

COLLECTIVE PERFORMANCE OPERA



Collective performance operas are complexly layered collaborative live performance works that are created through medium- to long-term intensive co-creation processes by VestAndPage in collaboration with other artists. These live works are presented only once, and are based on the unique contribution that each of the invited collaborators brings into the work.

Our urgency as artists is also to define with exact words the activity we do, deepening what each chosen word properly means:

PERFORMANCE

- The term ‘performance’ derives from the verb *perform* (c. 1300), meaning: ‘to carry into effect, fulfil, discharge,’ via Anglo-French *performer*, altered (by influence of Old French *forme* ‘form,’ from Latin *forma*) from Old French *parfornir* ‘to do, carry out, finish, accomplish,’ from *par-* ‘completely’ (see *per-*) + *fornir* ‘to provide’ (see *furnish*).
- The Latin preposition *per-* indicates ‘passing through a space and extending or spreading over and around.’ As a prefix to a word it functions as a superlative, complement or continuation.
- The Latin noun *forma* originates from the Greek *phorēsis*, ‘the act of carrying,’ from *phorein* ‘to carry, wear,’ frequentative of *pherein* ‘the action to bring,’ in the same way that it means ‘bearing,’ ‘posture’ and seemingly ‘aspect,’ ‘resemblance’ and ‘image.’
- The Latin *for-ma* also connects to the Sanskrit root *-dhar*, which has the meaning of ‘holding, supporting, containing,’ and desinence Sanskrit *ma*. *Dhar-ma* means ‘stationary, fixed,’ (in Hinduism meaning: the eternal law of the cosmos, inherent in the very nature of things). However, *for-ma* is a term that responds to the Sanskrit term *dhar-i-man*, meaning ‘form, shape, figure and image,’ and also ‘the choice and the way to dispose of a matter, whatever it is, in the human labor.’

Therefore, according to the etymological derivations, the meaning of the word ‘performance’ can be said to be *acting in support of the image*.

OPERA

- The Latin noun *opera* means ‘labour, work.’ It also implies the idea of *opus* in alchemy. In XVII century Italy, the term *opera* was used to define ‘the labour that a person accomplishes in a day,’ at first referring only to ‘manual labour,’ and later also to ethic and moral action, as well as intellectual, artistic, and scientific labour. *Io opero* (literally, ‘I operate’ or ‘I work’) is a more refined Italian expression than the simple *io lavoro*, ‘I work.’

Eventually, according to the etymological definition of the two terms, ‘performance opera’ can be said to mean *I work/ operate (or, 'a work') acting in support of the image*.

In fact, when we perform, we actually create a work – even though ephemeral – consisting of live images, which in turn produce meanings.

With the expression *performance opera* we don’t intend to define performances, which are mainly choreographed or structured *a priori* in every part. Our stance is that a performance should always remain open to the unpredictability of process, even though methodologically well-reflected and organized.

As it was for the alchemists engaging in their philosophical quest, a collective *performance opera* for us is both the vision and the result of a collaborative co-creative process, there in the space where it takes place, the laboratory to play out new challenges.