival in Chicago, USA ('Teatro Buendía', 9 Sep. 2012; Kenneth, 8 Jul. 2010).

Mexican companies such as Teatro Ojo have also taken advantage of the exposure generated by fmx. In 2011, after showing at the previous year's

fmX, Teatro Ojo's performance *Within a Failing State*, 'in which abandoned government buildings and public spaces of Mexico City are refigured as sites of memory, activism and reflection on previous authoritarian abuses', obtained the Gold Medal for Best Work in Theatre Architecture and Performance Space, in the Architecture Section of the 12th edition of The Prague Quadrennial (Prague Quadrennial, 26 Sep. 2012). In this manner, the importance of international festivals for local groups lies in their role as mediators within the theatre industry. Sometimes, showing work in a successful festival is the only way for local theatre companies to get recognition. This situation can drive artists to produce more marketable commodities rather than strive for real artistic innovation, but, at the same time, a festival can offer a way to empower local theatre companies.

What the opportunity for such empowerment reveals is the multidirectionality of festivalscapes, that is, the contrasting outcomes and social relationships caused by the tensions between different agendas at festivals. Even when a festival points towards a convivial consumption of art and fosters the same kinds of artistic and social paradigms at different places, the sense of place and the agency of host communities are not completely vanished. The idea of an international festival as a standard construct suggests a tension with the particularities of the place in which the event is developed. The relationship between festivals and their host places is two-fold. On the one hand, festivals are standard structures that receive artistic flows. On the other hand, festivals are connected to the specificity of that particular space in which they take place. That is, festivals seem to forge links between an area of ground and the people who inhabit it.

The spatial contradiction between place and placelessness contained in international festivals can also be applied to their models of organisation. While the international festival has to provide standard and recognisable settings for the participants, it should also open opportunities to experience the particularities of the host city. The landscape and services provided by Havana and Mexico City—the beaches or mountains, accommodation, food and drinks—must meet the visitors' desire for the new, but these elements must not be too unfamiliar or strange because few visitors or artists look for completely new things. Instead, they want recognisable facilities in unfamiliar environments. At the same time, festivals are expected to encompass a sense of place that is original and unique. In both the FITH and the fmx, visitors expect to find familiar services and structures but, at the same time, the essence of what it means to be Cuban or Mexican.

Festivals are at once actual and fictional places. They bring into one space, the festival city venues, many different times and places. It is precisely this dual nature that gives festivals a special status in societies: they appear as mirrors, as metaphors, as utopias for specific communities. Festivals construct dualities by accumulating performances from different regions or countries (as in the case of international festivals). They generate a fictional space and time within the real space-time of a community (for instance, the fictional space-time of a particular performance in opposition to the real space-time of the theatre with its curtains, lobby and lights). They bring together invented stories and situations with daily activities (for example, workshops and performances). In some cases, they are designed to remain in the collective memory of the target community, to preserve the memories of

a specific local culture (as in the festivals to honour local figures or important dates/events that become a hallmark of the cultural development of a community). However, they are also ephemeral acts, fictional spaces that disappear as soon as the activities finish. Moreover, they can 'create a space of illusion that exposes every real space . . . as still more illusory' (Foucault, *Other* 27). For instance, when there is a gathering of people from many different countries, the festival can create the illusion of a place where disparate cultures coexist in harmony and, from there, a festival utopia, a site where differences between cultures are dissolved. They can also transform a local city into a fantasy city (a tourist centre where the whole city is a festival) or provide the illusion of their functioning as 'a space that is other, another real space, as perfect, [as happy], as meticulous [and] as well arranged' in contrast to the unhappy 'messy and ill constructed' world in which we live (Foucault, *Other* 27). Thus, festivals contain double spaces, often juxtaposing one and many places, real and unreal, normal and extraordinary, chaotic and ordered. As such, festivals must be particular and general, original and standard, local and universal all at the same time.

Defining Locality in Relation to International Festivals

In *Theatre and Globalization*, Dan Rebellato asserts that some arguments in favour of localisation that 'are intended to support . . . regions of the world against cultural imperialism' are not well sustained by advocates of localisation (55). In his view, arguments that state that 'diversity should be respected and defended' do not hold up (54–55). Rebellato introduces four arguments against localisation. First, 'localization presumes that our cultures

are self-sufficient' (55). Yet, he argues, the needs and wants of *our* society have evolved to the point that in this modern world self-sufficiency is something almost impossible to achieve: 'We have come to enjoy the products of the world, and there is nothing inherently wrong with that' (55). For him, the important environmental concerns in relation to the transportation of goods are contingent because if new emission-free ways of transporting goods were found, these concerns would dissolve and the objection to 'eating avocados out of season would disappear' (55).

Second, Rebellato states that 'by expressing a particular concern for those inside the community, localization entails a certain disregard for those outside it' (55). He explains that 'a local small-mindedness . . . is the other side of localization' (55). 'If someone were able to intervene in another culture to prevent systematic acts of violence but on cultural-relativist grounds refused to do so, we might equally say they *were* imposing their moral standards on the people of another culture by not intervening to protect them' (56). Here, the local is presented as a promoter of fanaticism and a site of ignorance.

Third, Rebellato argues that 'asserting the values of your own region need not be politically progressive. It could just as well be brutally nationalistic' (56). In his opinion, the unbending value attributed to the local actually underpins certain kinds of inequity. By exploiting regional differences global corporations can profit, buying cheaper in one place and selling expensively in another (56). Rebellato argues that 'This would be impossible if there were single global standards for health and safety, wage minimums, and corporate governance' (56). Here, Rebellato sees the local as

a problem; due to their singularity, local communities are subject to exploitation.

Finally, he mentions that ‘cultural relativism [as pursued by advocates of localisation] is internally contradictory’ (56). The contradiction resides in its universal principle: ‘We should respect diversity *everywhere*, regardless of circumstances, irrespective of local conditions’ (57). Rebellato sets up respect for diversity as a universal principle that contradicts the characteristics of a particular locality. In so doing, he imagines a simplistic dyad in which universal values are pitted against local conditions.

However, in his propositions for localisation Rebellato ignores some fundamental issues. He essentially overlooks the power relationships and socio-historical implications of his arguments. His ideas about the self-sufficiency and small-mindedness of locals establishes locality as a backward construct in the development process. In this view, a local is someone who denies the progress of globalisation and cosmopolitanism, who lives (metaphorically) in pre-modern times. Rebellato’s argument that the declaration of George Bush Senior—‘The American way of life is not up for negotiation’ (56)—asserts the rigid values of the local, precludes the possibility that the American way of life constitutes a global agenda; he essentially overlooks the historical implications of our global era.

Rebellato also disregards the uneven distribution of the products that ‘we have come to enjoy’ (56). Rebellato casts globalisation as a necessary evil because it would be unthinkable to live just eating ‘Lancashire hotpot’ (55), so, through globalisation, we can all eat foreign food. However, his argument does not explain the processes by which all these products reach *our* tables;

he omits to mention the uneven social relationships that are generated in cycles of production that allow international goods to reach *our* tables. Furthermore, Rebellato takes advantage precisely of the social inequality that is the result of economic globalisation. His own book, *Theatre and Globalization*, was printed and bound in China.

What is misleading in Rebellato's approach is the implicit assertion that in spite of all the evil economic globalisation generates, it can also bring a better understanding of the world devoid of local, regressive ideas. In setting up the local as a backward construct that causes problems for the rest of the world, Rebellato is implicitly observing that world from a Western-centric viewpoint. This assertion situates localism as something that should be fought and subdued in order to reach cosmopolitanism. When Rebellato explains that the values of a local place 'need not be politically progressive', he is also paving the way for a Western progressive political enterprise to create a better world (56).

Put simply, the idea of constructing a politically progressive world has been used as a strategy by imperialist countries not only to bring progress to the so-called underdeveloped, backward countries, but also to justify war against countries and localities that are considered barbarian, antidemocratic or opposed to the Western vision of the way the world should be. In this respect, intervening 'in another culture to prevent systematic acts of violence' (Rebellato 56) has been a rhetoric used to justify imperialist interventions. Bringing 'justice' may be a way to cover the imposition of a Eurocentric vision around the world, which is presented as a natural step in development and a synonym of progress.

In contrast to Rebellato, I argue that the local creates specific methods for addressing the unexpected influences and pressures that come from inside and outside a particular community. 'The local itself is a hybrid construct that is often formed out of regional, national, and even global forces' (Cvetkovich and Kellner 15). Therefore, the local is conceptualised in relation to the global because they both form part of the same process—an idea of which Rebellato is unconvinced (59).

Locality as understood by Appadurai in 'The Production of Locality' is the quality of neighbourhoods; it is not something given but produced by neighbourhoods, which are specific social formations (178–182). Each neighbourhood has its own techniques and ways of developing its particular local subjects, such as segregation, naming, circumcision, marriage and so forth (179). These social techniques also function to inscribe locality into bodies (179). Thus, locality is both produced and embodied. However, there are factors that can put pressure on the construction of locality that is undertaken by a specific social formation. That is, locality must also be maintained against different elements and influences that could be diverse in nature and either internal or external, for instance, borders, social relations, ecology or technology (179). These uncertainties can endanger the reproduction of locality and jeopardise the social formation in which this activity is taking place (179).

International festivals produce locality. They combat the anxiety, instability and fragility of social life by giving meaning, value and distinction to local subjects; they provide frameworks to understand and give meaning to people's actions. For example a festival to celebrate a special event or to

enjoy leisure time after work helps to structure time in a local community. In this sense, festivals are ritual processes; they localise duration (time) and extension (space). People assign particular properties and instil social meaning in both festival locations and activities. Through festivals, it is possible to understand not only how the idea of locality is embodied or produced by a community, but also how locality is challenged. Even if a festival is imposed on a social formation, the local subjects are compelled to interact with it. The event becomes part of the social landscape of that specific community, initiating local responses.

The local responses to a festival also reflect the specific way in which a community deals with the event. During the FITH 2011, the Turkish National Company presented *Paz (Peace)*, a Yucel Erten's adaption of *Peace* by Aristophanes. The performance took place in the Theatre Julio Antonio Mella, a building that, according to Cubaescena, emerged as a theatre space on 28 April 1961 in a place formerly occupied by the Cinema Rodi (*Teatro Julio Antonio Mella*). In the play's brochure, the company dedicates the performance to the Cuban public and wishes it free life and fraternity.

The performance was delivered in Turkish and subtitled in Spanish. Thus, in *Paz* a screen was set up at the top of the stage to project in Spanish the surtitles of the Turkish-language play. Visually, this situation created two foci of attention, the screen, which made the public look up, and the actors and their actions, which directed the audience's gaze towards the stage. If we wanted to continue the thread of the story, we had to look up to read the translated text on the screen; if we watched the performers' actions, the thread of the story was lost. This situation split our attention and made it

difficult to follow the events in the play. Sometimes, the jokes were projected after the actions, producing a time lag and perplexity. Moreover, the text was translated into Spanish as spoken in Spain; this also created differences, because some of the expressions used in the translation are not used in Cuba.



Fig. 32. A scene from the performance *Peace*, by the Turkish State Company. Please note the **surtitles** above the actors. Havana, Cuba, Theatre Mella, 30 Oct. 2011. Photograph by the author.

The use of a screen to project Spanish subtitles was a local response to the problem generated by the language difference. This solution, in turn, generated multiple responses during the play. Whilst some people abandoned the hall, others looked up and down during the whole performance, and some laughed (including myself) about the Spanish translations of the Turkish text. The creation of two foci of attention, together with the time lag and the use of Spanish expressions that are not used in Cuba, influenced the audience's response and the actors' performance. For instance, sometimes the actors had to delay acting because the translation

was not in tune with the actions. In this sense, the transfer of *Peace* from one space to another played a major role in this situation; the change of place entailed a change in reception and, therefore, in meaning. Some might say the whole exercise was rendered pointless.

From another perspective, a performance can also modify the normal/daily activities and social dynamics that take place in a particular site. One presupposes that particular spaces are bound to host certain types of activity, or that some particular actions are destined to be performed in those specific places, for example, a venue to act and watch, a lobby to chat and meet people, a restaurant to eat, etc. However, festivals designate specific spots for particular performances, sometimes contradicting the normal functions of those places, and thus establishing a dialogue between their historical and/or traditional framing and the new relationships brought about by a different kind of use.

As part of the fmx 2010, the performance *Huey Mecatl (Oh Great Cord!)* was held in one of the open-air sites of Ciudad Universitaria (University City). This site forms part of a series of gardens in the main complex of the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (National Autonomous University of Mexico). The performance was an installation of about ten containers arranged in two pentagons. The floor at the bottom of the containers had holes of about two meters each, which made them function as echo chambers. Inside the containers were set steel ropes that acted as the strings of a musical instrument. The performers, including a singer and a musical director, were positioned inside and on top of the containers. At certain moments, some of the performers rubbed, plucked or hit the 'strings', while

others tightened or loosened them, sang or jumped on the containers. Thus, the containers were both musical instruments and small theatres.



Fig. 33. Set for the performance *Huey Mecatl (Oh Great Cord!)*. Mexico City, Ciudad Universitaria, 21 Mar. 2010. Photograph by the author.

In this sense, there was a dialogue between the place's historical identities and those of the performances and containers. Containers usually refer to the production and transportation of goods around the globe, that is, they are linked to the global market. However, by converting them into huge musical instruments, the concert subverted the normal use of containers as transporters of commodities. Instead of goods, they contained music. At the same time, by placing the containers in this open-air zone, which is usually used as a park for university students, the event changed the site's normal functioning; the park became a theatre, and people enclosed within the containers' pentagons were prompted to experience an unusual dynamic. This example shows that festivals are not simply located against a background—an immobile context, a place lacking in agency—but rather, are

enacted through spatial and temporal framings. They flow into the space and time of a city, propelling a trajectory, mobilising structures and conventions. The use of space becomes central to the negotiation of a festival's principles and the dissemination of its perspectives.

Even though it is possible to suggest that a particular space has an order—an implicitly biased preconception that conditions its use—this order can be modified by the actions performed in such space. The preconceptions are both triggered and contested by the accumulation of memory and actions in that designated place. Therefore, festivals understood as a performance event can challenge or support the preconceptions attached to those specific spaces. In fact, festival structures, and the ideologies they foster, can be challenged by the activities contained within them. In other words, although international festivals employ spaces that represent particular ideologies, the events programmed in those venues can support or contradict those ideologies. Space is always a dynamic construction; that is, the spatiality of festivals is activated by the multiple dynamics between festival settings and their activities. In other words, although marginalised or restricted by international festivals, local movements are never absent.

If locality is definable as the daily construction and maintenance of a social formation's culture, then locality is an unresolved process, a contested dynamic in which different social agendas are present. Locality is the result of constant interactions between specific social formations, and it has both internal movements and external influences. Local not only refers to a particular place, region or set of conditions, but it is also a series of strategies employed and performed by the individuals that form part of a particular

social formation, including responses to, and transformation of, external influences and subversion.

Locality is not an immobile structure; therefore, it must not be regarded as an essentialist concept. In other words, the localised is not locked or isolated from the rest of the world as Rebellato suggests. Nor is locality a perpetual treasure lost in the past as some nationalist ideologies suggest. Confined to a nostalgic past or considered a utopian essence of a particular culture, the local becomes immobile, trapped in the developmental stage of an evolutionary narrative of the (cosmopolitan) nation. On the contrary, paraphrasing Doreen Massey, locality is constructed through interrelations, 'through the particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus' (*Global* 167). Local, national and global agendas are interdependent. In addition, locality, globality and nationality are discourses that advance their narratives at different local places.

As the FITH and the fmx show, there are many ways to interact with national and global agendas, that is, there are multiple ways of being local. Locality does not involve uniformity or demand one unique way to perform as a part of a social formation. Locality embraces different viewpoints and the possibility of different affiliations, as Nehad Selaiha suggests:

To the same degree local cultures or cultural identities have become personal choices, they have grown fluid and relative; these identities cannot be located in certain places on the map, even when such places are contained within the official political boundaries of one country, nor can they be said to belong historically to the same temporal framework. (63)

Multiple localities at festivals are also possible. What gives the sense of local in a festival is the interactions between local, national and global movements at the event. The type, quality and intensity of such interactions are specific to time and space. Therefore, locality at festivals encompasses particular methods for addressing, rejecting or incorporating the diverse national or global forces operating in a specific context. In this sense, locality at festivals can be embodied and negotiated in different ways.

Locality does not represent fundamentalism just as globalisation does not involve a complete homogenisation of cultures or economies. Doreen Massey states:

There is the fact that this very mixture together in one place may produce effects which would not have happened otherwise. And finally, all these relations interact with and take a further element of specificity from the accumulated history of a place, with that history itself imagined as the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages, [occurring] both local[lly] and [in] the wider world. (*Global*, 168)

In this regard, my study of locality at international festivals has not sought to identify pure, essentialist local forces, but to express the connections that allow us to reveal the relationships generated by different agendas at different scales. Therefore, it seems to me that what is needed is a *glocal* sense at international festivals.

Conclusions

Showcase and Encounter Festivals

In this thesis, I have discussed that the notion of festivals as showcases can be regarded in the fashion of the global-Western concept of space that sees the landscape of the host cities as a free territory where it is possible to insert a standard paradigm without taking into account the social context. Standardisation refers here to the same conceptual use of the space in different places: either the same festival structure, the same type of venues, the same type of audience-performance dynamics or the same marketing approach. The branding of local landscapes in order to attract global audiences is an example. Thus, these standardised structures, yoked to the implementation of the showcase model, transform the dynamics of the host community.

In contrast, my research has also showed that some international festivals are precisely organised as encounters, such as the *Mostra Latinoamericana de Teatro de Grupo*, in São Paulo, Brazil, where economic earnings are not the foremost goals. At this encounter, the groups remain during the whole festival to exchange points of view in after-talks, discussions, workshops and work demonstrations. All the activities are free for anyone contributing, to generate interchange between artists and the public and, in this way, generate community agency.³⁴ Therefore, for some international festivals, the objective is not the selling of cultural products, but the exchange of visions and the opening of spaces to engage in debates about differences. The encounter model opens the opportunity to experiment and

engage with multiple dimensions of difference, not necessarily to find ‘universals’ but to show the diverse understandings of nation, class, race and gender, among other categories. However, my research has also demonstrated that there are shifts between encounter and showcase festivals—an issue that I will take up again later.

From one perspective, the fmx is closer to the showcase model. The event has been converted into a parade of international cultural products. On the one hand, this trend has been directed by the fmx sponsors; that is, the implicit requirements established in the sponsorships negotiated by the fmx 2010 shaped its format and contents. On the other hand, the adoption of a showcase model has been prompted by the organisers’ desire to produce an event with an international profile. In this regard, the fmx 2010 prioritised the presence of foreign companies linked to artistic innovation under a technological umbrella, a characteristic that induced the inclusion of Western artists as paradigmatic models of artistic development.

The growth of the fmx has been possible because of the specific deals established with the private and public sectors. However, this support has not come without the need to compromise or adjust certain principles on the part of the festival. The support given to the fmx came with specific requirements from the sponsors or after various types of negotiations to find shared objectives with sponsors. For example, José Wolffer, the artistic director of the fmx 2010, defended his freedom to decide what events to include in the programming of the festival in a panel discussion with other festival organisers. However, he admitted that to gain the support of Pepsi Company, he had allowed a massive rock concert (Wolffer, 17 Mar. 2010).

Moreover, the festival's Electronic Arts section in the 2010 edition was implemented with funds from the European Union, which called for the promotion of European artists in Mexico. To some extent, the fmx was offered as a bargaining chip for institutions and sponsors in the fashion of a showcase model; the festival was thought of as a free territory that needed to be conquered, a fertile land where it was possible to plant or promote a global idea of development or artistic progress and, as a result, particular types of human relationships.

That sponsors shaped the fmx 2010 is also evident in the case of government support equalling 50 per cent of the total budget of the festival. The performances included in the 2010 festival programme did not contain any caustic political issues and also worked to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Mexican Revolution and 200 years of Mexican independence. Even the festival change of name for the 2010 edition had to become an instrument to include the political presence of both Mexico City's government and the federal government, accomplishing the social imperatives of both sponsors.³⁵ Hence, the particular needs of the fmx sponsors called for different types of activity, and this situation, in turn, contributed to the generation of a multiplicity of cultural products—a cultural market in which different artistic products were offered.

As a result of the need to establish an international profile, the fmx 2010 also included sections such as *(in)posición dinámica*, where brand new technology like robotics and artificial life and a wide range of cultural products that largely came from Western 'developed' countries mixed with art. The particular Western-generated notion of technology adopted by the

fmx was presented as the avant-garde of world art: an image that embraced a globalised concept of art and space. In this sense, festivals such as the fmx have increasingly become recipients of artistic 'innovation' in the form of Western cultural products. Thus, the goal of the fmx showcase model seems to be a convivial consumption of cultural products in a friendly global lifestyle.

The placement of the fmx within its host city also resulted in the imposition of transnational spatial arrangements, such as the idea of urban growth based on notions of the creative class and the creative city. Since the development of the fmx has been related to the improvement of the appearance of Mexico City's Historic Centre in order to bring investments, it is plausible to argue that this event is the instrument of a neoliberal project. The idea of progress and innovation in the fmx has been misinterpreted as the adoption of 'international ways of making'. As a consequence, a transnational corporate initiative has pervaded the fmx and found fertile ground in the landscape of a 'third world' metropolis such as Mexico City.

The move of some Latin American festivals from an encounter type of festival towards the adoption of the international showcase model in recent years, as in the Festival of Manizales in Colombia, the Cervantino International Festival in Mexico or the Festival Internacional de Teatro de Caracas (International Theatre Festival of Caracas), indicates certain socio-political conditions and trends that are allowing the proliferation of this international type of festival in Latin America. For the fmx organisers, the showcase model is considered to be at the forefront of artistic innovation, while other kinds of festival gatherings, such as the encounter festivals, are

often regarded as backwards. Thus, the showcase model of festivals is presented as an essential developmental step and as vital and ideal for Latin American countries, such as Mexico, in order to obtain the desired international profile.

Nonetheless, one of the main weaknesses of the showcase model resides in its dissociation of socially committed agendas and local problems. The selling of a wide range of cultural products in the fmx means more profits for the organisers, but the number of performances does not necessarily represent a positive impact on the cultural development of its particular communities. When more events are accumulated, it is believed that the impact on the national or local culture is going to be better, yet this is not totally true. Accordingly, what Arbeláez defines as the showcase festival can be meaningfully linked with what Ric Knowles argues about international festivals. Knowles asserts that:

International Festivals are first and foremost marketplaces. . . They served to shore up cultural fragments against “our” ruin, functioning as museums, pillaging and exhibiting decontextualized cultural artefacts in much the same way modernist artists themselves pillaged African masks and “oriental” forms of ritual expression. . . Today [they] function primarily as manifestations of a theatrical version of late-capitalist globalization, postmodern marketplaces for the exchange, not so much of culture as of cultural *capital*. (*Reading the Material* 181)

Knowles also considers that international festivals ‘display national cultural products in much the same way that other products are displayed and

promoted at international trade fairs' (*Reading the Material* 181). His argument seems to be based on two premises. First, he assumes that performances are cultural products that can be commercialised. They are goods or commodities that can be bought and sold, and festivals are the mechanisms to exhibit them. Second, he presumes that globalisation and capitalism have contributed to the cultural plundering undertaken by imperialist countries, transforming cultures into cultural artefacts or exotic products, thus diminishing their real historical and political values and dimensions. In this case, international festivals are instruments that contribute to this imperialist domination.

The idea of the compression of time and space prompted by the increasing interactions of our contemporary world is in part a strategy to distribute a particular model of festival organisation. The concept of a flat, shrinking world incited by economic globalisation is usually deprived of the socio-political relationships that make possible this shortening. Thus, the global festival circuit constructed in the fashion of the showcase model is a particular way of conceiving space, a fostering of specific audience-performance dynamics rather than as an accurate representation of a 'natural process of development'. The 'shrinking' of the festival circuit, that is, the adoption of the same organisational standards at different localities, entails here the greater capabilities that certain groups, institutions and countries have to implement a specific model of organisation and spatial arrangements at festivals to other parts of the globe. In these circumstances, the compression of the festival circuit due to the adoption of a showcase model is

a project that functions to the detriment of other aesthetics and imaginations of space.

Generally speaking, the FITH suits the encounter model better—though the festival was also about selling, showcasing and promoting Cuban products. The FITH gave more importance to the social topics dramatised by the international performances and opened opportunities of interchange between foreign groups and locals through conferences and workshops. The foreign material in the FITH has also been balanced with a great tradition of Cuban theatre; in contrast to the fmx, the national performances outnumbered the international ones in the event. Whilst the fmx paid all the expenses and salaries of foreign companies, the implementation of the foreign programme in the FITH depended, to a large extent, on international companies and organisations that could afford the costs for their presentations. Thus, in contrast with the fmx, the foreign presence in the FITH depended largely on solidarity and self-exploitation, which defined the type of international companies involved and the festival's trajectory to a certain extent.

At the FITH 2011, the selection of foreign performances with simple scenographic elements imbued the Cuban artists and audiences with specific ways of making theatre based on particular low cost production techniques; the festival also included social topics such as homosexuality, politics and scarcity. The fact that the festival fostered solidarity and a socially-committed type of theatre attracted foreign companies that were interested in performing in Cuba to engage in genuine social and artistic interchange rather than to make profits. These characteristics contributed to a social

agenda which differentiated the FITH 2011 from the fmx 2010. The FITH 2011 was a festival for an urgent socio-political situation.

The event, located in a declared socialist country, exerted its attraction as a place that marks alternative directions and artistic trajectories in world theatre. The FITH defeated artificial dynamics of exchange and built original spaces of interchange. This characteristic, in turn, highlighted Latin American artistic trajectories and paved the way for more significant cultural projects.

However, uneven access to economic resources sets the fmx and the FITH in different categories. The fmx can be equated with global success in terms of a Western-global vision on the arts. It has adopted a technologically innovative perspective that is, in fact, a copy of Western models of creation; the fmx is open to the transnational flows of the West which, in turn, constitute the festival's central element. The festival also receives support from private corporations and takes advantage of the global market. In contrast, the FITH can be regarded as less flexible and anchored in the past due to its difficulty in accessing brand new technology and hit performances. From one perspective, the FITH is still waiting for the benefits that commercialisation and the free market could provide it. It is a festival, paraphrasing Massey, which is 'not yet [been] drawn into the global community of instantaneous communication' (*Imagining* 34). In these conditions, success and recognition come from adopting a showcase ideal rather than by proposing alternatives.

Therefore, what these two visible models of festivals put at stake is the implementation of two different social projects. Cuba, for example, is

viewed as a territory isolated culturally and economically from global economic flows; Cuban independence from Spain, the USA and the former USSR, together with the economic blockade, may indicate divestment. However, isolation is only relational; one is separated *from* something. Separation involves a conceptualisation of the other from which one has been kept apart. In fact, this Cuban *segregation* symbolises a different type of relationship, a different ideological position to the dominant flows of the world, specifically to the dominant world order dictated by the USA in Latin America: an opportunity to see the world with a different logic.

In assuming this positionality in the world, the FITH looks to show a different understanding of international festivals, one that may contain, in spite of being at some moments biased and contradictory, an encounter model. If the global festival circuit distributes a Western model of producing and receiving art, if economic globalisation through these events attempts to appropriate cultural difference, then the adoption of an encounter model can help to destabilise the hegemonic endeavours that impel a one-sided vision of the world. In this view, the encounter model of festivals foments a critical combination of global structures with local imaginaries in order to restore agency to marginalised individuals.

Festivals as Arenas

This study is by no means a complete explanation of all the implications and interactions between festivals and political units or groups to secure their execution. What this analysis points out, instead, is the tension brought about between different conceptions of space, social trajectories and their possible

outcomes at festivals. Although the FITH is closer to the encounter model and the fmx to the showcase one, this situation does not reflect the internal contradictions of both festivals. Festivals are mixtures and tensions: ambivalent, mutable structures. International festivals contain competing discourses and the ability to accommodate disparate narratives. They can be instruments for colonisation, positioning exotic cultural artefacts as commodities, decontextualising cultural traditions, and thus creating a background against which to judge these cultural artefacts as primitive. However, they can also be instruments of rebelliousness and community cohesion; they create and embody opportunities, tensions and contradictions.

In fact, some international festivals tend to be related to celebration, the creation of a sense of community and subversion of normal social hierarchies. According to Jacqueline Martin, Georgia Seffrin and Rod Wissler, 'when the festival is rebellious, it embodies the liberation of self-expression for the populace' (Cremona 97). Festivals, like carnivals, have the power to open a window for people to be licentious and break the norms. By the same token, a festival can be seen as a weapon to fight against the established order: for instance, by building new hybrid aesthetic languages or mobilising artistic organisations to defend public spaces.

Festivals are like markets, which contain a mixture of categories, and goods from different parts of the world but are also local. Festivals and marketplaces are both central and yet on the periphery, inside and outside, strange and local, commercial and festive, highbrow and lowbrow. Markets are sometimes parallel sites of commerce, located in the outskirts of the cities

or far from the established trade centres; they also bring goods from remote places to local sites.³⁶ Festivals, as types of fairs, mix commodity and pleasure. Still, they can work outside the political authorities and give way to innovation.

Consequently, depending on the organisation of the events, for instance, the types of groups and activities included in the programme, the site where they take place and the opportunities of exchange, different kinds of festivals are possible. In other words, festivals are constituted in diverse ways, and each of these ways has a different principle of linking the activities that form part of the event. Each festival setting has a particular impact on the artists and the public and creates different social relationships. Thus, a festival structure embodies changeableness; indeed, there are contradictory forces and discourses coexisting in the same festival structure. Some of these forces can be considered dominant while others can be acknowledged as secondary, but this does not imply that they are absent or unimportant. Hence, it is essential to recognise that a single festival contains dissimilar narratives and that these narratives can lead to oppressive or, on the contrary, progressive practices.

For example, the inclusion of foreign performances in the FITH 2011 did not completely rest on the aesthetics or formative needs of Cuban theatre artists but on the capacity and disposition of foreign companies to come to Cuba. The range of artistic trends selected by festival organisers was restricted, to some extent, because the FITH 2011 depended on the solidarity of the external companies and institutions. This prompted the festival's curatorship to be determined to a large extent by the possibilities and desires

of foreign groups, leaving the festival structure subject to the ups and downs of external agents. As a result, the festival had inconsistencies: there were both excellent performances and those that lacked quality.

The limited range of international companies from which to choose engendered specific effects, such as encapsulating some representations as paradigmatic models of the foreign. Since the FITH is held every two years, the only possible representations of the foreign that reach many Cubans are disseminated by the international companies that can afford to be present. Accordingly, knowledge of what is happening in other parts of the world is fragmented in Cuba. For example, only the types of groups that give prominence to links with Cuba and its social system or that foreground their solidarity towards the island and its people are allowed or eager to come to Cuba on the conditions that the festival proposes. The inclusion of *Broadway Ambassadors*, for instance, resulted from political rather than artistic issues. In the quest to 'break' the blockade, the organisers decided to include this performance in the programme.

To some extent, the ambiguous festival structure blurs not only the social project of the festival, but also its course and objectives. Although the FITH has been quite successful in drawing some of the best Latin American companies and artistic movements, the internal contradictions of the Cuban state have distorted its original objectives. Factors such as the rejection of homosexuality by the Cuban state during the 1970s and 1980s, the restrictions applied in Cuba regarding freedom of the press and, as a consequence, the limitations in ways of producing art have worked in opposition to the festival's aims. As a result, the space opened by the festival

to admit politically committed companies has turned at moments into a stiff structure and possibly into political propaganda and some such companies have taken advantage of this 'socialist market' to gain notoriety in their own countries as socially progressive. That is, companies such as Broadway Ambassadors from the USA or Teatro Abrego from Spain have found in the FITH a niche from which to profit.

Thus, the FITH's composition, although inclined towards a type of encounter festival, is also eclectic and divergent, and the programming of international artists is left, to some degree, to the winds of fortune. The FITH's curatorial direction oscillates between the social agenda promoted by the call for entries, the political needs of the Cuban nation-state to maintain its social system and the willingness of the international companies to be present at the festival. The FITH moves between two extremes: an exotic place for cultural tourism that takes advantage of travel opportunities and a nodal centre that marks artistic trajectories in Latin America.

In the case of the fmx, although the event was biased towards internationality, local fare was also present. The festival hosted international companies such as Romeo Castelluci's as well as the Mexican National Theatre Company and local groups such as Teatro Ojo. Even when the programming was largely composed of foreign companies, local and national trajectories had an impact on the event. For example, while the fmx prioritised a convivial lifestyle based on international performances, local groups took advantage of the presence of foreign festival programmers to tour their performances to other parts of the world. That is, local groups, such as Teatro Línea de Sombra, used the fmx structure to obtain agency. The

fmX, created to bring prosperity to Mexico City Historic Centre, modified the dynamics and relationships of local communities. However, the festival also acted as a booster to local groups by providing, even if scarcely, the opportunity to access international programmers.

The fmX has been designed to bring new artistic developments to Mexico; it is the medium through which Mexican people and artists can fill an imagined artistic gap. As a result, and maybe unknowingly, the fmX is transmitting aesthetic models and disseminating around the country specific ways of doing theatre based on Western artists that employ so called high technology. However, although to a lesser extent, the fmX is also the medium through which emergent Mexican companies gain recognition.

The growth of the fmX and the FITH has been achieved due to their capacity to diversify and incorporate multiple elements. The analysis of my case studies illustrates how the festivals' expansion into the different spaces of their cities has been negotiated with a wider offering of activities and social trajectories. In turn, the establishment of deals with private and/or public sponsors has also allowed wider access to the festivals' audiences.

Festivals trajectories need to be pondered in relation to the spatial imaginations that they may contain. In other words, the events have to be considered in close relation to the boundaries they draw between the cultures, groups or institutions that participate. Festivals have also to be studied in connection with the power relationships brought into play. Thus, even when the international festival circuit is infused with a particular notion of space and distributes particular power relationships, different imaginations of space are possible. As social constructs, festivals encompass

competing narratives and different types of cultural mixtures. In this respect, in both the fmx and the FITH, the coherence of a curatorship is, to some extent, utopian, and the effects of its social project, either capitalist or socialist, global, national or local, are heterogeneous, giving individuals new ways to think about festivals. Therefore, we need to see festivals from a new perspective, as arenas where multiple discourses meet and distribute their narratives.

A New Concept of Space: New Ways of Thinking about Festivals?

Festivals are usually studied as events set in particular contexts. Host communities and cities are often considered as mere backgrounds, so despite their interaction with the events, their function is primarily to nest festivals. Nonetheless, festivals are not located in empty spaces. We should abandon the idea of space as a container or as a site of emptiness because space bestows our actions with meanings. According to David Wiles, 'Brook's ideal of an "empty space" was always philosophically untenable. In order to take a space and call it a bare stage, he (the unseen director) needs to frame that space, and separate it from the clutter round about. The shape and contour of the frame confers an identity on that which is framed' (243). Space provides schemes to receive and understand the actions performed in a designated spot. Space is never empty or absent of ideologies or meanings. Therefore, space design provides a way of seeing and, at the same time, a way of behaving. Doors, windows and seats, for example, influence the way we perform in space; colours, textures and lights generate thoughts and feelings.

Festivals 'take place' within specific, local spaces, which already bear the burden of ideologies and memories. In this sense, there exists a correlation between the location of festivals and the host city's spaces. As discussed earlier, the conceptualisation of space has implications for the way we construct our social relations and has an impact on the shaping of festival structures. Therefore, in order to have a different understanding of festivals, it is essential to have a new concept of space.

Massey identifies three points that need to be considered in order to engender a new concept of space. First, the recognition of 'space as the product of interrelations; as constituted through interactions', and the awareness that these interactions occur across the whole planet (*Space* 9). Secondly, the understanding of 'space as the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality; as the sphere in which distinct trajectories coexist' (in this manner, heterogeneity and space implicate one another simultaneously) (*Space* 9). Thirdly, the recognition of 'space as always under construction . . . as a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (*Space* 9). Therefore, identities are always changing, in the process of becoming, forging a future open to possibility.

I delineate two main propositions from the points identified by Massey. Diversity is viewable as the separation of identities existing simultaneously in different spaces in line with Benedict Anderson's idea of the nation. Anderson's view of imagining others sharing the same conditions and living together simultaneously in time highlights the value of the individual playing his/her role in the construction of the whole without interaction and within the same historical conditions (6-7). Another view is

of diversity as fusion, an interrelation between distinct identities. In this sense, there is, according to Massey, a dynamic simultaneity (*Space* 23): everybody evolves in space and time simultaneously in a network of mutual relations. Consequently, a space is permanently connected with other spaces and trajectories; space and time are articulated as 'places-moments' in evolution.³⁷ Identities are not isolated entities but processes constructed through numerous dynamics of interchange. Space is a structural part of these dynamics because it helps to build identities. In this context, space is not static but an entity capable of affecting human trajectories.

The point at issue here is revealing how festival structures host different spatial/social trajectories and how interactions and clashes between the different trajectories produce new social landscapes. In this respect, the notion of festivalscapes helps to challenge traditional concepts of space in relation to festivals. Space is actively involved in the construction of festivals and their multiple social meanings. The ways in which space is conceived in the context of a festival impacts how people think about and act in the event, also creating an understanding of social relationships.

Therefore, I make three propositions for the study of festivals. First, festivals are the product of interrelationships. At one level, it is neither place that conditions the meaning of a festival nor the festival's activities that imprint meaning on the host city's space; meaning is found precisely in the mutual interactions between space and event. For instance, the display of containers in the National Autonomous University of Mexico changed the social dynamics of that place, whereas, physical space influenced the performance's reception in the Great Theatre of Havana. At another level,

international festivals are constructed by setting together different local, national and transnational flows and trajectories. They act in close relation with people and institutions that happen to be not only in the community where they are 'placed', but also in other sites scattered around the world. For example, the National Turkish Company was able to come to the FITH 2011 due to the support of the Turkish Embassy in Cuba. In other words, international festivals are the product of reciprocal influences of local, regional, national and transnational agendas. Thus, to paraphrase Holdsworth, the opposition to market-led festival models can be reached through engaging with the particularities of local communities but having a global reach (25).

Festivals scatter their influence to other places and other festivals. The spirit of the encounter model was born in 1961 in Havana when Casa de las Américas organised the First Festival of Latin American Theatre. In 1968, the encounter model appeared again in the Festival Universitario de Teatro de Manizales in Colombia, in the Havana Theatre Festival in Cuba in 1980 and in the Festival Santiago a Mil in Chile in 1994. In terms of scope, cultural products, aims and organisation, it is possible to draw parallels between the Cervantes International Festival, which appeared in 1972 in Guanajuato in México, the fmx, which was created in 1985, and the Bogotá Iberian-American Theatre Festival that came into existence in Colombia in 1988.

Advertising campaigns that state 'as seen in the Edinburgh Festival' imply a flow and resonance between distant places. The connections between disparate geographical sites are also observed in the similar kinds of performances and themes emphasised by different festivals, the similar types

of venues and the international character of festivals. Festivals create networks according to their goals. In so doing, they associate with other regions and acquire narratives and ideologies which, in turn, represent particular aesthetics. The links with particular institutions, groups and sponsors determine to a great extent the festivals' growing quality and capabilities. International festivals are the product of interrelations and to some extent are hybrids; they bring together performances from different countries and mix disparate activities into a single event, producing cultural mixtures.

However, festivals feature different levels of hybridity, as seen in the mixture of cultural identities that embodied ideals of nationhood in *Malinche-Malinches* at the fmx or the mingling of companies coming from different parts of the world at both FITH and fmx. That is, festivals embrace different types and qualities of mixtures.

For Jacqueline Lo, the 'term 'hybridity' is used in a diverse and often contradictory range of political and theoretical projects concerned with identity construction' (*Beyond* 152). Lo distinguishes between two types of hybridity. On the one hand, Lo notes that a 'happy hybridity' describes a situation in which 'the term is emptied of all its specific histories and politics to denote instead a concept of unbounded culture' (*Beyond* 153). In this formulation, a happy hybridity presupposes an intercultural exchange that, in Helen Gilbert and Jacqueline Lo's continuum of intercultural theatre practice, would be located towards imperialist rather than collaborative practices (*Towards* 31-53). On the other hand, Lo argues that the term 'holds the potential to unsettle and dismantle hegemonic relations because it focuses on

the process of negotiation and contestation between cultures' (*Beyond* 153). For example, artists such as Guillermo Gómez Peña and Gloria Anzaldúa have used hybridity to deal with race and gender issues to disrupt hegemonic artistic narratives. The web page of La Pocha Nostra, Gómez Peña's performance group, includes the following statement:

For twenty years, Gómez-Peña has been exploring intercultural issues with the use of mixed genres and experimental languages. Continually developing multi-centric narratives and large-scale performance projects from a border perspective, Gómez-Peña creates what critics have termed "Chicano cyber-punk performances," and "ethno-techno art." In his work, cultural borders have moved to the center while the alleged mainstream is pushed to the margins and treated as exotic and unfamiliar, placing the audience members in the position of "foreigners" or "minorities." He mixes English and Spanish, fact and fiction, social reality and pop culture, Chicano humor and activist politics to create a "total experience" for the viewer/reader/audience member. (Pocha Nostra, 4 Sept. 2012)

Consequently, there is one hybridity that can be used to co-opt cultural differences: for instance, the fmx's quest for an international profile meant the event evolves into a parade of nations and their cultural products instead of a genuine interchange of artistic and social projects. By contrast, there is another type of hybridity that has the power to disrupt hegemonic narratives of art and culture, for example, the embedding of the performance *Amarillo* into the fmx structure or the adaptation of *Marat-Sade* by Peter Weiss by Cuban Theatre Buendía at the FITH. In general terms, the fmx embraced a

happy hybridity, while the FITH employed a more negotiated type of hybridity in the construction of the event. Hybridity in the festival structure is not only related to the particular assembly of the smaller events that comprise the festival, but also to the materialisation of different ideologies in the events. The cultural combinations at festivals entail economic issues and the sharing of ideas, images and techniques.

In the fmx, the borders between the different sections were very well-defined, as were the differentiations among the various events pertaining to a single section. The festival in 2010 consisted of eight sub-festivals, each one having distinctive artistic genres. The diversity of sections shown at the fmx aimed to indulge different types of audiences with the artistic practices they enjoy. For example, rock fans attended events such as the closing concert with the band Nortec, while classical music lovers were treated to events such as the performance *The Loves of Poet Robert Schumann* by artists Cornelia Hermann and Christoph Genz, and those fond of animation enjoyed a complete section entitled Animasivo.

The fmx 2010 as a whole event is a mixture that paradoxically separates the various artistic genres in particular niches. In the fashion of a happy hybridity, the festival seemed more a showcase in which distinct artistic activities were set to occupy distinct market niches. Diversity tended to rely on box-office hits; the kind of performances programmed in the festival had the capacity to capture and distribute a diversity that aimed to make a profit. At the fmx different cultures and artistic genres coexisted in the same festival structure, but they did not really mingle. In other words, the inclusion of diverse cultures and groups did not restore the imbalances in

the groups' working conditions and histories. Richard Schechner noted that while a diversity of cultural styles was encouraged in the 1990 Los Angeles Festival, questions of power, politics and values remained (7).

Festival structures operate to mediate cultural transactions, a mediation that eventually puts cultures face to face and produces blends. Festivals are the result of the combinations at different degrees of agendas and ideas, combinations that are not merely a matter of percentages. These mixtures refer to the amount of money, ideals, effort and travelling one culture puts into a project and to the combination of single event and festival structures, and they also refer to the appropriation, distribution and operating capacity that the companies and cultures achieve in a particular festival. Thus, it is important to remark that both the fmx and the FITH have particular characteristics that condition the types of mixtures they present. Both festivals have implicitly different artistic and social strategies; consequently, they entail different dynamics of interchange, which result in different arenas. In this sense, diverse quality and types of mixtures at festivals are propelled by certain ideologies.

My second proposition is that there are multiple international festival models and, consequently, many ways of organising these events. Each festival is to some extent unique; this particularity comes from festivals' special ways of dealing with the external and internal influences they receive and from the festival's host environment, as we saw in the section 'Environment, Festival Arrangements and Locality'. It is essential to recognise the plurality of voices instead of trying to impel one particular *international* trajectory. For instance, in spite of the proliferation of a globalising festival

model in the fmx, this trend by no means represents the absence of other trajectories. What this multiplicity highlights is precisely the power relationships that are created by the existence of multiple trajectories: the tensions created by the unfolding of those forces.

Even the seemingly unified artistic trends contain divergences. For example, in the FITH, the foreign fare of artists affected Cuban audiences differently. The topics and styles of performances, such as *Broadway Ambassadors* from the USA, *El Trompo* from Argentina or *Cosmogonia Experimento No. 1* from the Brazilian company Os Satyros, were disparate. *Broadway Ambassadors* generated great enthusiasm in one segment of the Cuban public due to their fascination of life in New York, enjoyment of the music hall and the presence of Western narratives on the social imaginaries of the Cuban population. The performance also provided the Cuban public with a chance to fulfil their cravings to 'possess' what they do not possess, for example, the fantasy of being in New York without really journeying there.

In contrast, *El Trompo*, a farce about the aristocratic education of a Creole family, was a theatre of resistance that aimed to raise awareness of race and gender discrimination in the conservative clusters of contemporary Argentina. Further, *Cosmogonia Experimento No. 1* offered the opportunity to observe a theatre of spatial experimentation. The performance took as a central element the mythologies of different cultures that supply diverse explanations of the beginning of life and the universe. In this performance, the audience was invited to dress as nurses and to enter into an Intensive Care Unit where a scientist was dying. It was, let us say, an existentialist

theatre that experimented with the distribution of the audience in the space and the possibility of multiples perspectives.

In the fmx, the emphasis on technology took a variety of forms. In the section Animasivo, many films employed computer animation as a tool, while in the section Arte Electronica, various installations explored artificial intelligence. These included *Life Writer* by Christa Sommerer and Laurent Mignonneau. Electrokinetic sculptures like *Hylozoic Soil* by Canadian Philip Beesley and computer software-generated installations like *Telefonías* by Mariano Sardón or *Apnea* by Ivan Abreu also explored artificial intelligence.

The heterogeneity of festivals was also observed in the particularities of the FITH and fmx's environments, which instilled the festivals with specific local characteristics. As seen in Chapter 3, there was a sense of place and placelessness at both events, a feature that marks the uniqueness of their social interactions and the variety of practices that festivals impel. Thus, even within the same artistic fields and in spite of dominant forces present at both festivals, there were divergences, a plurality of voices. Plurality does not necessarily mean democracy; however, it exposes the heterogeneity and diversity of artistic voices, the existence of diverse forces and populations, and the trajectories these forces compel festivals to take. In different ways, the FITH's and the fmx's local, national and transnational forces shaped the events.

The third proposition developed from this thesis work is that festivals are always under construction. The interactions that produce these events are always changing, giving way to new arrangements and dynamics. Both FITH and fmx have been changing over the years, the festivals' scope and

importance have been modifying and giving place to new ideas. For example, the *fmX*, which initially programmed mainly national artists, has been including more foreign groups, mostly from European countries, in the last editions. The *FITH*, in turn, has often programmed socially committed theatre, but in the more recent editions also included companies such as *Broadway Ambassadors*, which are focused on providing entertainment and making profits.

Festivals are in continuous evolution; they are part of history. Consequently, festival studies have to take into account the relationships and the material conditions of production and reception that give birth to these events and their mutability. It is through the study of these conditions and their evolution through time and space that it is possible to find a different understanding of festivals. Festivals are not spontaneously generated; on the contrary, they are linked, for instance, to social needs or projects of development that have specific political agendas. In this sense, festivals are the result of continually evolving socio-historical practices.

From this viewpoint, international festivals are flows that impel artistic and social trajectories. A festival composed of all its single activities is also an event; as such, it has certain autonomy that distinguishes it from the other single events that comprise it. In other words, the festival itself is like a single performance that has the capacity to do something. In this outlook, festivals, as performative events, embody ideological discourses and create narratives. Most importantly, as events in themselves, they interact with local communities either as instruments to fill the 'empty' spaces of cities and countries or to enhance the residents' pride and promote the preservation

and cultivation of the local culture. International festivals, as flows or trajectories, implement particular aesthetics and artistic practices that prompt local people to experience and react to the realisation of the events. The festival as a flow meshes with the multiples trajectories of local, national, and global agendas interacting at a particular site. In this sense, festivals are embodied actions that function in relation to a series of social relations specific to the host place.

The idea of festivals as flows establishes important differences from the notion of festival as containers/showcases, in which the festival structure is considered immobile and, to some extent, unidirectional. While in the notion of festivals as showcases, the events are 'standard structures' deprived of social contexts, or better yet, constructed in the same fashion or pervaded with dominant trends, the notion of festivals as flows emphasises the particular interactions at a specific locality. Whilst festivals as showcases consider the realisation of the event as a series of rules to be applied in the same fashion at different places; in the case of festivals as flows, the implementation of the events has to be negotiated.

The concept of festivalscapes helps to analyse the metaphors and ideologies propelled by the diverse types of local, national or transnational trajectories at festivals and by the power relationships that these transactions generate. As my thesis has shown, the concept also sheds light on the interaction and articulation of differing ideological standpoints and how they are embodied through performances, spatial arrangements and participants' actions. An international festival does not separate local or global forces; on the contrary, these forces come together in one place and

time and manifest their ideologies through hybrid spatial arrangements and actions. The social, political, aesthetic or spatial arrangements then help to frame the way people from different communities perceive and judge festivals. Festivals act as frameworks in which human actions are developed and imbued with meaning; they help to construct social life but at the same time reflect it.

Finally, I suggest that festivalscapes can also help to distinguish between progressive and ethical forces, the ones that help to restore agency and bring justice to marginalised people versus those that camouflage uniformity, dominion and exploitation in disguises such as technology, innovation and progress. The recognition of the multiple narratives present in a festivalscape can prompt researchers to distinguish, on the one hand, the cultural trajectories whose goals are to make profits from cultural difference and the traditional values that promote one-sided visions of culture, and, on the other hand, the ethical flows that decentre hegemonic attempts to coerce culture in the world.

Notes

¹ For example, senators Miguel Barbosa Huerta and Adriana González Carrillo have criticised the Mexican government for its lack of action before the US interference in national affairs. See Torres and Alba.

² 'Buena parte del teatro que se realiza fuera de La Habana sigue apenas sin ser confrontado con el público capitalino, lo mismo sucede en cada provincia donde se hacen escasas las programaciones de propuestas foráneas' (see Borrás).

³ 'La de servir siempre de balance de la labor realizada por nuestros teatristas en los últimos dos años y de posibilitar algo tan necesario como es la confrontación y el ensanchamiento de horizontes. A pesar de que cinco montajes no alcanzan ni con mucho a brindar el panorama de lo que acontece actualmente en la escena de Europa—tal pretensión escapa a los propósitos de los organizadores—, la muestra . . . funciona como pequeño escaparate para evaluar con bastante precisión algunas de las corrientes teatrales que hoy coexisten'. See Espinosa 94.

⁴ Opinions were obtained through a series of interviews conducted during the XIV Havana's International Theatre Festival.

⁵ Szuchmacher struggled to develop his ideas and left the festival soon after 2010. This suggests conflicts between the board of directors and the governmental institutions that provide the money for the Festival, on the one hand, and Szuchmacher, the Festival's artistic director, on the other hand, in relation to the role art should play within the Argentinian context.

⁶ In my opinion, labour, finances and technology are not so widely separated or disjunctive as Arjun Appadurai argues (see *Disjuncture* 25–48). They implicate each other. While cheap labour allows more profits, new technology often encompasses the absence of big groups of workers. Moreover, the new global order implies an increased flow and interaction because, in this way, it allows more economic gain. For example, the scattering of the process of production of commodities in different places around the world is indeed a flux of processes controlled by transnational corporations and bound to make this way of production more profitable. That is, the separation of the process of production in different countries does not mean the existence of a complete disjuncture but rather the instrumentation of a cheaper way of linking the production processes in order to create cheaper goods and get more profits.

⁷ According to Gerardo Estrada, the 2013 artistic director, this move was due to the need to obtain more funds, resources and sponsors. Please see Gutiérrez, 19 Feb. 2012.

⁸ Although national theatre seems to have an even or bigger percentage at certain times compared to Western theatre, this can be explained because it is cheaper to produce theatre than to bring expensive theatre companies to the festival.

⁹ 'Estados Unidos estrenó el 56% de películas de la programación, con lo que concentró el 90.5% de la asistencia, mientras que los estrenos nacionales sólo constituyeron el 18% de la programación total, con un 6% del total de los espectadores de cine del 2010'. Please see Hinojosa 164.

¹⁰ This idea differs from that of Said's Orientalism, because it does not entail a Western description of the attitudes and ideas of non-western countries. On the contrary, it refers to the Western construction of its own world and its dissemination around the globe as a set of notions and images that travel to other countries.

¹¹ This idea also has a hint of evolutionary theory, of change over time. However, what I want to describe here is the separation between modern and barbarian. Non-western cultures are often considered barbarian and, therefore, backward in time. This is a separation that does not exist in nature or as a natural process of evolution, as is often believed.

¹² 'Si estar fuera de la red es estar simbólicamente a la intemperie o en la sordera, las asimetrías entre conectados y desconectados marcan una brecha casi ontológica' (Author's translation).

¹³ The list of countries and number of performances are as follows: Spain 8, Finland 2, France 3, Brazil 2, Argentina 5, US 4, Norway 2, Cyprus 1, Italy 1, Mexico 1, Ecuador 1, Germany 2, Chile 1, China 1, Turkey 1 and UK 1.

¹⁴ 'Espacios como este se hacen imprescindibles, mas si tomamos en cuenta la escasa participación de grupos foráneos en nuestra cartelera, y con ello la poca vinculación del publico con lenguajes divergentes a los explorados por el teatro cubano'. See Borrás, 'Cruces y contextos de la escena actual. A propósito del 13 Festival Internacional de Teatro de La Habana' (*Revista Conjunto* 152 [2009]: 71).

¹⁵ The CUC is a Cuban convertible peso equivalent to one dollar or approximately 25 national pesos.

¹⁶ To illustrate this point further, the salary of a professor in the Higher Institute of Art (ISA) is about 1000 national pesos (40 CUCs) per month; in contrast, many sex workers can charge around 30 CUCs for a single service.

¹⁷ For example, in various universities—the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile (PUC) or the ISA in Cuba—the curriculum starts with Greek theatre and finishes with Western artists, such as Bertolt Brecht or Stanislavski. Latin American theatre only occupies a small part of the teaching and even less of the theatre made on other continents. This is also the case in a large number of US universities, a fact that shows the huge influence of a Western artistic perspective on the world theatre movement.

¹⁸ The opulence of the place can also be indicative of the power the artistic directors and institutions attain by using it. Through setting events in such opulent spaces, they show their capacity or power for pulling in money, performances and people.

¹⁹ This idea also indicates that national ideologies are not only found in official buildings and venues. This is why nation-states are becoming ubiquitous or landless—they are no longer bound to a territory but to a series of links and practices that allow them to implement their power, or to use Patrick Lonergan's words, there is a 'relocation of power from physical to a conceptual space, or a deterritorialization of power' where 'power is not expressed through the occupation of space by factories, but by the dominance of a brand' (21). In this respect, nations are no longer bound to a place but to the manner different nation-states market nationhood and the way we imagine it.

²⁰ A *corrido* is a popular narrative song that was widely popular during the Mexican Revolution and is still popular today. *Corrido* lyrics often tell the legends of heroes, although they also encompass themes such as drug trafficking.

²¹ 'Cuando a mediado de los años sesenta la revolución castrista se propone la creación de su 'hombre nuevo', un sujeto obediente, viril y dispuesto a dar su vida por aquel proyecto delirante, los homosexuales representan un incordio. Los prejuicios a que nos referimos antes les atribuyen una falta natural de vocación heroica, y su propia cosmovisión (siempre a contracorriente, siempre particular) los hace naturalmente indóciles para la vasta empresa de la construcción del socialismo'. Please see Echerri.

²² Please see note 20.

²³ The Yaqui or Yoeme are an Indian tribe who originally lived in the valley of the Río Yaqui in the northern Mexican state of Sonora. Many Yaqui still live in their original homeland but some live in Arizona due to conflict with Mexico. The Yaqui language belongs to the Uto-Aztecan language family. Yaqui speak a dialect of Cahita, a group of about ten mutually intelligible languages formerly spoken in much of the states of Sonora and Sinaloa. Most of the Cahitan languages are extinct. Only the Yaqui and Mayo still speak their language. Please see Hu-Dehart, 10.

²⁴ The Seris are indigenous to the Mexican state of Sonora. The majority reside on the Seri communal property (Spanish, Ejido), in the towns of Punta Chueca (Seri Socaaix) and El Desemboque (Seri Haxöl Iihom) on the mainland coast of the Gulf of California. Tiburón Island (Tahejöc) and San Esteban Island (Cofteecöl and sometimes Hast) were part of their traditional territory, but some Seris also lived in various places on the mainland. They were

historically semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers who maintained an intimate relationship with both the sea and the land. It is one of the ethnic groups of Mexico that has most strongly maintained its language and culture during the years after contact with Spanish and Mexican cultures. Please see Bowen, 230–249.

²⁵ For more information please see Hernandez, Larry and Cook.

²⁶ Please see note 20.

²⁷ A *Norteño* is a person from the northern part of Mexico. He is usually characterised wearing cowboy boots and hat. The costumes are also related to the type of clothing drug traffickers used to wear in Mexico. The costumes also complement the idea of the drug-trafficker cliché with weapons, jewellery and expensive trucks.

²⁸ See Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes, Programa Nacional de Cultura 2007–2012.

²⁹ In my opinion, a progressive locality is one that preserves the ethical elements of a particular community. For example, the Mayan calendar can be conceived as a progressive local time model compared to that of transnational capitalism. The Mayan calendar enhances the relationship between human beings and nature. Therefore, it can create an awareness of the destruction of natural resources. It is a model of time that takes earth cycles of production and rest into account. In contrast, transnational capital's model of time is conceived as a tool to produce money. Days throughout the year are dedicated to the consumption and production of goods and the generation of money. This model leads to indiscriminate production and the overexploitation of natural resources. Thus, the Mayan concept of time could be seen as a local, progressive initiative, while the transnational capitalist concept could be seen as oppressive.

³⁰ My evidence is based on interviews conducted with Latin American artists at international festivals in both Mexico and Cuba, notably Teatro Ojo (Mexico), Argos Teatro and Aldaba Teatro (Cuba), Os Satyros (Brazil) and El Trompo (Argentina).

³¹ This situation also raises issues regarding the ethical implications of Latin American festivals hiring expensive Western companies to perform in places with extreme poverty. Accessibility becomes a problem because only the local elite (a specific kind of audience) are able to pay and therefore access this type of event. Additionally, due to the elevated costs, only organisations with enough resources, such as national institutions, can programme, prearrange and pay for these types of events so that the poor can attend them. While the local elite can access all the events during a festival, accessibility for the local poor is restricted and depends on the good will of national or wealthy organisations.

³² Szuchmacher speaking on 17 March 2010 at the Foro Internacional de Programadores de Artes Escénicas, Festival de México, Centro Cultural Universitario Tlatelolco, Mexico.

³³ Latin American companies want to come to first world countries to fulfil ambitions of artistry as defined by Western norms. Western mediascapes distribute a model of artistry in Latin American countries that confines innovation to Western countries, and this idea combined with the desire to be part of an international festival circuit encourages Latin American groups to reduce their salaries in order to become part of a selected groups of international artists.

³⁴ More information about the Mostra Latinoamericana de Teatro de Grupo can be found at the Celcit (Centro Latinoamericano de Creación e Investigación Teatral) at: http://www.celcit.org.ar/noticias_2723_v.mostra.latinoamericana.de.teatro.de.grupo.html.

³⁵ Fundraising implies that in order to be attractive to sponsors and receive support, festivals should be wary not only of the content they programme, but also of the format that the event takes.

³⁶ According to David Wiles, marketplaces in medieval times were more connected to the local while fairgrounds were characterised by their itinerancy. For a more detailed description of the relationships of these spaces with theatre, please see Wiles 92–5.

³⁷ 'Lugares momentos' is the original concept. The notion refers to the way Mexicans conceived space differently to Spanish people, that is, as a combined process without the

Western separation into two dimensions: time and space. The concept is taken from Soustelle, *La vida cotidiana de los Aztecas en vísperas de la Conquista*.

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