

# Adolphe Appia and the Emergence of Scenography

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# Richard Wagner (1813-1883)

The highest conjoint work of art is the *Drama*: it can only be at hand in all its possible fullness, when in it each *separate branch of art* is at hand in *its own utmost fullness*.

# Adolphe Appia (1862-1928)

Swiss architect, scenographer, modernist theatre reformer



# Body, Space, Movement

Theatre

Architecture

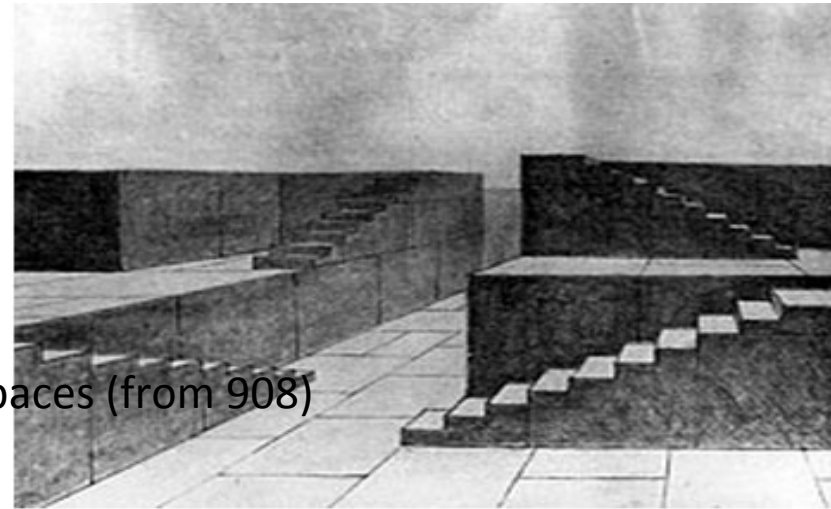
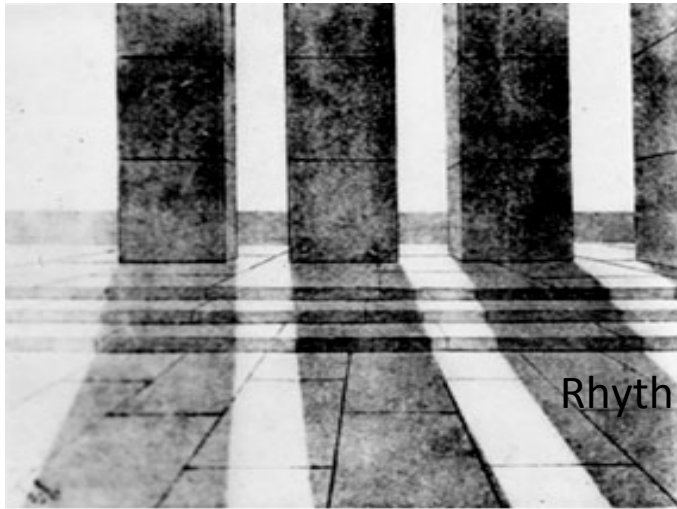
Set Design (Scenography)

# Appia on Parsifal at Bayreuth (1882)

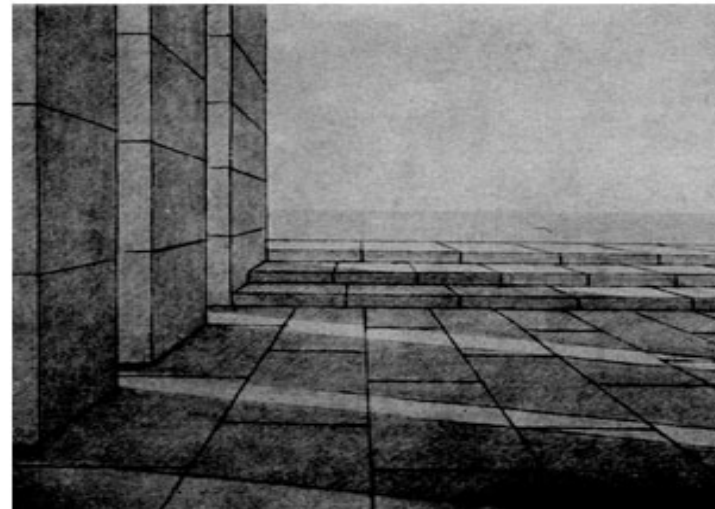
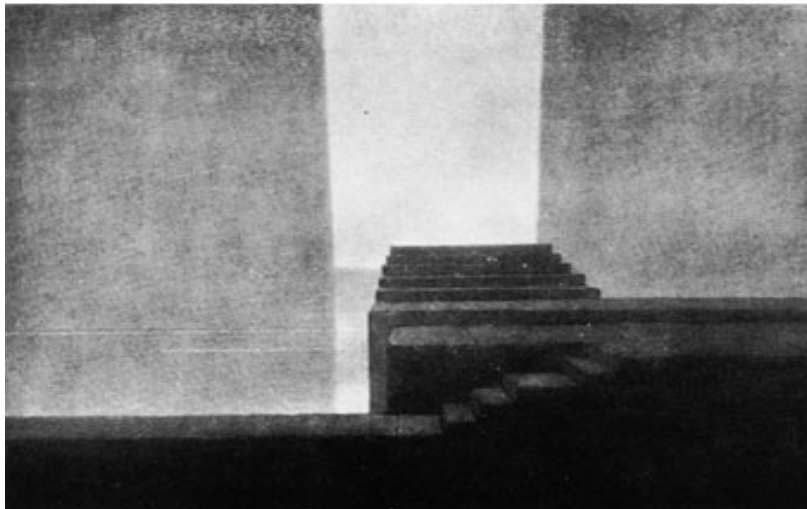
In Parsifal at Baureuth, when the curtain went up on the scene of the interior of the Graul Temple, the painted scenery had to be sacrificed to the darkness necessitated buy the scene change – imparting a marvelous life to the setting. As the lights started to come up, the illusion was continuously dispelled until, finally, in the full glare of the border lights and the footlights, the knoghts made their entrance into a pasteboard temple.

# On Costumes and scenic detail:

Characters in scrupulous historic costumes proudly descend a wooden staircase. In their luxurious and authentic footgear they tread boards cluttered with set pieces, and appear outlined against walls and balustrades, which the well-lighted painting indicates to be of marvelously sculptured marble. The costume, in contact with the set pieces and the drops, lighted by light not designed for it, is completely devoid of meaning – a museum piece, not more.



Rhythmic Spaces (from 908)



# Four basic scenic elements

Painted Scenery (vertical)

Spatial Arrangement (floor)

Actor

Light





# Scenic Innovation

- against pictorial realism (a tree is a tree)
- using symbols and metaphors (the atmosphere of a forest not the forest itself)
- against hierarchy of script and actor with scenery simply illustrating the action
- actors, script and scenery carry the same importance

# Appia on Light

Light is to production what music is to the score

# Light

Light creates Space

Light sculpts space

Diffused Light (scenery is visible)

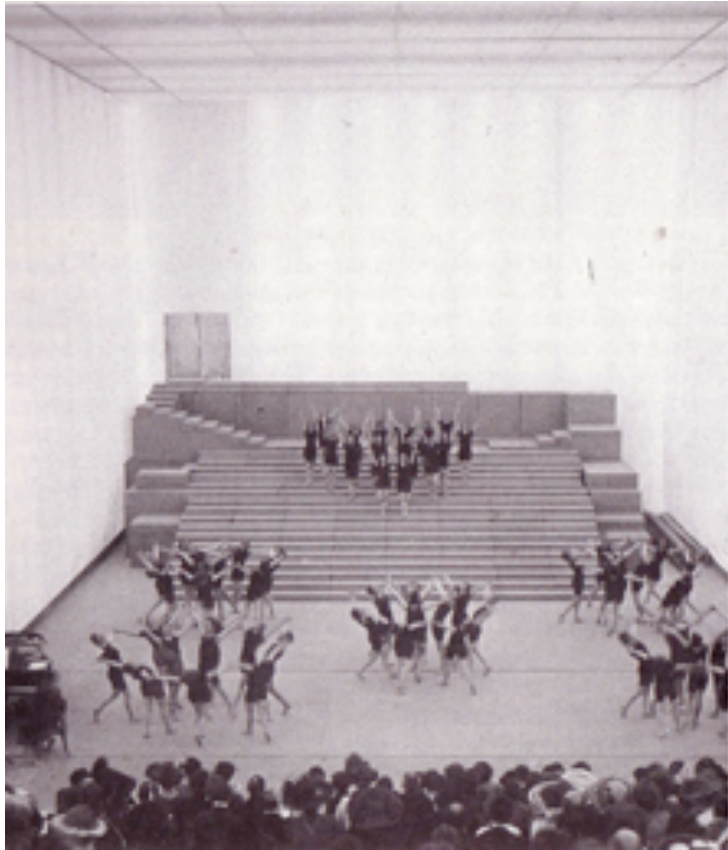
Concentrated Light (modelling form)

Light is structural

Light is fluid

Light is plastic

# Appia/Dalcroze in Hellerau, 1911



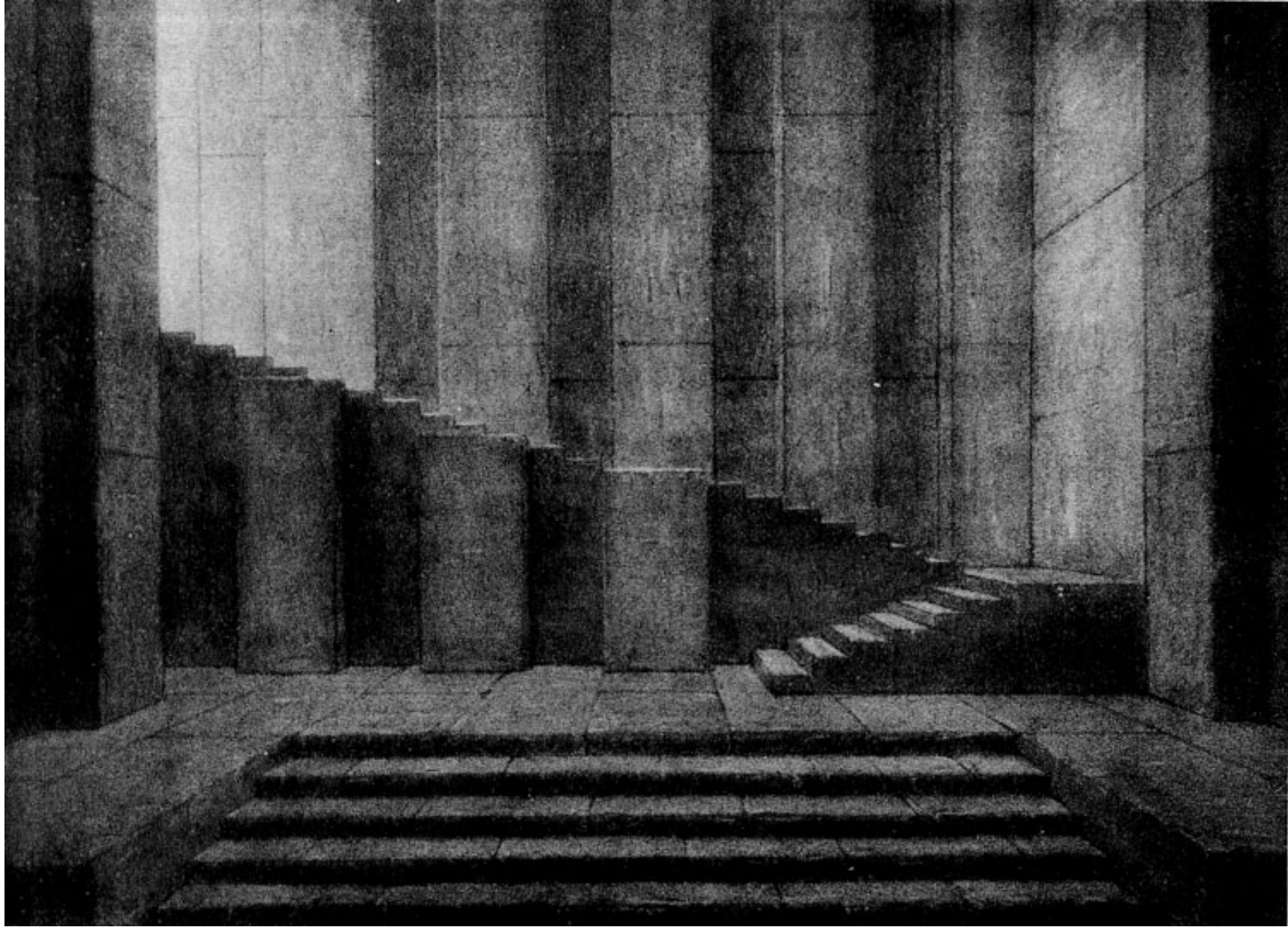




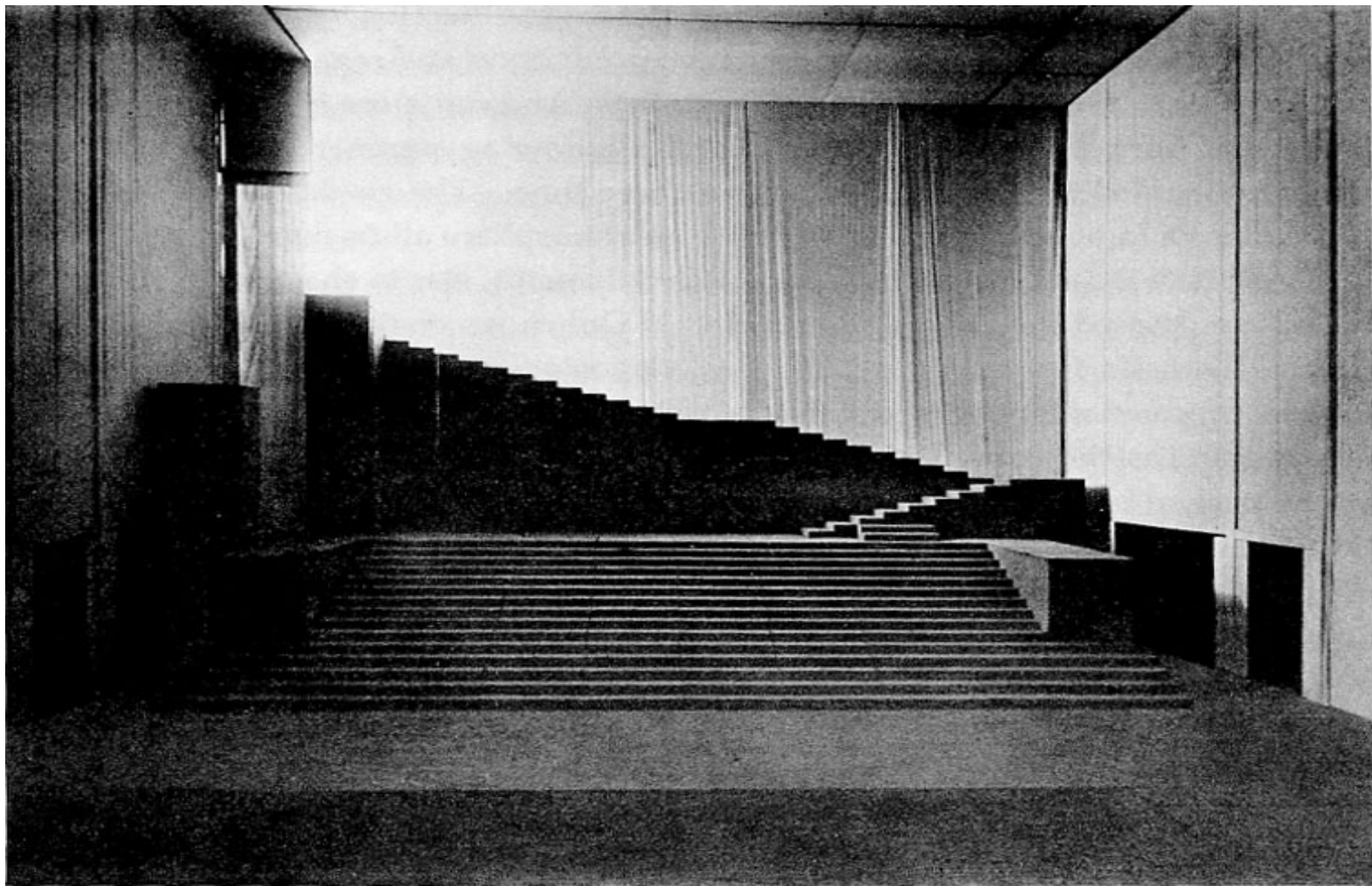
# The study-site

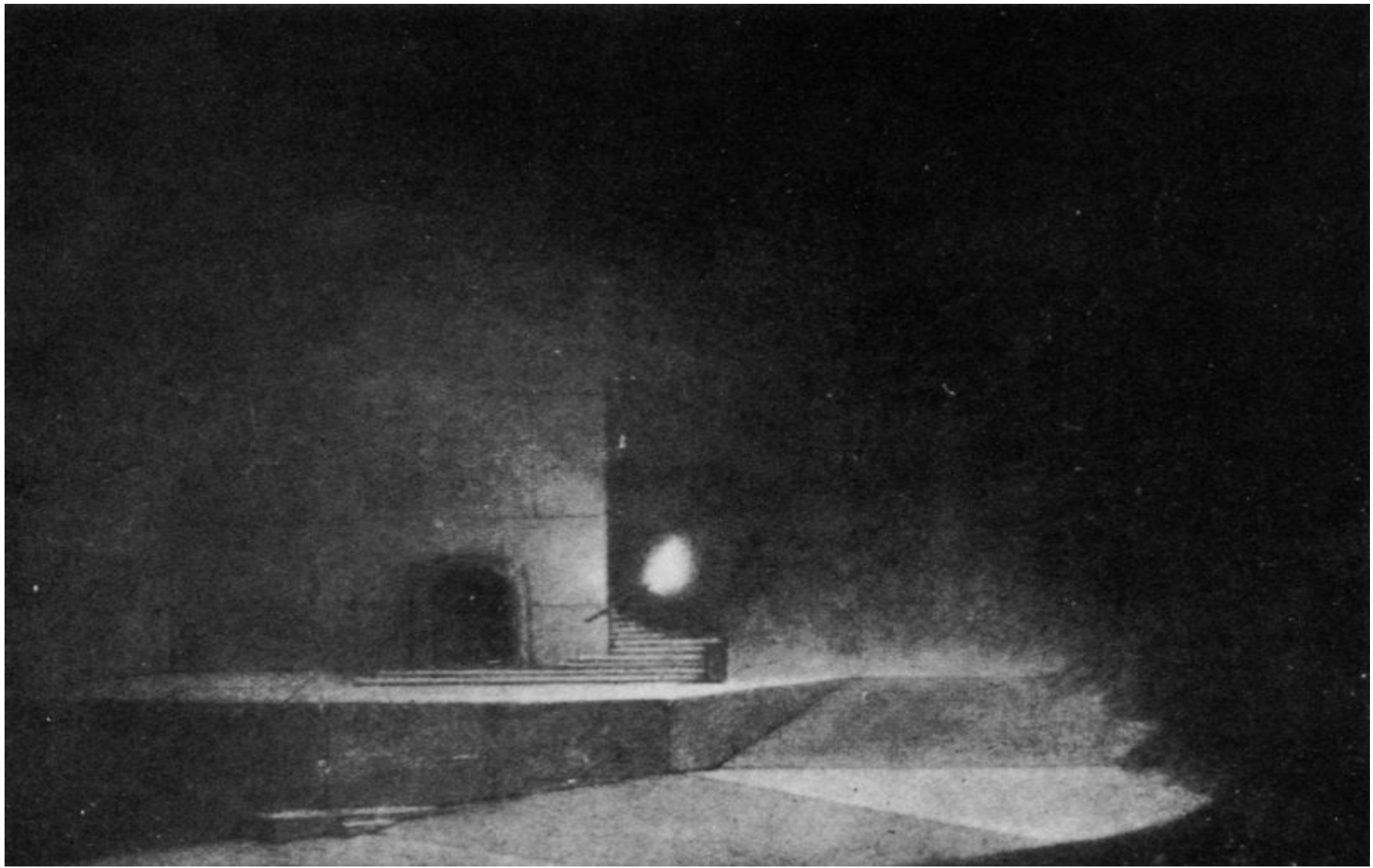
The obstacle to living art is the audience. We are in it, and it in us!  
Therefore the very concept of an audience, the expression of passivity,  
must be neutralized through an effort to overcome this passivity.

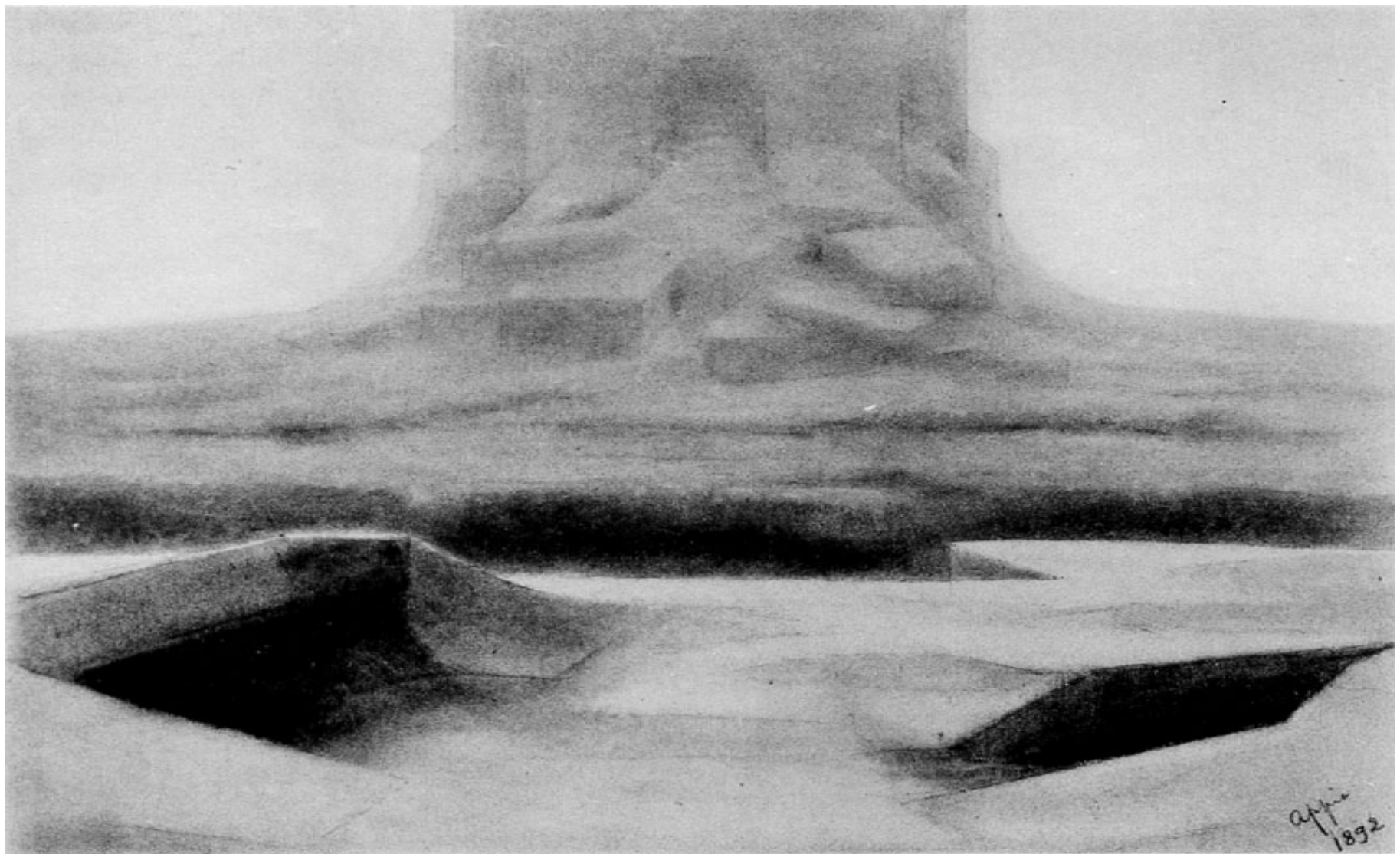


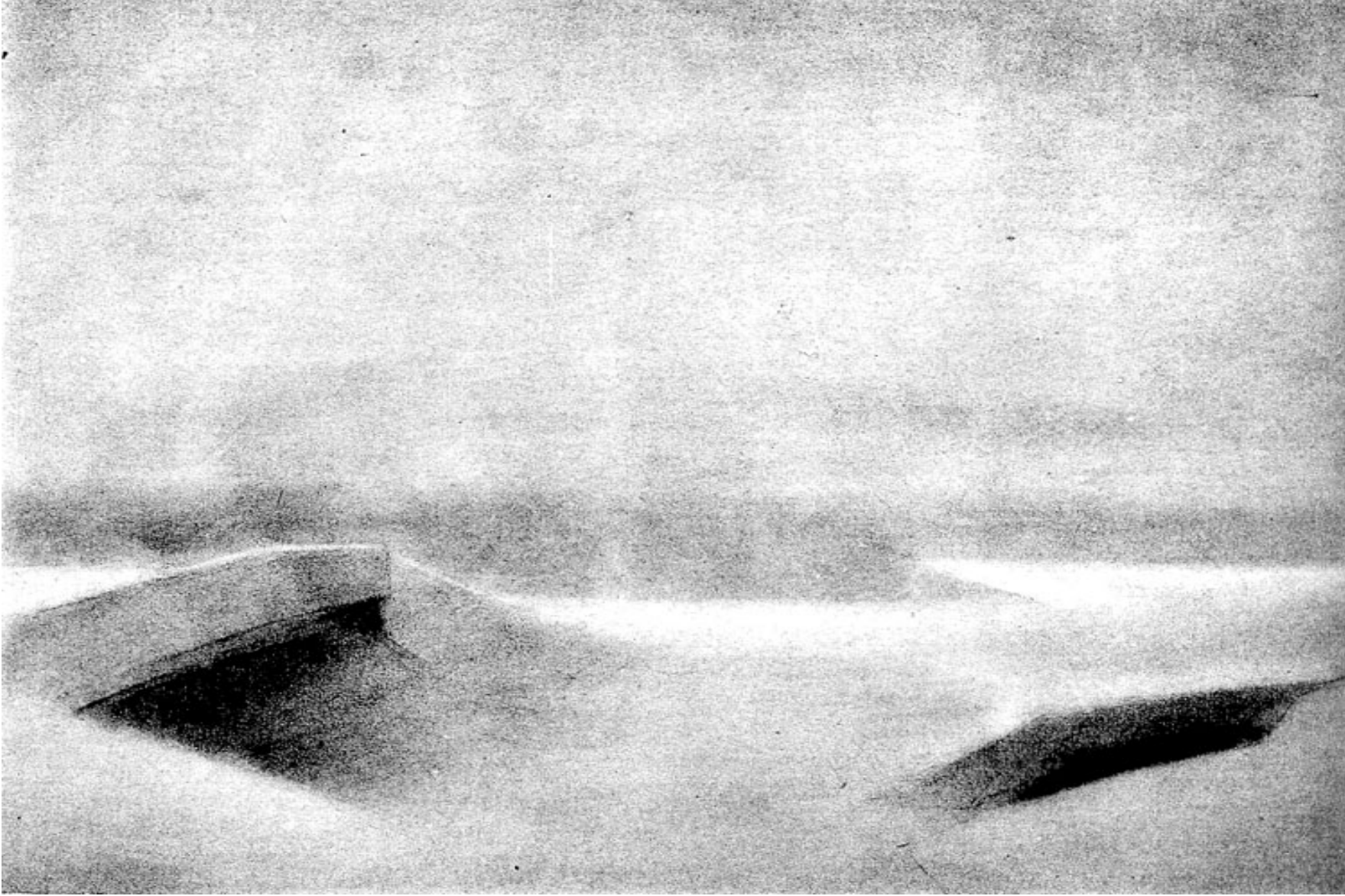


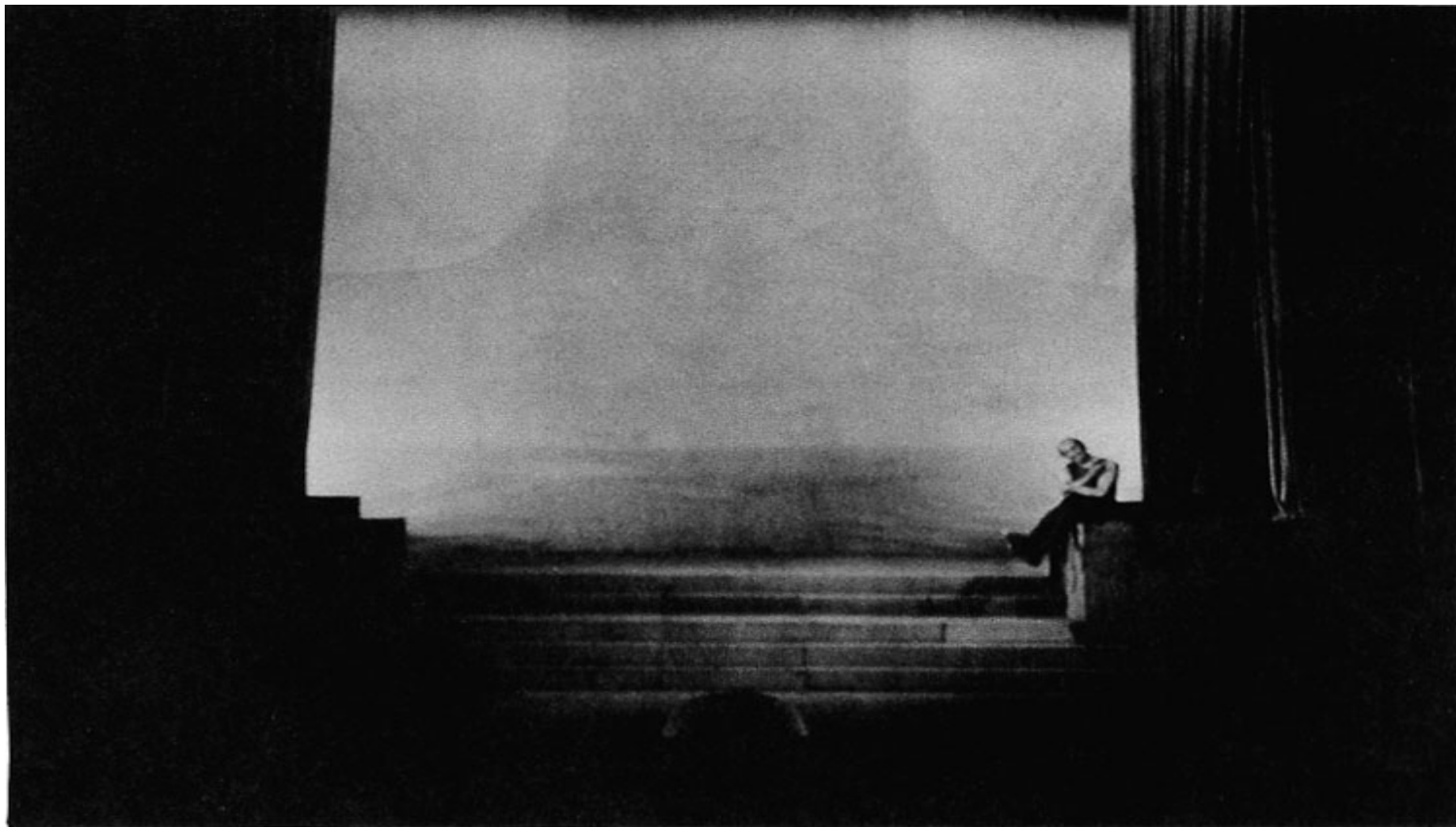














# Grosser Saal, Great Hall



# Appia: Rhythmic Spaces to Dance In, Dessau 2020

