

# **A formált hiány**

A negatív tér mint dramaturgiai eszköz

**Theses and abstract**

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## Abstract

This dissertation examines negative space as a dramaturgical device on stage. Only an absence bearing the imprint of a once-present shape can be regarded as a negative form. A different operation reveals the imprint in each medium. The research begins with the design question of how the two-dimensional illusion of a painted image can be transformed into real space on stage.

A historical survey of space and light in scenography examines the boundary of painted illusion and the role of light in shaping space. Design research focuses on lithophane, a technique used in porcelain art in which wall thickness carries the image. A custom-developed design tool enabled the technique to be adapted freely.

The test pieces and scale models confirmed that the image can be encoded in the material thickness of both flat and curved sculptural surfaces and revealed by backlighting. Converting tonal values into wall thickness does not automatically preserve the spatial effect of the source image in the lithophane's passive state, so its unlit and backlit states must be designed separately. On a Möbius-strip lithophane surface, a single central light source simultaneously reveals the backlit image of the dunes and the sculptural form of the shell-like ribbing.

The results of the research appear in the set design for the opera *Einstein on the Beach*. The dissertation's concluding interpretive concept is scenographic negative space, the dramaturgical relation in which the set embodies the meaning of absence.

## Theses

1. In my dissertation, I regard as a negative form only an absence that bears the imprint of a once-present shape. A different operation makes the imprint perceptible in each medium. On stage, negative form offers dramaturgical potential when the imprint becomes an expressive device within the set.
2. The test pieces and scale models confirmed that the image can be encoded in the material thickness of both flat and curved sculptural surfaces and revealed by backlighting. Converting tonal values into wall thickness, however, does not automatically preserve the spatial effect of the source image in the lithophane's passive state. Dramaturgical application therefore requires the two lighting states to be designed independently.
3. On a lithophane surface configured as a Möbius strip, a single centrally positioned light source simultaneously reveals the backlit image of the dunes and the sculptural form of the shell-like ribbing. This spatial and lighting solution is confirmed by the completed scale model. In its own material, the lithophane preserves the place of what is absent. I use the term scenographic negative space for the dramaturgical relation in which the set embodies the meaning of absence.