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Receptions of Ophelia:
from the Early Modern Period to the *Fin-de-Siècle*

Edited by Emanuel Stelzer

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PETRA BJELICA*

Aleksandar Sasha Dundjerović and María José Sánchez Martínez, eds. *Placeness and the Performative Production of Space*

Abstract

This review provides a critical analysis of *Placeness and the Performative Production of Space*, edited by Aleksandar Dundjerović and María José Martínez Sánchez, examining how the volume conceptualises, develops, and positions its central theoretical construct – *placeness* – within the intersecting discourses of performance studies, architectural theory, and spatial humanities. While recognising the work’s significant contribution as an interdisciplinary curatorial project, showcasing global case studies across performance, urban design and curating, social justice, policymaking, digital media performances (VR/AR/AI), and pedagogical practices, the review asks whether and how far the proposed terminology of *placeness* advances methodological rigour in analysing the dynamic relationships between space, place, and performativity. Particular praise is given to the volume’s dialogic structure (with practitioner interviews comprising half the text) and its synthesis of contemporary spatial theories, assessing both the framework’s analytical potential and its limitations in addressing embedded sociopolitical dimensions of placemaking.

KEYWORDS: placeness; performativity; place; space; digital

What distinguishes *place* from *space* – and how might this distinction yield new critical frameworks for analysing the performative production of spatial meaning, both within and beyond performance studies? Can performance studies, with their emphasis on embodied practice and temporal unfolding, deepen our understanding of placemaking as a socially embedded process? And crucially, what conceptual work does the term *placeness* perform in mediating these inquiries? These are the foundational questions that Aleksandar Sasha Dundjerović and María José Martínez Sánchez pose in their ambitious new volume *Placeness and the Performative Production of Space* published as part of Bloomsbury’s Methuen Drama series. Positioned at the intersection of performance studies, architectural theory, and

1 London: Bloomsbury, 2024. ISBN 9781350349810, pp. 212

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spatial humanities, this book seeks to develop an innovative lexicon and methodological toolkit to interrogate how placemaking emerges through performative acts – artistic, social or digital by using the concept of *placeness*. In doing so, it engages with and aims to expand on the rich theoretical legacies of the *spatial* and the *digital turn*, the latter of which has further complicated spatial ontologies through virtual and hybrid environments. The authors' intervention is timely: as urban development, community activism, and digital technologies increasingly reshape human interactions and spatial experience, their interrogation of *placeness* – as both a quality and a process – offers an important lens through which to examine the interplay of performativity, narrative, embodiment and design in contemporary placemaking. This conceptual ambition also invites critical scrutiny. Does *placeness* recast existing theories of performative space in new terminology, or does it generate genuinely novel analytical possibilities? How rigorously does this book negotiate the tensions between its theoretical aspirations and its applied focus on case studies spanning theatre, architecture, urban design and digital art? And to what extent does it engage with political, ideological, and economic dimensions underpinning spatial production? These questions linger on the threshold of the text, framing the stakes of its contribution to interdisciplinary debates on space, performance, and place.

Placeness and the Performative Production of Space deftly channels the above-mentioned discussions into the area of performative studies while maintaining a firm grasp on contemporary spatial practices. Moreover, its methodological approach – bridging theory, qualitative research, and practice-based inquiry – ensures that the analysis remains grounded in real-world applications and relevant projects, even as it engages with evolving conceptual debates. Articulated into a Foreword by Javier Ruiz Sánchez, an introductory chapter *From Place to Placeness*, four thematic sections (*The Performative Origin of Civitas*, *Spatial Dramaturgies*, *Placemaking and Performative Urban Pedagogies*, *Digital Placeness*) and a conclusion entitled *Post Placeness*, the book systematically develops its arguments while allowing for interdisciplinary flexibility. Primarily addressing “artists, professionals and community builders” as well as “professionals from different disciplines” (xi), Ruiz Sánchez claims that the text positions itself both as a scholarly intervention and a practical resource. It enters into dialogue with key theoretical works and authors not merely by summarising them, but by critically testing their practical applicability to contemporary performative and architectural practices. This approach ensures that the book neither assumes prior expertise nor oversimplifies its theoretical foundations, making it equally valuable for newcomers and seasoned scholars. While the book's methodology does not break radically new ground, its strength lies in its rigorous synthesis of existing ideas and their application to projects. The

authors avoid reinventing terminology for its own sake; at times, however, the density of specialised terminology overwhelms the articulation of core arguments. Nevertheless, the overall writing is accessible and well-structured, and the book's greatest contribution may not be a wholly original theoretical framework, but rather its curatorial rigour: by placing diverse practices – from urban festivals to digital performances – in conversation or juxtaposition, it reveals patterns and tensions that might otherwise remain obscured.

Javier Ruiz Sánchez's Foreword provides an essential conceptual anchor for the book, articulating placeness as fundamentally both architectural and performative: "architecture is the art of making place, of creating placeness" (x). His architectural perspective proves particularly valuable in framing space not as a passive container but as an active generator of narratives: "Architecture produces spatial structures . . . [that] make possible a range of narratives, of stories (architecture as storytelling)" (x). This emphasis on spatial storytelling underscores the book's core thesis: place emerges through dynamic interchange between built environments and human action. As Sánchez observes, "we act/perform in space according to the information we exchange with it" (x), a formulation that neatly encapsulates the performative reciprocity at the heart of placeness. Sánchez highlights the book's commitment to bridging disciplines as one of its most vital contributions, noting its aim in "establishing those interdisciplinary dialogues that will empower all the stakeholders involved in the transformation of places" (xi). This aligns with the broader objective to equip readers, whether artists, scholars, or policymakers, with "a set of tools to develop a very much needed understanding of placeness" (xi). The foreword thus positions the volume as both a theoretical intervention and a practical toolkit, challenging readers to consider how its frameworks might translate across fields. Sánchez's foreword primes the reader to expect a synthesis of theory and practice, and while the subsequent chapters provide rich case studies and methodological approaches, the tension between *placeness* and related terms (e.g., placemaking, spatial dramaturgy) occasionally surfaces without full resolution. That said, the book undeniably advances the conversation by testing these ideas against real-world examples, offering scholars and practitioners alike a common vocabulary to interrogate spatial performance. Whether this constitutes a paradigm shift or a refinement of existing discourse may depend on the reader's disciplinary vantage point – but the foreword makes a compelling case for its utility as a catalyst for further research.

The introduction, *From Place to Placeness*, opens with a case study about the *Casa di Giulietta* (Juliet's House) in Verona, Italy – a site where Shakespeare's fictional narrative has been materially reimagined as urban reality. The authors frame this as a paradigmatic example of placeness: a space with "no historical authenticity" and yet one that becomes "an evocation of a space from a theatre

play” (2). Here, literary fiction is spatially appropriated, transforming Verona into a stage for what they term “the performativity of space conceived in the tourist gaze” (2). This analysis prompts a broader theoretical question: what forces (social, cultural, historical) reshape place into placeness? The authors argue that performativity is not incidental but foundational: it is “at the root of every lived space” (3), generating meaning through embodied interaction and collective narrative. Further on, the text grounds its definition in the Oxford English Dictionary’s dual notions of placeness as both “the quality of having or occupying a place” and a “quality reminiscent of a particular locality or place” (4). However, it expands the definition into a dynamic framework, emphasising how placeness actively shapes the historical and cultural value societies assign to locations. This conceptual move draws on Henri Lefebvre’s triadic model of space (representational spaces, spatial practices, representations of space) and postmodern architectural theory (for example, Charles Jencks’ *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* from 1977), positioning placeness as a mediator between material environments and social imagination. One of the book’s key contributions is its proposal of an “architectural script” – a dramaturgical cartography that interprets everyday life as a performance shaping urban spaces (5). A utopian concept of placeness is vividly illustrated through examples like Cedric Price’s *Fun Palace* (1964), a visionary project merging theatre, architecture, and technology to democratise cultural access. Similarly, the authors cite Richard Schechner’s *Performance Grou* (later called Wooster Group), Robert Lepage and Punchdrunk to underscore that “space is performance” (6) and explore how spatial performance disrupts traditional audience-performer dynamics. Building upon the work of the Theatre Architecture Working Group of the International Federation for Theatre Research, the book prioritises placeness as “physical involvement of the audience in a space” (8). The introduction outlines an interdisciplinary methodology blending theoretical frameworks (“Know that”), qualitative research methodology of interviews (“Know what”) since nearly half of the book features dialogues with practitioners and lastly, practice-as-research (PAR, “Know how”), as a reflexive analysis of the authors’ spatial interventions. This approach is tailored to hybrid practices (architecture, performance, placemaking) with tangible community impacts, ensuring theory remains tethered to concrete applications. A curated set of questions guides each case study, evaluating a project’s background, interventions’ narrative dimensions, socio-spatial effects, and sustainability. The introduction excels in synthesising performance and architectural theory while the emphasis on participatory methodologies is laudable, yet deeper engagement with political economies of space (e.g., who benefits from these interventions and how?) could strengthen its critical edge. Nevertheless, the chapter succeeds in framing placeness as a performative, iterative process

– one that invites readers to reimagine how spaces become places through collective action and narrative.

Chapter 1, *The Performative Origins of Civitas* explores how public spaces in Western contexts have historically emerged from political and communal performativity, demonstrating how designed events can fundamentally transform collective urban narratives. Theoretical frameworks ground these examples in broader discourse about urban space. Edward Soja's *Thirdspace* helps unpack the interplay between physical environments and lived experience, while Henri Lefebvre's *Production of Space* informs the analysis of how spaces are socially produced. Furthermore, the concept of the urban palimpsest serves as a powerful framework for understanding how cities accumulate and perform layered histories. The authors articulate this as a dynamic process where competing narratives become physically and symbolically inscribed in the urban fabric, collectively constituting what they term the "urban realm." Historic cities like Rome and Paris exemplify this phenomenon, their streets and structures embodying what the authors describe as "superimpositions of realities" (19) – visible traces of successive eras and ideologies. A particularly illuminating case is the *Hausmann Plan*'s radical transformation of Paris under Napoleon. The authors analyse this not merely as urban renewal but as performative spatial politics: while framed as improving citizens' welfare, the grand boulevards and uniform façades equally served as imperial propaganda, materialising what they identify as "underlying performative elements; as it was based on a narrative not only of well-being of citizens but also on the power and the celebration – and performativity – of Napoleon's empire" (19). This example demonstrates how urban planning can function as spatial theatre, where infrastructure becomes both stage and script for political narratives. Thus, the concept of cities as palimpsests emerges as particularly salient, framing urban environments as accumulations of competing historical narratives where each new intervention – whether festival, protest, or policy change – adds another layer of meaning. Central to the chapter are also concepts of policymaking, co-design, urban storytelling, and urban curating, defined as "transforming ordinary or neglected spaces into vibrant and meaningful places" (26) which bridges artistic practice, social engagement and creation of civic identities. The chapter presents two illuminating case studies that exemplify this process. First, the *Prague Quadrennial* (2015) under Sodja Lotker's artistic direction reimaged the entire city as a living scenography, where projects like *The Tribes* with costumed participants moving through urban spaces temporarily rewrote Prague's narrative landscape. Lotker's approach treated architecture as a "matrix of interactions" (29), emphasising how performance can reveal power dynamics and reshape audience engagement with place. Second, Dr. Jenny Peevers' *Re:connections* (2019) in Birmingham's Lee Bank

neighbourhood employed walking tours, storytelling, and installations to examine how urban regeneration policies affected community identity. By documenting both long-term residents' and newcomers' experiences, Peevers highlighted the tension between planned placemaking and organic place identity, particularly through her focus on a neighbourhood's "shifting rhythms of a place" (45). Both case studies demonstrate how curation can activate latent narratives within the urban fabric. While celebrating the social contact and the sense of belonging generated by these interventions, the chapter successfully positions cities as ongoing performances, where the cumulative effect of events, policies, and community actions continuously redefines the urban palimpsest and the very nature of placeness.

The second chapter, *Spatial Dramaturgies*, shifts the analytical lens from how culture gives meaning to space (as explored in Chapter 1) to a dialectical examination of how space and performance mutually constitute place and placeness. As the authors assert, "every space tells a story, and every story can give meaning to a place" (49), framing their investigation into how spatial dramaturgies in performative arts operate bidirectionally: first, in how a space's inherent performativity informs narratives, and second, how performativity generates new meanings for places. This dual approach is particularly evident in analyses of the *genius loci* (spirit of place), where dominant historical narratives become materially embedded in architecture, only to be reinterpreted through contemporary performativity of placeness. On examples like Schechner's *Dionysius in 69* and *Makbeth*, the second chapter explores how "performance events can transform space and make a place with a power to create new meaning and social realities" (58), positioning site-specific works as vital tools for reconfiguring urban narratives. The authors also clarify and contextualise terms such as scenic writing while differentiating it from dramatic writing. Scenic writing is defined by Schechner as "performance text that materializes in space", being a part of "spatial dramaturgy and is recognised in performance studies as how space organises the elements of theatre production" (60). The authors develop a framework for understanding how textual and spatial structures merge in placemaking, particularly in post-dramatic theatre and non-theatre spaces that undergo regeneration.

Two case studies exemplify these theoretical approaches. The well-known Catalan group *La Fura dels Baus* (1979–present) demonstrates how immersive, large-scale performances in repurposed industrial sites (prisons, warehouses, slaughterhouses) activate audiences' bodily engagement while exposing the social realities embedded in these spaces. Their Furan language involves strong images and explicit violence, deconstructing the work they adapt in the fashion of a total spectacle exemplifying how performance can redefine a city's global image while maintaining local political resonance,

with a background in street-art and musical spectacle. Conversely, *Teatro Os Satyros* in São Paulo's Praça Roosevelt – a square once synonymous with crime – illustrates the decolonial potential of spatial dramaturgy. Through a fusion of European director-theatre and community-engaged practices since 2000, the company has rewritten the plaza's narrative, embodying the chapter's core thesis: that performance doesn't merely occur in space but actively produces place through contested social histories. An example of their community work can be seen in involving amateurs, prostitutes, transvestites and criminals into their practice as well as professional actors. By juxtaposing these examples, the chapter reveals spatial dramaturgy as both an artistic methodology and a form of urban critique, one that asks how a location's materiality inspires narrative, and how performance might reciprocally transform that location's social meaning. Where *La Fura dels Baus* emphasises spectacle and bodily immersion, *Teatro Os Satyros* foregrounds slow, dialogical placemaking, together demonstrating the spectrum through which performative interventions negotiate between architectural histories, performative practices and living communities.

Chapter 3, *Performative Urban Pedagogies and the Future of Placeness*, shifts the book's focus toward forward-looking strategies for placemaking, exploring how performative practices and urban pedagogies can shape more inclusive and sustainable futures. Building on the foundational hypothesis that "performativity is embedded within the production of place" (95), the chapter examines how this relationship can be actively harnessed through community-engaged methodologies. Central to this exploration is the concept of *spatial justice*, which frames placemaking as a pedagogical process that empowers marginalised communities to participate in policy decisions affecting their environments. The chapter presents three case studies demonstrating how performative art practices facilitate this vision. *Airplace* (2023), developed as part of the Portland Thinkbelt project led by Anna Francis and Rebecca Davis, transformed a Hanley (Stoke-on-Trent, UK) neighbourhood into a pop-up learning space through collaborations between academics and young residents, creating what the authors term a "performative urban artefact" – a temporary but impactful reimagining of place through play. Similarly, *Ceramics, Memory and Site* (2023) project led by María J. M. Sánchez used ceramic art as a medium for regeneration, bringing together architects, policymakers, and residents to collectively reshape their environment. These projects exemplify the RSVP Cycles (Resources, Scores, Valuation, Performance), a participatory model developed by Lawrence and Ann Halprin in 1964 that fosters interdisciplinary collaboration. As the authors note, this approach creates "cross-disciplinary labs" (102) uniting dancers, designers, artists, and writers in explorations of bodily expressivity and spatial relationships. The third case study is a collaboration of the book's

authors and students from the School of Architecture of Madrid entitled *Urban Dramaturgies* (2017). This project further illustrates these principles through a four-day collaboration between architecture, theatre, and urban planning students. Their site-specific installation applied the RSVP model and Kold's experiential learning. The project functioned as Aleksandar Sasha Dundjerović and María J. M. Sánchez a "creative interdisciplinary pedagogical environment" (106), mapping lived experiences of public space. Interviews with practitioners like the *Zuloark Collective* (the creators of Madrid's *Campo de la Cebada*, a participatory public space redesign) and artist Anna Francis (whose Portland Inn Project and *Spode Rose Garden* in Stoke-on-Trent established community-run cultural hubs) underscore the chapter's emphasis on co-design. As Zuloark's Aurora Adalid and Juan Chacón explain, their work merges urban innovation with scenographic and cultural practices, positioning performance as a tool for spatial democracy. By framing placemaking as an iterative, taught practice, the chapter argues that sustainable urban transformation requires not just physical interventions but pedagogies of participation – methods that equip communities to continually reimagine their spaces. This vision of placeness as an evolving, collectively authored performance challenges top-down urban development, proposing instead a model where expertise emerges from lived experience and interdisciplinary dialogue.

If previous chapters oriented themselves toward the future of placemaking, the fourth chapter confronts a reality where that future has already materialised – one defined by the pervasive influence of digital technology on our conceptions of space, place, and identity. Titled *Digital Placeness*, the chapter interrogates how virtuality, hybridity, and physicality intersect in contemporary spatial production, particularly through online communities, artificial intelligence, and extended reality. It begins with *The Matrix* as a metaphor for the duality of digital existence – a theme that gains urgency in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced a global reckoning with the possibilities and limitations of digital contact. The chapter questions how placeness is constructed in digital realms, and how performativity functions when the stage is a Zoom call, a video game, or an AI-generated environment. Digital space, the authors argue, is "constructed and mediated" (136), shaped by the same social and political dynamics that govern physical places. Lev Manovich's assertion that AI-generated realities are "another version of the real in a digital space" (138) underscores the chapter's central tension: the blurring boundary between artificial and authentic experience. Digital performance, rooted in avant-garde experimentation, exemplifies this fluidity, as "the space is not a fixed and static entity but the outcome of power dynamics, conflicts, and contradictory processes produced by social relations" (139). Nowhere is this more evident than in social media, where

the curated self performs identity for an audience, rendering the digital body a site of constant negotiation. Meanwhile, technologies like Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality redefine theatrical immersion, creating *phygital* spaces where physical and virtual coexist. The chapter highlights case studies that embody these shifts. Sumit Lai Roy's *The Red Curtain International* (2020–present) exemplifies “theatre without borders” (154), assembling performers from four continents via Zoom and YouTube into what Dundjerović calls a “digital agora” (155). Productions like *The Art of Facing Fear* leveraged multinational, multilingual collaboration, dissolving geographic and temporal barriers. Conversely, Vladimir Vanja Vlačina's *I Remember Project* (2019–2022) explores digital memory, transforming a derelict socialist-era shopping mall in Bosnia and Herzegovina into a site of familial remembrance through digital collage. His work exposes the paradox of digital placeness: even as it fosters collective memory, it coexists with physical isolation. Vlačina's practice delves deeper with *Background of My Childhood*, where he reconstructs a six-floor modernist building as a digital palimpsest, layering fragmented histories of his family home into a haunting collage of temporal dissonance. His *Camera Obscura* installation further destabilises perceptions of place and presence: audiences encounter the artist's digital avatar confined within miniature gallery boxes, viewable only through peepholes.

Yet the chapter does not shy from critique. Digital space, while enabling transnational connection, also risks “covert neo-colonialism” (152) under the guise of globalisation. The deterritorialisation of place – where physical boundaries dissolve into “supratentorial space as matrix” (ibid.) – raises ethical questions about equity, access, and the erosion of local specificity. Still, the authors identify hopeful countercurrents: decolonial potentials in digital inclusivity, the circumvention of censorship, and projects like Sumit Lai Roy's that democratise performance. As Manovich notes, AI and digital media are cultural forms reshaping aesthetics and perception, demanding we reconsider what we deem real. Ultimately, this chapter positions digital placeness as a double-edged phenomenon – one that simultaneously connects and alienates, remembers and erases. In doing so, it completes the book's arc: from the historical roots of performative placemaking to its speculative futures, now unfolding in the algorithms, avatars, and virtual stages of our present moment.

The concluding chapter, *Post Placeness*, takes the form of a reflective dialogue between Aleksandar S. Dundjerović and María J. M. Sánchez, recorded in Birmingham on 25 September 2023, synthesising the book's core thesis while looking toward an increasingly digital future. They define placeness as “the experience of space and its different networks, space in time within these dualities; it is about a place and its presence now. It is the temporality and fluidity of performance defined by the moment in which

we engage with events which define the meaning of a place” (171). Yet, as they argue, emerging technologies (AI, AR, and VR) are fundamentally disrupting these categories, rendering physical presence less central to identity formation, whether personal, collective, or artistic. Their approach, they note, has been evolving in their work for over a decade, culminating in this exploration of how performativity reshapes spatial understanding. Dundjerović gives an example of his performance event entitled *The Trial of Harold Pinter* (2006). Central to their conclusion is the assertion that “performative production of space contributes to placemaking by providing identity, belonging, and attachment to a particular space” (172), with storytelling emerging as the most potent tool for fostering these connections. Through their interviews, the authors reveal that practitioners, often unconsciously, employ performative strategies, underscoring the book’s key revelation: “performance defines the meaning of a place through narratives and human interaction” (172). The interviewees’ experiences demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between space and community, a dynamic Dundjerović emphasises as vital to understanding placeness’s impact. The book’s primary objective – to “articulate the theory and practice of placeness and to identify them in existing interdisciplinary practices” (178) – is achieved through the PAR (Practice-as-Research) model. This approach validates their central claim: that placeness is inherently performative, and that performativity underpins all placemaking practices, with storytelling at its core. The authors’ commitment to open dialogue, collaboration, and exchange reflects the book’s ethos, rejecting hierarchical knowledge in favour of shared inquiry. This democratic spirit extends to their vision of “an open field that looks at possibilities of creating placeness through the performative production of space” (13), embracing hybridity, co-design, and the unresolved tensions between physical and digital realms. Ultimately, the conclusion does not offer tidy resolutions but invites further exploration, positioning placeness as an evolving concept – one that must continually adapt to technological, social, and artistic transformations. The book’s greatest contribution may lie in this methodological openness, providing a framework for future research while reminding us that place, in any form, remains a collective performance.

While the volume does engage with political and economic dimensions in its analysis of projects by *Teatro Os Satyros* – which explicitly address issues of spatial justice and decolonisation – a more systematic and sustained critical framework examining these forces across all case studies would have significantly strengthened its analytical rigor. That said, the work succeeds admirably as both a cartography of contemporary spatial-performative practices and a methodological toolkit for further research. This dual achievement reflects the authors’ decade-long immersion in these

interdisciplinary explorations, resulting in a volume that not only documents but actively contributes to ongoing conversations about performative placemaking. This diagnostic approach, mapping existing practices while providing actionable frameworks, invites both scholarly and practical development of its central concepts.

Dundjerović's and Sánchez's curation of artists and practitioners stands out as its compelling strength, encompassing a diverse, interdisciplinary cohort: theatre makers, architects, designers, educators, academics, policymakers and scholars, whose collective expertise spans both theoretical innovation and decades of grounded practice. By integrating voices with over thirty years of field experience alongside emerging practitioners, the authors construct a dialogue across generations, revealing how concepts of placeness evolve in response to artistic, social and technological currents. This inclusive approach ensures that theoretical discourse remains tethered to tangible examples, from avant-garde performance collectives like *La Fura dels Baus* to community-driven urban interventions such as The Portland Inn Project. The accompanying visual documentation, including images of interviewed projects, further enriches the analysis, offering readers a concrete lens through which to interpret the book's claims. The visuals are not merely illustrative; they serve as evidence of spatial performativity, capturing how architecture, embodied action of placemaking and storytelling coalesce in specific sites. However, while the selection demonstrates geographic breadth from India, Brazil, UK, the Czech Republic, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Spain, one might question whether it sufficiently grapples with non-Western epistemologies of space and place, particularly given the global scope of contemporary placemaking. The analysis could benefit from a more systematic engagement with how structural factors – including race, class, and displacement – fundamentally shape the production of placeness, rather than addressing these dimensions only when they emerge organically through specific case studies. Nevertheless, the book's commitment to practitioner-led insights and the openness to dialogues ensures that theory emerges from and returns to the material realities of spatial production.

Lastly, while *Placeness and the Performative Production of Space* offers a valuable synthesis of interdisciplinary ideas and a rich compendium of case studies, it is not without its conceptual ambiguities. The reader remains somewhat perplexed about the concept of placeness. Despite its proposed novelty, it may feel like a reframing of existing concepts rather than a transformative intervention. In some moments, it seems that the jargon of *placeness* dresses established ideas – spatial dramaturgy, embodied memory, community co-creation – in new terminological garb rather than genuinely offering fresh analytical tools. Furthermore, the authors' insistence on performativity as the "root of every lived space" (3) is compelling but

risks conflating theatrical performance (a curated event) with the broader, everyday performativity of place (a sociological condition), blurring lines that might have merited sharper delineation. Nevertheless, the book excels as a curatorial project, bridging discourses across architecture, performance, and digital culture.