

Edward Gordon Craig - Figure and Abstraction

*Craig's theatre visions and Das Schweizerische Marionettentheater
The Edward Gordon Craig Collection at the Museum of Design in Zurich*

Edward Gordon Craig is regarded as one of the 20th century visionaries of the theatre whose designs and concepts have had an important influence on the scenography, stage direction and acting of the modern theatre. The famous theatre exhibition of 1914 in the Museum of Arts and crafts (now the Museum of Design) in Zurich showed the Englishman Craig and the Swiss Adolphe Appia as the great innovators of the time. With his activities in Zurich, Craig not only promoted the reform of the Swiss theatre, he also had a crucial influence on the development of Das Schweizerische Marionettentheater (1918-1935).

In words and pictures, the book provides an insight into Craig's vision of the de-personalised actor and his theory of the Ueber-marionette. The latter is portrayed in connection with stage practice and discussed with reference to the experimental, abstract 20th century puppet- and object-theatre. In addition, the book contains some hitherto inaccessible witnesses to and documents of Craig's work. During research in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, the author discovered and identified marionettes from the Arena Goldoni School workshop which were exhibited in Zurich in 1914 and were presumed lost. Furthermore, the book documents a Swiss collection of Edward Gordon Craig's works and materials previously unknown to theatrical science. This collection is in the possession of the graphics collection of the Museum of Design in Zurich and contains woodcuts, etchings, bibliophile writings and a complete set of copies of Craig's theatre-theoretical magazines "The Mask" and "The Marionette". The collection is distinguished above all by the fine etchings in which Craig depicted his geometrical-cubist vision of the theatre of the future. This is the first publication on the Craig collection.

Dr. phil. Hana Ribí is concerned with the theory and practice of the puppet- and object-theatre. Co-founder and the first director of the Zürcher Puppen Theater, she is a writer, stage director, organiser of international exhibitions and journalist specialised in issues relating to the puppet theatre.

Hana Ribí: Edward Gordon Craig – Figur und Abstraktion. 224 pages, 74 illustrations, 8 of them in colour. Schweizer Theaterjahrbuch 61-2000, Basel, Editions Theaterkultur Verlag, ©2000. ISBN 3-908145-38-4. Sfr. 59.-/DM 70.00.