

## Drawing Performance

### Laszlo Moholy-Nagy 'Score Sketch for a Mechanical Eccentric'

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Laszlo Moholy-Nagy's experiments aimed to innovate knowing through drawing, projection and performance. His 'Score Sketch of a Mechanical Eccentric' (*Partiturskizze zu einer machanischen exzentrik*), 1924-5) is a unique drawing that aims to demonstrate the multiplicity of actions that occur when a theatre performance evolves over time. In this drawing Moholy-Nagy proposed a diagram, how a theatre performance might evolve. The four columns in this diagrammatic drawing try to demonstrate various aspects of theatre performance. In drawing these 'columns' Moholy-Nagy imagined how aspects of performance evolve over time. The first column Moholy-Nagy called 'form and motion'. The second column Moholy-Nagy called 'form motion and cinema'. The third column Moholy-Nagy called 'light (colour)'. The fourth and end column Moholy-Nagy called 'sound (music)'.

The notations of actions in each of the columns are related to one of Moholy-Nagy's three stages: the main stage, the stage for projection and the in-between stage. Column one actions are to be performed in stage one (the main stage), column two actions are to be performed in stage two (the stage with fold-out projection screen) and the column four are actions to be performed in stage three – the in-between stage where mechanical musical instruments are situated. The lighting effects in column three affect all spaces and stages. Moholy-Nagy has separated a variety of actions within each column. These actions take place simultaneously in space on three different stages. As Moholy-Nagy suggested 'the synchronisation in the score appears in the horizontal'. The relationship between columns happens in the gaps between them, horizontally.

Apart from its similarity with the idea of a musical score, the 'Score Sketch' drawing opens up other interesting issues. As stated by Moholy-Nagy, the synchronising relationship between the columns is horizontal, although there are no drawn lines in the 'Score Sketch' that make this connection. These absent, un-drawn, lines are temporal lines that connect the various actions represented in each of the columns in a unified performance. The absence of explicit, or drawn connections between the separate parts (columns) is also what makes the drawing appear like a musical notation. In a musical score the temporal gaps are part of the notation, but here we have to imagine similar temporal gaps between the actions depicted in each column that are the part of the performance. As a drawing 'Score Sketch' seem to offer an un-prescribed way of how the performance may evolve, in other words, it demonstrates the potentiality of the performance. In this sense, we can view the 'Score Sketch' as a propositional as well as a generative drawing, suggesting a plurality of actions and events, drawing of many ways of knowing.

Consisting of column-notations whose parallel vertical positioning allows for many possibilities to be made across them horizontally and could be seen as proposing something 'yet to come'. One thing 'yet to come' is the potential of the future performance that cannot be known in a drawing but suggested. Such potential is open to interpretation, since the 'Score Sketch' is a non-illustrative, rather abstract drawing; its notations are without 'symbolic' or 'iconic' investment. As Andrew Benjamin suggests when discussing diagrams, such drawings 'allows for another existence' and 'the possibility of realizing that which is yet to come'.