

The Moscow *Hamlet* and the Cranach *Hamlet*:

Edward Gordon Craig, Konstantin
Stanislavsky, Stage Design and Book
Design.

- ‘Some failures in the theatre are more important than the most touted success’. (Alisa Koonen, 1912).
- ‘To criticize an aesthetic programme for failing to keep any of its promises is to miss the point’. (Alain Badiou, *The Century*, 2007).

- ‘What a glorious genius is this, who over the course of three years cannot cope with *Hamlet!* ... The monotony of the screens eventually begins to bring the spectator to the verge of illness and despair. You want to cry out and run away. No light, no air, it’s stifling. Screens, screens, and more screens. Screens without end’, (in Laurence Senelick, *Gordon Craig’s Moscow Hamlet: a Reconstruction*, 1982).

- ‘Learnt much by the enjoyable perusal of the plates cut in this book. [..]
So much for a floor – pliable yet firm. Complicated yet simple in construction & effect.
But a pliable floor was not all I desired. [note: I meant mobile, 1945].
I wanted one “scene” so pliable that (within rules) it might move in all directions – tempos – in all things under the control of the one who could dream how to move its parts to produce “movements”.
[...] I have found the soul of theatre. It is here’
- (Edward Gordon Craig, notes for *Scene*, 1923).
- *Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture*, vol. 1, *Books I-V of Tutte l’opere d’architecttura et prospetiva*, ed. And trans. Vaughan Hart and Peter Hicks, Yale University Press, 1996.
Craig’s 1560 Italian edition.

- ‘Acting is not an art. It is therefore incorrect to speak of the actor as an artist. For accident is an enemy of the artistic. Art is the exact antithesis of Pandimonium (sic), and Pandimonium is created by the tumbling together of many accidents; Art arrives only by design. Therefore in order to make any work of art it is clear we may work in those materials with which we can calculate. Man is not one of these materials.’ (EGC, ‘The Actor and the Übermarionette’, *The Mask*, 1908).

- ‘That would not be Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. It would be a new art founded on the theme of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*’. Stanislavsky (quoted in Senelick, 78).

‘There is no play that suffers so much on [*sic*] being transferred to the stage’. (EGC).

- ‘Into each engraving of each character in the play I have put what I saw in my mind’s eye, not to *exhibit* as woodcuts, but to *show* the actor what I had seen... I think it is much better that an actor should have designs to look at, rather than he should be annoyed by a great deal of *talk*’ (EGC, quoted in L. M. Newman. *Edward Gordon Craig, Black Figures: 105 Reproductions with an Unpublished Essay*, 1989, 20).