

Anneli Saro

University of Tartu

TRANSGRESSION OF GAZE IN PERFORMING ARTS

The Greek word *theatron* referred to a place for viewing and viewing is still the core of communication in performing arts. Nevertheless, viewing or a gaze can be perceived also as a performative or transgressive act, since it is an implicit extension of the viewer's body that touches or even penetrates the object viewed.

In the paper, I am going to analyse what kind of gazes, when and why could be considered transgressive, making first a distinction between neutral and performative, and secondly between theatrical and extra-theatrical gazes. Since many theatrical languages rely to a considerable extent on everyday behaviour, I start my analysis from such transgressive examples, making use of studies by philosophers, psychologists and feminist theorists. Nevertheless, in theatrical communication frame, daily gazes are often recontextualised and magnified, which might make a neutral gaze performative. For analysis of different types of performative gazes in theatre, I use Ene-Liis Semper's and Tiit Ojasoo's production *72 days* (2022) as an example.

Anneli Saro is Professor of Theatre Research at the University of Tartu (Estonia). In 2010-2014, she was Lecturer of Estonian Culture at the University of Helsinki. Saro has published articles and books on Estonian theatre history and system, performance theory and audience research. Currently she is working on two projects: comparative analysis of amateur theatre fields in small European countries and poetics of playing.

Saro has been a convener of the international working groups Project on European Theatre Systems (2004-2008, 2017-) and Theatrical Event (2011-2017). She has been active as the Editor-in-Chief of *Nordic Theatre Studies* (2013-2015) and as a member of the executive committee of the International Federation for Theatre Research (2007-2015). She also served the University of Tartu as Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs and as Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.