F.T. Marinetti’s Concept of a Theatre Enhanced by Audio-Visual Media

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Introduction: Industrialization, Modernism and the Arrival of the Future in Italy

The nineteenth century was a period of great changes in the physical and mental landscapes of Europe. A large number of new technologies and inventions, such as synthetic fibres and dyes, electric light, wireless telegraphy, motorcars, cinema etc., made a profound impact on the everyday life of most citizens in the industrialized world. An increased speed of urbanization transformed people’s living environment and had far-reaching repercussions in their social existence. The revolutionized means of transportation and the new modes of communication shook up people’s conception of a linear time-space continuum and altered their cognitive mapping of the world.

By the 1880s, a feeling of cataclysmic commotion with profound and far-reaching consequences had gained ground. There was agreement amongst intellectuals and the common population that European society had undergone a profound transformation and that a truly modern civilization had come into existence. Artists and writers ushered in an extensive debate on how this ‘modern’ world could be adequately reflected in their creations. From c. 1890 onwards, Europe was ripe with new schools and movements that rallied behind Rimbaud’s call, ‘One has to be absolutely modern’. The ‘Moderns’ sought to reflect the changing conditions of contemporary life, the hustle and bustle of the metropolis, the myriad of sense impressions that incessantly showered the city-dweller’s mind. But in doing so, they wanted to transcend the traditional ‘mirror’ concepts of Realism. These innovative and often highly experimental works of art presented reality as it was processed by human consciousness. If in the artist’s mind a shattered, incoherent and absurd world conjured up images of chaos, energy, noisiness, etc., then the forms employed to express this experience had to be similarly dissonant, disjointed and fragmentary.

As an artistic response to the advent of the modern age, Modernism consciously broke away from classical methods of representation and instead explored forms of expression better suited to the altered experience of time and space. Rather than adhering to conventional themes and academic repertoires of styles, artists focused on the present and made use of the changed forms of communication in advanced industrial societies.

At the turn of the century, Italy also began to catch up with the economic developments in the more advanced European countries. The agrarian character of the young nation underwent a rapid and profound transformation and gave way to industrial capitalism, especially in the North. However, despite this “Arrival of the Future”, Italy’s cultural identity remained firmly rooted in the past. The great achievements of the Renaissance weighed heavily on the modern generation. The agrarian character of the young nation underwent a rapid and profound transformation and gave way to industrial capitalism, especially in the North. However, despite this “Arrival of the Future”, Italy’s cultural identity remained firmly rooted in the past. The agrarian character of the young nation underwent a rapid and profound transformation and gave way to industrial capitalism, especially in the North. However, despite this “Arrival of the Future”, Italy’s cultural identity remained firmly rooted in the past. 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resuscitate the dormant cultural life of their country which, in their view, was steeped in traditionalism and ignored the great advances of the modern world.

One of them was Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, a successful poet and literary manager. In his function as editor of the journal *Poesia* (1905-09) he had gathered around himself a “stable” of collaborators, who supported his radical drive towards a modernization of European literature. In 1908, Marinetti set up a new artistic school, which after some hesitation he named *Futurismo*. With the help of a business friend of his late father he managed to place a foundation manifesto, which he had previously circulated as a broadsheet and issued in several Italian newspapers, on the front page of *Le Figaro* (20 February 1909). In the following years, Futurism made a major contribution to twentieth-century avant-garde creativity. Marinetti’s articles, interviews and manifestos indicated that he took a great interest in the advances of science and technology, but also the underlying philosophical and aesthetic implications of the changing conceptions of energy, matter, time and space.

Futurism is based on the complete renewal of human sensibility brought about by the great discoveries made by science. Anyone who today uses the telegraph, the telephone, and the gramophone, the train, the bicycle, the motorcycle, the automobile, the ocean liner, the airship, the airplane, the film theatre, the great daily newspaper (which synthesizes the daily events of the whole world), fails to recognize that these different forms of communication, of transport and information, have a far-reaching effect on their psyche.²
The whole history of Futurism was predicated on Marinetti’s ideas that the most recent discoveries and inventions should be employed to capture the “frenetic life of our great cities”, the modern “state of mind”, even “dynamic sensation itself”. In the first five years of its existence, the Futurist movement published no fewer than 45 manifestos that propagated their ideas on how the most recent technological inventions could be applied to the fields of art and literature.

In 1910, several friends with a fine-arts background joined the movement. Futurist painting took as its subject matter “the many-hued, many-voiced tides of revolution in our modern capitals”, i.e. the hustle and bustle of street life in the metropolis, the pulsating dynamism of trade and commerce, the machine as a civilizing power, the social and political tensions in industrialized countries, and so on. To render these experiences in a novel and up-to-date fashion, the painters studied the science of optics, the physiology and psychology of vision, the analysis of movement in chrono-photography and cinematography. They also absorbed Henri Bergson’s reflections on the new experience of time and space, and took into account how the artist’s subjective experiences of reality affect his or her state of mind. The result was a new aesthetics which in their manifestos they summed up under the headings simultaneity, interpenetration, synthesis, multiple viewpoints, and universal dynamism. Painting as a complex network of forms, colours and force-lines was meant to connect not only the depicted objects and their surrounding space, but also to draw in the viewer until in the end s/he becomes “the centre of the picture”. Thus, Futurist painting revolutionized both the production and the reception process of a work of art.

A similar concern was pursued in the field of sculpture. Boccioni sought to represent matter in terms of movement and duration, lines of force and interpenetration of planes, using a variety of materials for expressing an essentialist reality hidden beneath the surface of observable phenomena. His sculptures grew beyond their physical limits into the surrounding space, where in a dynamic fashion they fused with the environment and shaped its atmosphere. Movement was synthesized as “unique forms of continuity in space” that take hold of the viewer and force him/her to a similarly dynamic relationship with the sculpture exhibited.

Another field with broad influence was Futurist music. The Painter Luigi Russolo undertook far-reaching experiments in order to replace conventional music with one that was based on a wide gamut of sounds related to, but not simply imitative of, the noises of everyday life. Since conventional musical instruments were far too limited in their sound spectrum to reflect the sonorous surroundings of modern Big City life, Russolo invented a number of devices which could be tuned and rhythmically regulated by means of mechanical manipulation and which produced a wide scale of tones, different timbres, and variations in pitch. After presenting his ideas in the journal *Lacerba* and issuing a manifesto on the new “Art of Noise”, Russolo assembled an orchestra of noise intoners (*intonarumori*) and, on 21 April 1914, produced a first programme of *musica di rumori* at the Teatro Verme in Milan: *Risveglio di una città* (Awakening of a City), *Colazione sulla terrazza del Kursaal Diana* (Breakfast on the Terrace of Kursaal Diana), and *Convegno di automobili e di aeroplani* (A Meeting of Automobiles and Aeroplanes).

In view of Marinetti’s successful pre-Futurist career as a poet and literary entrepreneur it is not astonishing that literature was always a key area of activity in the Futurist movement. After 1909, several young writers joined Marinetti’s new literary school, signed his first manifestos and produced manuscripts that reflected the ideas propagated in the *Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature*. 
In the course of the 1910, Marinetti relinquished his Late-Symbolist aesthetics and developed a new type of poetry, communicated in a free graphic style.

In 1914, during one of his many stays in London, Marinetti also began to record his poetry on five 78 rpm discs, a practice he was going to continue throughout the 1920s and 30s. In the field of theatre, Marinetti developed several new dramatic genres designed to capture, “the many-hued, many-voiced tides of revolution in our modern capitals”. But he did not only write plays that reflected the modern, technologically based forms of communication; he also integrated these technical devices in his theatre performances. At the opening of a Futurist exhibition at the Doré Galleries in London, on 28 April 1914, Marinetti recited several passages from his novel Zang tumb tumb. On the table in front of him he had a telephone, which he used to instruct his assistant, the painter Nevinson, in the adjacent room to supplement his recitation with appropriate sound accompaniment.

This first recorded use of a telephone in a stage performance was followed up a few weeks later, on 17 May 1914, when Marinetti declaimed his latest poetry via telephone from London to a Futurist performance that was taking place at the Sprovieri Gallery in Naples.8

Italy and the New Electronic Mass Media

The invention of wireless telegraphy and radio signalling was of fundamental importance for Marinetti’s theory of “wireless imagination” that formed the basis of his literary reform programme of 1912. Oliver Joseph Lodge had demonstrated, in 1888, that radio-frequency waves could be transmitted along electric wires and, in 1894, had devised a radiotelegraphic set with a receiver. In 1909, the Nobel Prize for physics went to Karl
Ferdinand Braun and Guglielmo Marconi in recognition of their contributions to the development of wireless telegraphy. The Italian government placed its radio communication services under strict State control and had it regulated in a law of 1910. When, in 1924, the first public Italian radio station URI (Unione Radiofonica Italiana; Italian Radiophonic Union) went on air, only few people were able to listen to it, as the Italian radio industry was rather underdeveloped compared to other Western countries. However, Marinetti was amongst the first writers to compose dramas for this new media and became a regular contributor to EIAR (Ente Italiano Audizioni Radiofoniche; Italian Body for Radio Programmes), created in 1928 for an audience of 50,000 subscribed listeners. The Futurist involvement with radio began in the 1926, when, on 18 May, Marinetti made his first broadcast on Brazilian Rádio Mayrink Veiga. The same year, Giuseppe Fabbri published the journal L’antenna, followed by Gianfranco Merli issuing the first volume in his Edizioni radiofuturiste “Electron” and Bruno Munari founding a group called “Radiofuturismo” (both in 1929). On 20 December 1931, the first Futurist radio drama, Tum-Tum by Pino Masnata, was broadcast by EIAR, followed, on 19 January 1933, by Marinetti’s Violetta e gli aeroplani.

In the Futurist Manifesto of Radio (1933), Marinetti appeared to be particularly inspired by German radio pioneers and their imaginative creation of radio dramas and radio operas. He mentioned the Silesian Expressionist poet, Fritz Walther Bischoff (1896–1976), who was director of Breslau Radio and author of the highly successful “radio symphony”, Hallo! Hier Welle Erdball! (broadcast on 4 February 1928, on Radio Breslau, and excerpts issued on two records, directed by Viktor Heinz Fuchs). He also referred to the Communist playwright Friedrich Wolf (1888–1953), who wrote an interesting radio play about a Russian icebreaker rescuing an Italian aeroplane stranded in the Antarctic, SOS … rao rao … Foyn “Krassin” rettet “Italia” (transmitted in Berlin, in 1929, and Paris, in 1931). He also cited M. Felix Mendelssohn, who created, in 1931, with music by Walter Goehr, the radio opera Malpopita.
of a mechanical television apparatus in England (1926) and the USA (1927) to set up their own television laboratory in Milan in 1928. On 9 February 1929, the semi-Futurist newspaper L’impero published an article on “The Progress of Television”, which predicted that within a few years there would be as many television sets in Italy as there were already telephones and radios. In the following months there were more news items in the Corriere della sera: On 15 July 1930 the paper reported from London on the first televised theatre show by the BBC; in September 1930 it featured an article on the Berlin Funkausstellung, where John Logie Baird had transmitted television signals from a studio in Friedrichstrasse to a 30-line, 60 x 180 cm screen, fitted with 21,000 bulbs, at the Scala theatre; and on 4 November 1930 it informed its readers on a televised performance of a Montmartre singer in Paris. Marinetti was clearly aware of these events, as in the Manifesto of Futurist Cuisine, published in the Gazzetta del Popolo, on 28 December 1930, he referred to that "immense network of long and short waves that Italian genius [i.e. the radio pioneer Guglielmo Marconi] has flung over the oceans and continents, [and] those landscapes of color, form and sound with which radio-television circumnavigates the Earth”.

Also in Italy, the era of television was now approaching. In the course of the Fascist campaign for the modernization of Italy, plans were made to develop a national television industry. On 11 July 1931, the government gave EIAR the go-ahead to open radiophotography and radio-television services in Rome, Milan and Turin. In 1932, at the IV. Radio National Exhibition, a public television experiment was conducted at the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Milan, followed a year later, at the V. Radio National Exhibition, by an exhibition of television images, called "radiovisione". In the following years, several Italian journals and magazines began to write about television and its technical apparatus, often referring to it as radio visiva (visual radio). Although television was still in its experimental phase, in 1937 the Ministry of Propaganda set up a Supervisory Office for Radio and TV Broadcasts (Ispettorato per la radiodiffusione e la televisione). But it was not until 1939 that a public television station was installed on Monte Mario in Rome and first programs were broadcast, on 22 July, at the opening of the XI. Radio National Exhibition, thus initiating daily TV services in Italy.

Fig. 6: TV images of the EIAR technician Manlio Bonini, broadcast from Monte Mario to a 441-line TV monitor in the Circo Massimo on 22 July 1939.

Fig. 7: Roman audiences in the Circo Massimo watching the first public TV broadcast from Monte Mario on Safar und Fernseh monitors, as part of the XI. Radio National Exhibition.
Marinetti’s Theory of Theatre Enhanced by Electronic Media

When, in 1912, Marinetti reflected on a literature that was able “to encompass and gather together all that which is most fleeting and elusive in materiality”,22 he referenced his ideas with “the cinema that shows us the dance of an object that divides in two and then joins together again without any human intervention”.23 In the manifesto Destruction of Syntax, he praised the cinema for its ability to let “the faint-hearted, stay-at-home citizen of any provincial town indulge himself with the headiness of danger at the cinema, watching a big-game hunt in the Congo”.14 He was greatly impressed with the way the new medium and seventh art could affect “modifications to our sensibilities”.15 He addressed these issues in his plays for the new theatrical genre, teatro sintetico, and felt that only by using the means of montage and dynamic abridgement “the theatre will be able to fend off, and even overcome, competition from the cinema”.16 Similarly, in his Futurist Variety Theatre he sought to develop a form of presentation that was “cinematically imprinted on our souls as dynamic, fragmented symphonies of gesture, word, sound and light”.17 In the manifesto, The New Ethical Religion of Speed, he discussed the changed conceptions of Time and Space due to the modern means of communication and described, amongst others, cinemas and radiotelegraphic stations as “places inhabited by the divine”.18

In 1916, Marinetti set up a first Futurist film production, Vita futurista, which was an expression of the plurisensibilità futurista (Futurist Multisensibility) and combined elements of painting, sculpture, theatre, music, and poetry.19 As such, it produced “a synthesis of life at its most typical and most significant”.20 When the film was first presented, on 28 January 1917, at the Teatro Niccolini in Florence, it formed part of a programme of Futurist plays performed by the company of Ines Masi and Giulio Ricci. Such a combination of cinema and theatre was exactly what Marinetti had advocated in the Variety Theatre Manifesto of 1913.21 It took Marinetti a few years before an integrated use of these media could be considered. The inspiration for this came from Russia and Germany.

Sergei Eisenstein was the first stage director who appears to have incorporated a specially shot film sequence (Glumov’s Diary) in his “montage of attractions”, The Wise Man (1923).22 The idea was taken a stage further by Vsevolod Meyerhold, whose use of film projections, according to Picon-Vallin, included The Gun Shot (1929), The Second Army Commander (1929), The Final Conflict (1931), and D.E. (1935 version).23 In his essay of 1930, “The Reconstruction of the Theatre”, Meyerhold propagated the use of film as an integrated feature of modern theatre practice: “The theatre cannot afford to ignore the cinematograph; the action of the actor on stage can be juxtaposed with his filmed image on screen […] Let us carry through the ‘cinefication’ of the theatre to its logical conclusion, let us equip the theatre with all the technical refinement of the cinema”.24 The most sophisticated interaction between theatre and screen could be observed in Berlin, in Erwin Piscator’s productions of Tidal Wave (1926), Storm over Gottland (1927), Hoppla, We’re Still Alive (1927), Rasputin (1927), Schweik (1927), and The Merchant of Berlin (1929). These multi-media spectacles with multiple scenery and use of film projections became well-known in Italian theatre circles, not least because of the reports written by Anton Giulio Bragalia for La gazetta del popolo (12.9.1929), Il tevere (25.10., 29.10., 2.11. 1929) and Comoedia (Jan.-Feb. 1931). Marinetti, however, will also have been informed about these shows by his fellow Futurists and regular visitors to Berlin, Enrico Prampolini and Ivo Fannaggi.
Marinetti’s first statement regarding the use of television in a theatrical setting came in 1932 in an enlarged and partly re-phrased issue of the manifesto, *A Theatre of the Skies*, by the Futurist aviator Fedele Azari. Azari’s *Teatro aereo* was first launched in a propaganda flight over Milan in April 1919. It foresaw the use of aeroplanes to perform dances, dramas, operas and pantomimes in the air. Like any good theatrical character it was to be costumed (“Every aeroplane will be painted and signed by a Futurist painter”), move in an expressive fashion (“Roar up perpendicularly and dive vertically into the void […] turn over two, three, ten times in an increasing happiness of loops, lean over in whirling barrel rolls, swirl, skid, rock into long falls” etc.), speak or sing with other characters (“with two or more aeroplanes it is possible to perform entire dialogues and dramatic actions […] the voice of the motor can be regulated to fullness or reduced, broken up into clearly defined and precise points, or modulated in scale from high to low, thus forming a way to supplement musical and noise expression very effectively”). Azari states in the manifesto that in 1918 he had performed elementary examples of his Aerial Theatre in the Camp of Busto Arsizio. Marinetti is probably backdating Azari’s later sky spectacles when he called them “pantomimes of aeroplanes camouflaged as big-bellied bankers, suave Don Juans or as tutu-clad ballerinas […] performed at Busto Arsizio”. The experiments did, however, give rise to a number of plays for a Futurist Theatre of the Skies, such as Maurizio Scaparro’s *Il parto* and Marinetti’s unpublished *aerodramas*.

A by-product of Azari’s Aerial Theatre was the idea of a Futurist pyrotechnics or aerial scenography, presented by Gino Cantarelli in his manifesto *Pyrotechnics – A Means of Art*. It promoted the concept of “the sky as our canvas” for a “decorative aerial scenography”, which “presents visions composed of aerial theatre + pyrotechnical complexes + noise-intoners, that is: pilots, poets and noise-makers fused in one ensemble of geniality”.

In 1928, Azari joined Futurblocco, an artists’ association which intended to run an art gallery, a newspaper, a publishing house, a film production company, a theatre, etc. None of these ambitious projects ever came to fruition, but they organized a few *serate*, one of them at the Salon of the Associazione Piemontesi. One of the fellow artists remembers how Azari declaimed his aeropoesms at the event and afterwards, together with Guido Keller, devised a play for his Aerial Theatre, *La conquista del sole*: “An immense spectacle, which would conquer the world with its grandiose beauty. It had 500 aeroplanes as protagonists, with music produced by their engines, and employed the natural scenery of the sky.”

The large-scale project remained an unfulfilled dream. However, the Futurist Aviators’ Club in Milan carried out further experiments, some of which were presented at the Prima Giornata Aerosportiva in Rome in November 1930. Marinetti used the event to complement Azari’s manifesto with his own reflections on a *Theater Enhanced by Radio and Television*. By that time, the development of powerful loudspeakers made it possible to endow the aeroplanes with a “voice” and enhance the dramatic complexity of the plot by introducing dialogues and poetic recitations. At the Giornata Aerosportiva of 8 December 1931, Somenzi and Marinetti expanded on the idea in a *Manifesto futurista a Italo Balbo* and, on 28 January 1932, presented at Taliedo airport an experiment with an aeroplane, “which had on board a loud-speaker, appropriately modified to produce sounds of up to 1,600,000 volts […] to emit musical numbers and short propaganda speeches”. It is likely that these experiments made Marinetti realize that the displays in the vast theatre of the skies were not always easy to follow. He therefore seized upon the
opportunity to complement and amplify the spectacle by electronic means, just we are still doing nowadays at rock concerts and football matches. In 1932, however, this idea was going to be implemented by specially prepared aeroplanes in the following manner: Huge panels of aeropoetry and screens for television would be hung from special airplanes flying close to the audience and transmit the aerial drama performed high up in the sky by other aeroplanes, which because of their distance would otherwise be difficult to follow. On the ground, special loudspeakers mounted on vehicles camouflaged in a novel way would argue and bicker in their support for one or other of the planes acting up in the sky. When the gambling crowd had placed its bets on the outcome of the aerial drama, the loudspeakers would announce details of the bets to the gamblers in that vast arena. Up in the sky a dynamic spectacle would take place with aircraft moving at different speeds and at changing altitudes, and a complementary spectacle in which the machines emit a changing display of coloured smokes.

The culmination of all these ideas and experiments was Marinetti’s *Total Theatre Manifesto* of 1933, which foresaw the introduction of cinema, radio and television as complements to the theatrical means of communication in a truly multi-media spectacle.

The ground plan of this theatre was round and contained several stages: one was like a circular platform surrounding the whole of the stalls area which, in its turn, was surrounded by a trench filled with water deep enough to swim in. A second stage was placed in the middle of the stalls. Around this central stage, every member of the audience had a
revolving seat and a little table to eat from. Small groups of spectators were provided with a radio and a television screen to get close-up views. To give them further possibilities to experience the spectacle, they were encouraged to move about in the theatre:

The spectators can [...] engage in the chance adventures of a journey, participate in the nautical actions unfolding in the trench. Or they can exit, using specially made elevators, into the brightly lit basement for refreshments or a moment of relaxation. Thus, having behaved and performed like actors, and, like dispersed troupes, having speedily communicated with each other with their radio-telephones, they can return to their seats and tables.34

These tables were fitted with tactile and odoriferous, moving belts, an idea taken over from the Tactile Theatre, which Marinetti had described in the manifesto of 1921, Tactilism: A Futurist Manifesto: “We shall have theatres specifically designed for Tactilism. The audience will place their hands on long, tactile conveyor belts which will produce tactile sensations that have different rhythms. One will also be able to mount these panels on turntables and operate them to the accompaniment of music and lights”.35

The great circular stage was divided into several smaller stages that could be separated one from another by movable perpendicular walls. The different complementary and contradictory actions of a single Futurist drama would take place on these various stages, all at the same time. This drama was conceived as an expression of the simultaneously occurring events in human life or in major historical upheavals. High up in the theatre, an electric sun and moon were moving on metal tracks, as the plays required, through the orbit of the cupola, complemented by a careful simulation of starlight.

The principle of simultaneity of action was strongly enhanced by the use of cinematic installations. From the trench around the outer circular stage, film projectors would throw a succession of moving images onto a great tilted cyclorama spanning across the theatre dome. Also animated aeropaintings and aeropoems would be projected onto it. Another array of film projectors, positioned beneath the auditorium, would cast all possible combinations of the fantastic and the realistic onto a large cyclorama surrounding the outer stage. Marinetti writes:

Presented, in this way, with the illusion of the speed of the great international communication networks, the spectator in this simultaneous, all-embracing theatre will witness not only the dramatic synthesis of a city, but sometimes even a dramatic synthesis of the whole world. […] In our simultaneous, multi-scenic theatre, the spectator has […] almost become a collaborator of the actor, and has thus moved to the centre of the dramatic action.36

At the end of the text, Marinetti announced: “A company has already been set up in Milan, for the construction of the great Futurist theatre, with capital amounting to 500.000 lire”. As my research has shown, in 1926, Marinetti did indeed begin to seek public funding for the erection of an ultra-modern and technically advanced, permanent Futurist theatre in Milan. In 1927, he submitted a Memorandum to the Duce, in which he outlined the shortcomings of the existing theatre and acting profession and how these could be overcome in a playhouse, a State acting school, as well as a new type of conservatoire for directors, stage designers and theatre technicians. Mussolini was sympathetically inclined towards the project and had it carefully assessed by the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finances, who eventually turned it down for financial reasons.37
F.T. Marinetti’s Concept of a Theatre Enhanced by Audio-Visual Media

Summary:

Marinetti’s interest in the advances of science and technology caused him from an early age to recognize the historical significance of the mass media and the new technologies of communication. His writings are not only full of profound reflections on fundamental issues such as time, space, energy, matter and their impact on the human psyche; he also, in a more specific manner, developed a Futurist aesthetic that successively incorporated the new experience of the telephone, cinema, radio, and television.

Futurist artists undertook a large number of experiments in a variety of artistic media to revolutionize both the production and the reception process of a work of art. By employing the techniques of universal dynamism, fragmentation, simultaneity, collage and polymaterialism they went beyond mere reproduction of reality and arrived at a new experience of modern life in an artistically re-fashioned universe. By placing the viewer into the centre of the work of art they managed to overcome the traditional gap that separated art from life.

In the field of theatre, the Futurists reduced the significance of the spoken word and human actor and instead produced purely visual spectacles carried out by robots and machines in a kinetic, luminescent and sound producing architecture. This inspired Marinetti to incorporate also the other senses of smell, taste and touch, and to explore ways of how the different sensations could be synaesthetically correlated, e.g. in his tactile theatre and culinary theatre experiments. Thus, the idea of a Futurist Total Work of Art was born. In the 1920s and 30s, Marinetti pursued his concept of a Futurist Theatre of the Skies, into which the new technologies of sound amplification, radio and television could be integrated. But his most complex and Utopian project was that of a Total Theatre formulated in the early 1930s.

Notes

2 All quotes from Marinetti’s manifestos are taken from my edition, F.T. Marinetti, Critical Writings, New York 2006. Here: “Destruction of Syntax-Untrammelled Imagination-Words-in-Freedom”, in: Critical Writings, p. 120.
3 See the first manifestos of Futurist painting, translated in Umbro Apollonio, Futurist Manifestos, London 1953, pp. 25 and 27.
6 To date, none of the actual disks from the 1910s have been traced, but several of his later recordings have been re-issued on compact disks.
8 For a more detailed description of these performances see Günter Berghaus, Italian Futurist Theatre, 1909–1944, Oxford 1998, pp.172–175, 234–240.
10 F.T. Marinetti, Critical Writings, p. 396.
13 Ibidem, p. 111.
15 Ibidem.
17 Ibidem, p. 203.
"Manifesto of Futurist Playwrights", in: Critical Writings, p. 183.

See Critical Writings, pp. 185–192.

These and many other experiments have been analyzed in Claudine Amiard-Chevrel (Ed.), Théâtre et cinéma années vingt: Une quête de la modernité, 2 vols., Lausanne 1990; and Béatrice Picon-Vallin (Ed.), Les Écrans sur la scène: Tentations et résistances de la scène face aux images, Lausanne 1998.


The text of the manifesto and many documents pertinent to Azari’s life and œuvre have been published by Lucia Collarile (Ed.), Fedele Azari: Vita simultanea futurista, Exh. cat. Trento: Museo aeronautico G. Caproni, 1992. For an English translation see Michael Kirby, Futurist Performance, New York 1971, pp. 218–221.

See F.T. Marinetti, La grande Milano tradizionale e futurista. Una sensibilità italiana nata in Egitto, Milan 1969, pp. 177 and 247.
