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ONLINE THEATER AS A NEW ART FORM

ОНЛАЙН-ТЕАТР ЯК НОВИЙ ВИД МИСТЕЦТВА

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Abstract. This article examines the phenomenon of online theater, demonstrating the relevance and inevitability of its emergence as a result of the synthesis of theater, screen arts, and new technologies. It advances the hypothesis that online theater represents the birth of a new art form rather than a genre of theater, and provides arguments to support this claim. Online theater incorporates various classical genres while simultaneously generating new ones, and thus cannot be reduced to a genre itself. It also possesses distinctive features that set it apart from other art forms; eleven such features are described here, with the suggestion that there are more. The study employs the Method of Action Analysis, which the author teaches at Ukrainian universities and applies in her directorial practice. Drawing on her experience directing a number of screen plays, she analyzes and reflects on her own experiments. The article concludes by predicting the development of online theater as a new art with significant potential to sustain cultural life in the face of crises, pandemics, and wars. Finally, it calls on colleagues, scholars, and practitioners to engage with and foster the growth of this emerging art form.

Keywords: online theater, online performance, viewer, viewer's position, performance participant.

Introduction[1]**.** Online theater has emerged, but no one has taken notice of it. In a Jewish proverb, they say: "He to whom a miracle happened does not notice it."

The impetus for the development of the online theater was the years of quarantine due to COVID-19, i.e., 2020–2022, when theaters closed and artists were forced to go online. What is surprising is that the quarantine was quickly forgotten after it ended. All the author's attempts to contact specialists in dance, theater, pantomime, and other performing arts to discuss their online experiences were met with resistance. The only answer was "I don't like online. I like live communication." This is understandable because, for an extended period, we had a forced online life. We were tired and missed direct physical communication.

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[1] For technical refinement, ChatGPT (version February 2025, OpenAI) was utilized to improve grammar accuracy and reference formatting in accordance with Harvard style. The AI was not used to generate theoretical concepts or shape analytical interpretations; all intellectual contributions and findings are solely those of the author.

But it's time to stop and reflect on the unique experience we have had. The challenge of the time we lived through was not in vain. It's up to us to learn from it.

It should be said that steps are already being taken to reflect on such experiences in various spheres, including the performing arts. For example, the British Academy has been supporting the programme "Pandemic Preparedness in the Live Performing Arts: Lessons to Learn from COVID-19" (British Academy, 2023). Professor Pascale Aebischer at the University of Exeter, UK led a group and prepared a report analysing the theater experience online during COVID-19 (Aebischer & Nicholas, 2020).

But the time of challenges is not over for Ukrainians. We have been scattered around the world because of the war. Now, we are physically unable to go to our theaters or exhibitions. And as it turned out, and I say this from my own experience, the need for artistic communication becomes more urgent. We miss our people's cultural traditions because many of us live amongst other people. We feel more acutely the impossibility of returning to the ordinary lives we were living before the war. That is why the development of online theater is becoming such an important need in the artistic life of Ukrainians. We are the ones who are developing it now, inviting the world to pay attention to it and researching its various forms. After all, thanks to this art form, we can be together, feel unity and cultural belonging, forget for a while that we are at war and we are refugees.

However, the emergence of online theater can be justified not only by the need for communication during isolation, but also by the development of art and media, communications, and computer technology. It has created all the conditions for the emergence of this new art form.

In Lev Manovich's fundamental work, *The Language of New Media*, he rightly identifies that we are at the beginning of a revolutionary upheaval. He writes: "Just as the printing press in the fourteenth century and photography in the nineteenth century had a revolutionary impact on the development of modern society and culture, today we are now in the middle of a new media revolution —the shift of all culture to computer-mediated forms of production and communication. This new revolution is arguably more profound than the previous ones, and we are just beginning to register its initial effects. Indeed, the introduction of the printing press affected only one stage of cultural communication—the distribution of media. Similarly, the introduction of photography affected only one type of cultural communication—still images. In contrast, the computer media revolution affects all stages of communication, including acquisition, manipulation, storage, and distribution; it also affects all types of media—texts, still images, moving images, sound, and spatial constructions" (Manovich, 2001, p. 19). Changes are taking hold in all aspects of our social life, including art. Therefore, the emergence of a new type of art is inevitable and, moreover, expected.

I am aware of criticism as to why there are few performances; it is not popular, professionals do not pay attention to it, the language of such theater has not been developed, it is not researched enough, and it's too early to talk about a new art form. I agree with all of this. However, practice is not always ahead of research. There are cases in history when the opposite happens. For example, democratic transformations in Poland began with theoretical discussions about democracy, and then reforms followed. Wilhelm Reich developed this idea, even believing that not only nations create states, but also states create nations (Reich, 2013).

It has to be said that the theater's exploration of the Internet began in the very early 2000s. Helen Varley Jamieson, a digital media artist from New Zealand, uses the term "cyberperformance" and conducts experiments. In 2012, she and her colleagues organised a symposium and published materials. (Abrahams & Jamieson, 2014). Creation Theater is now successfully operating in Oxford, UK, representing itself as a *digital theater* company (Creation Theater, 2024). The Big

Telly Theater from Dublin, Ireland, also has experience and a history of experiments in this direction. (The Big Telly Theater, 2024). Here, an important question naturally arises: where can online theaters come from if there are many established theater and film professionals in the world, and online theater makers have not yet graduated from universities? That is, such specialists are not yet graduated, so it is necessary not only to develop this art form but also to train directors and actors, including online performers. We are only at the beginning of this process, and traditional thinking and habits can hinder the development of a new theater, but they can also be used as a good basis for its formation. It all depends on our position.

It is an independent art form, not a genre. A wide variety of genres are represented in online theater: detective stories, romantic poetry performances, children's games, etc. Since one genre cannot contain many others, online theater should be considered a new art form, not a genre.

The founder of art theory, Aristotle, in his *Poetics* of 350 BC, in Chapter 1 of Part 1, taught us to distinguish between the types of art: They differ, however, from one another in three respects—the medium, the objects, and the manner or mode of imitation, being in each case distinct (Aristotle, 2009).

Much like the Aristotelian view of different art forms, online theater can be seen to have distinct features and means of expression, which will be further developed below.

Aristotle also defined drama by proposing a formula of unity of time, space, and action, which was actively used and developed by the era of classicism. However, rethinking these elements, we argue that they remain relevant today in online theater. Online theater has all these elements. The actors and the audience exist in the *same time*, not like in the cinema. That's why we're talking about online theater—theater, not cinema.

A *common space* for action. Spectators and actors exist together in one space. This space, which differs from the space of classical theater only in that it is located on the screen. But it is the only one. The action is something that actors, directors, and participating spectators have to provide together in real time.

Unity of action between actors and audience. We can define action as what happens between actors and audiences in real time. By action, the author understands a conscious process of human activity that involves influence with a specific purpose. Action is the basis for the development of events in works that develop over time. And since online theater has a temporal dimension, action is also a basic component. So Aristotle's idea of the unity of action can be interpreted as a single action of the audience and the actors; therefore, only online theater can realize it. Classical theater historically avoided this, and cinema did not have such a technical opportunity.

We can use the definition of Viktor Kisin, a representative of the Ukrainian school of television directing: "A spectacle is a specially organized public demonstration of socially significant behaviour in time and place" (Kisin, 7) [translated by the author]. Again, this exactly describes the components of online theater.

We have been waiting for a new art for a long time. Online theater can become a new art form, which we have been waiting for so long and which is now possible and necessary, having unique opportunities for artistic communication, so vital for society now. It is known that the birth of new types of art is made possible by the introduction of modern technologies. It is a natural process: the emergence of a new art form absorbs previous achievements, adapts, synthesizes, combines, and builds upon them.

At its inception, professional theater incorporated the performing arts of traveling artists, drama, painting, scenery, makeup, and architecture, among others. The same process accompanied the development of cinema. Movies combined the latest technology with the theater, with all its

achievements (actors, drama, theater rooms, etc.). The flat, four-cornered screen was borrowed from painting. The moving image is a result of the specific equipment used (camera, film projector). At that time, achievements in photography had already been made, which were also incorporated into cinema. The time of the action, the way of presentation, the organization of space, acting, drama, and so on, were borrowed from the theater, although, of course, they did not immediately acquire a modern look. All this formed a specific language of cinema. It took several decades for the language of cinema to develop and for experts to agree that a new art had been born. Today, cinema is an independent art form, and no one doubts this. However, more than a hundred years ago, it was also perceived as something frivolous.

Next came television. However, in the author's opinion, television never became an art form, since its possibilities were too politically and commercially attractive. The author agrees that this statement is too polemical and requires a detailed argument in another article, but the continuity of television is obvious. The TV screen is a movie screen, only reduced in size, and it lives in your home, and you don't have to go far to see it. A new quality is emerging in television: the simultaneous existence of the viewer and the person on the screen, without feedback. Of course, there are also recorded programs on television. However, the original nature of television is live, with audiences viewing the same programme at the same time. It is this component that the online theater follows.

Here I will try to explore in general terms the unique opportunities offered by online theater. I will present the results of my own practical experiments with online theater.

All the online performances I've seen, many of which were interesting, did not completely satisfy me because they revealed only a few possibilities of online theater. Therefore, as a practicing director, I personally made several online performances, where I explored the unique possibilities of online theater on a practical example. However, here I will focus on the latest experience, because, unlike the previous ones, the author openly put research goals at the forefront. Having determined theoretical tasks in advance, she then looked for creative solutions.

1. The Characteristic Elements: Hypertextuality. Multicomponent Structure. Multilevel Organization. Textual Hierarchy. Synthesis of the Arts. (Each of these elements could be explored separately, but not within the limitations of this article.) This means that the text incorporates various components. In online theater, several windows can be viewed simultaneously—actors, viewers, video, graphics, static images or photographs, special effects, sounds, and music—all functioning at once. Moreover, and very importantly, this combination is natural for online theater, because it is the child of digital parents.

Hypertextuality is also represented by several screens contained within one larger screen, simultaneously (multiscreen). This element is seen in TV also. But here we can see the actors together with the audience, which TV does not allow. The combination of screens with other elements, especially with the audience's reaction, can become a new means of expression for the director (Figure 1).

This includes the multilevel development of the plot. This form originated in computer games and later evolved into recorded digital theater. It is a component that has not become very popular in the theater because of limited Internet theater. I will give you an example of a Ukrainian play called *Scars.* It's by the Wild Theater, Kyiv, Ukraine. The plot has several options for development, and the viewer chooses his or her own version of the story. This show is recorded theater. It's not a live online performance. However, this function can also be preserved in the online theater.

2. Direct Contact with the Audience. In an actual theater, an actor cannot see the audience. It's dark in the theater, and from the illuminated stage, the audience is not very well seen, even in the front rows.

In addition, the typical scheme of traditional theater does not allow actors to look directly at the audience, with the sole exception of the *aside* (from French *à part*, derived from Latin *a parte*—"to oneself," "not for everyone"). However, these are short addresses to the public, after which the actor returns to his usual existence behind the fourth wall. In the cinema, the direct address to the audience was almost forgotten, because the viewer and the actor cannot communicate at the same time. Instead, direct appeal to the viewer was developed on television. Television made this pattern the main one in its interaction with the viewer. But television is a monologue. This form of one-sided performance is characteristic both of the general function of this type of communication in society and of its visual presentation on the screen.

It is this form of one-sided information without feedback that is characteristic of totalitarian states, where the government provides the information that is beneficial to it (Dniprenko, 2009). This model is still in effect in Venezuela, Russia, and other countries where TV works as propaganda.

Democratic countries implement other models and look for new models of dialogue.

Online theater represents a new philosophy of artistic democratic dialogue. This is an unprecedented new interaction that was previously impossible, although many artists have strived for it.

3. A New Form of Dialogue. Online interaction is a fundamentally new form of two-way diaogue, where all participants have equal positions, and where feedback provides rights to everyone. Where everyone present on the screen is both an actor and a spectator. History has never known a product like this!

It should be noted that at the beginning of theater, the interaction model was more democratic, but the history of the development of this art has led the viewer to being passive. For online theater, this means a return to the origins.

Online theater is making a real revolution—for the first time in human history, it is possible to have an on-screen dialogue with the viewer. Not a monologue, where one person speaks and the other listens, but a dialogue with feedback (Figure 2).

We are witnessing a transformation of the monologue, which for a long time was regarded as the prerogative of the author, artist, or director in the arts—theater, cinema, and television—into dialogue. Online theater is not merely the child of these earlier forms, but also marks a new era in visual communication—a fundamentally new stage in the realization of the philosophy of communication and its embodiment in visual art.

Soon it will be difficult to figure out who is where. So far, the search for a new interaction is very uncertain. Actors use old forms of communication with the audience developed in theater and cinema. However, it is only necessary to develop online theater to put it on a par with other types of art, to explore and look for new forms. Then soon it will surprise us all.

Moreover, in the author's opinion, it is this uniqueness that is the greatest challenge for scientists and practicing artists. In the search for the forms of new dialogue, in the formation and modeling of new relationships and patterns of the viewer and the actor, a unique opportunity and prospect for the development of this new art is waiting to be discovered.

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4. Changing the Position of the Spectator from an Observer to a Participant. According to the renowned German scholar Fischer-Lichte, performance, through role reversal, transforms viewers into active participants (Fischer-Lichte, 2004). On a practical level, online theater has finally implemented a real model of communication. It should be noted what exactly the author understands by communication. This is a model of information exchange with subject-to-subject relationships with feedback and equal positions in communication (Dniprenko, 2008). Subject-subject relations here mean that no one is a passive object and all parties are active actors.

In online theater, at least two people should be present. It is a theater where there are no spectators and no actors. In principle, everyone has equal rights. Once a person enters the space of action, he or she becomes a participant. The position of the spectator turns into an active one. Everyone feels like an equal actor. In his research on the role of the spectator, Jacques Rancière envisioned a "theater without spectators," where the spectator would become an active participant (Rancière, 2008).

The space of the stage in a classic theater provides an unequal relationship. It places the actors in a separate space, illuminates them, and often uses microphones, while the viewer assumes the position of a mute observer with highly regulated behavior, "sitting in silence." They are sitting in the dark, being squeezed between rows of chairs, while actors can walk, talk, sing, and so on. In a proscenium arch, the actors' dominant role is emphasized in various ways. The premise of a stationary theater is designed in such a way that all the audience's attention is focused on the actors. The actors perform on a stage that raises them above the ground floor; all the seats are located around the stage, which is illuminated with lights. Microphones are used to amplify the sound. For many years, rules of behavior have been established in relation to the audience, amounting to maximum passivity. The viewer has only to sit, and even then, silently. Only the actor can act and speak. Such behavior on the part of the audience only became possible after many years of effort by the actors and represents a stage in historical development. This liberation of the viewer gave way to other possibilities of behavior. It will be the task of the new online theater to develop this. In reality, online theater also presents its own challenges. For example, Philip Auslander writes about the challenge of creating a sense of community among the audience in an online performance. Since the audience is separated in physical spaces, each director needed to solve this issue in a different way (Auslander, 61–67).

Let me provide an example from my research and experiments. I staged an online performance of *Coriolanus* based on Shakespeare's play, where research was conducted on most of the components discussed. The goal was to find new active forms of interaction with the audience. Therefore, we did everything opposite to what is done historically offline. While traditional theater asks the audience to turn off their phones, we, on the contrary, asked them to turn them on and open a special Telegram channel created to accompany the performance. We provided additional information there: instructions for the audience, who had to choose the type of troops they would join for the battle, recommendations and explanations on how to create a paper figure, which later played a decisive role in the development of events, and conducted voting on the dishes to be served to the heroes at the banquet. In our online performances, we asked the audience to eat with us during the banquet scene, to fight and shout during the battle, to participate in horse races, to vote in elections, to pass judgment on a thief, and more. It is worth noting that the audience was actively involved and responded to such invitations.

In my production of *Coriolanus*, we drew parallels with Ukrainian history. The audience in Great Britain stood up during the performance and shouted, "Down with Coriolanus!" as the characters in the play were supposed to do in the Roman square (Figure 3).

The author is convinced that the audience is ready to adopt new roles in this new type of theater. They crave active engagement and are eager to become participants in the events.

5. Unique Capabilities of an International Acting Troupe. It is similar to working with actors in the cinema, where you can invite any artist from another country. However, in cinema, it is expensive to create, and not every artist will agree to travel far. To take part in an international online performance, the actor does not even need to go to another country; he does not even need to leave his home. An actor can work anywhere there is an internet connection. The actors of the play *Coriolanus* performed from Kyiv, Poland, and Switzerland, and the audience was in Great Britain (Figures 4, 5).

The director can assemble a team of actors from all over the world. Actors will not have to spend time moving—this will give them more time to work on the role. For producers, this is an opportunity to bring in a more diverse team. Putting on a play online saves time and money. Everything is as it should be in terms of ecological, technical, and technological progress; the result is achieved with less effort, saving resources and energy.

6. Digital Scenery. Online theater offers a wide variety of possibilities for creating virtual scenery in a simple way. The background behind the character can even be moving. Online scenery can use all the visual artworks that the world has created. However, we must understand that it is like a video play; a famous painting in front of an actor stops being the original masterpiece it was before, but it retains the characteristic of a sign and, like any hypertext, refers the viewer to the original source.

The scenery can also be created specifically for the performance, which is done by a graphic artist using various techniques. It can be graphics, painting, sculpture, photography, filmed video, computer effects, animation, verbal texts, and other, or any combination of these.

The fact that the online theater primarily works with close-ups and details allows for the use of texture on the surface and the meaning of objects (Kelley & Adamson, 2013).

7. Invention of New Genres. It can create its own new unique genres—online performances, design or dance shows, online marathons, documentary discussions, etc. In addition, online theater can serve as a form of artistic communication between two people. This will also add diversity to the genre. The fact that the technical capabilities of online communication programs can provide connections for several hundred people or more at once means that genres for a larger audience are also possible. However, in the author's opinion, online theater tends to be more individual with personalized communication.

The author predicts that this form of theater may eventually become a theater for oneself. One may ask how, through various technological tools—such as digital scenery, voice processing, augmented reality, artificial intelligence, and others—a person could perform an entire play alone and simultaneously be their own audience. I predict that a whole industry will soon emerge, becoming a new form of entertainment for creative individuals, much as karaoke became popular in the last century.

The author also tested a new technology for presenting online theater, which is a Live Screen Theater performance for an audience in a large hall. It looks like a regular theater, but with actors on the screen. And, I must say, it worked great. The task was to check the possibility of conducting a dialogue with the audience through the screen. Experience has shown that the screen does not

interfere with the conduction of a dialogue. Contact and unity take place. After the performance, the audience did not leave for 40 minutes. The actors, mostly played from a city where missile attacks could occur at any minute, the audience was warned about this while they sat in peaceful England. They sang songs together, talked about simple things, and even cried together. This form of online theater deserves additional study and requires further development. After all, the function of theater as a means of uniting people and exchanging experiences can become a powerful cultural resource in times of war, pandemic, and crisis, and therefore, this experience has been carefully studied and described. It is an important artistic and scientific task for the future.

8. Props and Details Turn Into an Image. A small detail can become a mise-en-scène, a character, a scenery; a simple napkin can become a curtain (Chen, 2023). In my online performance of *Coriolanus*, two fingers represent a horse. And altogether, actors and spectators participate in horse races (Figure 6). The same fingers I had in a performance a few years ago meant a person walking up the stairs. Or in The Theater of Figures and Puppets under the direction of Inessa Pasich, Peru, fingers play a whole miniature. This means that the internet screen has its own unique figurative nature, which differs from the language of cinema and television.

9. The Unique Specificity of the Moment in Online Theater. The feeling that something unexpected and unpredictable can happen at any moment gives the genre of online performance an unscripted outcome. Classical theater also has this feature. Although traditional theater directors underestimate this component. They do their best to fix not only the text, but also the mise-en-scène, the sound of the lines, etc.

During one of my online performances, the closing ceremony of the festival during the COVID-19 pandemic, we imitated a red carpet. The whole family of one of my students in France had to walk up the stairs on a red carpet. The camera was placed on the floor and filmed only their feet. I was to comment on the live streaming in Ukraine, as if the stars were going into the ceremonial hall. And then... it turned out that there was a puppy in the house, and when the whole family went up the stairs, the puppy ran after them, yapping (Figure 7).

10. Online Theater Cannot Be Filmed. The peculiarity of online theater is that it cannot be recorded. It is possible, of course, from the point of view of technical capabilities. However, it is essential to recognize that the unique property of shared experience would disappear forever if this were to occur. The moment of joint participation in shared time that you experience in online theater is unique. Barker (2016) explores how *liveness* is produced and how the process of forming relationships with the audience is shaped. The focus in online theater has shifted from the object to the process. This theater is full of improvisation, and this is interesting. A video recording of a performance will merely provide an actual record of what happened in the past, turning a live performance into a document. All professionals know that watching a video recording of a performance is not at all the same as watching the performance itself in the theater. Online, this feature of traditional theater is also preserved. Because online theater is, first of all, a child of the theater.

Online theater is not a performance that was staged in a traditional stationary theater, and then filmed and shown on the Internet. A video product is not theater. It can only create the impression of a theater.

It is also not an online broadcast from a performance in a regular theater. Although this is important work, such broadcasts are carried out by the Royal National Theater (National Theatre), Shakespeare's Globe, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and other theaters. However, providing a stream—a live broadcast does not make such broadcasts an online performance. While it takes

place at the same time, it does not provide a single space for the audience. Such a performance preserves the passive pattern of the viewer, making any feedback with him impossible because it takes place in different spaces.

11. And Finally, the Main Thing: Inclusive Access to the Theater. Access to the theater has traditionally been restricted for people with disabilities. Even when all theaters are equipped with special technical devices, this situation has not changed much. Many people live in remote places or do not have the financial means to go to the theater. People don't have time, or transportation is scarce and expensive.

Therefore, it is significant that the surge of interest in online theater occurs during the quarantine lockdown, i.e., during the period of limited opportunities, but for the whole society. But why have those people who lived through this period and know from their own experience how difficult it is to live without creative communication forgotten about it today?

However, yesterday, today, and tomorrow, there will be people who are unable to attend the theater. And those who make theater happen should remember them. Online theater can be a sanctuary for such people. These people need theater!

So today, Ukrainians are scattered around the world because of the war and do not have access to their national theaters. I emphasize that I am talking about live theater, which will give a sense of unity right now.

Online theater is becoming a solution for us, a response to the challenges of war, a new opportunity to bring a creative product to those who need it, soldiers and refugees. That's why we, Ukrainian scholars, draw the attention of the world's academic and creative community to this new direction of theater. The author, for example, initiated an academic conference on new genres online (International Scientific and Practical Conference-Laboratory *Online Genres. New Realities. Challenges. Trends*, 2024).

Nobody knows what the future holds for humanity or what surprises it has in store for us. Thus, artists and academics should be ready for challenges.

Because this article aims to provide a general overview of the uniqueness and potential of online theater, many of its aspects are not discussed in depth but mentioned in passing. A detailed discussion of individual elements is forthcoming.

Conclusion. This study has examined the origins of online theater and outlined its distinctive features, emphasizing that we are witnessing the creation and development of a new art form. Among its unique characteristics are: transforming the viewer into an active participant; enabling actors to perform from different parts of the world and form international ensembles; employing digital (including dynamic) scenery; turning props into scenery to generate new imagery; fostering equal dialogue; dismantling the fourth wall; directly addressing the viewer; prohibiting recording; and expanding opportunities for inclusion, among others. Moreover, online theater encompasses both traditional and entirely new genres that are specific to this medium. Taken together, these features, in the author's view, signal the emergence of a new art form—one that calls for continued exploration and scholarly attention.

Ілюстрації

Figure 1. *Coriolanus* by Shakespeare,
directed by Natalia Dniprenko (2024). Photo by the author

Figure 2. Discussion with the audience during the screening
of the online performance *Coriolanus*
for Wellingborough School. Screenshot by the author. 2024

Figure 3. A viewer stood up during the premiere
of the online performance *Coriolanus*
and shouted, "Down with Coriolanus!" Photo by the author. 2024
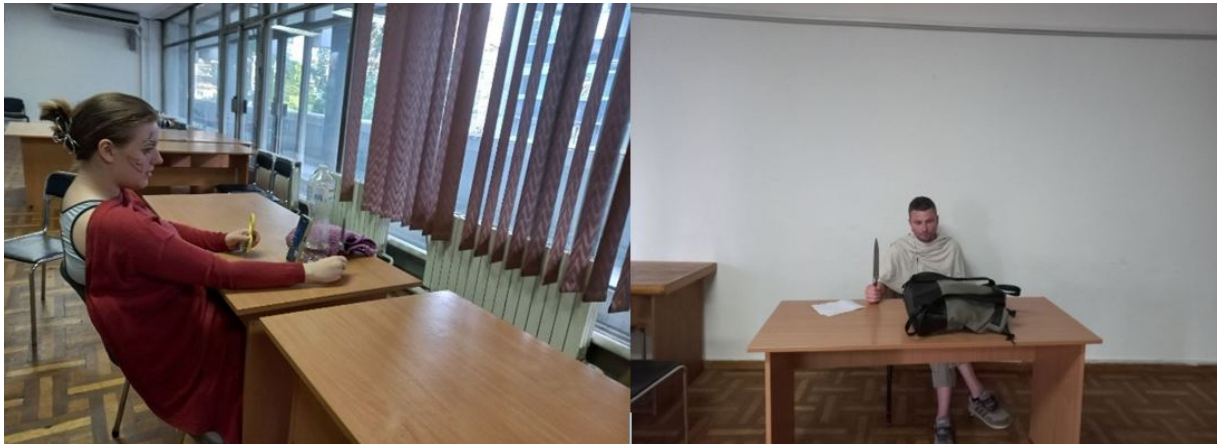
Figures 4 & 5. Actors Daria Dashkevich and Denis Golyshev perform in the online performance *Coriolanus.*
Scientific and Practical Conference-Laboratory *Online Genres.* New Realities. Challenges. Trends.
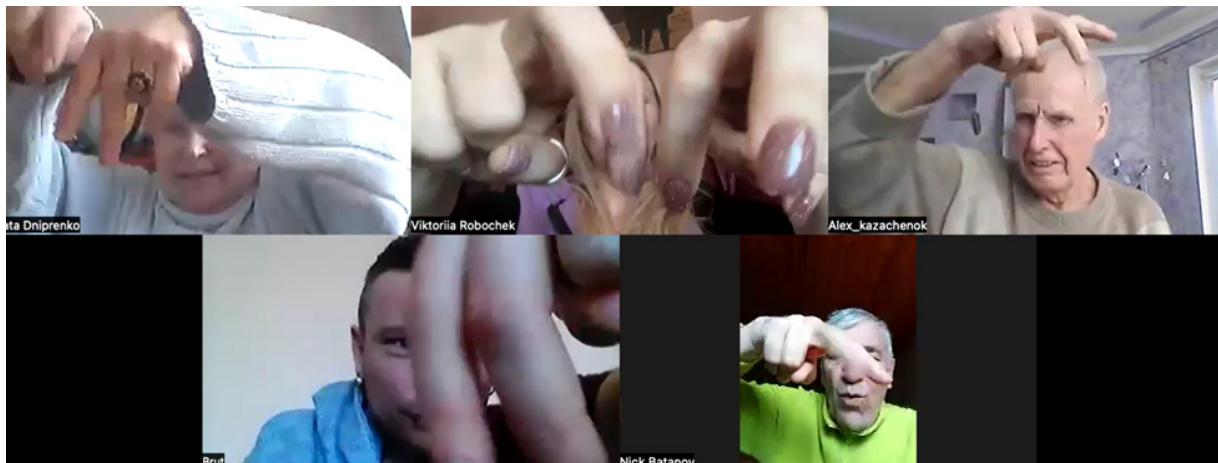Photo by the author. 2024

Figure 6. The viewers participate in a horse race together with the actors in the online performance
of *Coriolanus.* A co-production of University for the Creative Arts and Karpenko-Karyi Kyiv National University
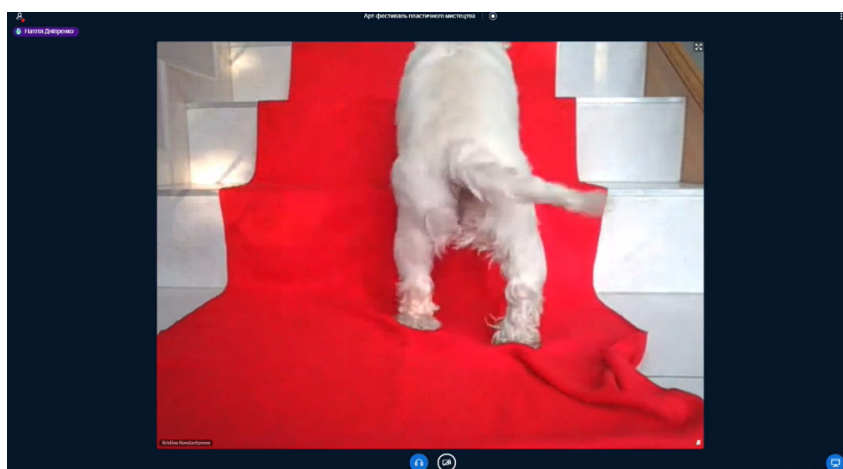of Theater, Cinema and Television. Screenshot taken by the author. 2024

Figure 7. The unexpected appearance of a dog during the closing ceremony
of the International Art Festival of Plastic Arts Extra Words. Screenshot taken by the author. 2020

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Наталія Дніпренко

ОНЛАЙН-ТЕАТР ЯК НОВИЙ ВИД МИСТЕЦТВА

Анотація. У статті досліджується феномен онлайн-театру, обґрунтовується актуальність і неминучість його виникнення як результату синтезу театру, екранних мистецтв і новітніх технологій. Висувається гіпотеза, що онлайн-театр є народженням нового виду мистецтва, а не одним із жанрів театру, та наводяться аргументи на підтвердження цього твердження. Онлайн-театр інтегрує різні класичні жанри, водночас продукуючи нові, й тому не може бути зведений до жанрового визначення. Він також має низку специфічних ознак, які відрізняють його від інших видів мистецтва; у статті описано одинадцять таких характеристик із застереженням, що їх може бути значно більше.

Дослідження ґрунтується на методі дійового аналізу, який авторка викладає в українських університетах і застосовує у власній режисерській практиці. Спираючись на досвід постановки низки екранних вистав, вона аналізує та осмислює власні творчі експерименти. У висновках окреслюється прогноз розвитку онлайн-театру як нового виду мистецтва з потужним потенціалом підтримки культурного життя в умовах криз, пандемій і воєн. Насамкінець авторка закликає колег, науковців і практиків долучатися до осмислення та розвитку цього нового мистецького явища.

Ключові слова: онлайн-театр, онлайн-вистава, глядач, позиція глядача, учасник вистави.