

ISTANBUL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY ★ GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SCIENCE
ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

**THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND TRACES OF NATIONAL
REPRESENTATION ON EUROVISION STAGES**

M.Sc. THESIS

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Department of Industrial Product Design

Industrial Product Design Programme

JUNE 2017

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İSTANBUL TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ ★ FEN BİLİMLERİ ENSTİTÜSÜ

**EUROVISION SAHNELERİNDE TEKNOLOJİNİN ETKİSİ VE ULUSAL
TEMSİLİN İZLERİ**

YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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To my Grande Amore,

FOREWORD

Being attracted to colors and different cultures all my life, Eurovision has always been a festival and the highlight of the year for me. I have collected memories, songs and stories from all around the continent. I learned about geography and how it affects cultures. The song contest has been an excuse to research the history of nations as only that would explain the unique harmony of their native languages... For some, Eurovision might have been a contest to win, for others it is an overrated competition with songs unworthy of listen to. For me, it is an excuse to ask questions and look for answers and constantly analyze.

A few years ago, I decided to combine my design education with my lifelong passion and initiated my study of Eurovision stages. I am thankful to my mother, Serap Nemlioğlu, for supporting every decision I made; my sister Elif Simge Fettahoğlu Özgen for being a very positive role model; my brother Mehmet Fettahoğlu for tolerating tension.

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May 2017

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ABBREVIATIONS

App	: Appendix
BBC	: British Broadcasting Corporation
DR	: Danish Broadcasting Corporation
EBU	: European Broadcasting Union
ESC	: Eurovision Song Contest
EU	: European Union
HD	: High Definition
LED	: Light Emitting Diode
LCD	: Liquid Crystal Display
ORF	: Austrian Broadcasting Corporation
RGB	: Red Green Blue
RTE	: Radio Telefis Eireann
RTS	: Radio Television of Serbia
TRT	: Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu
TV	: Television

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THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY AND TRACES OF NATIONAL REPRESENTATION ON EUROVISION STAGES

SUMMARY

Eurovision Song Contest is an annual song competition that is organized by European Broadcasting Union, to bring European countries together and to contribute to peace. It is musical equivalent of Olympics and shows resemblances to World's Fairs: the multinationality provides an opportunity for nations to perform their uniqueness, observable in different elements of its scenography. This thesis focuses on the design of the platform on which the performances takes place and tries to layout the multiple factors of change through years. In a way, Eurovision becomes a case study to examine, how different editions of the same product are effected by external events; such as technology, trends and producers' vision.

The contest has the rule of assigning the hosts via victory, which means the victors of an edition bring the show to their homeland and their national broadcaster takes the responsibility of the next edition's production. As a result, the participants, voting process and winner play an important part for scenography. The contest began with seven countries in 1956 and reached to fifty different participants by 2017 including former Yugoslavian and former Soviet Union nations and Australia. This geographical expansion resulted with a growth in the scale of the production and turned the contest into a national display for Eastern countries that are mostly neglected in international media. Televoting was also a milestone for this process as the voting extended from jury to strong diaspora. As a result, twenty six nations presented their approach to the contest so far.

Eurovision's sixty two stages to date provides a visual database of design history, which makes the contest interesting for academic study. In this thesis, all these stages are analyzed, the elements that made them unique and stories behind them are noted. The limitation of having minimal number of academic studies on the subject is overcome with the help of news, documentaries and designer interviews. Three designers of eight stages in total, were interviewed personally: Michael Grogan, Servet Işık and Florian Wieder contributed with their side of the story. Afterwards a timetable, that is modeled after design road maps, is applied to see patterns and breakpoints as a visual chart which is used for further arguments.

The stages are considered to differ for cultural and technical reasons. The design objectives and the elements of technical evolution are analyzed and their impact on the set design is assessed as a resolution. The major concept that is unique to Eurovision, is national representation; the host nations might refer to a national discourse, they can use cultural heritage objects as a source of inspiration, homeland architecture can reflect on the stage and landscape is also featured as a method for national branding. Secondly, application of trends are observable as futuristic or globalist approaches were also be taken. Also, in some editions the contest's brand identity is applied as the main theme. Lastly, versatility seems to be an important

objective throughout the Eurovision history, as the performances on the same night are usually very diverse and needs to stand out visually as well as musically and the producers provide them analogue, lighting oriented or digital tools to adapt for their performances.

Even though there are several repeating themes in Eurovision, there is a significant difference between the first stage and the last, as a result of technical advancement of entertainment industry. These changes are grouped under broadcasting, audio, microphone, televoting, lighting and special effects in terms of their effects on the contest's scenography.

The eighth chapter, focuses on the interviewed designers' reflection and their insight on the sector and the contest are discussed and compared. The importance of the contest for their career, the brief they received and the way they chose to respond to it, the ways their work stood out from the others, the balance between the TV show and the concert aspects of the contest and the impact of technology were all examined by the professional set designers that have worked on at least one Eurovision stage before.

As a result, this study aims to position Eurovision's physical existence in a context. Both technical and cultural events reflect on the annually recreated design of the ESC stage, and similar relations can be observed in any product line with periodic releases and multiple editions. That is the reason why, the contest is a case study. The created timeline could also be extended, to foresee the stages of the future.

EUROVISION SAHNELERİNDE TEKNOLOJİNİN ETKİSİ VE ULUSAL TEMSİLİN İZLERİ

ÖZET

Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması ilki 1956 yılında, İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası Avrupa kıtasını birleştirmek ve barışa katkı sağlamak amacıyla EBU, Avrupa Yayıncılar Birliği tarafından düzenlenen, her yıl tekrarlanan bir şarkı yarışmasıdır. Yılın en büyük eğlence etkinliği olarak gösterilen yarışma, Olimpiyatlar ve uluslararası fuarlarla karşılaştırılıyor: Uluslar, özgünlüklerini temsil edebilecek ve kültürel rekabete girebilecekleri bir ortama daha sahipler, bu da set tasarımına yansıyor. Bu çalışma, üzerinde performansların gerçekleştiği platformun tasarımının yıllar içerisindeki değişimini ve bu değişimin etkenleri çalışıyor: Eurovision aslında, bir ürünün farklı sürümlerinin teknoloji, trendler ve üreticinin vizyonu gibi dış etmenlerle nasıl gelişeceğini örnek vakası olarak ele alınıyor.

Yarışmanın galibinin düzenleme imkanını kendi ülkesine getirmesi kuralı, katılımcıların, oylama yönteminin ve kazananların sahne düzenlemesini de etkilemesine neden oluyor. İlki 1956’da yedi ülkeyle başlayan macera, altmış iki sene boyunca teknik ve artistik çıtayı yükselterek genişledi ve eski Sovyet ülkeleri, İsrail ve Avusturalya dahil toplam 50 ülkenin çeşitli yıllarda parçası olduğu büyük bir organizasyona dönüştü. Bu coğrafi büyüme hem prodüksiyonun ölçeğini değiştirdi, hem de yarışmayı özellikle uluslararası medyada kendine yer bulamayan Doğu ülkelerinin ulusal kimliklerini sundukları bir vitrin haline getirdi. Aynı zamanda 1997’de halk oylamasının devreye girmesiyle, Avrupa içerisindeki diasporalar da kendi varlıklarını gösterme imkanı buldular. Tüm bunların sonucunda, organizasyona Batı, Güney, Kuzey, Doğu Avrupa’dan toplam 26 ülkenin yaklaşımını inceleme fırsatı oluştu.

Eurovision’u bir tasarımcı ve akademik bir çalışma için ilgi çekici kılan nokta, altmış iki sene boyunca her sene yayınlanan televizyon programının gerektirdiği özünde aynı olan tasarım problemine altmış bir farklı çözüm getirilmiş olmasıdır. Sahneleri benzer kılan ve çehresini değiştiren kültürel, teknolojik etmenlerin analizi, hem ulusal kimliklerin temsili hem de tasarım tarihi ile geleceği adına daha genel çıkarımlara yol açacaktır. Bu çalışmanın amacı da, zamanın, teknik yeterliliğin, coğrafyanın, kültürün aynı ürün üzerindeki etkilerini incelemek. Oluşturulan zaman çizelgesinde de , kırılmalar ve trendler görülebiliyor.

Konuyu araştırmayı kolaylaştıran, incelenen nesnenin amacına uygun kullanımının, videoya kayıtlı ve arşivlerin internet üzerinden rahat erişilebilir olması idi, ama sadece görüntüler tasarımların motivasyonlarını anlamak için yeterli görülmedi. Yarışma üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmalar kısıtlı olduğundan, konu üzerine çekilmiş belgeler, tasarımcılarla ve katılımcılarla yapılan röportajlar, aktarılan haberler de kaynak olarak kullanıldı. Ayrıca Servet Işık, Michael Grogan ve Florian Wieder’la, yani farklı dönemlerdeki Eurovision sahnesi tasarımcılarıyla özel görüşmeler yapıldı. Tüm bu kaynakların yardımıyla ilk olarak altmış bir farklı

sahnenin tanımlayıcı analizleri yapıldı. Onları farklı kılan noktalar ve ilham kaynakları, temel motivasyonları özellikle vurgulandı.

Tanımlayıcı analiz sırasında gözlemlenen farklılıklar ve ortak motivasyonlar, tasarım yol haritası tekniğinden esinlenen bir zaman çizelgesi üzerine işaretlendi. Ürünlerin zamanla “Pazar çekimi” ve “teknoloji itimi” gibi iki karşıt arasında şekillendiğini öneren tasarım yol haritası fikrinin Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması sahnelerinde sağlaması yapıldı. Görüldü ki, gerçekten bazı zamanlar Eurovision pazarının temel beklentisi olan ulusal kimlikler ön plana çıkarken, bazen salt teknolojik gelişmeleri deneme amaçlı tasarımlar yapılıyor.

Hazırlanan zaman çizelgesi iki ana satıra sahip: tasarım amaçları ve teknoloji. Tasarım amaçlarının altında, ulusal kimlik yansıması (ulus markalaştırma), trendler, yarışmanın kendi markası ve çeşitlilik grupları yer alıyor. Trendler ve çeşitlilik ya da logo uygulaması, diğer benzer prodüksiyonlarda da görülebilecek olgular olduğundan, Eurovision’un yapısıyla anlam kazanan ulusal kimlik bu tezde özellikle ön plana çıkarıldı. Sonuçta, ev sahibi ülkeler, yer yer ulusal duruşlarını sergileyerek, yer yer özdeşleştikleri objeleri, coğrafi özelliklerini ya da özgün mimari öğeleri konu edinerek özgünleşebiliyorlar ve bunların örnekleri ayrıca incelendi.

Ulusal bir duruş sergileyenler arasında, Endüstriyel Devrim’in onurlu mirasçıları Birleşik Krallık var. En teknolojik, en inovatif ulus olduklarını kanıtlamak istercesine, yarışmayı düzenlemeyi hak ettiklerinde ya da başkaları adına bu görevi üstlendiklerinde, yenilik arayışında olduklarını ve ilk renkli canlı yayın, sahneye entegre ilk ekran gibi dönüm noktalarıyla özdeşleşiyorlar. Eski Sovyet ülkelerinden Estonya ve Ukrayna, demokratik devrimlerini “masal” ve “uyanış” olarak niteleyerek, yakın tarihlerini ve bağımsızlık hikayelerini sahneye yansıtıyorlar. Rusya ise, büyük ve yenilmez olduğunu Eurovision’u düzenlediğinde de büyük ve kusursuz bir sahneyle tekrar iddia ediyor.

Ülkelerin coğrafi yapısı başka bir kimlik göstergesi olarak Eurovision sahnelerine şekil vermiş. İskandinav ülkeleri İsveç ve Norveç buz imgesini kullanmayı tercih ederken; Dublin, Riga, Belgrad gibi şehirler üzerine kuruldukları nehirleri soyutluyotlar. Hatta 1994’ün fütüristik Dublin’inde ve Liffey Nehri’nin sahnedeki izdüşümünde, İrlanda folk danslarının çağdaş yorumu olan Riverdance örneğinde bir Eurovision sahnesi üzerinden uluslararası üne ulaşan ve İrlandalılıkla özdeşleşen yeni bir oluşum görüyoruz. İsviçre’ye yarışmayı düzenleme sırası ona geldiğinde, performanslar Alpler’in efsanevi zirvesi Matterhorn’un etrafında gerçekleşiyormuş hissini uyandırmaya çalışıyor.

Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması kapsamında kültürel nesnelerin sahnede kullanımını da gözlemek mümkün. Hollanda özdeşleştiği lale imgesini yirmi iki yıl arayla iki kez kullanıp yarışmanın nerede yapıldığını izleyiciye net bir şekilde iletmeye çalışıyor. İrlanda, hem 18. Yüzyıldaki cam işçiliğindeki becerisine, hem de Kelt atalarının metal işçiliğindeki ustalıklarına atıfta bulunarak, tarihlerinde önemli yer tutan ürünleri ve takıları sahneye ilham kaynağı olarak kullanıyor. İlk ve tek İspanyol Eurovision sahnesi, ülkenin dünyaya mal olmuş sanatçısı Salvador Dali’nin heykelini sete entegre ediyor. Finlandiya, Asya enstrümanlarıyla akraba olduğu bilinen telli çalgı kanteleden esinlenen sahnesiyle, diğer Avrupalılardan farkını ön plana çıkarıyor. İsveç, Viking geçmişini bir Viking ejder gemisinin neredeyse bire bir örneğini sahnede modelleyerek vurguluyor, Danimarka da yine benzer motivasyonlarla gemicilik geleneğini kimliğinin belirleyicisi olarak görüyor ve sahneyi yapım aşamasındaki bir gemi olarak tasarlıyor. Hatta bu iki “gemi”, aynı

esin kaynağı olduğunda bile teknolojinin ve tasarım anlayışının sonucu ne kadar değiştirdiğini net gösteriyor.

Bir başka ulusal kimlik göstergesi ise mimarlık üzerinden şekilleniyor. Ulusal yayın kuruluşları, yerel mimariden esinlenen sahneler üretmeyi de tercih edebiliyor. Versailles Sarayı'nın bahçesiyle birlikte soyutlanmasıyla başlayan süreç, Kudüs'te Mescid-i Aksa ve İstanbul'da Ayasofya'yı baz alan kubbelere yer verilmesi, Atina'nın sahnelerin başlangıcı olarak antik tiyatronun dijital ve ekranlı versiyonuna sahne olması gibi tarihi örneklerle devam ediyor. Bir başka örnekte Norveç, ülkenin ulaştığı refah seviyesinin de nedenlerinden olan Kuzey Denizi petrol kuyularını soyutlamaktayı tercih ediyor ve 2009 Rusya sahnesi hiç inşa edilmemiş bir efsane olan Tatlin Kulesi'nden ilham alıyor. Sahneler ölçek olarak büyüklükleri ve mekansallıklarıyla mimarlığa yakınsadığından, bu eğilimin yoğunluğu şaşırtıcı değil.

Kimi durumlarda Eurovision sahneleri, geniş çaplı akımların etkisinde kalıyorlar. Örneğin yeni milenyuma, 2000 yılına yaklaşırken teknolojiyle ilgili beklentiler ve korkuların en yoğun olduğu yıllarda, sahnelerin de gelecek tasviri ve fütürizm çabasına girdiğini gözlemlemek mümkün. 2009'dan sonra daha çağdaş ve globalist yaklaşıma geçiliyor. Ayrıca yarışmanın yapısı gereği, postmodernizmin örneklerine de yer veriliyor.

Adeta tüm sahnelerin ortak motivasyonu ve neredeyse kriteri olan bir tema ise, çeşitlilik. Bir gecede 26'ya, bir haftada 42'ye varabilen katılımcı sayısına ulaşan yarışma, üçer dakikalık şarkıların art arda çıkıp seyirciyi sıkıması ve akılda kalıcı olması için değişik görseller en az değişik şarkılar kadar önemli. Ayrıca her şarkı farklı bir duygu durumunu anlatıyor ve her birini iyi yansıtabilmek için üstün çaba sarf ediliyor. İşte bu nedenlerle sahneler yer yer sadece renk değiştirerek, yer yer her türlü animasyona izin veren ekranlar sayesinde, yer yer ışık şovlarıyla katılımcılara eşlik edebilecek türlü mekanizmalar sunuyor. Özellikle video ekranlarının gelişmesi ve sık kullanılmasıyla girilen dönemde bu açıdan pek sıkıntı yaşandığı söylenemez ama önceki yıllardaki bir tasarımcı zorluklara rağmen iyi iş başarıyor. Hollandalı Roland de Groot'un, arkaplan için hazırladığı geometrik kompozisyonlar ve değişken fiziksel elementleri tüm katılımcılar için değişmeyi ve anlamlı kalmayı başararak dikkat çekiyor ve yarışmanın sahnesini 4 kez tasarlamasının da yolunu açıyor.

Kültürel etmenler bir yandan gelişip değişirken, sahnenin fonksiyonlarını değiştiren şey teknoloji. Müzik, mikrofon, yayın, ışıklandırma, televoting ve ekran teknolojilerinin gelişiminin fiziksel yansıması da oluyor. Örneğin; yayının radyo ağırlıklıdan televizyon ağırlıklıya geçişi, siyah beyazdan renkliye geçişi ve yüksek kalitenin evlere girmesi. Mikrofonun ayaklı hali ve kablosuzu arasında katılımcıların hareket alanları hususunda büyük farklılıklar var. Halk oylaması, kazanan ülkelerin çehresini tamamen değiştirerek, yarışmanın Merkez Avrupa'dan uzaklaştığı sekiz yıla sebebiyet veriyor, böylelikle ülkelerin ulusal kimlik temsil ihtiyacını artırdığı gibi, temsil edilecek de farklı ulusal kimlikler seçiyor. Orkestranın yerini önceden kayıtlı sistemlere bırakması, orkestra gibi fonksiyonel ve geniş alan kaplayan bir elementin artık yer almamasına neden oluyor. Ekranlar, üst düzey ışıklandırma teknikleriyle beraber 21. yüzyılda artık kendine yer bulan ekran efektleri, sanal gerçeklik ile hologram teknolojinin hala önemli gelişmelere gebe olduğunu kanıtlıyor.

Bu tez Eurovision'un en büyük fiziksel ürünlerini bir bağlama oturtup, periyodik ürünlerin zamana dayalı olarak nasıl incelenebileceğine dair bir vaka örneği sunuyor. sayesinde Binlerce insanın emeğinin geçtiği bu kültürün arkasındaki düşünce sistematüğini anlamak, geleceği de bir ölçüde tahmin edilebilir kılıyor.

1. INTRODUCTION

Eurovision Song Contest is an international event that has been broadcast since 1956 and since its inauguration it has become a phenomenon with its unique social connotations, extending to political and cultural realms and its stage has been a medium to test and demonstrate audio visual technical developments where hosting nations compete in showing their technical capabilities and uniqueness. Much like Olympic Games, international fairs and events of such stature it has become a stage itself for national representation and pride and it thus provides an interesting and valuable visual database for design researchers.

From the venue to graphic design; from the interval acts to the postcards - short introductory videos for each performing nation, mostly utilized to represent the most 'iconic' and touristic features- and from the songs to the stage performance, in every aspect, Eurovision offers multiple grounds for design research.

The most intriguing aspect of Eurovision as an object of design and an academic research is the fact that it provides 61 different solutions to the much-or-less the same design question. An analysis into the underlying factors in the stage design, their inherent similarities and differences is a reading through the 'zeitgeist' of the last century and its ever-changing technological and cultural determinants.

The stage itself provides a valuable testing ground for broadcasting technologies, resonating the cultural production and its widespread influence, from the limited capacities of the monochrome television to the streaming and augmented technologies of late.

1.1 Purpose of Thesis

The thesis aims to identify and analyze patterns and differences and discuss the reasons behind the stage design. The main purpose is to understand and depict the mechanisms behind the stage design, where the outcomes differ substantially where the brief and the requirements remain the same. These are investigated under two

broad categories, one that deals with the production and stage itself, from the lens of technological advancements, and the other through an investigation into design objectives, mainly national representation. The medium and types of national representation is classified and their broader context and influencing trends are investigated. The impact of the technology is analyzed to understand the change in the features and expectations from a stage.

Also, the thesis questions if the “market pull” “technology push” principle has real life and widespread response, referring to design road mapping literature and testing through its methods. In a way, Eurovision is a case study that shows how time effects the products in both technical and conceptual manners.

1.2 Method of the Thesis

Descriptive analysis depicts a year-by-year narrative of the stages and its elements. The archival broadcast footage, for the each year provides a base ground and was investigated thoroughly and systematically while supplementary materials such as documentaries, news clippings and interviews with the stage designers provided additional ‘insights’ into a contextual reading.

Structured interviews with three prominent set designers, who contributed to eight editions in total, were conducted specifically for this study. Utilizing the methods of the design road mapping; a timeline was derived, with three main rows: Technology, Purpose and Time. The conclusions were mapped on this timeline as an instrument to open up further contextual debate, and results were investigated within the main text.

1.3 Limitations of the Thesis

Although its impacts and influence are prominent, the studies on Eurovision Song Contest is limited, and they are investigations solely on sociological and cultural grounds. Some of the material within the scope of the thesis was harder to reach, and was culturally harder to trace, as detailed information is scarce for the early editions, and popular culture references are mostly lost within the context. Besides some information were eligible only in the native languages of the host countries, and marginally relevant to the content and method of the thesis.

In the other end of the scope, the ease of access, and ample source materials of late editions provide much to work with, although this time, careful filtering and systematization of the data is needed and relevant information is derived through this process.

The close-knit and widespread Eurovision community helped immensely in overcoming those limitations, as one-to-one interactions helped to fill in the gaps, especially for the national and regional references that was hard to contextualize.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Even though there are not many studies on Eurovision Song Contest, studies on National Identity and Scenography contributes to the current thesis and it is important to have an understanding of them beforehand. This chapter aims to identify “national representation” and “stage” the way it will be mentioned later on.

2.1 National Representation

A nation requires cohesion and a sense of unity and uniformity. The parameters of this sameness form the cultural identity that becomes a shortcut to a nation's sense of self. As a country grows and matures it is able to make adjustments to how it is perceived internally and externally, these changes are often incremental and require a conscious effort in the form of a communication stream that can be described as advertisement or branding: *“Nation branding is a specific application of marketing principles to improve a state’s global and economic standing.”* (Gan, 2011)

The American Heritage dictionary defines identity as: *“the collective aspect of the set of characteristics by which a thing or a person is definitively recognizable or known.”* The significance of these characteristics are, being unique and immediately distinguishable from others becomes. The principle function of national identity is to form internal unity, while creating a distinction from other nations that is very clear, it focuses on finding moments to divide nations from each other and group their own citizens closer together, as also visible in Dennie’s definition of nation brand: *“the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for all of its target audience”* (2007).

The commonalities that gathers together under same identity, may be a single government, a common language or common history as claimed by American Heritage Dictionary in two different definition for the term ‘nation’: *“A relatively large group of people organized under a single, usually independent government; a country.”* or *“A community of persons not constituting a state but bound by common*

descent, language, history, etc.” National identity is one of the most basic social identities. It comes with a territory and only reveals a single aspect of a person; the country in which they were born or permanently reside.

Reinforcing the parameters of national identity are a vital and perpetually developing task of every government. The cohesion and unity of a people, especially in an age of movement and diversity that is this historically unprecedented in scope and volume becomes a critical concern. *“Identity, personal or national, isn’t merely something you have like a passport. It is also something you discover daily, like a strange country. Its core isn’t something solid, like a mountain. It is something molten, like magna.”* (Bechhofer, McCrone 10) The idea of what a nation is both to the citizens and the outsiders become a keystone of every individual's personal identity, and can cause both conflict and a sense of belonging and tranquility. The influence of national pride or sense of history or culture transcends the population as a collective and becomes infused into each person at an individual level, becoming warped to match that individuals perspectives and views. To make a greater appeal to individuals the branding of the nation needs to be present in very diverse spheres of interest and activities to have the widest reach and impact on individuals’ unique sensibilities.

Governments may prefer to utilize marketing techniques to enhance the nations’ relations in an artificial way, and even though they usually have their own vision of how to promote the nation, the identity of most nations has usually been established over many years and relies on perceptions, which can be based as much in myth, religion and partial historical views as in fact. Anthony Smith identifies a number of features of national identity, which he summarizes as follows: *“A nation can therefore be defined as a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members”* (1991).

Nations are defined as groups of people with shared values, and these values need to be either maintained or evolved over time. For an individual *“Having an identity’ is seemingly ‘one of the most universal human needs”* however it *“ it will not come by itself. It must be created. It also needs its creators and authorities. It needs culture...”* (Bauman,1999): Uniting individuals requires them to share commonalities. Forming similar values and preferences in individuals that span different interests that don't

overlap means that large scale events offer a quick access to an entire group of people via their innate interest. Sporting events like the World Cup, national parades and celebrations, conferences, forums and conventions and musical events like Eurovision all provide access to groups of citizens that share an interest. The song contest is also significant for merging nationality with “LGBT” and “Europeanness” in terms of identity.

The larger the event, the more people of that interest group can be reached with the message of national unity. Eurovision is an event that reaches millions of people and has a time frame that reaches beyond the main event. Since the process includes various qualification rounds and rehearsals and widespread media coverage on multiple platforms, the spread of the message of national unity is far reaching and is willingly processed multiple times by the individual viewers. Spreading a widely accessible, cohesive message full of ideas that are unique to that nation to different audiences during varied events furthers the social cohesion, to the point where a sporting fanatic and a music connoisseur have an inherent connection to a collective group, while being individually different.

To summarize, Eurovision is an event where multiple nations are present or competing, where the role of division can be addressed, and each nation can highlight how they are unique and different. Aside from forming internal unity, or promoting an idea of being to the rest of the world, they can act out and embody the idea as proof and reinforce their identity claims. They can apply marketing tools to both position to brand their nation both to position the country in international environment and to unify their citizens.

2.2 Stage Design

Most literature that examines the virtual aspects of theatrical events and concerts are grouped under scenography though other names for similar line of work include, set design, scenic design or production design. Scenography is defined as “*the seamless synthesis of space, text, research, art, actors, directors and spectators that contributes to an original creation*” (Howard, 1996), and is considered as the collaborative effort of all the stakeholders involved in a theatrical performance. Bauhaus artists’ definition is similarly general, the stage workshops they held was

for “the investigation of space, form, color, sound, movement and light.” (Tirmingham, 2012) altogether.

Even though all the elements mentioned are observable in Eurovision Song Contest, the scope of this thesis is much narrower, focusing on the design of the stage as described by Oxford dictionary “*A raised floor or platform, typically in a theatre, on which actors, entertainers or speakers perform*” (“stage”, 2017). The reason to narrow down the scope to focus on the stage as the construction is, to be able to observe the meaning of the designed space. “*Highlighting design as distinct aspect of producing scenography allows the designer’s concepts to play an important part in analysing the potential meaning of the designed space...*” says Armstrong in a similar struggle to analyze traces of national representation on set design (2010). As a result, in the current study, the scope is the structure that action takes place and its visual elements, rather than the scenography planned for every performance, highlighting the host countries’ solution to the annual design problem.

2. EUROVISION SONG CONTEST

Eurovision Song Contest is organized by the European Broadcasting Union, with the initial purpose of bringing the European nations together and diminishing the devastating effects of World War II while testing and aligning the technological capacities of EBU members. The concept of participating countries being represented by musical performances and evaluating each other in a live broadcast event, remains alive to date. Since 1956, the contest has grown geographically and cultivated its own culture, which is compared to that of Olympics and International Fairs by many. The revue of ESC 2016, with lyrics by Matheson Bayley, defines the show and summarizes its significance:

It's a multinational competition, with a collaborative mission, so much like the Olympics in a way. [...] It's rather less athletic, though just as energetic, more colorful and [...] theatrical. We make music and friends with every nation and bankrupt the hosting TV station. To help to shore up a post-war Europe in 1956 it all began. The set I'm certain was nothing but a curtain, there were only seven countries and one camera-man. But then it's started growing now Australia's ours!

Eurovision's permanence, scale and multi-nationalism is extraordinary. The contest is the Guinness World Records holder as the "*Longest Running Annual TV Music Competition (international)*" (Lynch, 2015) and during 62 years of its history almost every major political event, technical improvement or trend had observable effects on the show. The hosting of the contest itself requires exceptional organizational and technical skills and it also allows every participant to build a national image, presenting their political discourse. These two elements, according to Göran Bolin, turn Eurovision Song Contest into a "*post-industrial equivalent to the World's Fairs of high industrialism.*"(2006), a resemblance that became more apparent after the inclusion of Eastern European countries. After all, the following observation on World's Fairs by Çelik, is directly applicable to the current situation of Eurovision: "*while claiming to be platforms for peaceful cultural communication, in reality ... displayed... a stratified power relationship.*" (1992).

Despite its socio-cultural, economical context and high-caliber participants such as Domenico Modugno (1958), Julio Iglesias (1970), ABBA (1974), Celine Dion (1988), Andrew Lloyd Webber (2009), etc. the musical quality of the contest is still debated. While many countries that are mostly neglected in the international platform see it as an opportunity to reach to a wider audience abroad and therefore pursue a certain level of quality and assign established local acts to the competition, a sense of carelessness is often observed by others. Some have lost hope, some simply want to avoid the expenses of hosting that become a chore after victory. The budget for the contest has been up to 60 Million Euros for Azerbaijan in 2012, and almost 45 Million Euros for Denmark in 2014 (Dean, 2016) and there were many countries who had to refuse the opportunity to host due to high costs in early editions. After all, no matter how poor the songs are, the production is expensive as it has to meet the high standards of European Broadcasting Union.

2.1 The Expansion

The idea and scope of Europe has been changing and the participants list of Eurovision has expanded more or less simultaneously. The official website of Eurovision has a history section where the following information is gathered (“Countries”, 2017), including the participants list in App. A. When Eurovision Song Contest began in 1956, seven nations, all from Western Europe, participated with a total of fourteen songs. The pioneering seven countries, Germany, France, Belgium, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Italy and Luxembourg were soon joined by United Kingdom, Austria and Denmark. With the addition of Sweden, Monaco, Norway, Finland, Spain, Yugoslavia, Portugal and Ireland by 1966 the contest had eighteen European countries, extending from the Balkans to Atlantic Ocean, from Mediterranean to Scandinavia as shown in Figure 3.1.

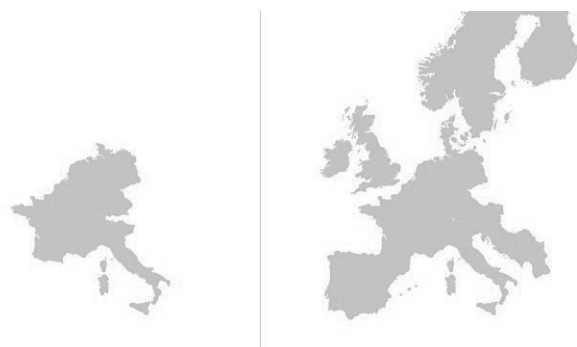


Figure 3.1 : Map of participants in 1956 (left) and 1966 (right).

In the next two decades, the increase in participant number was comparatively slower. Between 1966 and 1986, only seven countries debuted: Malta, Israel, Greece, Turkey, Morocco, Cyprus and Iceland. The long lasting controversy over European identity, started in this era, as Israel had no land in the continent and Turkey had majority of its ground in Asia, even though both countries could join Eurovision. Technically, this contest is open to any member of EBU (“Rules”, 2017), so the criteria has never been geography, however it’s only natural for traditionalists to challenge such major changes. The debut of Turkey was also protested by Greece in 1974 and Morocco’s appearance remained one of a kind in 1980. By 1986, the contest has had expanded to Northern Africa and Middle East as shown in Figure 3.2.

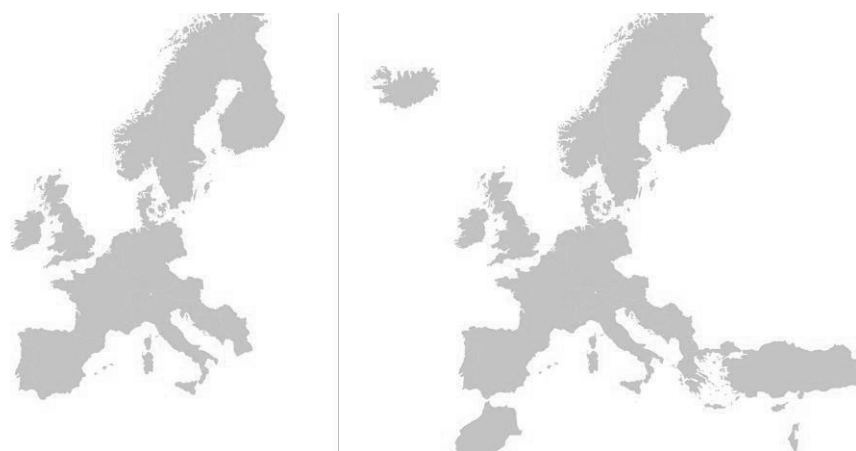


Figure 3.2 : Map of all the participants until 1966 (left) and until 1986 (right).

Between 1986 and 1996, major political changes have occurred: The Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 signified the end of the Cold War (Dodds, 2014), leading to the Collapse of the Soviet Union in late 1991 (Plokhy, 2014) and Breakup of Yugoslavia in 1992 (Glenny, 1996). As a result, many new nations emerged from Eastern Europe, that were either eager to build a national identity or ready to integrate into the West after a long period of isolation. Eurovision Song Contest has provided significant opportunities for these emerging nations, even though, the sudden accession of European states has forced EBU to take precautions to limit the number of contestants. For instance, in 1993, a year after the last Yugoslavian entry there was an elimination round specifically for its successors, after which Eurovision audience could meet the selected Bosnia & Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia. A relegation rule was also introduced so new states could replace the unsuccessful ones in a cycle. With the help of relegation rules, in 1994, seven previous contestants were replaced

with Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Lithuania, marking the year as the one with the most radical expansion. All in all, by 1996, thirty-five different countries has had their share of Eurovision spotlights (Figure 3.3).



Figure 3.3 : Map of all the participants until 1986 (left) and until 1996 (right).

After 1996, the contest continued expansion with the introduction of seventeen more countries including Ukraine, Latvia, Belarus, and from the Baltic Region; Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria and Albania. The south eastern border of Eurovision geography has changed after the Caucasian boost with Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan, only to be overshadowed by Australia. As a result, 52 different countries from Iceland to Australia have been on the Eurovision stage (Figure 3.4), in one year or another. EBU has tried several relegation rules before deciding the current system with two semi-finals and one grand final, enabling the contest to accommodate a high number of active participants with the maximum of 43 in 2011.

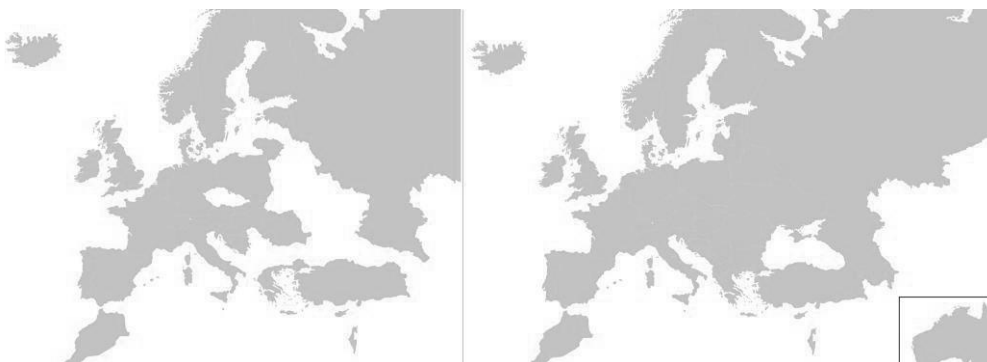


Figure 3.4 : Map of all the participants until 1996 (left) and until 2016 (right).

2.2 The Hosts

This study focuses on the stage design, and the approaches to it by different national broadcasters in different years. Naturally, the twenty-five hosts to date are more important than the twenty-seven winners, and fifty-two participants; even though there is a strong correlation between them all due to the ever-changing rule of the contest that can be summarized as “The winner takes it all” (ABBA, 1980): The opportunity to host Eurovision Song Contest, is the major reward for the victorious country since the very beginning (“Rules”, 2017). Figure 3.6 shows a list of winners and hosts in a chronological order, the data for the list is collected from official Eurovision website (“Events”, 2017).

Some participants can be extra motivated to win and bring the celebration to their homeland, especially if they have a national discourse to promote. Others might wish for a defeat, just to avoid budget issues: The high standards set by European Broadcasting Union are expensive to achieve, especially in the high technology era, and a TV production of this size is not easy to organize, a point proven by many occasions where the winning nation refused the opportunity and a volunteer had to step in. Switzerland is the first host, first winner, and first to resign from organizing the event, as it would be twice in a row. Later The Netherlands, France, Luxembourg and Israel followed this example and their frequent victories did not result in similarly frequent hosting. Moreover, after winning Eurovision 1971 Monaco has suffered from its small size and became the only winner with no hosting experience. Their replacement would be Germany (1957), The Netherlands (1980), and most often United Kingdom: BBC from 1960 to 1974, had four extra opportunities to showcase their technological superiority and overall the UK managed to hold ESC eight times, making them the leader of the list of the hosts.

The 1990s, marked the Irish era of the contest. Between 1992 and 1997 Ireland won four times and despite the debates over its costs, did not avoid production. Liam Miller, Head of Programmes at RTE, mentioned the importance of being ready for “the consequences of winning” and how overcoming this challenge was a matter of national pride. (“Counting The Cost” , 1995). This country still holds the record of most wins, followed by Sweden. Ireland and Sweden rank second and third in the list of hosts and both nations showcase diverse approaches in each event, sometimes

referring to their ethnic background and sometimes focusing on technical capabilities. This repetition and diversity of design approach provides a remarkable insight to the current study.

Just before the new millennium, Eurovision went through remarkable changes with debuting participants and a new voting system. As discussed before (p.10) the dissolution of Yugoslavia and Soviet Union gave birth to many nations and their participation changed the demographics of the audience for the contest. Meanwhile, in 1997, televoting was tested in five countries: the points rewarded by Austria, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and United Kingdom were determined by the spectators instead of their national juries. The next year, this method was spread to all participants and soon the impact would be visible. The combination of Eastern expansion and televoting, revolutionized the expectations: the usual winners struggled while unusual countries were successful. As a result, between ESC 2002 in Estonia and ESC 2009 in Russia, every host had their first ever experience in organizing Eurovision Song Contest.

The Eastern streak boosted debates over political voting and diaspora effect. Acting on them, in 2009, EBU employed a new voting system with both national juries and public involved in decision making. The addition of juries aimed to balance the diaspora effect mostly, however they were also expected to reward the quality of the acts contrary to public's neglect. In 2010 the contest went back to a more familiar city, as it took place in Oslo and stayed around until Kiev 2017. The organizing nations before 2002, between 2002-2009 and after 2009 are shown in Figure 3.5, and the statistics of number of participants and unique hosts are laid out in Figure 3.7.



Figure 3.7 : The hosts before 2001, between 2002-2009 and after 2009, in that order.

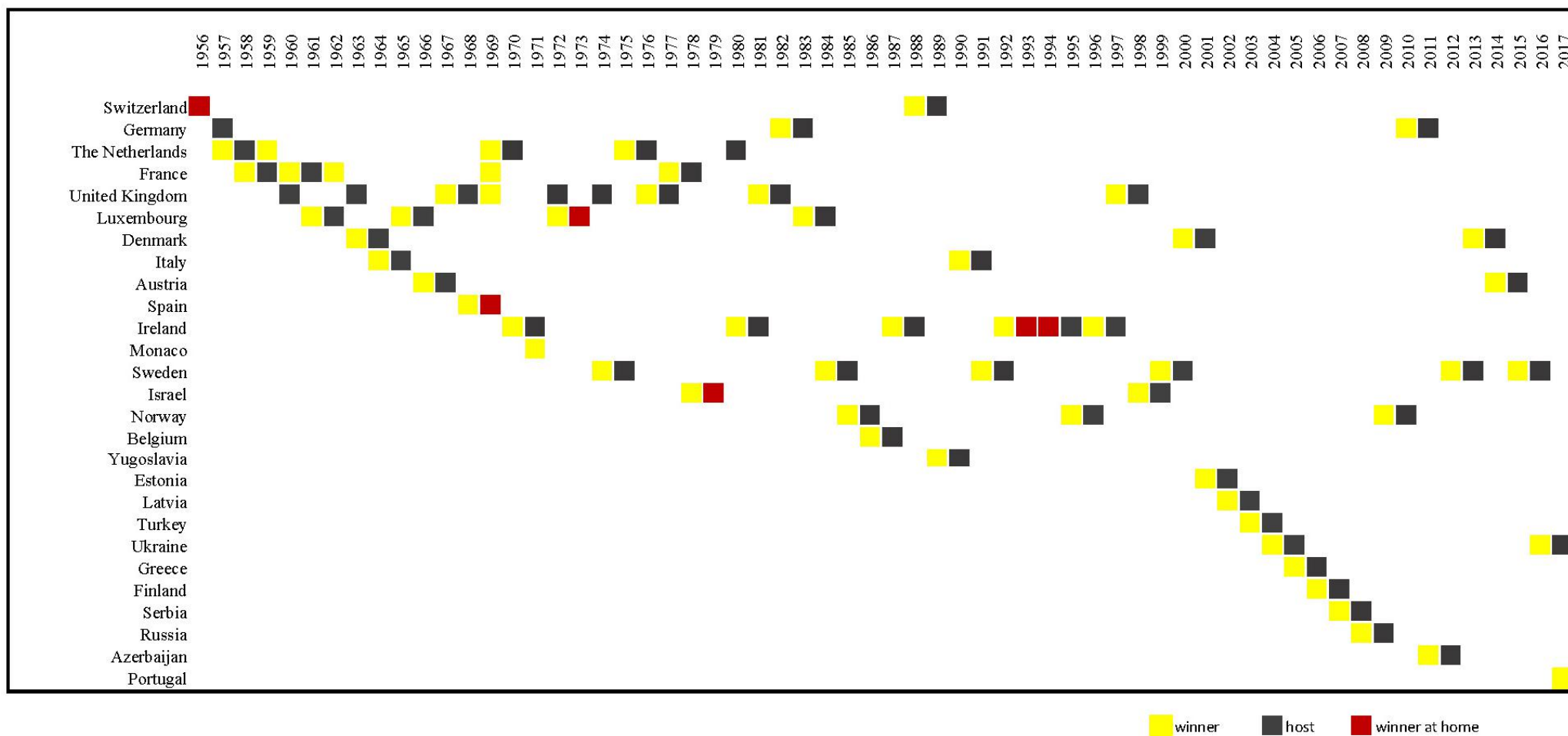


Figure 3.6 : Chronological list of the winners and hosts

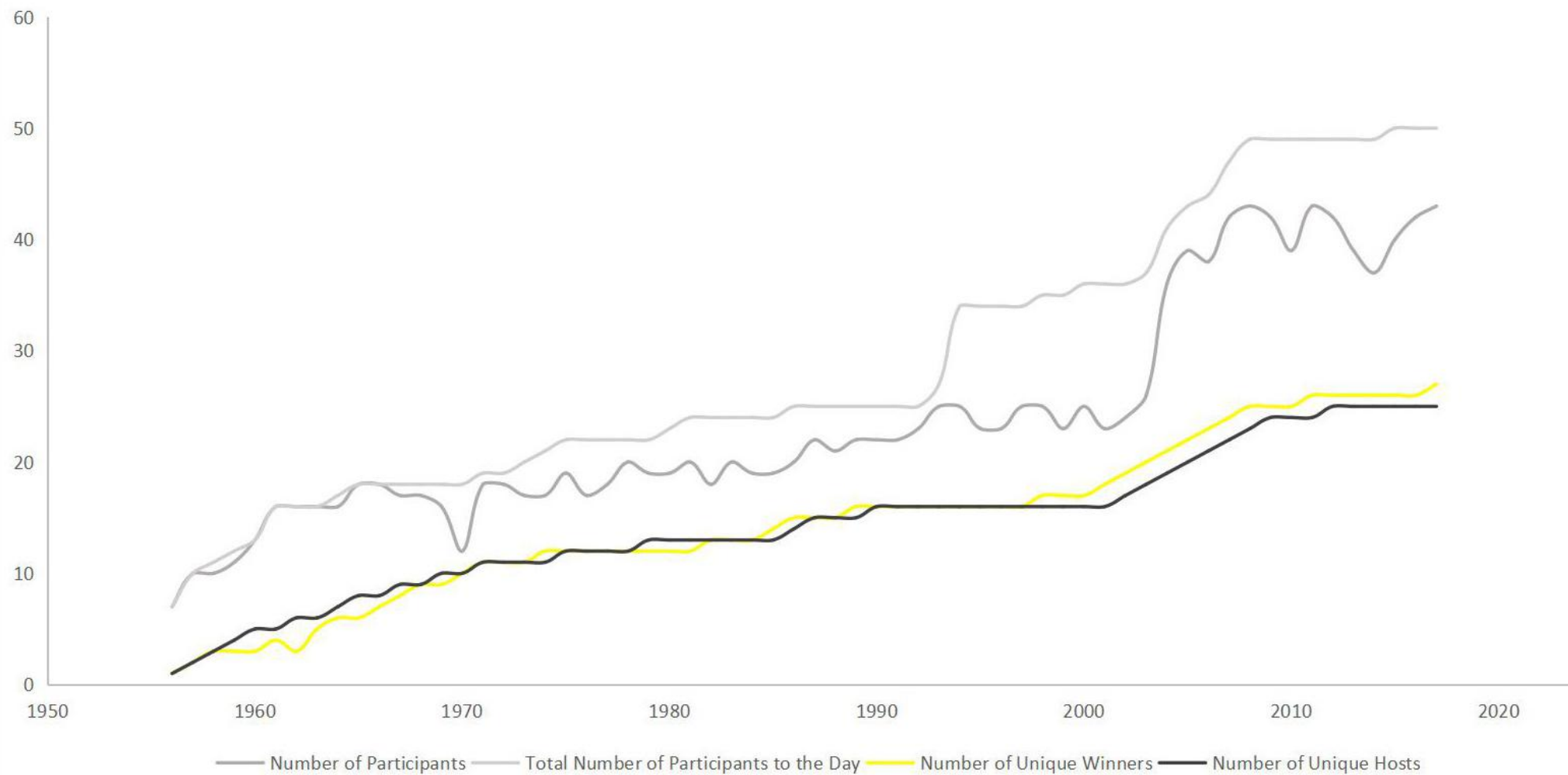


Figure 3.7 : Graphics related to ESC winners, hosts, and participants

4. METHODS

Eurovision Song Contest is a popular Television show, organized by European Broadcasting Union, therefore almost all recordings are accessible online, which provides an incredible source for descriptive analysis. Meanwhile, to strengthen the debate, three Eurovision set designers were interviewed. The data gathered by the analysis, is put on a timeframe that is based on design roadmapping literature. The motivations of selecting these methods, and details of application are discussed in this chapter.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis is used to convert visual information and related research to meaningful data that uncovers the nature of the studied events. Because that the study aims to reveal patterns of Eurovision stages, and there is an extensive video footage available; describing all sixty two stages was the reasonable initial step of the study. The method is described by Lambert as follows:

Data collection of qualitative descriptive studies focuses on discovering the nature of the specific events under study.... data collection also may include observations, and examination of records, reports, photographs, and documents. Rather, qualitative descriptive research is purely data-derived in that codes are generated from the data in the course of the study ... descriptive studies generally are characterized by simultaneous data collection and analysis. (2012)

While examining the videos, It was realized how the process could be too assumptive; to avoid this, any direct source related to the subject were reviewed in addition to personal observations. Official Eurovision website's history section proved to be very useful, meanwhile fan comments and opinions helped identifying some features significant for the spectators. Moreover, newspaper and TV archives were included in the research as, despite the frequent problems of language and other cultural barriers, the news and documentaries could provide many details of the production, such as the story of the projects, interviews with the designers or at least the identity

of them. The names of the designers allowed a more detailed research on their points of views, as some would have portfolios where they exhibited their success with detailed sketches, meanwhile three designers were personally contacted for this study. The Irish designer Michael Grogan who has worked on ESC 1981, 1988 and 1997; the Turkish production designer of ESC 2004, Servet Işık; the German mastermind behind ESC 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2017, Florian Wieder were asked about Eurovision Song Contest and their work for it. As a result of this process, the descriptions turned out to be more than personal opinions and included more objective insight; revealing some key objectives and elements of the subject. The analysis is in Chapter 5, with images, quotes and comments.

4.2 Interviews

The best way to have an understanding of the Eurovision stages was via the expert opinion of the designers who had experienced the production process of one or more of them. Some of the designers already were either interviewed or voluntarily shared the details of their work and the recordings of their opinions could be accessed easily, while others remained mystery. During the initial research, any interesting name that was responsible of creatives were noted and amongst them, four were contacted with a request for interview. Three of them replied and made massive contribution to the theory examined in this research.

Time and travel restrictions guided the way interview was conducted: the participants were contacted online and the questions were sent and replied via e-mail: it was very structured with no secondary feedback session. A set of open-ended questions were determined based on the type of insight that would be useful for the study: the unique concepts behind every stage the participants have worked on, the details of the design brief, and thoughts of Eurovision in general. The participants, as the expert, should have had the opportunity to share their personal view, and close-ended questions would not provide as valuable data. Lastly, each participant's background was taken into consideration to personalize the questions, while keeping the main theme intact so opinions could be compared to each other. The full text of the interviews are listed in Appendix B and further comments on designers perspective are in Chapter 8.

4.3 Design Roadmapping

The outcome of descriptive analysis is further evaluated on a timeline to identify the differences, similarities, patterns and milestones throughout the sixty two years of the contest. The timeline transforms Eurovision Song Contest's history of stages into data, providing a clear visual insight to the situation via abstraction. The years are written in the central row and main themes, inspirations and significant technical elements are marked in corresponding columns. As with the descriptive analysis, assumptions are avoided as much as possible and the clustering is based on statistical evidence. It is important to note that the input is reduced to the major occurrences directly effect the physical attributes of the stage as defined in p.8. despite loads of other elements of a typical Eurovision production, that could have ticked some boxes especially in categories like national representation. In addition technology advances in a much more complex manner however it was simplified to general concepts.

The adopted format for the timeline is originally used for “technology roadmapping”. This commonly utilized technique aims to prepare the product designers and companies for the future, created to efficiently chart the factors that shape products through time. *“The approach provides a structured (and often graphical) means for exploring and communicating the relationships between evolving and developing markets, products and technologies over time”* (Phaal et al., 2003). The purpose of this study is to clarify the impact of external sources on the end product, in a specified period. While the former is aiming for the future, the latter is reassuring the format by applying it to the past and indicating the possibility of predicting the future with the same mindset and framework.

The roadmapping literature emphasizes the importance of a dialogue between a commercial perspective and the technical capabilities, and suggests creating separate research for both just to be merged later on a chart explaining the relationship between them and products. The two aspects are called “market pull” and “technology push” in literature and there are multiple versions of roadmap templates available in a range between these extremes (Phaal et al., 2003). A very common and simplified template is proposed by EIRMA (1997), as illustrated in figure3.63. It simply shows market, product and technology layers on one axis, and time in the

other. Bars indicates the developments with beginning and end points and lines connect “market” and “technology” in products, highlighting the impacts of both sides.

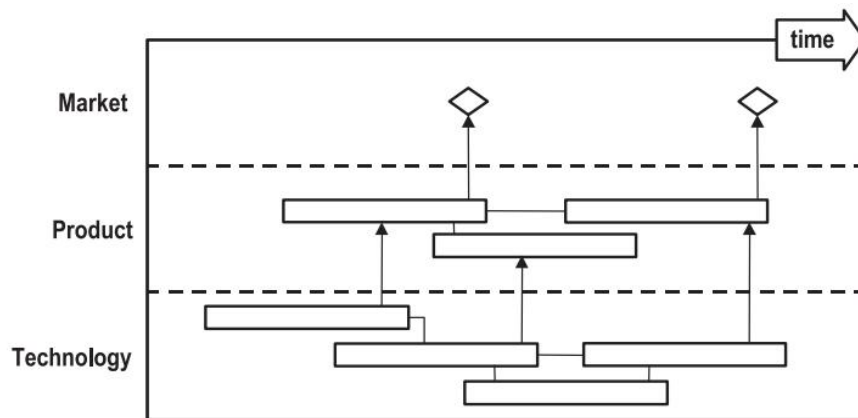


Figure 4.63 : Schematic Technology Roadmap (EIRMA, 1997).

A more clear understanding of the terms “market”, “product” and “technology” are required in order to capture the variability of the technique. In Figure 4.64, a detailed guide to roadmap architecture, that is built on analysis of many examples, is observable. The horizontal axis is for time, and its scale depends on the scope and type of the project. Vertical axis should be carefully designed with layers and sublayers, based on the requirements of the problem at hand.

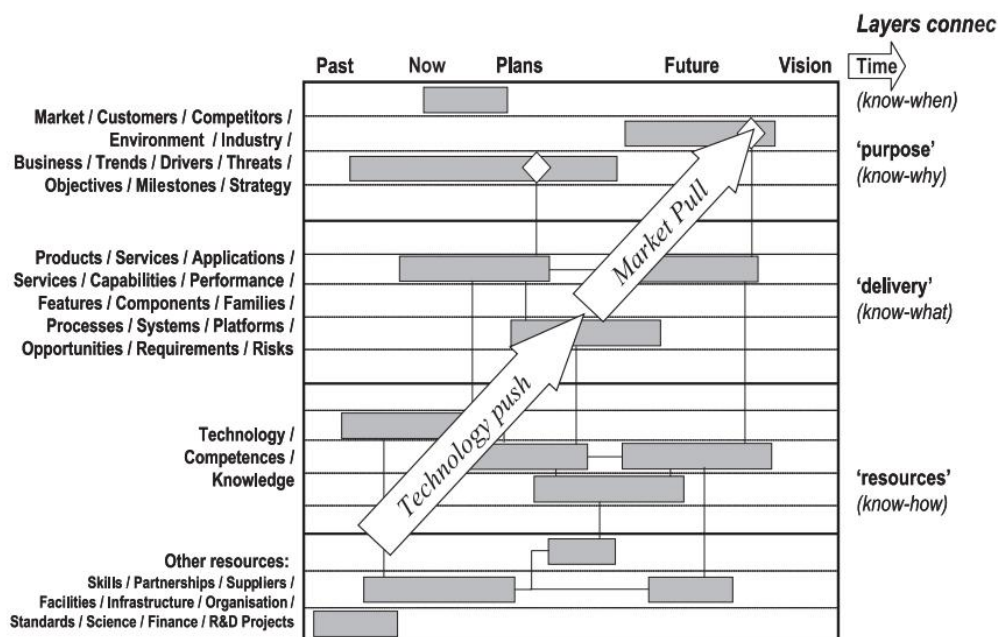


Figure 4.64 : A detailed guide to roadmapping (Phaal et al., 2003).

The timeline prepared as a part of the current study is modified for Eurovision Song Contest stages that has been designed and produced between 1956 and 2017. Considering the event is annual and there has not been any pauses to date, the horizontal axis is easy to set. The years are also used to define the analyzed products, and is therefore placed as the central layer. The main top layer in the vertical axis is defined as “design objectives” considering they are set by the stakeholders to address to market demands, and the main bottom layer is “technical capabilities” as shown below (Figure 4.65).

DESIGN OBJECTIVES								
TIME / EUROVISION STAGES	1956	1957	1958	1959	..		2014	2015
TECHNICAL CAPABILITIES							2016	2017

Figure 4.65 : The simple layout of the timeline

The “commercial perspective” layer is subdivided into four categories, guided by the descriptive analysis. The most common and re emerging themes in the stage development process are clustered under “National Representation”, “Trends”, “Versatility” and “Branding”. The “technology” layer is split into five sublayers: “broadcasting” “audio” “microphones” “lighting and special effects” and “televoting”. All indicating the technical developments that changed the sound, visuals and elements on stage in different ways. The timeline became an efficient way to lay out all the factors involved.

5. ANALYSIS OF EUROVISION STAGES

The sixty two stages of Eurovision Song Contest, are described and analyzed in this chapter. The concepts of all the unique stages designed for the long running show, the motivations of hosting TV stations and their relations to time and place are the focal points. Meanwhile the significant changes in technical aspect, such as camerawork, microphones, the orchestra, lighting equipment are noted especially when they add additional value and revolutionize the expectations from the set. The sets' capability to adapt for many performances were also evaluated as the efforts for it were noticeable even in the first editions. In summary descriptive analysis of ESC stages are built on three pillars: concepts, versatility and use of technology.

5.1. Descriptions

5.1.1. Lugano 1956 / Switzerland

The first ever Eurovision Song Contest was held in Lugano, primarily as a radio show. The broadcasting technologies at the time, and the lack of television sets among European households, did not allow the show to be televised ("Eurovision Song Contest Lugano 1956", 2017). However, it was still taped, with some black and white footage still available as an archive. The winning performance of Lys Assia takes place in a simple set, decorated with flowers and curtains (Figure 5.1). The chamber orchestra fits on stage, accompanying the singers. As expected from a non-televised, prototype of a show, the set is simple and not looking for an adventure.



Figure 5.1 : A view of ESC 1956 set featuring flowers and curtains (EBU, 1956).

5.1.2. Frankfurt 1957 / Germany

Despite the victory of Switzerland the previous year, the 1957 contest was held in Germany, as the former declined to host two years in a row. This time it was televised live, which resulted in the first ever efforts to visually impress the audience of Eurovision: A passionate kiss and a fake telephone were minor on-set distractions, while the key to visual diversity achieved in this set, was the backdrop. The singers from ten different countries, performed in front of paintings that were unique to each act (Figure 5.2). This allowed the performances to differ and let the competitors hope to stand out on merits other than music. In addition, minimal camerawork focused on the performer's entrance to the stage and then remained in a close up of the face, creating a sense of intimacy or claustrophobia. A few establishing shots showcase an onstage orchestra as well as a live audience. The attire of all performers was very classic for the time period. The performance closed off in a traditional theatrical style, with flowers and applause.



Figure 5.2 : Views of ESC 1957 set featuring different backdrops (EBU, 1957).

5.1.3. Hilversum 1958 / Netherlands

The third version of Eurovision Song Contest took place in Hilversum, Netherlands where all the songs -including *Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu*, or with its more famous name “*Volare*”- were performed between a thousand tulips in a static arrangement on the stage and throughout the orchestra. Tulips are the national flowers of Netherlands and decorating the stage with a thousand of them, is an attempt to mark the stage as Dutch, thus branding the experience as unique to that nation. In addition to tulips, the set included drapes, curtains, stars and moon in a fairy tale like setting which remained the same throughout the contest (Figure 5.3). A sense of visual diversity was attempted by locating performers in different positions. A noticeably wider

camera angle, with dynamic zoom and pan controls featured the orchestra and the contestant chart more often. The attire of the performers and the background became more prominent on stage as a part of the act, while the transitions remained in the similar, walk out style, more elements of the game show were now clearly present.



Figure 5.3 : Views of ESC 1958 set featuring tulips (EBU, 1958).

5.1.4. Cannes 1959 / France

The French city Cannes hosted the 4th edition of Eurovision, welcoming 11 participants. The introduction featured the host city and an exterior shot, establishing the event from outside the theater and the scale of the spectacle. The orchestra was placed between the audience and the performers, rather than on the stage which gave room for a more integral and unique set design which included three revolving doors with golden embroideries, that resembled human size books. On the panels of this structure, there were images of famous sights and buildings, associated with participating nations: Every act was performed in front of a representative image of their native country, such as Sacre-Coeur Basilica for France, steep roofed houses for Denmark, Palazzo Dugale for Italy, Monte Carlo Casino for Monaco, a mill for Netherlands, Big Ben Tower for United Kingdom. The 12th side had an image of Gulf of the Napoule as a representation of the host city, Cannes. As a result, the set looked diverse for each act, while maintaining a cohesive look for the event that embraces the multinational discourse of Eurovision. Even though the footage is black and white and comparatively low quality, it still manages to show the distinct approach to staging, all visible in Figure 5.4. The cameras tried to capture the movements of the revolving panels and the entrance of the singers between the performances, while zooming in for close up during them. The orchestra was placed

between the audience and the performance area and stairs made a smooth transition possible. There are flowers as additional decoration, all creating an elegant and royal look.



Figure 5.4 :Views of ESC 1959 sets featuring revolving panels (EBU, 1959).

5.1.5. London 1960 / United Kingdom

1960 was the first year, United Kingdom stood up to host the event on behalf of previous year's winner, and it would not be the last. By being the replacement, they would indicate their technical superiority, something United Kingdom has been proud of since Industrial Revolution. The black and white footage fails to capture the color scheme, however Terry Wogan explains that the stage is colored blue, white and gold (BBC, 1960) directly referring to Union Jack, the flag of United Kingdom. The set offers different props for each performance varying from cardboard mountains, glittery frames to other three dimensional structures (Figure 5.5). Along with theatrical curtains unfurling to reveal each act they establish a clear visual transition between contestants. Despite the success in versatility, the key image of 1960 edition of Eurovision is the press booths with names of the performing countries tagged on them, giving a clear message of multi-national reach of the contest.



Figure 5.5 : Views of ESC 1960 set featuring various props (BBC, 1960).

5.1.6 Cannes 1961 / France

When Cannes was the Eurovision capital for the second time, similar to their previous experience, the orchestra was placed in front of the audience, before the performance area with stairs leading up to it. However, when revealed after curtain opening, the set looked static compared to that of ESC 1959 (p.25), the national representation was limited just to just host country, and visual diversity was only attempted by placing the singers in different positions on the two-story balcony reproduction. The main structure was accompanied by extensive garden paintings and real flowers (Figure 5.6). It almost looked like the participants from 16 countries performed in the gardens of the Versailles Palace to the guests in a reception. The relaxed garden atmosphere also played a background to more physical acts, as a series of dance performances transitioned into the award ceremony.



Figure 5.6 : A view of ESC 1961 set featuring a baroque theme (EBU, 1961).

5.1.7 Luxembourg 1962

Luxembourg, a very small country in Central Europe, hosted Eurovision Song Contest for the first time in 1962. The stage featured an orchestra on the left side and a performance area on the right was decorated with a classic flower pot, tulle curtains, and several geometric patterns that were mostly overshadowed by the magical feeling of the very ambitious “twinkling lights” show. The light bulbs attached to the backdrop, would turn on and off to the rhythm of the songs during the performances, imitating a starry night. To maximize the impact of the small flickering lights, the camerawork was more tame, focusing closer on the singers. Despite having problems with power and failing to manage to keep lights on all night (Figure 5.6), their vision is still appreciated.



Figure 5.7 : Views of ESC 1962 set showcasing power issues (EBU, 1962).

5.1.8 London 1963 / United Kingdom

London once again stepped up for a winner in despair -France in this case- and volunteered to host the event. Yvonne Littlewood, the director of the event, mentions the reason as BBC’s motivation of showing off their newly built studios (“60 Years of Eurovision”, 2015). This motivation resulted in the first and last Eurovision Song Contest in which songs were performed in a studio environment, separated from their audience. In addition, boom microphones were preferred instead of usual standing ones, and this decision freed the singers’ hands, allowing the them to move freely and interact with a variety of props and other performers (Figure 5.8). Moreover, clever use of perspective and lighting contributed to the making of high quality visuals comparable with movies of the time, causing controversies over whether the show was pre-taped or not that persist to this date. All in all, ESC 1963 remains as one of the most successful shows in terms of visual diversity.



Figure 5.8 : Views of ESC 1963 studio, showcasing visual diversity (EBU, 1963)

5.1.9 Copenhagen 1964 / Denmark

The striking features of Danish stage of ESC 1964 are stairs, flowers, and square blocks with ornamental paintings inside. In addition, a sense of depth was achieved by using transparent glittery curtains, which play with light and layers (Figure 5.9). The orchestra is placed off-stage, on the right side of the audience. Further analysis on camera angles or versatility of production is difficult, since the only copy of the full show footage was burned in a fire at Danish broadcaster DR's archives ("Copenhagen 1964", 2017).



Figure 5.9 : A photograph of ESC 1964 featuring the winner (Buhl, 1964).

5.1.10 Naples 1965 / Italy

The tenth edition of Eurovision Song contest was held in Naples, Italy. While the orchestra stood between pipes therefore achieving a more sophisticated feeling, the performance area was kept very simple. The logo of Eurovision was scaled up and used to cover the backdrop while the eighteen performers stood in front of it, making the contest's brand identity relevant to the set design for the first time (Figure 5.10). The winner "Poupée de Cire, Poupée de Son" marks a milestone as it is the first pop song that won the contest and changed the type of entries in later years.



Figure 5.10 : Views of ESC 1965 set featuring the logo backdrop (EBU, 1965).

5.1.11 Luxembourg 1966

When Luxembourg hosted the event for the second time in 1966, they avoided major risk unlike their first attempt (p.28). The main elements of the stage were a staircase for the entrance of the performers and a hanging and revolving chandelier (Figure 5.11) and a moving scoreboard. A general floral theme was applied. In terms of visual diversity, the production of this year failed to compete with its precedents since not much changed between acts and the cameras zoomed on the vocalists.



Figure 5.11 : A view of ESC 1966 set featuring a chandelier (EBU, 1966).

5.1.12 Vienna 1967 / Austria

The nation of Mozart, Haydn and Schubert impressed the audience and seventeen participants with the talented orchestra and the location: “Hofburg Festsaal”. Few things could be more Austrian than the festival hall of former imperial palace of Habsburg dynasty. In addition to impressiveness of the hall, the set featured four revolving mirrors, providing optical illusions and therefore excitement, action and visual diversity to an otherwise classical setting (Figure 5.12). The performers stood still in the focal point of the mirrors, and despite their general static posture, a kind of dynamism was achieved. Overall, Vienna hosted one of the most memorable editions of Eurovision Song Contest especially for its time and brought a high quality and creative closure to black & white era.



Figure 5.12 : Views of ESC 1967 set featuring mirrors (EBU, 1967).

5.1.13 London 1968 / United Kingdom

London hosted the contest for the third time, this time after an actual victory. As usual, United Kingdom used this as an opportunity to push the contest further and show how innovative the country is. One of the major revolutions of the contest history happened: this edition was broadcast live and in color. Royal Albert Hall was prepared for this event with the addition of a big transparent Eurovision logo in the backdrop and light projections (Figure 5.13), a better attempt at branding than Italy 1965 (p.30). However, all acts were presented in a monotonous fashion as the stage didn't offer versatility for the performers, for instance the colors did not change and there were no additional props. The visual diversity came from the wardrobe choices of the performers and the camerawork.



Figure 5.13 : Views of ESC 1968 set featuring a transparent logo (EBU, 1968)

5.1.14 Madrid 1969 / Spain

Madrid 1969 was significant mostly for political reasons and its four winners. The contest was held under the shadow of the rumors about Spain using unethical methods, such as bribing the judges, to win and therefore host the event (“60 Years of Eurovision”, 2015). The unrest caused by state of emergency in the country was paused only for the contest. The event managed to be very satisfying in its musical merits. United Kingdom, Netherlands, Spain and France all had songs worthy of winning. The stage itself was not as exciting as the competition though despite being decorated with a Salvador Dali sculpture (McKenzie, 2017) and many flowers. The scale of the sculpture and flowers (Figure 5.14) failed to provide a wide enough backdrop so the monochromatic beige walls formed the dominant backdrop for the acts, while the shimmer of the Dali metal blended with the organ pipes of the theater. The wired microphone and the vast space allowed the singers to move around.



Figure 5.14 : Views of ESC 1969 set featuring a Dali sculpture (EBU, 1969)

5.1.15 Amsterdam 1970 / Netherlands

In a year where many participants lost interest, due to the voting system's failure to assign a singular winner, Netherlands managed to pull off a very interesting show for the remaining twelve participants. After an introduction with an aerial view of Amsterdam, a journey was taken through its channels, the special housing, bikers and Rembrandt were highlighted. When the doors of the hall opened, the stage stood there as a simple, integrated geometric sculpture. The 5 matte silver arcs marked a focal point where most of the performers preferred to stand. The arcs were matched with six shimmering spheres of different sizes. The set elements, had the capability to move and create diverse looks for each act, this variety was further enhanced by changing light colors (Figure 5.15). The backdrop became a participant in the performance, the sphere joining the artistic ensembles as collaborators. All in all, the set of ESC 1970 was the first cohesive yet dynamic set, building different Worlds for every performance. And it was the first time Roland de Groot made an impact as a set designer to the European audience.



Figure 5.15 : Views of ESC 1970, showcasing the dynamic set (EBU, 1970)

5.1.16 Dublin 1971 / Ireland

When Ireland hosted for the first, but not the last time, after a victory that meant “a very bright light in very bright days” (“60 Years of Eurovision”, 2015), referring to economical and political difficulties the country has been facing. RTE used Eurovision as an opportunity to try broadcasting live in color. “The Eurovision production was one of the first home produced colour television programmes broadcast by RTÉ.” (RTE, 2014). The color broadcasting was such a new experience

for the Irish TV channel that, the infrastructure was not established enough and they had to loan color cameras from BBC.

The set consists of radial contours and an interesting object in the backdrop (Figure 5.15) as the set designer took inspirational cues from Irish glassware from the 18th century. Riley says “As this year, the Eurovision Song Contest emanates from Dublin, and as it is likely to have a worldwide audience, i felt that the total design concept should have an Irish flavor. Clearly a typical Celtic type ornamentation would not be ideal for this kind of program, so after considerable research I have settled on 18th century Irish glass and silver as my principal sources of influence” (1971). He continues to explain how the semi translucent fiberglass allowed for color changes and how the colors were planned to be coordinated with performer’s outfits and the black & white screens were still taken into consideration by making sure the elements were tonally interesting; underlining the importance of color transmission and lack of it for the stage design. This approach allowed each act to have a visual cohesion in both close ups and wide shots, providing the most individually tailored mood ambiance for each performer, compared to the previous editions of Eurovision.

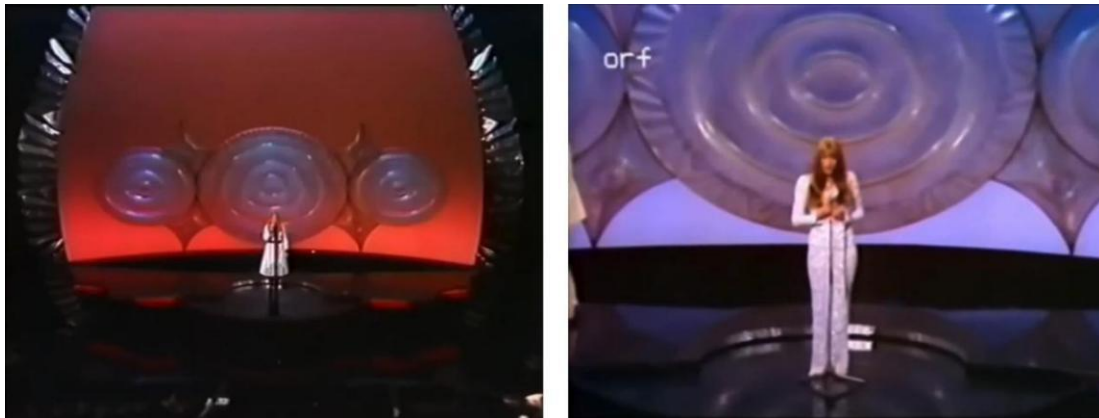


Figure 5.16 : Views of ESC 1971 set featuring a translucent object (EBU, 1971).

5.1.17 Edinburgh 1972 / United Kingdom

Once again, United Kingdom hosted on behalf of a previous winner, stepping in for Monaco, a very small country with insufficient resources for an event of this size. In fact, the city state remains the only country with a victory and no hosting experience to date. Instead Edinburgh, Scotland’s capital was selected by BBC as the host city of Eurovision 1972. The venue, Usher Hall was built in 1914 and boasted with its

popularity: *“perhaps more world famous orchestras have appeared here than any other hall in Europe”* (Wogan, 1972)

The focal point of the stage was a convergence of two rectangular planes onto a black shiny curtain that acted as an entrance (Figure 5.17). The two walls were framed by blocks of lights that became a static background for the acts. The circular stage protruded into the orchestra, that separated the audience from the singers in a semicircular arrangement, putting even more emphasis on the corner. One edge acted as a video wall, which became the most significant attracting element on stage. It was used for the introduction of the acts, and as a graphic, changing background to boost the musical expression of the songs. BBC once again managed to advance the technological expectations for the contest, by featuring the video wall.



Figure 5.17 : Views of ESC 1972 set, featuring a video wall (BBC, 1972).

5.1.18 Luxembourg 1973

Luxembourg hosted for the third time in eighteen years, in 1973 and they used this opportunity to turn the orchestra into the stage. The controversial subject of this year, was Israel’s participation, both due to the fact that it was the first geographically Asian country in the contest and they brought security problems along. The security measures were so intense that Wogan explains it as “The concert hall was surrounded by police, soldier, armored vehicles, an attack was expected... Just before the show starts, the floor manager says ‘Please remain in your seats, when you are applauding, do not stand up, otherwise you may be shot’” (“60 Years of Eurovision”, 2015)

Despite the security concerns, Luxembourg put on a good show with a spectacular

stage design. The backdrop of the set was a three story structure that had room for the orchestra to sit and play their instruments (Figure 5.17). For additional flow, some curvy props were included in front of them. The overall grayness of the structure, was well balanced with brown and yellow of the instruments, warm colors in back lighting, red flowers and a gold plate embossed with the lion symbol from the country's coat of arm. Patterned projections were also included in the package, when a sense of movement was required. Overall, Luxembourg's stage design manages a very smart use of small space and pioneers the idea of turning the orchestra into a key object.



Figure 5.18 : Views of ESC 1973 set, emphasizing orchestra (EBU, 1973).

5.1.19 Brighton 1974 / United Kingdom

When Luxembourg won for second consecutive year, they rejected the opportunity to host, leaving the honors to United Kingdom once again. For the fourth time in Eurovision history, BBC produced the show without having won the contest in preceding years. 1974 is mostly remembered due to its legendary winner Waterloo, by the most internationally celebrated act that ever participated in Eurovision: ABBA. The venue, Brighton Dome, takes pride in hosting “truly exceptional cornerstones in the history of popular music”, listing ABBA’s performance as one of their most important. In fact, they would organize a 40th year anniversary event to commemorate that moment. (Cooper, 2014) The Swedish band overshadowed everything else, including Olivia Newton-John, former winner Gigliola Cinquetti and the set. The set itself used a bigger space than usual, featuring large curves, glittering drapes, integrated lights, hanging orbs. The asymmetrical design of the stage, combined with metallic and matte finishes (Figure 5.19), was able to provide both

shimmering backdrops in close ups, and smooth colour gradients for establishing shots. The stage of ESC 1974 is remarked as “one of the first times that bespoke design became a prominent part of the show’s setup” (Unistage, 2016).



Figure 5.19 : Views of ESC 1974 set, showcasing asymmetrical design (EBU, 1974).

5.1.20 Stockholm 1975 / Sweden

The Swedish public did not react well to their country’s first adventure of hosting Eurovision. There were extensive demonstrations against commercialization of music and the costs of staging the event (Radio Sweden, 2013). However, SVT did not pull back in its efforts for production and assigned Bo-Ruben Hedwall for the set design. Hedwall, took the opportunity to express an abstraction of the geographic attributes associated with the Scandinavian nation. The set included two layers of blue-silver-white panels, engraved with curved abstractions of sea and ice. However, the consistent dark and gloomy atmosphere of the two hour - twelve minutes of broadcast, showed an incompetence in lighting. Moreover, the visual diversity between acts did not appear to be one of the principles in design. The moody atmosphere forced more close up angles and the presence of the stage itself fell away into a murky gloom. Figure 5.20 shows the designer with a model of the stage, providing a clear understanding of layered idea behind the set design of 1975 Eurovision Song Contest. This image is accompanied with a photo from the winning performance.



Figure 5.20 : Set designer with the model and presenter of ESC 1975 (SVT, 1975)

5.1.21 The Hague 1976 / Netherlands

“An extraordinary kind of geometric miracle” are the words Terry Wogan used to describe the 21st Eurovision stage (1976). A returning set designer, Roland de Groot, took a similar approach to his previous work in 1970 (p.33) and suspended an arrangement of several geometric parts, creating distinct shapes in different combinations. It was yet another play on abstraction of form in space, this time incorporating a fast moving sculpture instead of a composition that merely implied motion. The enthusiastic balance between simple and complex reminds of modernity, deStijl, Art Deco and geometrical modernism (Figure 5.20). The color scheme however is muted, contrasting the brighter color choices of previous years. 1976 is also an important year for sound technology and rules for the contest. Orchestra’s importance has diminished with wider use of prerecorded sounds being integrated to the system.

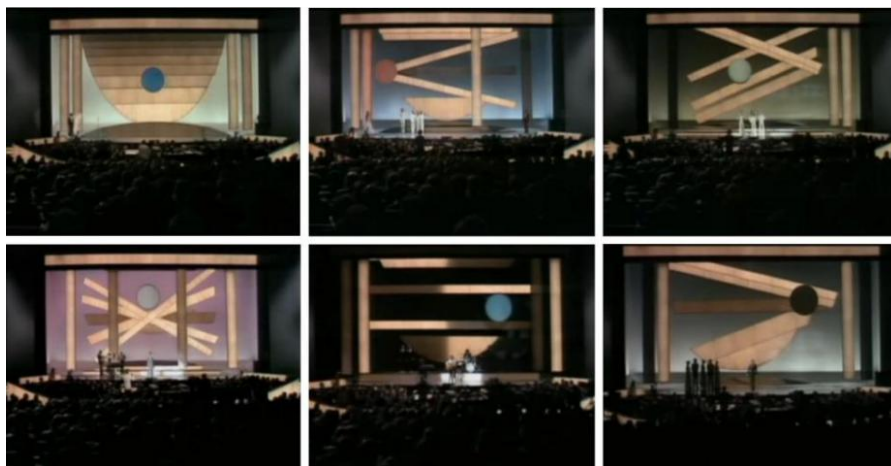


Figure 5.21 : Views of ESC 1976 set, showcasing the variety (BBC, 1976)

5.1.22 London 1977 / United Kingdom

Saving all kisses (Brotherhood of Man, 1976) saved the victory for United Kingdom and they managed to host for the third time in five years, this time in London. In the documentary “That was the Week We Watched”, production is described as “A 2700 seat auditorium at the brand new Wembley Conference Center. A revolving stage, twelve cameras filming eighteen different songs, to be beamed simultaneously to thirty four different countries and an audience of six hundred million. A great chance for Britain to show off ... their technology” (2004) So, the technical capacity of BBC and enthusiasm over Wembley Conference Center were celebrated, in a stage that imitated the roundness of the venue, and had revolving parts (Figure 5.20). Orchestra

was once again a main element on the stage and the elevations in the structure were emphasized with lights covering the edges. Different color lighting combinations were used to provide a sense of visual diversity between acts which mostly included plural people wearing coherent costumes, dancing with a cheerful choreography. The camerawork had zooms, pans and crisp transitions, capturing the joy.



Figure 5.22 : Views of ESC 1977 set featuring revolving parts (NRK, 1977)

5.1.23 Paris 1978 / France

The 23rd edition of Eurovision Song Contest took place in Paris and was a rather disappointing production. The orchestra revealed itself via a rotating platform on the stage, making them the key element, the backdrop and focal point (Figure 5.23). Around them a general curvilinear set was designed. The stage was mediocre however the major issues were with the lighting and broadcasting. The overall look was as gray as the asphalt of Champs-Élysées and it was not an intentional reference to the host city this time. Despite the set being very up to date, the presentation of the show itself created an atmosphere more appropriate in the two prior decades. Camerawork was very stable compared to the previous year, however an angle behind the singers towards the audience and spotlights, set up the mood for ballads.



Figure 5.23 : Views of ESC 1978 set featuring orchestra (EBU, 1978)

5.1.24 Jerusalem 1979 / Israel

The Eurovision Song Contest, was hosted outside of continental Europe, for the first time in 1979. A fact that probably justified Germany's selection of "Dschinghis Khan" singing about riding horses in Central Asian steppes, drinking in tents and generally being Mongolian (1979). Israeli approach to set design was clean with a clear reference to the nation's identity, as the first image of the set showed a golden dome and an eye (Figure 5.23). The golden dome is a of Dome of the Rock, acting as both an architectural and contextual reference to Jerusalem. *"In addition to being a beautiful urban magnet that draws visual attention to itself, the Dome of the Rock is a symbol with many connotations for Muslims, Jews and Christians"* (Grabar, 2006) The eye however, was a more subtle icon of Zionism, and a shape shifting element on the stage. Overall the stage looks like it's narrating the line from the national anthem of Israel: *"With eyes turned toward the East, looking toward Zion"* (1877), while still providing high quality visuals to the audience. The symmetrical nature of the stage and its radiating geometry created a more claustrophobic feel as the flat color of the backdrop eliminated any feeling of depth. The thematic color and lighting changes accompanied every act, however a lack of foreground objects forced every act to use a similar composition. The camerawork was not as dynamic as the centerpiece and changed between close-up and zoom out.

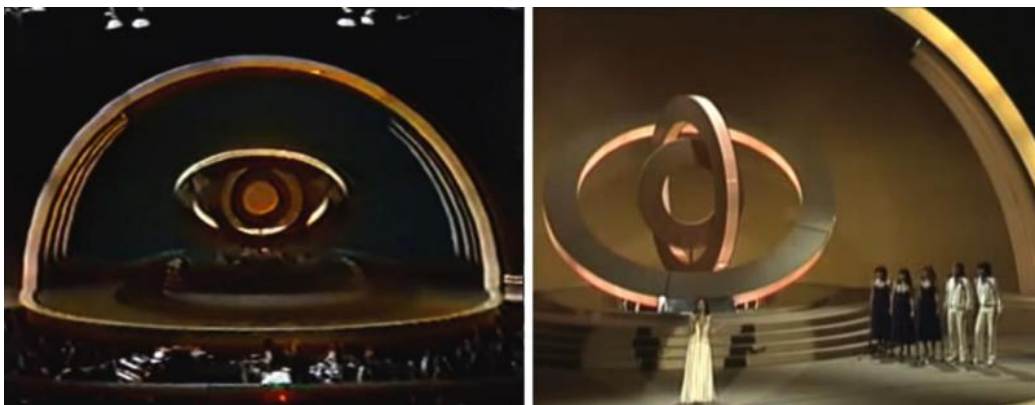


Figure 5.24 :Views of ESC 1979 set featuring a dome and an eye (EBU, 1979).

5.1.25 The Hague 1980 / Netherlands

Israel won consequently, however, BBC wasn't interested in hosting the event for another victor anymore. Therefore the other successful host of the 1970s, said *"What's Another Year?"* (Logan, 1980) and welcomed the 19 participants to The

Hague. It is relatively easy to distinguish the Dutch productions of the decade, mainly due to one exceptionally talented designer: Roland de Groot. Even though they had to re-use most of the stage of 1976 (O'Regan, 2015), the backdrop had a significantly different geometry. However, the main principle remained the same, the set elements once again were used in different combinations for every act, providing a strong visual diversity. In addition, there was a more clear reference to Dutch identity, two big tulips for the presenters' corner (Figure 5.24). Standing there and introducing Turkish entry, Şebnem Savaşçı said “*The Turks who brought you tulips several centuries ago, is now bringing you a love song about petrol.*” (1980). The muted gray and light color graduated tonalities dominate the visuals as a clear contrast to Israel's previous flat color fields.

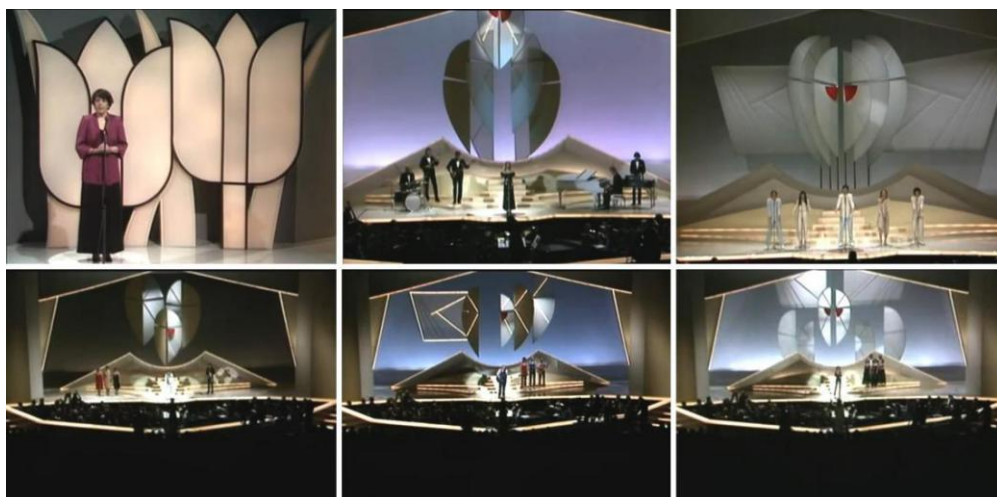


Figure 5.25 : Views of ESC 1980 showcasing versatility and tulips (EBU, 1980).

5.1.26 Dublin 1981 / Ireland

Dublin hosted the event for the second time a decade after the first. They took a similar approach as first one, with a better sense of depth. An interview with the set designer Michael Grogan was conducted (Appendix B.1) to reveal more on the process and the result. Grogan mentions Eurovision as a “make or break” situation for his career, he was given three months to fulfill the request of simply designing “a stage that’s reflecting Irish culture” for the contest. He was inspired by Celtic artifacts from early and pre-Christian civilizations, namely Torc and the Petrie crown which were both worn as clasps for formal dresses (2017). The inspiration is clear in the translucent sculpture in the backdrop. To emphasize the vision of modernized Celtic culture, “the opening sequence of the 1981 Eurovision Song Contest showed

'old Ireland' blending into 'modern Ireland' with shots of Celtic ruins, cliffs, castles, edited together with close-ups of art and shots of planes.” (RTE, 1981)



Figure 5.26 : Views of ESC 1981, featuring a translucent backdrop (ORF, 1981).

The graphic cohesion of each act was achieved through muted monochromatic lighting schemes. The colors of the stage for each performance were arranged after the costumes were decided and shown to production team, so the cohesion was deliberate. The background objects mimic the metalwork as the screen frames allude to metal seams and the individual lamps resemble decorative stud work. The overlapping scenes create shimmering gradients of color washes and simulate a depth to the stage while maintaining a simplicity of construction as well as visuals. The integration of lighting into the floor as well as the background creates a uniform wash of light over each performance.

5.1.27 Harrogate 1982 / United Kingdom

“Where is Harrogate?”, “Ou est Harrogate”, “Harrogate neredé?” were the questions from the introduction video of ESC 1982, in three different languages of participating nations, asking where the host city of Eurovision 1982 is. The contest was unexpectedly held in the newly built Harrogate Conference Center in North Yorkshire. The small size of the town was visible in the stage, since it was so compact that some of the acts struggled to get the most from their performances. The size hindered dancing in particular which was a more regular part of the act compared to the previous decade. The design of the set a broken up into a series of linear, sharp lines set at right angles. Several blocks, including a revolving one, were arranged with overlaps to create a sense of depth and could change colors using

integrated edge lighting (Figure 5.27). Therefore the set had the capability of shaping itself to create diverse abstract compositions, enhancing the mood of each act while still maintaining a unique look for the show. However, all the efforts, including mirrors, failed to override a sense of claustrophobia that permeated the show.



Figure 5.27 : Views of ESC 1982, showcasing a small stage (EBU, 1982).

5.1.28 Munich 1983 / Germany

After the first German victory, the contest was held in Munich, in 1983. The set had a very industrial feel: a modular metal framework was the key structure, with bigger lights at each corner (Figure 5.28). The frames were filled with either vertical or horizontal lines, that light up in the background. Each box had the individual ability to shine or stay dark, which enabled different patterns to emerge, easily responding to the rhythm of acts. The concept was quite a unique and new approach for Eurovision history, however the application failed to impress. The stage was very dark overall, and according to Wogan it looked like “*the biggest electric fire in the world*” (1983). The two flanking lamps became distractions more than assets, while the monotonous background provided little graphic differentiation between performances. However, wireless microphones were used for the first time, boosting the freedom of performers. Orchestra was placed between the audience and the performance area and was on-screen in most of the shots.



Figure 5.28 : Views of ESC 1983 set, featuring lit frames (BBC, 1983).

5.1.29 Luxembourg 1984

The Luxembourg stage of 1984 looked very much like the Dutch productions of the decade: ESC 1976 (p. 38) and 1980 (p.40) for a rightful reason: The set designer was Roland de Groot. Therefore, once again and for the last time, we witnessed a strong geometric, highly transformable, mostly gilded set design. All the elements of the backdrop could be relocated to form different abstract compositions making the general structure the only way to identify they are from the same event (Figure 5.29). During the performances they continued to move, changing the back lights with the composition, sometimes creating gradients: making the production even richer visually. Unlike 1973 (p.35) the orchestra was barely visible. The stage also gave enough space for the performers to move around, and many of them preferred to do so with their wireless microphones. The stage faded to full black for the interval act that marked a true foreshadowing of the future - an abstract interactive dance with a series of sketched animals. Courtesy of the Prague Theater of Illuminated Drawings, this skit featured a white, linear creature morphing and interacting with a performer on stage using wire work, creating a feel later to be mimicked by digital media.

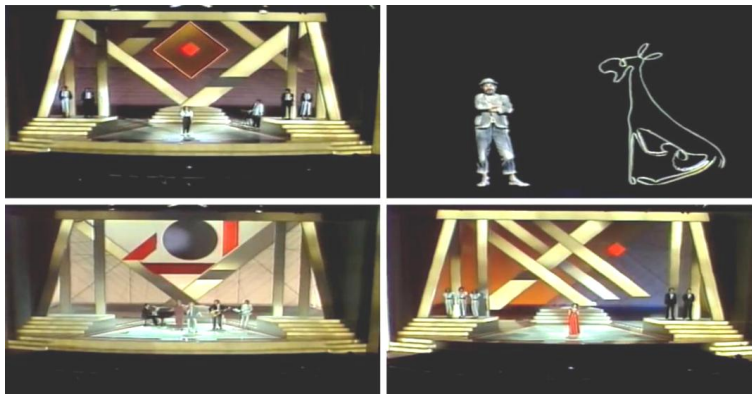


Figure 5.29 : Views of ESC 1984 set, including the interval act (EBU, 1983).

5.1.30 Goteborg 1985 / Sweden

The second Swedish Eurovision, was held in Gothenburg and the set had many scattered elements including metal grids, neon light bars, stairs, abstract arcs, columns, chandelier-like globes, a logo plate, plastic palm trees, a giant pink ball and changing background lights. In this cacophony of objects, the neon lights stood out most prominently. The stage was an eclectic-industrial playground with many tonal and material gradients. The orchestra was neither invisible nor the focal point this

time, they stood slightly on the right of the stage, becoming the backdrop for performances in some shots. Despite lacking cohesion, the camerawork and lighting managed to produce more focused shots by choosing to zoom in on the performers to highlight few elements for each act, filtering out the rest of the stage. (Figure 5.30)



Figure 5.30 : Views of ESC 1985 set, featuring clustered elements (EBU, 1985).

5.1.31 Bergen 1986 / Norway

For any European having suspicions over frostiness of Norway, 1986 was a year to clear confusions: Norway definitely is a cold country with plenty of ice. The whole stage imitated different forms of frozen water: ice stalagmites, icy mountains, arcs, glaciers. Everything was adding up to the concept and working in cohesion, even the orchestra, located on the right of the stage, contributed to the image by wearing plain white suits. The preferred lighting color to complete the concept was pale blue, however, it also changed for each act, if necessary to warmer tones, such as orange or pink. Every color of light, would just reflect from the half translucent ice shapes, giving a magical feeling. Also the audience looked almost completely black, creating the illusion that the stage was floating in space (Figure 5.31). Overall, it was an enchanting futuristic fairy tale experience for the audience.



Figure 5.31 : Views of ESC 1986 set, featuring imitations of ice (EBU, 1986)

5.1.32 Brussels 1987 / Belgium

Eurovision 1987 nearly marked the beginning of a new era. The stage included a tilted checkerboard, a big globe and a pyramid (Figure 5.31). It can also be read as an abstract landscape as the globe acts as the Sun, rising and going down. The laser light shows were more significant than the narrative of the stage, as they indicate a new element to be further explored for future stage shows. Another important image from this contest is the European Union flag, planted on top of a mountain, in the interval video. The European Union would be founded in the form it has today after the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, the Single Market would be launched with the 'four freedoms' of: movement of goods, services, people and money (National Board of Trade, 2015). Leading up to the treaty, feelings of unity became dominant and Belgium projected this enthusiasm on Eurovision. Brussels went on to become established the European Union's capital. The vision of European unity is projected via dazzling lights over the futuristic landscape as each nation presents their song, entangling politics with spectacle.

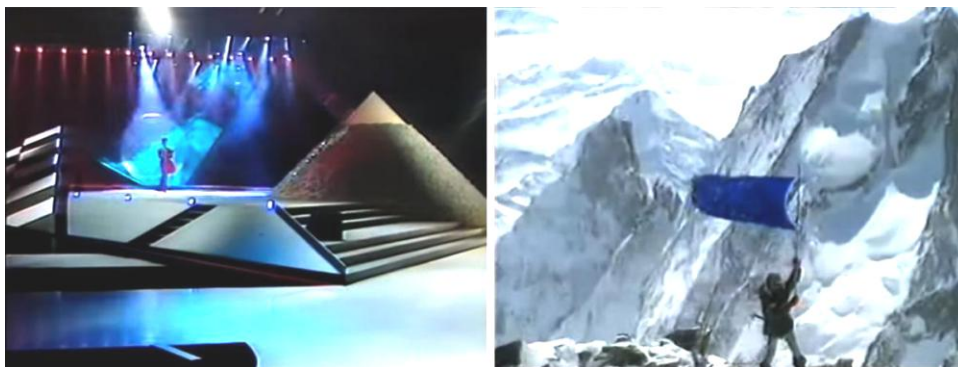


Figure 5.32 : Views of ESC 1987 featuring references to EU (EBU, 1987).

5.1.33 Dublin 1988 / Ireland

When Ireland hosted for the third time, a very different design approach was taken. Michael Grogan, as in 1981 (p.41) worked with RTE on the Eurovision production, along with co-designer Paula Farrell. As he explained in the interview conducted for this study the brief did not require a cultural representation projected on the stage design, therefore nothing was Celtic this time around. *“A new modern state of the art, black box concept with lots of special effects were used, therein lots of agonizing among the traditionalists.”* (App. B).

The stage looked like a grid for two point perspective (Figure 5.32). The black tiles were contoured with lights that changed color during the performances. A mirror reflected this digital frontier into the infinite, expanding the perceived depth of the stage indefinitely. Different props and lights created individual backdrops while the floor remained as the graphic signature of this year. There were also two blocks of screens, displaying zoomed in views of the performers. Overall, it came across as very dark, however together with Brussels 1987, it marked the beginning of a new era of staging techniques, one that is based on light shows and special effects. This stage marked the entry into the digital age, and acted as an appropriate gateway, eliminating the theatrical backdrops of the past, presenting a road into unknown possibilities.



Figure 5.33 : Views of ESC 1988 featuring a futuristic perspective grid (EBU, 1988).

5.1.34 Lausanne 1989 / Switzerland

After Celine Dion's victory, Switzerland earned the right to host the contest for the second time. In 1956, the Swiss production could not be broadcast live, so it was still a new experience for the Alpine country. The production was characterized by the country's proudest symbol, the Matterhorn, and the annual logo also featured an abstraction of the tourist attraction. The set designers followed the theme, and created an abstract and high-tech landscape. The object in the center of the stage, resembled the uniquely shaped peak of Matterhorn (Figure 5.34), however failed to capture the might of "*the highest heights*" making "*the dreams ... demand their rights*" (Lovebugs, 2009). The abstract peak of famous mountain was accompanied with other angular shaped structures, a video screen and many lighting elements, including projections and plenty of spotlights. The dominance of lights against the

dark background showcased the new staging minimalism and the variety made versatility possible. Lastly, the orchestra was barely visible.



Figure 5.34 : Views of ESC 1989 featuring an abstract Matterhorn (EBU, 1989)

5.1.35 Zagreb 1990 / Yugoslavia

While the rest of Europe was celebrating unity and chanting “*Insieme, unite unite Europe!*” (Cutugno, 1990), Yugoslavia was on the verge of dissolution. Therefore, Eurovision 1990 was more or less a Croatian production rather than a Yugoslavian one. Despite the obvious tension in the nation, Zagreb did a fine job putting a decent show that was visually brighter compared to many of the recent editions. The screens had a more significant place in the stage, the floor changed color and the light shows included projected shapes as well as bars of lights that turned on and off accompanying the rhythm (Figure 5.35). The camerawork presented the acts in a much more dynamic way, integrating motion and depth, as the floor and wall screens created a fully digital environment, without any static moments.



Figure 5.35 : Views of ESC 1990 set featuring projections (EBU, 1990).

5.1.36 Rome 1991 / Italy

The 36th edition of Eurovision Song Contest was held in Rome, Italy and their stage matched the glory of the country's history, contrary to everything else about the production. The set was a depiction of historical heritage with very clear references to Ancient Egyptian and Roman architecture (Figure 5.36). There were skyscrapers too, to emphasize the contrast between modern and ancient, just like the stage itself, as it combined the traditional theatrical decor with new lighting and projections in the floor and plane walls. The orchestra was placed on the left of the stage with modern scaffolding, balancing the stone building of the right. The general sand feeling was contrasted by sharp blue lights and wide shots set up the scenes. Lighting effects changed the mood for each song, and there was a big screen zooming on the performers.



Figure 5.36 : Views of ESC 1991 imitating ancient architecture (EBU, 1991).

5.1.37 Malmö 1992 / Sweden

When Sweden hosted the event for the third time, they decided to showcase their history very literally. “*The Viking movement was a Pan-Scandinavian phenomenon. Vikings came from all round the Scandinavian lands and seas, and they sailed anywhere accessible by ships.*” (Scott, 1988) and the ESC 1992 stage looked like Vikings sailed right into Eurovision. A model of a wooden ship, with a shield wall and dragon figurehead was the centerpiece and center of attention. In addition to the dragonship, there was a big Eurovision logo covering the floor, forming a cohesion with the texture of shields (Figure 5.37). The set was surrounded by two staircases in each side, adding to the stage depth. The orchestra was placed on the left side from audience perspective and lighting effects proved to be a dominant element of the

show in 1992 as well. The stage was symmetrical and the dynamism of the performances came through from the camerawork, the stage felt more like a concert rather than a theatrical event.



Figure 5.37 : Views of ESC 1992 set featuring a Viking ship (EBU, 1992)

5.1.38 Millstreet 1993 / Ireland

The decade when Ireland was the ultimate host of Eurovision Song Contest began in 1993. Even though the country hosted three times before, achievement wise it did not compare to hosting four times in five years. The 38th edition of Eurovision was held in Millstreet, still an Irish city but not Dublin. Because the venue was different this time, the challenges it presented were also different and the designer focused on solving these issues and building a futuristic and a universal look, rather than national representation or any other common approaches. The set designer, Alan Farquharson (n.d) explains his work:

Addressing the main problem of lack of height in the venue led to two key features of the final design, namely a three foot excavation of the area under the stage to accommodate underfloor lighting and a 60' wide tilted ceiling piece to allow cameras to shoot wide and high without shooting off the set... The ceiling piece was designed to mirror the shape of the floor area of the set then tilted in two planes creating a varying aspect on camera when seen from different angles... Alternate spaces between the channels were left void to facilitate backlighting of the performers... The orchestra was positioned camera left of performance area in a three foot deep orchestra pit. Two giant video screens either side of the stage showed program output for the benefit of the live audience and the computer generated scoreboard during the voting sequence”

The angled planes pulled the shadows into the background creating a gradient of depth and a spatial envelopment of each act (Figure 5.38). The angular geometry

provided interesting compositions in every look and the chromatic consistency of the Irish was once again apparent as the performances were awash with colored lights creating a visual uniformity to each act. The variety of color combinations along with unique camera angles, and lighting equipment made the set versatile and the stage reacted to rhythm of the songs, as well as the mood.



Figure 5.38 : Views of ESC 1993 set, emphasizing depth (EBU, 1993)

5.1.39 Dublin 1994 / Ireland

The contest returned to Dublin after six years, and this time the set designer was Paula Farrell. Her vision was a futurist projection model of the host city by night. The imaginary skyline and skyscrapers of future Dublin were joined by the image of ever existing River Liffey (Figure 5.39). The abstraction level topped the recent attempts of staging landscapes or city models and there were integrated screens with animations. The high quality production was immortalized by the most significant interval act of Eurovision history.



Figure 5.39 : Views of ESC 1994 set, showcasing future Dublin (EBU, 1994).

The official Riverdance website describes the moment as “20 years ago, on April 30th 1994 something happened during the interval of the Eurovision Song Contest

that was to lead to the creation of one of the most successful stage shows of all time.” (2014) while RTE notes that it “*mixed traditional and modern music, choral singing and Irish dancing, and presented them in a totally new way.*” (1994). Not long after the Eurovision night, the show became an international sensation. This time, the competition did not just use the national heritage images and phenomena, it created one.

5.1.40 Dublin 1995 / Ireland

In 1995, RTE assigned Alan Farquharson again and he was inspired by technical capabilities and show’s requirements, making versatility the focal point. The flat plane of the background acted as a screen for graphic projection and the dynamic light contrasts created the sense of depth in the space (Figure 5.40). Unlike other attempts at a gloomy and mysterious staging, the bright contrasts created visual clarity in the performances.



Figure 5.40 : Views of ESC 1995 set, featuring variable elements (EBU, 1995).

Farquharson explains the production process in his portfolio as following:

The primary concern was to create as much visual variety as possible throughout the 3 hours of live broadcast ... With theatrical flying facilities comprising 90+ counterweighted flying bars it afforded a very different approach to that of the Eurovision Song Contest 1993. The main performance area was a triple layered rostrum swept back in a curve to join the flown centrepiece of the set ... Concealed lighting highlighted the layered edges. Steel and gauze pieces were combined with side-emitting fibre optic and sculpted polystyrene in an ever changing configuration from performance to performance. In addition to the physical changes to the set, five large video screens surrounded the stage onto which were projected animated forms echoing the flown elements.”

5.1.41 Oslo 1996 / Norway

Ten years after the ice-stage of Bergen, Norway took the trophy to Oslo and prepared a show presented by Morten Harket of internationally famous Norwegian band A-ha. The staging was also inspired by the internationally famous industry of the country: petroleum. The extensive use of metal frameworks, with kinetic parts was a reference to oil rigs of the North Sea (Figure 5.41).



Figure 5.41 : Views of ESC 1996 set resembling oil rigs (EBU, 1996).

A more interesting element of the contest were live post-production effects, including Virtual Studio. “*The Eurovision Song Contest in 1996 broke new ground in the arena of live television – one hour of the program ... was made in a ‘virtual studio’*”. It is “*namely the production of a television studio, or set, inside a computer rather than by using traditional techniques.*” (Hughes 1996). During the distribution of the points, the experienced presenter was placed in a blue screen environment and a virtual environment was created around her. For the live audience to follow, the outcome was projected on an additional screen that covered the stage. It was a successful attempt however, it still remains one of a kind in Eurovision history.

5.1.42 Dublin 1997 / Ireland

In the late 90s, expectations for radical technical advancement from the new millennium were common. 2000 was a psychological threshold and was a source of inspiration for many creatives. A science-led future was trending, even though some of the stories were skeptical about the benefits of technology and focused on the horrific possibilities. Eurovision, thanks to Paula Farrell and Michael Grogan’s intention of reaching a younger audience, reflected the popular science fiction culture

created by movies such as *Total Recall* (1990), *Jurassic Park* (1993), *Ghost in the Shell* (1995) *Independence Day* (1996) and *Star Trek : First Contact* (1996).

Grogan clarifies the importance of graphic and design combination for the success of this show (Appendix B.1). Integration of multiple small screens of many sizes seem to be the primary method to achieve the vision as it's persistent on the stage and in the videos (Figure 5.42). An arc that resembles a door to a super villain layer combines with lighting and sound design, contributes to the overall impression. This year is also important because the televoting began with five countries.

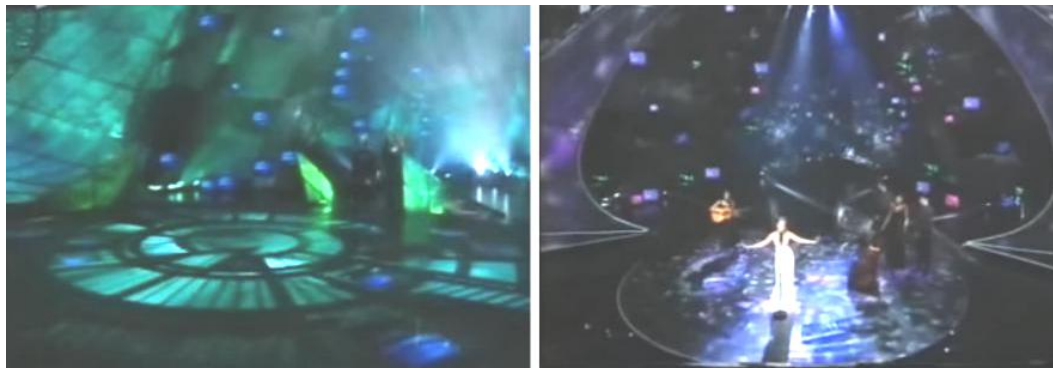


Figure 5.42 : Views of ESC 1997 set featuring multiple screens (EBU, 1997).

5.1.43 Birmingham 1998 / United Kingdom

“Eurovision’s coming home, home to Birmingham, the second city, hub, the driving force to Britain’s great industrial revolution.” (Wogan, 1998). The city’s marine culture is translated to stage, as three enormous whale tails and a general wave aesthetic (Figure 5.43). It was not the first time a “whale” was used as a symbol of the oceanic empire, after all von Holstein said “the Whale and the Bear could never come together” (1901) as a way to criticize British - Russian relations in early 20th century. Indeed Russia could not meet the whale on the stage this year, as a victim of the relegation rule that was introduced in 1994 to limit the participant number to 24. As more and more countries were eager to take part in the contest and as the contest scaled up, the stages followed.

Birmingham 1998 was the first arena based show, radically changing the expectations for the production size. In addition, flags in the audience became visible

for the first time, showing the international reach of the event. The use of pyrotechnics such as fireworks were also introduced completing the transition from a theatrical event to a concert experience.



Figure 5.43 : Views of ESC 1998 set featuring whale tails (ESC, 1998)

5.1.44 Jerusalem 1999 / Israel

Eurovision went on a journey to Jerusalem twenty years after the first time, and Germany reacted once again by being as eastern as possible. Sürpriz, the Turko-German band that represented the country sang :“*Selam, selam, here we go again on a journey to Jerusalem. Selam, selam, hadi gidelim, Kudüs’e hep birlikte*” (Sürpriz, 1999) On the journey to host the contest, Jerusalem had some ups and downs. The initial idea was assigning the internationally celebrated Israeli artist Yaacov Agam to design the stage, however the model he submitted to production team (Figure 5.44) was found inappropriate and a new set designer was selected just three months prior to the contest. (Maariv, 1999) Agam, ended up designing the trophy, as announced during the contest and the new set designer decided on a solar system concept. A kinetic sculpture, an abstraction of the Sun, was placed in the center of the stage. Behind the abstract Sun, there was a projection wall. Globes, and star-like lights were hanging all across the hall, adding up to space feel.

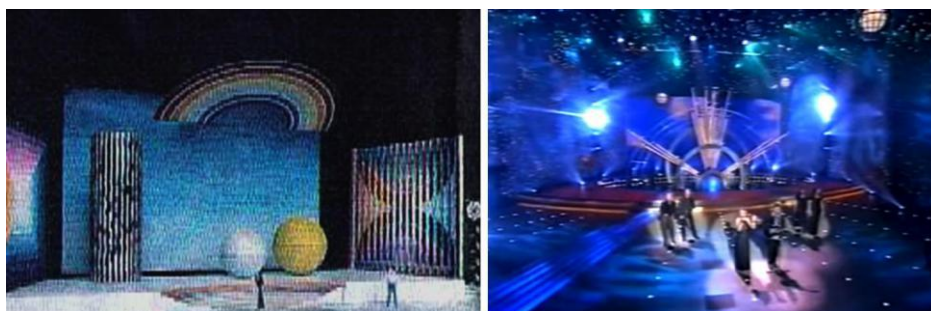


Figure 5.44 : Proposed design (Maariv, 1999) and realized set (EBU, 1999)

The Israeli solar system was missing the one common element of all the Eurovisions so far: the orchestra. In 1999, EBU changed the orchestra rule and the host countries did not have to provide one anymore. In fact, they were advised not to have one, so that with the background sound track, a standard audio quality could be reached with minimal effort.

5.1.45 Stockholm 2000 / Sweden

The first Eurovision of “*the new millennium of love*” (Toal, 2000) had a minimalist, futuristic approach that would be expected from the year 2000. Like Birmingham 1998, Stockholm preferred an arena in which a circular stage was built. In the back, a series of lit cubes were aligned to create three color-changing linear arcs, each module could have a different color and change any time, providing an opportunity of almost indefinite combinations to the lighting designers. On the camera left side of the three arcs, there was a big screen, zooming on the stage performance for the live audience and on the other side, there was a circular screen that shows participants’ flags in the specially design logo of the year. Moreover, there were five video walls on the stage that could be moved to any location and could show any animation (Figure 5.45). These five screens were the first indication of LED-dominated future of the Eurovision stage. The combination of the elements above, provided a set that could be transformed into almost anything, something that could explain the enthusiasm of the live audience. 13.000 people that filled the arena were waving flags, reacting to shows and singing along, even joining the light show with the twinkling lights they were provided with. All in all, Stockholm 2000, marked the beginning of a new era, and set a precedent to the contemporary era of the contest.



Figure 5.45 : Views of ESC 2000 set featuring LED screens (EBU, 2000).

5.1.46 Copenhagen 2001 / Denmark

The 46th edition of Eurovision Song Contest was hosted in Parken Stadium (Figure 5.46), probably thinking if an arena could provide an intense atmosphere with the crowd, a stadium would be even better with more crowd. However, no other edition would prefer the “stadium concert” approach again, it simply did not work with Eurovision, failing to adapt to different acts, and not translating the diversity.



Figure 5.46 : Views of ESC 2001, taking place in a stadium (EBU, 2001)

The main visual pattern of the contest was four circles shaping a heart as further explained: *“In line with typical Danish minimalistic design traditions, the logo of the 2001 Eurovision Song Contest was made out of four circles, placed in the shape of a heart. The four circles came back in the stage design, as the light construction was made of the same four rings”* (“Copenhagen 2001”, 2009).

5.1.47 Tallinn 2002 / Estonia

By 2002, Eurovision Song Contest was geographically expanding (p.10) and televoting gave the audience full control of winners. Both led to a dramatic change in hosting nations, the Eastern European streak started with Tallinn and it was the time to hear different stories, test the capabilities of less famous nations and challenge the international prejudices. Tiuu Simm, Assistant Executive Producer of Tallinn 2002 explains *“When we won our German colleagues sent us a small article from a newspaper where it was written that the event would be held in the forest where the Russian bears live [...] Even the Germans, with who our culture is tied with did not know much about Estonia”* (2007).

The prejudices were not just cultural, Estonia had to prove they were technically capable of putting on the show, despite not having done so, ever. That is the reason

Estonia drafted half of their technical and production team from outside, and had equipment transferred from Swedish Television (Mibs, 2002) However, the authorities emphasized how ideas were Estonian, all of which were grouped under the theme: A Modern Fairytale.

The theme was directly linked to Estonian history as emphasized further in the official programme booklet: *“If Estonia were a fairy tale, it could perhaps be likened to Sleeping Beauty. Having awoken from the ice cold slumbers of Soviet Rule, Estonia today is a bold, young country, vibrant with creative energy and eager to take its place in Europe.”* (Vilbre, 2002) The design team of Iir Hermeliin, Ain Nurmela and Ülar Mark also worked with the theme and created a neither square nor round stage, with half transparent amorphous shapes hanging from ceiling (Figure 5.47). The shapes, which are the key to the fairytale setting, are placed differently for each participants. The lighting effects are mostly done with projections, and they are also designed to contribute to main theme.



Figure 5.47 : Views of the model and actual set of ESC 2002 (Hermeliin, 2002).

5.1.48 Riga 2003 / Latvia

Latvian production focused on the country's landscape. Riga is in the intersection of Daugava River and Baltic Sea, and is bordered by Lielupe river. The way rivers flow to sea was poeticized as Magical Rendez-vous and was declared the slogan of Eurovision 2003. The further explanation was *“All rivers flow toward the sea, all songs flow toward the Eurovision Song Contest”* (“Riga 2003”, n.d.). The logo, designed with the same concept, was named “upes” -latvian word for rivers- and has included a circular abstraction of rivers and land coming together and the stage was based on the logo. There were arcs, round screens on the ceiling, and as the most

important technical improvement to what we have seen so far, there was a LED floor (Figure 5.48). LED floor made the overhead shots as interesting as any other, providing a new perspective to performers to work with and audience to enjoy. And for the first time, the green room was unveiled during scoring and the live audience could also see the reactions of the participants.



Figure 5.48 : Views of ESC 2003 set featuring LED floor.

5.1.49 Istanbul 2004 / Turkey

Servet Işık, the head of design team of 49th Eurovision Song Contest, was interviewed and asked about the production, the questions were mostly based on theme and technology. (Appendix B.2) The contest was a challenge in many ways. The producers had doubts over Işık and her team's capabilities, however, as an executive she convinced them that there's no better choice for this task. The requirements list of EBU includes many other aspects for the production such as accommodation, stage, size of production, places for meetings and meals etc. To meet these standards, they had to build tents outside Abdi İpekçi Arena, for social purposes. She remembers the experience as a race against time, mainly because after the decor, a lot of meetings were required to assign camera angles and positions, performance spaces, lighting and lighting design is mostly the key to adapt the stage to different acts. The delegations give information to production team, and set designer works with the lighting designer to create visuals and apply them.

It was very important and exciting for Işık to experience Turkish victory and design a stage of that scale. The budget for Istanbul 2004, was 11 million years and it was bigger than her previous work. With no influence and special demands from TRT

administration, the production team, inspired by unique cirrt Istanbul, created a Hagia Sophia inspired stage with the theme “Under The Same Sky”. Even though they made a research on previous Eurovision stages, their motivation was to create something original and new. The sky was represented in the shape of a dome, and under it, there were multiple LED-floored platforms. An organic sculpture connected the floor to the dome, and it was backed by an additional video wall (Figure 5.49).



Figure 5.49 : Views of ESC 2004 set, featuring a dome.

5.1.50 Kiev 2005 / Ukraine

The theme for the 2005 contest was declared as “Awakening” and was highly associated with The Orange Revolution (Jordan, 2011). However, when asked about this executive producer Grystak would say the theme was not about politicians but about society and clarify “Ukraine has been awakening and it has been doing it for decades” (2007) The stage also meant to symbolize the “awakening” and on the official Eurovision website it was defined as follows:

“... The stage will be more than a place on which the artists to perform their songs. It will become a Garden of Eden with mystical plants and animal life where growth, wealth, colours, beauty, creativity and light are the order the day. And a day that will be completely new, symbolizing the dawn of a new age for both the song contest and Ukraine itself.”

In reality, the set, designed by Ukrainian firm Zinteco, did not manage to capture a gardenesque or floral feeling, it was rather dull and dark and below the technical standards expected from organization. There were cylindric elements on both sides of the stages that were partly transparent and partly LED (Figure 5.50). However the camera angles and the lighting didn’t communicate the smart design idea as a

positive element to the audience. Considering there was a transition to the 16:9 screen ratio, this should have been less of a struggle.



Figure 5.50 : Photos of the set of ESC 2005 (Zinteco, 2005).

5.1.51 Athens 2006 / Greece

A short time after hosting Summer Olympics 2004, Athens had the opportunity to welcome thirty seven countries over two nights of Eurovision. The city's recent major organizational experience was probably helpful as Greece achieved a very high quality production. The stage was a high technology, full LED recreation of ancient Greek theaters. Six staircases, or what the designer Ilias Ledakis preferred to call “wings” surrounded a circular performance area, and behind them, there was a wall of thousands of lights as shown in Figure 5.51. The wings could get steeper or lower and platforms could raise up from the floor. Therefore the shape of the set could adapt to performances, as well as the lighting. Interval acts and openings, consisted representations of Greek mythology, for which, dancers were hanging in the air, which indicates special mechanisms in the ceiling too. Overall, 2005 could be analyzed as a step further than 2000 in the terms of technology as well as a showcase of national representation in Eurovision sets.



Figure 5.51 : Views of ESC 2006, referring to ancient theatres (EBU, 2006).

5.1.52 Helsinki 2007 / Finland

In 2007, the contest moved up North, to a Scandinavian country that has never hosted the contest before. The stage design was inspired by a traditional Finnish musical instrument “kantele”. The inspiration is obvious in the shape of the backdrop, which has angular edges on both sides, much like the wooden shell of the instrument. The white sculptures on and around the stage work as an abstraction of the strings. The performance area is round, while a catwalk is extended into the audience to extend the stage for various uses and settings. There were video screens in three main locations, the central one being aligned with the catwalk. In addition, over 500 moving lights were used and the designer Mikki Kunttu “*created one of the most innovative, fresh and eye catching Eurovision shows to date*” (Robe, 2007). Even though the stage was not determining winners quite yet, 2007 became a key year of discovering the potential for graphic design’s contribution to the stories of each performance. In addition to usual fire and water abstractions and stars, a lot of other elements were used in the lighting design, such as: text, buildings, silhouettes, flowers, a road image, roses, planes etc. (Figure 5.52). The senior project manager of the scenic contractor Stage One would take pride with the success: “The show’s production was widely regarded as a resounding success and the role that the Stage One team played was key in its achievement” (2007).



Figure 5.52 : Views of ESC 2007 featuring variety of animations (EBU, 2007).

5.1.53 Belgrade 2008 / Serbia

When It was Serbia's turn to host the Eurovision Song Contest, RTS organized an open competition and David Cushing became the winner with the set design themed "Confluence" It was directly inspired by the junction of Sava and Danube rivers in Belgrade as declared by the designer (2014). Two led sculptures merged and surrounded an elliptic platform and extended to a catwalk (Figure 5.53), imitating the city's landscape. All was backed by a cyclorama made of a sheer video wall and LCD blocks.

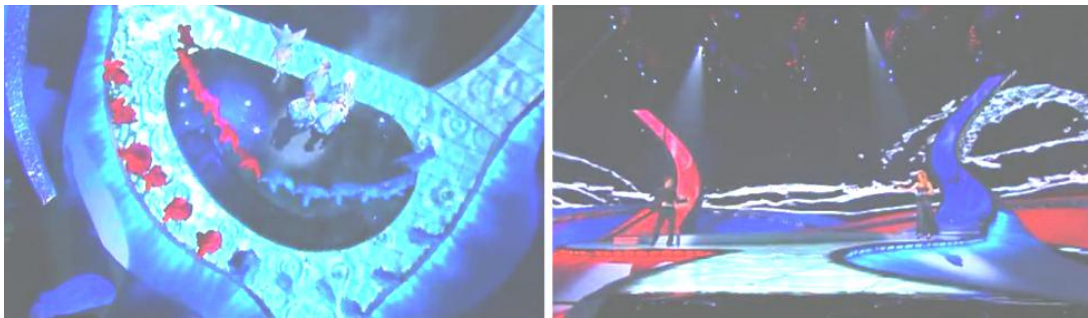


Figure 5.53 : Views of ESC 2008 set featuring LED sculptures (Cushing, 2014).

5.1.54 Moscow 2009 / Russia

Russia is big. It is the largest country in the World by surface area, and their stage was the largest in Eurovision history. "*The Beijing Olympics of Eurovision*" is the phrase Graham Norton used to describe the Moscow edition of Eurovision (BBC, 2009). The comparison was due to the scale of the production and it being seen as an opportunity to receive positive international media coverage, something the country was craving for. The Russian duo t.A.T.u sang "They're not Gonna Get Us" in the interval act of the first semi final, symbolizing the nation's communication issues and also implying a resistance against being captured. The duo was accompanied by the Aleksandrov Red Army Choir, a large number of dancers, real size inflatable models of a pink tank and a baby blue aircraft (Figure 5.54); all visually supporting the message of the song and showing the scale of the set very clearly at that point, as more than 150 people active on the stage did not feel over encumbered.

The New York based Irish designer John Casey, who worked at RTE before and experienced the Eurovision production process several times, was assigned by

Channel One to create a stage that is “impressive looking, very large, big, and bold as possible” and relating to Russian art history. (Casey, 2009) So Casey built a stage that used 30% of all the LED screens available in the World by then; and his main inspiration was Tatlin’s Tower, a never-built symbol of early 20th century Russian constructionism. Therefore there were many geometric elements that clashed in cohesion, including LED screen strips of many sizes, beginning on the floor, bending to shape the backdrop, and continuing to the ceiling. There was also a ring in the ceiling, divided to many modules, wrapping the strips and crowning the floor. Another layer was made of crossing columns and finally a bigger outer ring surrounded to outline. The structure was very flexible, many elements moved between or during performances, adapting to all 42 participants and many other interval acts in three nights. The outcome was unique and memorable, and would be mentioned as all-time favorite by both Servet Işık and Michael Grogan (Appendix B)



Figure 5.54 : Views of ESC 2009, showing the scale of the event (BBC, 2009)

John Casey also mentions how working with an animated 3D computer model from the very beginning, helped him consider camera angles and perspectives of possible positions of the moving elements, so the TV outcome was contemplated in the design process. The initial work set a guide for the video crew and made it easier for them to come up with different variations for every performance. The professional quality of the production would be praised by many people later on, including Paul Thomas Jordan: *“From a technical perspective the 2009 contests staged in Moscow were flawless and widely seen by those present as a*

piece of a highly sophisticated television producing and therefore a triumph for Russia” (2011).

5.1.55 Oslo 2010 / Norway

Hosting Eurovision Song Contest i 2010 was challenging for Norway, as comparison with the previous year was inevitable and it was almost impossible to beat in technology, especially with a much lower budget. Therefore NRK decided on something much more simpler and contrasting the previous years (Figure 5.55).



Figure 5.55 : Views of ESC 2010 set emphasizing simplicity (EBU, 2010)

The performance area was a circular glass platform lit from below. It was outlined by a white structure to create an illusion of one white and one black circles coinciding with an angle. In addition, there was a small catwalk completing the base shape. The unique element of the stage was the video wall, as it was an array of 1900 LED fixtures, that was used to create low resolution, pixel art like animations. Without a solid screen, cameras could work in all 360 degrees, enriching the TV experience. *“Other layers included Jarags, moving lights and Starcloth curtains, plus a 3D curtain of 2000 X-Balls in the center and other textural elements”* (Chroma-Q, 2010). The simplest stage of the decade, also witnessed the visually simplest winner of many years. Lena of Germany, marking the new era where contemporary replaced the native / ethnic sounds. maNga, a rock band from Turkey taking the second place with a black and white show with crisp lighting also contributed to the idea of universal replacing local.

5.1.56 Dusseldorf 2011 / Germany

After many years, Eurovision Song Contest was finally back to Central Europe. To create a contemporary stage, Germany worked with Florian Wieder, who had

experience with a range of TV shows including Britain's Got Talent (UK), Dancing with the Stars, MTV Video Music Awards and MTV Europe Music Awards. He would later design the stages for 2012, 2015 and 2017. For this study, he was interviewed online for direct insight on his work (Appendix B). For Wieder, the Eurovision set is no different than other large scale projects, however, the amount of countries involved makes it special and it is important to make sure the stage works the same way for all. The stage of Eurovision Song Contest has to be practical and flexible; addressing the variety on the show and it has to look unique and outstanding compared to previous editions. However, he does not get influenced by the national backgrounds of the host country to provide the uniqueness, as he believes the stage belongs to all the participants, not just the host. Instead he focuses on improving the experience of different segments of the show with innovative use of space. In 2011, the major improvement was for the voting session. The green room was located behind the LED screen, only to be unveiled for the voting session so the audience could see all the performers and their reactions when they received the points and when Eldar and Nigar walked to victory (Figure 5.56).



Figure 5.56 : Views of ESC 2011 featuring the unveiled green room (EBU, 2011)

5.1.57 Baku 2012 / Azerbaijan

When Azerbaijan obtained the right to host the contest for the first time, they did not have an arena that matched the requirements, so they built Baku Crystal Hall, right next to Caspian Sea, specifically for the event. The facade was lit with dynamic LED lights, which was used to display colors of the performing country during Eurovision. The stage was once again designed by Florian Wieder, this time with a sharper and edgier look (Figure 5.57), with plural angular LED screens instead of one big one, mimicking the architecture of the venue. The significance of this edition according to the designer was the idea to “*bring the show and talent as close to the audience and*

viewers as possible.” (App. B). The in house audience deserved more than watching the voting on screens, as it is a huge part of the show so the green room was placed within the audience, which would be a common approach in later years too.



Figure 5.57 : Views of ESC 2012 set supporting an edgy look (EBU, 2012).

5.1.58 Malmö 2013 / Sweden

Sweden is one of the centers of contemporary pop music and the home of many Eurovision songwriters and fans, therefore it was important for the nation to host the event again, 13 years later. Executive Producer for the 58th Eurovision said *"We are going to offer the viewers a show of the highest calibre, with a scenography that enables the artists and audience to get closer to each other. It will feel intimate and spectacular whilst at the same time being something we've never experienced before"* (2013) There was a round main performance area and an organic shaped extended performance area, in other words a catwalk. The gaps were left for a standing audience to get the audience to contribute more. The audience were provided with wristband lights, and on top of them there were flying lanterns, that could move both up and down. The stage though, had lacked the glamour of other editions, with a comparatively small, amorphous backdrop, and a high arc. All were drawing the focus to audience as much as the performance and making a full use of the arena.

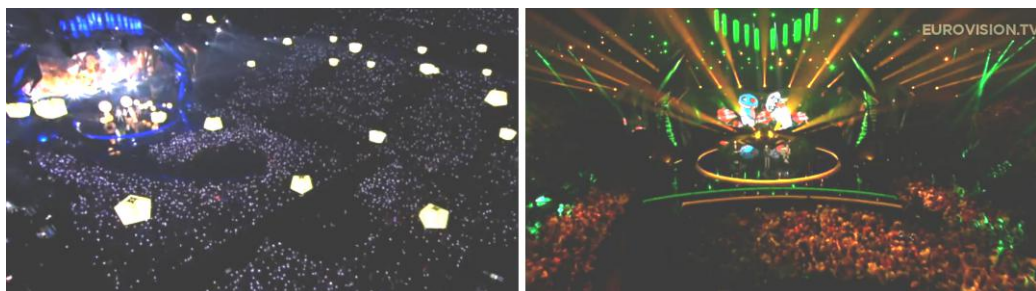


Figure 5.58 : Views of ESC 2013 emphasizing audience (EBU, 2013).

5.1.59 Copenhagen 2014 / Denmark

The third time was the charm for Copenhagen, as the third Danish stage was the most memorable. Claus Zier, an architect, had a 12-year dream of designing a Eurovision stage and when he finally had the opportunity, he used this to create a balance between rustic and modern. The building DR selected to transform into a Eurovision venue was originally a shipyard and Zier wanted to build on the history of the hall. It would also fit the idea he had of emphasizing the nautical culture of the nation, as he says *“Of course living in Denmark, which is always a ship nation, we always had a lot of ship trading with World and we’re building ships here. And it was .. kind of.. rumbling around somewhere that, that could be a theme at that time”* (2014). So the concept was both influenced by the venue’s history and nation’s culture.

The set was impressive with simple yet effective geometry and innovative features. Zier says, a specific photo of a ship under construction at this place inspired him. The sharp front edge of the ship in the photo was visible in the stage, surrounded and emphasized by a layer of water. The main structure was a frame wall that resembled the iron constructions that are used to build boats, also referring to the idea of the ship under construction. The frame was covered with video mesh, and the transparency of the surface changed to close down for an intimate performance, or open up and work with the LED screen in the backdrop (Fig. 3.59). Playing with transparency enhanced the sense of depth. In addition, the floor was made of a touch screen, so it directly reacted to dancers’ moves, most obviously in Montenegrin act. Zier made sure the stage was a *“clean, minimalistic, modern piece of architecture that stood as an icon”* that would absorb each country’s different visual expressions (2014). Danish creative director Nicole Refsing, also contributed to Zien’s vision by designing high quality staging, using pyrotechnics, animations and lighting.



Figure 5.59 : Views of ESC 2014 set featuring layers (EBU, 2014).

5.1.60 Vienna 2015 / Austria

In the first year Australia participated, Austria was the host for the second time and they decided on the theme “Building Bridges” because the city was experienced at this, having 1716 bridges. For the set design, ORF worked with Florian Weider, making this his third Eurovision experience and with “a tiny group of very ambitious people” (App. B) he built a giant eye that consisted 1288 individual pillars. However, according to Eurovision’s official website’s notes, the eye is more than it seems: *“A huge eye is the simplest way to describe how it looks like but there is substantially more behind the vision of the stage of the 2015 edition of the world's biggest entertainment event. The eye is a portal and forms a bridge between the artists, their delegations and the audience all over the world.”* (2015). As further explained by ORF’s TV director Kathrin Zechner: *“The vision for the 2015 Eurovision Song Contest is the bridge from the past to the present and the future. The eye is a symbol of this bridge - a mutual respect between cultures, countries and people.”* Both the floor and the backdrop were uninterrupted LED screens, making the set available for any creative animations. However, Mans Zelmerlöv from Sweden still needed an additional projection screen, for his digital, interactive, winning, puppet show.

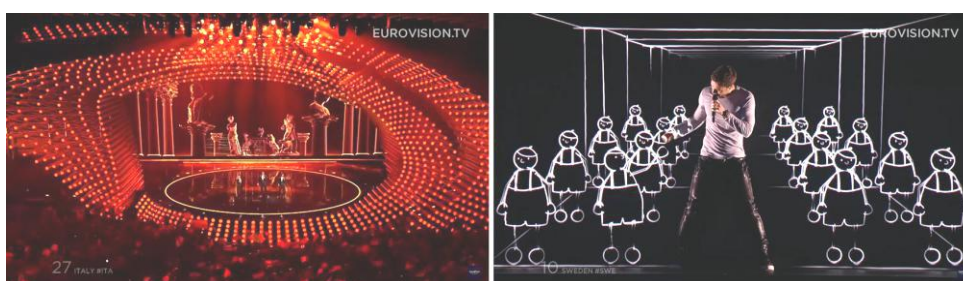


Figure 5.60 : Views of ESC 2015 featuring interaction with backdrop (EBU, 2015).

5.1.61 Stockholm 2016 / Sweden

The Swedish stage of 2016 had a more masculine feel as described by Ola Melzig *“This year we don't use the traditional soft shapes. Instead, we use a masculine feel with angular shapes.”* (2016). It indeed felt different than most of other Eurovision stages, as it was stronger and more rectangular. The backdrop looked as if block of were stacked on each other, with a bracket mostly used to give depth and emphasize the performers’ positions on stage, which really worked for Jamala’s winning act when a yellow tree was spread from the floor through the bracket to rest of the stage

during the peak of her vocal performance. In addition to cleverly placed LED screens, the stage had a set of moving lights and lasers, allowing unique combinations for lighting shows. The final touch was made with holograms and post production effects, making the show very contemporary and magical.

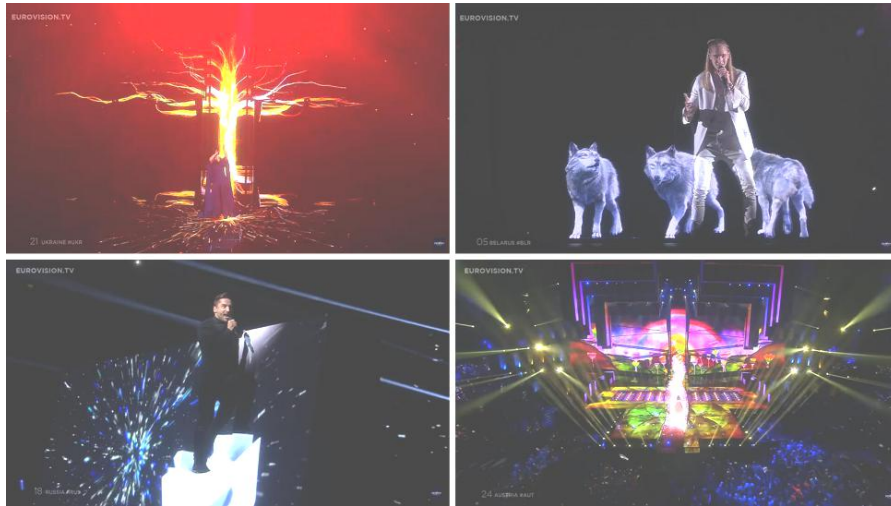


Figure 5.61 : Views of ESC 2016 featuring holograms (EBU, 2016).

5.1.62 Kiev 2017 / Ukraine

Under the shadow of the war between Russia and Ukraine, that extended to a ban on the Russian participant (Stolworthy, 2017) Kiev organized Eurovision in 2017 with the theme ‘Celebrate Diversity’. The set was once again designed by Florian Wieder after his successful efforts in 2011, 2012 and 2015. Contrasting with the previous edition (p. 60), the Kiev stage had a very feminine feeling with a high, deep organic structure acting as the defining shape. This structure itself, acted as a projection screen, especially obvious when the flag colors of the participants were projected on it before each act. Behind it there was a cyclorama made out of LED screens, the usual for the era. Unusually, the screens did not cover all the backdrop, causing difficulties for graphic designers, as the upper corner of the screen was visible, making smooth transition between the animations and darkness harder to achieve. However, there was an optional element that eased the situation, and was used in very impressive ways, boosted by overhead shots of the cameras: A chandelier of transparent, adjustable video screens. The chandelier was crowning the main performance area, which was round with a LED floor and too distant from audience for an intimate connection. The winner from Portugal, Salvador Sobral, benefited

from his decision of standing on the additional minor performance area surrounded by spectators, creating a simple but emotional aura.



Figure 5.62 : Views of ESC 2017, showcasing multiple uses (EBU, 2017)

In 2016 edition of Eurovision Song Contest there was extended use of on-screen effects and holograms, which raised the expectations for 2017 too. However, in the 62nd year, virtual effects were not preferred with the exception of Bulgarian team's elegant effort. This would not have been the case if Wieder's vision of half real - half virtual set was not canceled due to budget restrictions. The designer notes: "The original idea was to bring in a new technology and create a hybrid set: half real - half virtual" (App. B) These plans were unfortunately canceled and the idea of hybrid stage is another year's challenge to make true.

Eurovision 2017 also sparked a widespread debate about the importance of music compared to visuals in determining the winner, especially after Sobral's victory speech: "*Music is not fireworks, music is feeling, so let's try to really change this, and bring music back.*" (2017). It is common for Eurovision performances to use pyrotechnics like fireworks or smoke, or impressive dance routines and lately eye catching lighting effects and animations to create a memorable experience for the spectators, somehow distracting from the musical quality. In addition, most of the contemporary pop songs focus on stimulating momentary entertainment, rather than deep emotions. Sobral's comment, criticizing both, seemed to be as effective as his victorious performance.

5.2 The Timeline

The process of analysis continued with the creation of the timeline as mentioned before (p.19). The result, Eurovision Timeline (Figure 5.63) is a tool to configure main characteristics of every set of its history. With additional knowledge to be provided on how every element actually effects the end product, this becomes a guide to history. For instance in 1965, there was a logo application and an orchestra on stage, its designers did not care about versatility; it was still broadcast black and white and there were just standing microphones available. This set of information is enough to imagine singers standing still in front of a logo and an orchestra taking more place than the performance area.

The top row is for design objectives, as in the brief set by organization or concepts aimed by the designer. National representation, standing for direct references to the hosting nation's characteristics, is relatively special to Eurovision, compared to other music related events such as awards shows or vocal competitions. Versatility stands for the stage's ability to transform itself, in order to present unique visuals for each act; a motivation prioritized by many set designers. In some editions, the production teams have preferred to follow the dominant trends of the era, such as futurism and globalism. Meanwhile, branding covers the utilization of contest's main or annual logo directly on the stage. These four categories frame the message sent via set design, through television screens, to the audience.

The "technology" layer is split into five sublayers: "broadcasting" "audio" "microphones" "lighting and special effects" and "televoting". All indicating the technical developments that changed the sound, visuals and elements on stage in different ways. For instance, the introduction of Color TV made colors a more important aspect of design, the relatively new types of microphone changed the movements of performers therefore the scale and layout of the performance area. The lighting and special effects revolutionized the expectations from a TV show. It is important to notice that only major technological innovations with clear impact on the design have been marked and there is a continuous evolution and advancement in overall quality.

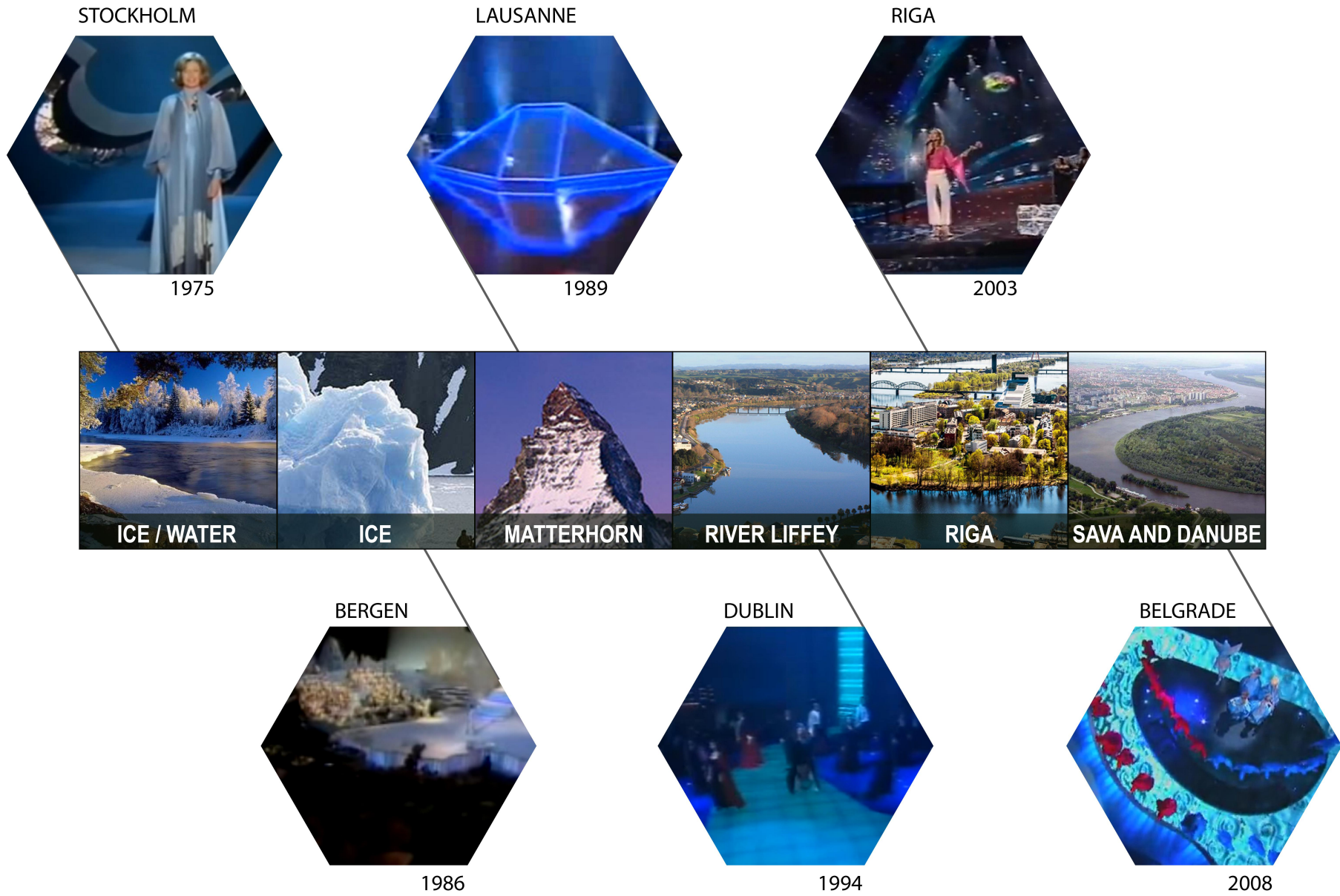


Figure 6.4 : The stages that were inspired by landscapes

6. DESIGN OBJECTIVES OF EUROVISION STAGES

The host of the Eurovision Song Contest is determined by the results of the preceding year. The champions took the responsibility of producing a high quality show, other than the six occasions where the victorious nation rejected the opportunity for mostly financial reasons and one time when the host had to be picked among four winners. They wanted to continue and advance the Eurovision tradition and preferably build something unique to make a positive national impression with and remembered by. That unique concept can be inspired by the host's national identity, trends of the era, versatility and branding, all examined in this chapter.

6.1 National Representation

Eurovision is an international contest, that has reached around 180 million viewers in 42 markets just in 2017 (EBU News, 2017) and has always been popular. It puts the spotlight on participating countries and lets them directly reach out to other markets, providing them an opportunity to express themselves with motivations such as building an image, attracting tourists or taking pride in their cultural uniqueness. Irving Wolther explains how a representation of national characteristics can be important for ESC entries: *“the participating artists assume the clear responsibility of representing their respective countries”* (2012) and it is clear how that same responsibility is even greater for hosting nations as everything shown via screens becomes associated with them, rather than EBU or other multinational organizations that are involved in the process.

Almost every Eurovision production so far, has had something local and something international intertwined at different levels. As the show itself is unique for involving multiple nations in a song contest, it has had visual and auditory elements such as national flags, ethnic musical instruments, folk dancers, traditional outfits, native languages, local stars, political messages etc. all highlighting their diversity. Especially the postcards, which are the short clips that are shown right before each performance, have been seen as an important window to tribute the national identity

of the host or the participant, depending on the production team's approach. For instance, in 2004 TRT used footage from landmarks of Turkey for all the acts, just to end with a welcoming gesture by Azra Akın -Miss Turkey and Miss World of 2002-; whereas for Moscow 2009 Ksenia Sukhinova -Miss Russia and Miss World of 2008- transformed into stereotypical collages of participating countries as her looks were enhanced with landmarks and symbols of each guests as shown in Figure 6.1. Hence, a variety of national representation methods are displayed in the contest.



Figure 6.1 : Captions from ESC 2004 and ESC 2009, showing postcards.

This study excludes the interval act performances and the off-stage footage, seeking elements of national representation reflected specifically in the form of the stage. Five different recurring themes have been further examined with corresponding cases. In some editions a national discourse is observed: United Kingdom takes pride in being the technological pioneer as the successors of the Industrial Revolution, Russia does not hesitate to display a sense of ambitious scale and glory and both Estonia and Ukraine liken the Eurovision experience to the momentous revolutions in their recent history. Some hosts have preferred to use, refer to or abstract cultural heritage objects as a way to distinguish their production. In some editions, the main concept is built around landscapes that are associated with host cities or countries: the northern the contest takes place, the icier the contest looks. In addition, references to homeland architecture are common as a way to localize the appearance of the contest: Domes, gardens, ancient or modern buildings have been a source of inspiration to set designers of Eurovision. Lastly, there were times flags, the main national symbols have been used to brand the stage. All of the above is examined in details in this chapter.

6.1.1 National discourse

The national identity is occasionally built through a discourse, a stance that is based on historical events and achievements. Eurovision Song Contest is a platform for nations to display, advance or create their stories. For instance, in 2017, Sweden was mostly the European center of contemporary popular music and the Swedish songwriters behind many other acts show proof of their prowess as they celebrate their proud nations' consistent production of high quality acts year after year. The politics also play an important role as Mueller mentions: *"Eurovision is legendary as an arena for settling diplomatic scores, venting ethnic grievance, baiting national rivals and undermining governments - and, what's more, these moments are almost always the highlights."* (2005). The position of each individual country in the international environment and the unfolding conflicts reflect on the list of participants each year, mostly on the lyrics, and occasionally on set design.

The first example of national discourse is observed with United Kingdom and the hosting experiences of BBC. The country positions itself as the heir of Industrial Revolution, therefore technically superior and innovative. Considering Eurovision is not just a song contest but also an exhibit of the latest broadcasting technologies of Europe, Göran Bolin's comparison of the World's Fair to ESC becomes even more meaningful in the example of England: *"The fact that the first World's Fair took place in England is, naturally, no coincidence, since England was also the most industrially advanced nation in the world in the mid-19th century."* (2006). Similarly, the fact that Eurovision Song Contest took place in the UK seven times in the first 27 years, is also not a coincidence, mostly because in four different occasions, in 1959, 1963, 1972 and 1974, the country actually volunteered for the responsibility when the winners declined it. In the catalogue of Great Exhibition at the Crystal Palace the following is written *"...it has been reserved for England to provide an arena for the exhibition of the industrial triumphs of the whole world."* (1851) and Terry Wogan says *"Eurovision's coming home, home to Birmingham, the second city, hub, the driving force to Britain's great industrial revolution."* (p54) when event is taking place in Birmingham, showing England's interest in providing an arena to international organizations has been permanent through centuries.

BBC did not show the country's revolutionizing ability to engineer just by hosting the event when the others could not, they also regularly elevated the contest to the next level with its brave decisions. In 1963, the contest took place in a studio for the first and the last time, as the use of boom microphones made the audience question if the event was prerecorded (p.28). In 1968, the first color broadcast of the competition took place thanks to the advanced capabilities of BBC (p.31). In 1972, a video wall was integrated to a Eurovision stage for the first time (p. 34). 1977 had a revolving stage as a display of country's technology (p.38) and 1998 was the first time the contest took place in an arena, changing the scale and expectations of the contest radically (p.54). Almost every time United Kingdom hosted, they tried something innovative, technically challenging or brand new; fitting the national image they presented later in the Opening Ceremony of 2012 London Olympics: the subject of both Industrial and Digital Revolutions.

A more political kind of revolution was the national discourse for both Estonia in 2002 and Ukraine in 2005. When the contest took place in Tallinn, Estonia, the country was still celebrating their return to Europe after 51-years of Soviet rule, and the recent history was likened to a fairytale, specifically Sleeping Beauty, and this theme was directly applied to the stage design (p.57). A similar theme was utilized by Ukraine in 2005, as the country, struggling between pro-Western and pro-Russian politicians, was celebrating the Orange Revolution and the hope of becoming more European. The contest in Kiev was formed around the idea of "awakening" and the stage aimed for a gardenesque look to emphasize the end of a long winter (p.60). While two ex-Soviet countries showcased their Europeanization, in 2009 Russia has shown how powerful their country is in the most glamorous production ever (p.63).

6.1.2 Cultural heritage objects

A method to associate a product to a nation has been the adoption of cultural heritage objects, as would be expected from touristic souvenirs. These objects range from flowers to crafts items such as traditional jewelry, unique musical instruments or the work of renown artists that have become trademark of these nations' cultures. Eight of the Eurovision stages were directly inspired by and referred to these symbols, in the years 1958, 1969, 1971, 1980, 1981, 1992, 2007 and 2014 (Figure 6.2).

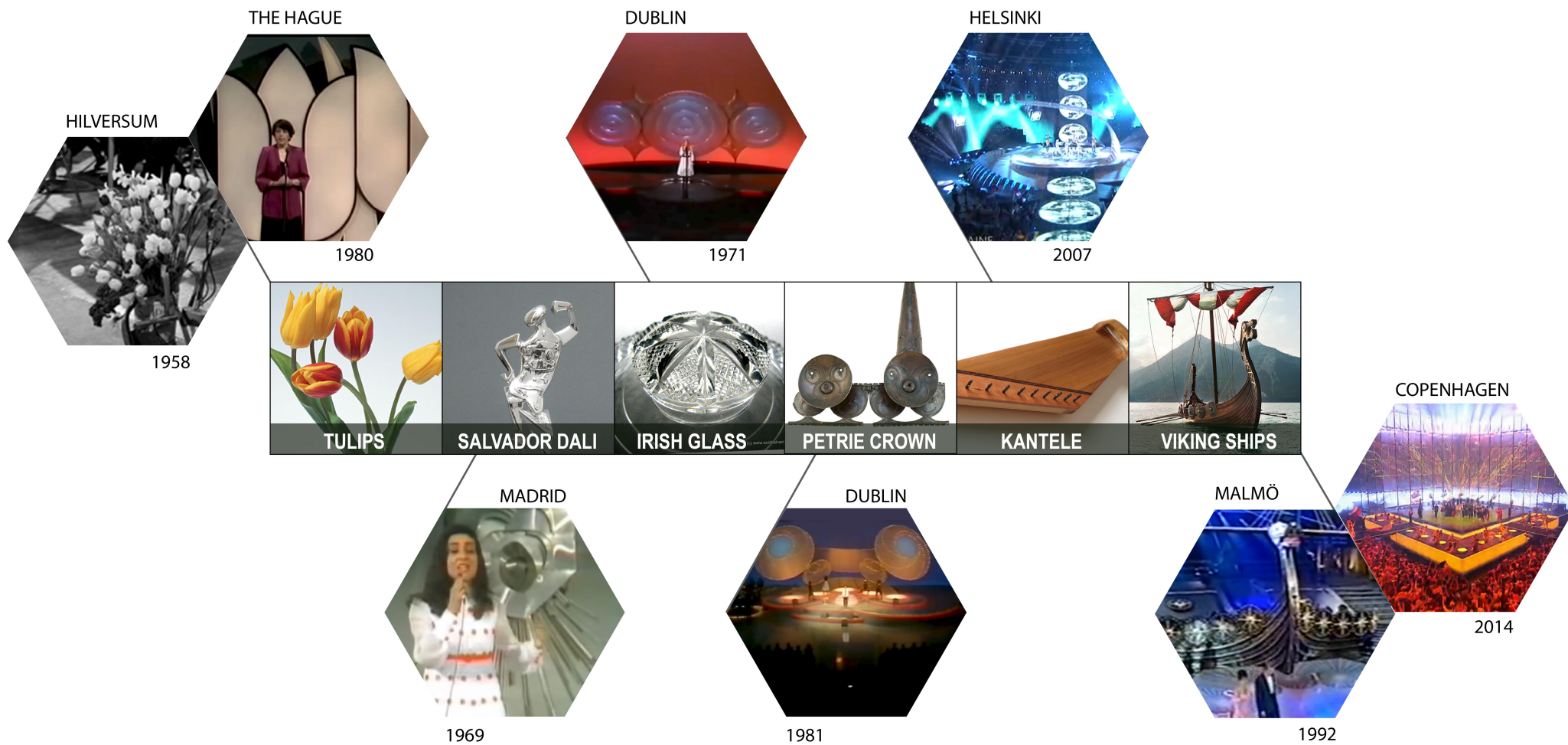


Figure 6.2 : Cultural heritage objects and their reflections on Eurovision

After its arrival from Ottomans in 1590s tulips became nationally celebrated in the Netherlands in such a way that it's described as "*a madness in the Age of Reason*" and the demand was so high that the flower caused "*Tulipomania*", one of the first economic bubbles in history (Leslaw et al., 2000). 360 years later, in 1958, Dutch broadcaster wanted to show how good the nation is at bulb breeding, by decorating the stage by one thousand real tulips (p.24). And in 1980, Roland de Groot, used two plastic but very large tulips for decoration (p.40), prompting the Turkish presenter to claim ownership by mentioning the history of the flower. Both versions of tulipomania in Eurovision stage, fit the general trends of their era. Several of the first years of the contests witnessed utilization of real flowers, and in 1970s and 80s it was expected to see more up scaled shapes in the stage.

In 1969, Spain under Franco's rule, had a chance to host Eurovision and wanted to use this opportunity to impress the spectators and for that reason they worked with a Spanish artist that had been impressing all World with his art, and representing the country in a good manner for a while. Salvador Dali worked on Madrid 1969 and sculpted a metal object and designed a poster (p.32).

Ireland used an abstraction of local crafts of different eras twice in their Eurovision stages, first in 1971, later in 1981. In 1971 the designer was inspired by Irish glassware and silverware of 17th century (p.33). Even though glass beads have always been significantly used in ancient Celtic culture, 17th century marks the date where crystal was invented and made Ireland the center of glass making. (Haggerty, n.d.). The stage in 1981 was referring to ancient Celtic accessories, including Petrie Crown and torque (p.41). Petrie Crown is a horned headpiece, considered as an exquisite example of pagan goldsmithery of Celtic Iron Age. And torques were worn between 1200 BC and 600 AC, therefore coinciding with the crown and marking ancient Irish metalwork. In both examples we see a display of national identity via craftsmanship and cultural objects.

In 2007, when it was Finland's turn to host the contest, they decided to get inspiration from the nation's heritage objects too. In this case it was kantele, a traditional musical instrument (p.62), that has relations to Estonian kannel, Turkish kanun, Japanese koto, Russian gusli and many other Baltic and Asian chordophones. Therefore making an implication to Asian roots of Finnish history, as a way to alter

from Western countries as well as expanding the European identity as expected from the early 2000s.

The Scandinavian countries have reflected their Viking history and nautical culture in Eurovision stage design. The first time was 1992 when the contest was held in Sweden and the Swedes decided to place an realistic replica of a Viking long ship, with a dragon figurehead and wooden shields in the backdrop, it felt like the singers performed in a Viking shipyard (p.49). 22 years later, Denmark had the opportunity to host and the performance did take place in a shipyard and the designer aimed to display the venue's character by making the stage look like a ship under construction (p.57). However due to change in the ways of expression and technological advancement of entertainment industry, the end results are radically different. 2014 is way more abstract with clean lines, layered with application of transparency and versatility with employment of LED screens. This is an important example of how the same brief and similar concepts can lead to different products with the influence of materials and design mentality.

To summarize, tulips took the stage twice for Netherlands as a reminiscence of Tulipomania, Spain consulted Salvador Dali Ireland took pride in their metalwork, glassware and Celtic roots twice by shaping the stage after the national crafts, Finland chose a traditional instrument as inspiration making a statement about the nation's and Europe's position, and lastly we have witnessed two different applications of 'ship' from the descendants of Vikings.

6.1.3 Homeland architecture

Another common way of expressing uniqueness of the nation states, is presenting the architecture of the country, either with a reference to history or successful industries. From Cannes 1959 where the identities of participant nations were symbolized with homeland buildings, till Moscow 2009 where the host nation's inbuilt landmark was a source of inspiration, there were at least 10 Eurovision Song Contest editions where buildings and architectural identity were used to represent nation states, some of which are shown in Figure 6.3.

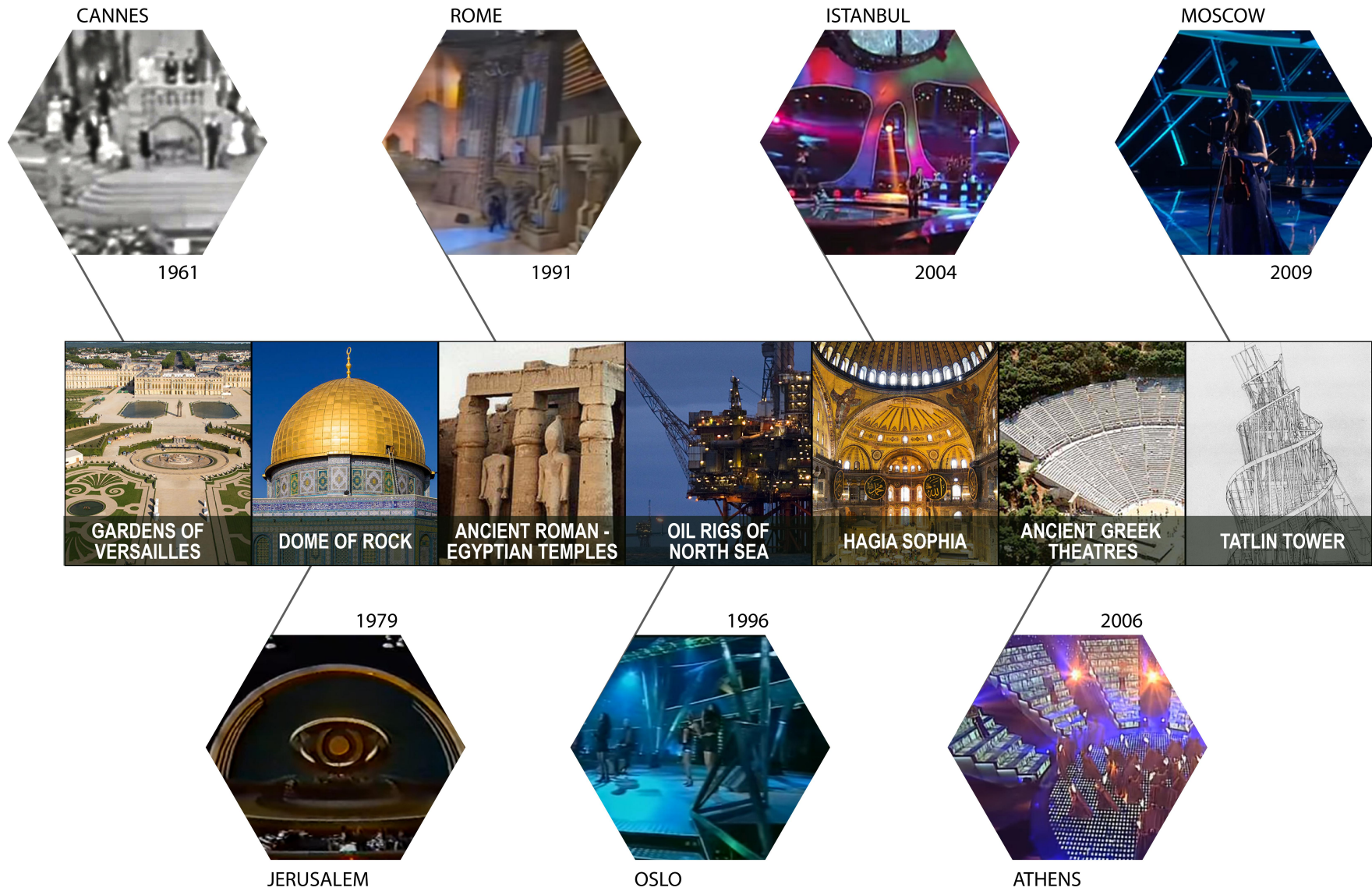


Figure 6.3 : The stages that were inspired by local architecture

Glimpses of royal architecture were observed in Eurovision several times. The 1961 edition of the contest took place in Cannes, France and the stage was designed to be expressively French with a large backdrop referring to gardens of Versailles, and a balcony on the stage replicated the palace (p.27). In 1967, the Austrian royalty took the spotlight, as the venue was located in the former imperial palace of Habsburg Dynasty (p.31). In 1991, the glory of the former empires struck once again, with a more sublime and postmodern approach, as Italy reproduced a view from Roman Egypt and Rome on stage (p.49). Cannes, Vienna and Rome all longed for their imperial past and their longing became visible in ESC sets.

A dome has been the focal point twice for Eurovision stages now. In 1979, the whole stage was an intersection of a dome with an addition of a kinetic sculpture, representing one of the key buildings of Jerusalem that is sacred for three major religions: Dome of the Rock (p.40). 25 years later, another country would be inspired by an internationally cherished religious building that symbolizes the host city: Istanbul celebrated the game changing architecture of Hagia Sophia . The stage included a small dome and was an abstraction of interior of the building that was once a church, later a mosque, now a museum (p.59). All in all, Istanbul and Jerusalem has had their share of significant domes, religious wars and Eurovision fun.

In 2006, Greece also has looked back to its roots to build an identity for today. Once again, Greeks were trying to remind the world of how everything that is related to Western culture is based on something from Ancient Greece, including Eurovision. After all, the theatre and stagecraft itself was developed to satisfy the artistic desires of the Greeks. The proof was the set itself, an Ancient Greek Theatre was replicated, 2500 years after its first version, with a small change in materials as the stones were replaced with screens (p.61).

When Norway hosted the contest in 1996, NRK was inspired by local architecture but not a royal, ancient or religious building. Instead the country used elements of oil rigs from the North Sea (p.53). The petroleum industry has a huge impact on Norwegian economy, since the discovery of first oil fields in the 1960s, and is shown to be responsible for the development of their welfare state. In a way Norway did not need to long for a wealthy past while it was experiencing a wealthy present.

Lastly in 2009, Tatlin Tower, an unbuilt icon of Russian constructivism inspired the stage (p.63). Irish designer John Casey mentioned an interest in the early 20th century art and architecture movement of Russia and he used their clashing geometric forms, arcs and crossing columns. This attempt stands out, as the historical meaning of the building, is not nearly as important as the art movement it is a part of, therefore it is actually the unique artistic heritage and capabilities of the nation that's emphasized and elevated as an identity symbol.

In brief, the nation states tend to connect to their glorious days via architectural references on stage, whether historical or current or they can use unique buildings from their homeland to brand the set with something new and special.

6.1.4 Landscape

In some occasions the national broadcasters prefer to refer to the city landscape in an attempt to make the stage feel more local. In the years 1975, 1986, 1989, 1994, 2003 and 2008 the stages had elements of, mountains, ice and rivers that were symbolic of the host nations climate spirit (Figure 6.4).

Sweden and Norway both used their Nordic climate to represent their nations. In 1975 Sweden had a mostly blue setting with silver and white wavy lines, abstracting the integration of ice and water (p.37). In 1986, Norway also emphasized the icy nature of their country with a translucent stage, that almost feels like an ice palace. Even the light's refraction is imitated perfectly with the translucent plastic material, so the feeling is captured accurately (p.45). Both stages make the viewers realize the event takes place somewhere in the iconic cold of Northern Europe, if not specifically these countries.

In 1989, the mighty Matterhorn, a tourism symbol for Switzerland, is replicated on the stage or at least that was the intention (p.47). The unique shape of the tip of that mountain is recreated and highlighted by laser tubes. Perhaps, the desired feeling for the performers was up on Matterhorn, an experience unique to Switzerland. The issues of scale left the viewers underwhelmed. This stage shows the importance of accurate abstraction when replicating a national landscape.

Lastly rivers have been integrated to the Eurovision Song Contest stages, in an engagement that gave birth to the internationally celebrated Riverdance. In 1994, the Irish set portrayed the future of Dublin, and what differentiated it from a line of skyscrapers was the River Liffey flowing down from the ceiling to the floor (p.51). The impact of the shape was boosted with lighting and the type of under-painting that gave a rippling river effect. In 2003, The way rivers meet the sea, was depicted in a circular way and the cohesion was further emphasized with the motto “Magical Rendezvous” (p.58). A similar merger of two waters was taken into consideration for the Serbian stage in 2008, it was a literal replication from geography. In Belgrade, Sava and Danube Rivers meet and create a small island, all of this could be observed in the stage. This time, the rivers were made of LED screens and occasionally a water texture was preferred to highlight the landscape and the source of inspiration (p.63). To summarize, a careful Eurovision viewer has learned about the rivers of Dublin, Belgrade and Riga from their abstract presence on the stage.

Nature is the source of life and also a source of inspiration for Eurovision Song Contest stages. The host cities are sometimes represented with their unique geographical attributes, such as climate, their mountains or rivers. It seems like the texture is as important as the form in these metaphors because with nature when it is not properly illustrated it becomes difficult to communicate the general concept.

6.1.5 Flags

Flags are the main symbols of nation states and they have been integrated to Eurovision stages in one way or another. Union Jack colored the British Stage in 1960 (p.26) and Luxembourg had its coat of arms embossed on a bronze plate to indicate the location of the show in 1973 (p. 35). Though not literally changing the form or main colors of the set, flags have been an important visual element in later editions as well. In almost every version of Eurovision, the flags were a part of introduction videos or postcards and more importantly in 2000s the audience has become united in perception with colorful flags they wave. In addition, some productions preferred to use lighting techniques to show every participants’ flag colors before every performance: Sweden had a logo that changed colors (p.56), Baku lit the exteriors of the Crystal Hall (p.66) and Ukraine used projection on the set’s main sculpture (p.70).

6.2 Trends

In some occasions Eurovision Song Contest's priorities changed for more universal approaches and its sets were conceptualized with dominant trends of the era or the hype over these trends were too strong to be ignored in an international event of this scale. The most observable ones were futurism and globalism. The expectations of technology from the new millennium has changed the set design of the contest very dramatically and lately nationalism is being minimized by a global mindset. Both had very strong impact on Eurovision, which is discussed in this chapter.

6.2.1 Futurism

In the 1990s the whole World was getting ready for the new millennium, and a sudden technological change was expected, including doom's day scenarios. Science fiction was getting popular more than ever and a newly emergent internet era was being celebrated. This movement in popular culture had its impact on Eurovision stages too. Either for testing new capabilities, getting ready for the new era of peace and technology, or aiming to capture a younger audience, the ESC stage designers preferred a futuristic approach between 1993 and 2000.

In the 90s, the Eurovision Song Contest went through an Irish era, when Ireland won three years consecutively and four times in five years. RTE, the Irish broadcasters, have referred to their Celtic roots and national craftsmanship, the first two times they hosted, as mentioned (p.78). Therefore, the need to display their glorious history on a Eurovision stage was already satisfied twice. Instead a test of technical capabilities, pursuing glory in the future and attracting a younger audience became more tempting to Ireland. In the years 1993 (p.50) and 1995 (p.52), the designer Alan Farquharson, was assigned to employ new lighting technologies and that was his main intent. In 1994, the futurism was reflected in the skyscrapers of the background as the whole setting was the vision of Dublin of the future (p.51). The last time the country hosted was 1997, when the whole production looked like a science fiction movie, down to every detail, including integrated small screens (p.53).

The other hosts of the era, with a futuristic mindset were, Norway, Israel and Sweden. In 1996, Norway hosted and the influence of oil rigs in design also resulted in an untraditional look, however, the main technological challenge was the application of virtual studio for the voting part of the contest. And the results belonged to a future

beyond 2000, since it hasn't been replicated yet (p. 53). The Jerusalem stage in 1999, was not ambitious technically, in fact with a kinetic structure in the background it reminded of the 80s' Eurovision stages. However, the main theme was the solar system, therefore the idealization of the Space Age still was apparent (p.55). The first Eurovision of the new millennium took place in Stockholm, and being the first Eurovision of the new millennium was indeed the theme (p.56). LED screens were used to convey a sense of elegant minimalism that complemented the futurist approach.

Almost all the countries that hosted Eurovision in 1990s, were sharing the international hype for 2000. Therefore they preferred less national representation and more of a universal, futuristic theme either with centering actual technological change or borrowing images and concepts from science fiction movies.

6.2.2 Globalism

After 2000 Eurovision Song Contest has been through a massive transformation, it was spread to a larger area, as more countries wanted to participate, the native language rule was canceled and everybody could use English -the lingua franca-. The contest became an arena event, orchestra became redundant and was removed, and most importantly the televoting began. The results of these small changes were very dramatic when combined. Ireland did not win anymore, instead, between 2001 and 2008 eight different and new countries took the trophy and therefore the hosting rights as they used it as a one time opportunity to present their nations. In this era, the songs had more ethnic elements and the stages followed suit. The Eastern "fairy tale" began with Estonia, only to be ended in 2009 when the voting system has changed, by "Fairytale" of Aleksandr Rybak.

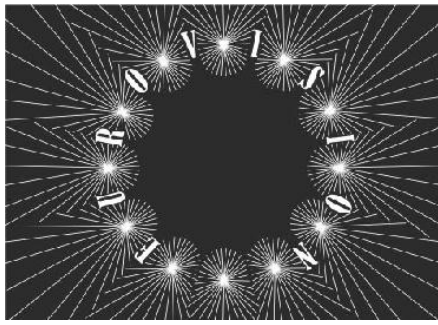
This identity-condensed era was also the beginning for more generic, global themes. For instance, the contest in Tallinn required the national broadcaster to enquire for international technical help, which made the need of outsourcing Eurovision production obvious. The motivations of televotes left a question mark, as "neighbour" and "diaspora" voting were deemed responsible for Eastern success and a balancing jury was introduced in 2009. The jury would prefer the more contemporary sounds and televoters would also change habits as ethnic songs became worn-out. This resulted with the contest going back to its original hosts.

Norway, Germany, Sweden, Austria, -by then- had less reasons to seek consent for their national discourse and were more motivated to contribute to the contests' quality and placement in an international market. The only new host of the Eurovision after 2009 was Azerbaijan, however their approach to Eurovision was also based on proving their ability to fit into the global perspective, as they won with a song composed by Swedes, sung by Eldar and Nigar whose names were shortened to Ell & Nikki for a more Western sound and most importantly for this study; their stage of 2012 was designed by Florian Wieder, the name behind Dusseldorf 2011.

Florian Wieder, who designed four Eurovision stages in eight years between 2010 and 2017, is a very successful stage designer, with a portfolio of many significant international entertainment events, therefore he has the capability to make sure Eurovision reaches the high standards of contemporary entertainment business. Moreover he believes the stage belongs to all the participants not just the hosting nation and whenever possible national pride should not be communicated via the constructed stage. Wieder -with his ability to align Eurovision to other global entertainment events, and promoting a new kind of nationalism, is a symbol of 2010s globalism of ESC stages.

6.3 Branding

Eurovision Song Contest has supported a strong brand identity, as every edition of the contest has prepared a logo to mark the production. In some occasions, the broadcasters decided to integrate their logo to the generic Eurovision logo, which has changed several times, always adapting to the era. The first generic logo of Eurovision resembles a union of stars and gives the feeling of lights omitted from a source emphasizing the importance of the contest for broadcasters. Currently, the generic logo has a heart shaped V, in which there is room for host's flag or participants (Figure 6.4). Meanwhile, some broadcasters decide to create a separate annual theme and a logo that is a piece of the puzzle. Both generic and annual logos are occasionally placed on the set in various sizes and levels of abstraction. Sometimes the logos cover the backdrop and sometimes they are observable in details.



EURO♥**VISION**
SONG CONTEST

Figure 6.5 : The generic logos of Eurovision.

When it comes to logo application on stage, the early generic logo is by far the favorite with three major analogue uses in 1965, 1968 and 1992. Naples edition in 1965, glorified the orchestra section of the set, while keeping the performance area very simple, and let the singers stand in front of a massive Eurovision logo (p.30). Three years later, in the first ESC broadcast in color, BBC utilizes a similar approach and builds a perforated and glittery version in the backdrop (p.31). The same logo decorates the floor of the Swedish stage of 1992, becoming the sea to the Viking ship (p.49). The logo is still highly popular when referring to the contest, especially the classical periods of it.

Many times the annual logos are also integrated to the stage. In 1985, Sweden had a set crowded with many elements, while emphasis was on neon lights. The logo also worked with the theme and was placed on the set almost feeling like a title to the mess (p.44). The Scandinavian country had the annual logo as a stable feature of the set once again in 2000, the abstract lips would change colors depending on the performing nation. (p. 56) A year after that, Denmark would build a framework of their logo and hang it over the stadium (p.57).

Some other applications of the logo are more creative and less literal. When Switzerland built the set around the Matterhorn theme (p.47), they also had a logo derived from the same mountain. Similarly in 2003 and 2008, Riga and Belgrade editions had conceptualized the cities' unique landscape (p.84) and the logos they designed acted as the abstraction of the set. Moreover, Estonian fairy tale of 2002 had "neither square nor round" elements both in the set and the logo, as they were building up the same brand identity (p.57).

6.4 Versatility

Eurovision Song Contest has had up to 26 contestant per night, and as a TV show aiming to entertain the spectators, visual diversion between performances proved to be necessary. The producers need it to keep the audience attention alive through three hours and the performers need to be different visually as much as they are musically if they want to be remembered between many contestant to gain votes. For these reasons, the set designers have tried to provide enough variables and as technology has developed, more and more elements have become available. In the first years the changes in the set were analogue, later lighting became determinant and now with the help of large screens and endless animation possibilities; a combination of all turned the contest into an event that creates unique settings for each performance.

The first attempt to visually diversify the outcome was in the first year the contest was broadcast live. The 1957 edition includes changing background paintings, and props like a phone (p. 24). 1959 is an impressive example of versatility as the revolving doors had twelve different images related to the participants' national identity on them, providing every performer the illusion of singing in their homeland. (p.25) In 1960, BBC equipped props on the set, that changed for each performance (p.26) and in 1963 they maximized versatility by using a studio (p.28).

Later there was an era where the lighting equipment also provided means to create a diversity in addition to analogue methods. The introduction of the Color TV also boosted this, letting the colors communicate and enhance the moods of performances. Some productions, such as the ones of Dublin 1971 (p.33), Brighton 1974 (p.36) and Dublin 1981 (p.41) use hue changes as the only way to create distinct looks in otherwise stable sets, while some others combine dynamic settings with changing colors. Dutch designer Roland de Groot seems to be master of this practice, geometric pieces come together to create abstract compositions for each act in his work, observed in Amsterdam 1970 (p.33), The Hague 1976 (p.38), The Hague 1980 (p.40) and Luxembourg 1984 (p.44). With this approach de Groot achieved a combination of versatility and cohesion through the night.

The next era between 1985 and 1998, the analogue ways of changing surroundings were replaced by different lighting tools such as neon tubes, laser lights, projections etc. The set of 1985 was clustered and a diversity was achieved by highlighting

different parts in each performance (p.44). In 1987, laser shows aided the change of sight and rhythm of the songs were adapted to (p.46). For Lausanne 1989 (p.47), Millstreet 1993 (p.50) and Dublin 1995 (p.52) sets were designed with general blackness to focus on different lighting elements that can be utilized depending on performers' wishes. These prepared the audience to the next era.

After 2000, due to the introduction of screens and high quality animations, the stages had the capability to transform into very distinct ambiances, only limited to lighting designers' imagination. Digital variations are extremely important in the latest era of Eurovision and the performers feel less and less in need of dressing in extravagant fashion to be noticed. And pyrotechnics provide the additional analogue touch to spice things up. However, some designers do not think it is enough and are motivated to bring in physical changes to the stage. For instance, in 2006, the floor of the performance area had platforms rising whenever needed and the walls of the stage could get steeper or lower (p. 61). In 2009, there was an arc made of modular screens that shifted up and down, therefore giving the performers more options (p.63). In 2010, there were curtains, chandeliers and moving lights, giving the participants a range of props to choose from (p.65). In 2017, there was a chandelier of transparent LEDs, for any act that would like to go out of the box (p.70) Moreover, some artists prefer to bring their own props to enhance the narrative they are trying to express. All in all, the latest editions of Eurovision maintain analogue, lighting oriented and digital capabilities for versatility.

7. TECHNICAL EVOLUTION

Eurovision Song Contest has been aired for sixty two years so far, and during that period the technologies that are used by entertainment sector advanced radically. This advancement inevitably reflects on Eurovision stages, and even though principles remain the same, the end product can vary because of the possibilities the tools provide. Since 1956, broadcasting technologies changed dramatically, orchestra was replaced by backing tracks, microphones went from figuratively tying the singers to letting them wildly dance, it has become possible to directly let the spectators at home vote for their favorite and most importantly LED screens took over and pyrotechnics became a part of Eurovision culture. All of these and their effects on the stage, will be discussed in this chapter.

7.1 Broadcasting

The broadcasting technology had three important breakthroughs during Eurovision's lifetime. The first one was the transition to live transmission in 1957. Before that, in 1956 the contest was considered a radio show in fact, only the winner's reprise was recorded to video. Therefore, there was not spectators at home or juries in other countries, waiting to be visually impressed. The set was simple, decorated with flowers and curtains, featuring an orchestra and letting everyone keep the focus on musical quality (p.23). However as soon as the show was being broadcast live in 1957, the looks gained importance, the first gimmicks were used and the background differed for each act (p.24). Eurovision officially became a televised show and it has shown characteristics of televised shows ever since.

1968 was an important milestone in Eurovision history as the contest was broadcast in color for the first time (p.31). Color is a significant aspect of the stage as it brings another layer to consider and is the ultimate media to set the mood. It is worthwhile to mention, that the technical changes of this kind are gradual rather than radical. So in the first years, most people would continue watching the show through black and white screens, making it a challenge for designers to put on a show that looks good in

both. Despite this, for a long time colors has become the main feature of versatility (p.91) and became the hero of many editions of Eurovision. For instance, in Dublin 1981, the background lights was arranged to match the costumes of performers so that the views would be perfectly balanced.

The latest major broadcasting improvement was in 2005, when high definition was introduced. High definition mostly meant the ability to see every detail of celebrities, however, it actually changed the ratio of the default videos. After 2005, the set designers had to consider a more rectangular framing and develop the camera angles and the areas of the stage that cameras capture, accordingly.

7.2 Audio

Eurovision Song Contest originally had a live orchestra, the songs were more classical too, not including synthesized elements. The first change happened in 1976, when prerecorded backing tracks were allowed in the show along with the orchestra, as the sound of the participant songs and winners turned more into pop. However, orchestra was still a significant visual element in London 1977 (p.38), Paris 1978 (p.39), Goteborg 1985 (p.44) and Bergen 1986 (p.45), even if it was not as central as it had been for the 1973 edition in Luxembourg (p.35).

Later, the contest's expansion caused problems with the orchestra as it was challenging for them to practice almost twenty five songs to perfection, synchronized with the backing track and the singer in a short amount of time. And unlike other game shows, the Eurovision orchestra had to follow strict rules and be careful about time restrictions. Their task was getting impractical, redundant and replaceable at the same time. In 1999, full playback became eligible and the rules has changed and host countries' obligation to provide a live orchestra was removed.

There was of course an audible decrease in quality after this decision, however, this study focuses on visuals and in that context, full playback meant one less component of the set: A major original element was missing and the placing of the live musicians and instruments was no longer a challenge. Instead, the designers would experiment with green room's position compared to the stage and the contest rapidly became an arena event and the interaction with a wild audience with flags, replaced the image of the relation between singers and the orchestra chef.

7.3 Microphones

The microphone technology had a direct impact on the movements of performers, therefore the shape and scale of the performance area. In 1956 there were standing microphones, which restricted the moves, and the singers would not leave their position through the performance. The exception of 1963, where a boom microphone was equipped in a studio environment, showed how the artists were eager to use body language when they could. In 1966, wired microphones were used, which resulted in larger area for performers, however the main revolution was in 1983 with wireless microphones. After this date, the participants had the opportunity to move freely and create smart choreographies, for which they would also need a larger space and special lighting and efficient camerawork to capture their moves.

7.4 Lighting and Special Effects

Eurovision is nowadays associated with incredible staging and lighting shows, however it used to be a plain theater stage with few spotlights. The first attempt of impressing the audience with a light show that works to the rhytym of the songs was made by Luxembourg in 1962. The blinking lights actually worked and provided the magical touch the city state was looking for, however, it also caused major power issues almost proving how the show was too ahead of its time (p.28). Later twinkling lights would become a default of Eurovision stages. Any color change of the stage during the show is also due to lighting technologies, and it was responsible of most of the versatility in 1970s and 1980s. After 1989, projected shapes would be the major special effect for a while, especially since the video walls integrated did not contribute to the staging the way they do nowadays.

The screens have changed the Eurovision set immensely. The first video wall was integrated to set in Edinburgh 1972 (p.34) however, they were mostly used for zoomed in live footage of performers and did not make the impact of LED screens. The five LED blocks of Stockholm 2000 (p.56) started a leading to the contemporary Eurovision stages which can transform to anything, limited by nothing but the imagination of lighting designers. After 2004, only Oslo 2010 did not include a LED cyclorama however they did have a replacement of similar principle, only with lower resolution that was only suitable for pixel art (p.65). LED floor is also an important

feature of many Eurovision stages, as they present an additional value to certain camera angles.

There are other relatively new technical extensions that are used to create memorable Eurovision moments. One of them is pyrotechnics, that include fireworks, actual fire and fog, either marking the climax points of the performances or adding up to the romantic mood. In Stockholm 2016 (p.69), pyrotechnics were overshadowed by holograms and on-screen effects. These new effects might possibly dominate the future, however when and where will depend on the finances as Wieder's vision of creating a half real half virtual studio was tackled by budget issues in 2017 (p.70).

7.5 Televoting

Televoting became possible in 1997 in five major countries and they were followed by the others in the upcoming year. This new voting method, that has become available after the telecommunication technologies were advanced enough, changed the successful type of entries and created a new set of successful the nations that are more eager to tell their national story. which resulted in an era of folk music and sets concerned with national representations. This is also due to the system providing an opportunity for the minorities and diaspora around the continent to show loyalty to their home countries in form of 12 points. The diaspora voting and the subjective lower quality of the successful entries have both been the excuse to balance the system and in 2009 juries were brought back to effect respectively half of the votes.

8. DESIGNERS PERSPECTIVE

Three designers amongst many who have taken part in the production of Eurovision stages in different editions, are interviewed specifically for this study to have a better understanding of their products, the motivations and inspirations behind them. They provided insight into the way the system operated when they were involved and moreover the way they view the contest and its evolution. Servet Işık Michael Grogan and Florian Wieder, have very kindly responded to the researcher's request and replied a set of questions via electronic mail. The insight provided by them, contributed to the debated subjects and at some points confirmed personal observations.

The contacted designers represent different eras of Eurovision and are known for their works in 1981, 1988, 1997, 2004, 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2017 editions. Michael Grogan, who has worked for the Irish broadcaster, RTE, had the opportunity to be involved in three editions thanks to seven Irish victories, he took part in the production of 1981, 1988 and 1997 stages. Servet Işık a production designer working for the Turkish channel TRT, shows an example of the Eastern European approach to hosting the contest, with her team's work on 2004. Lastly, Florian Wieder has his own company with experience on many internationally celebrated TV shows, such as MTV Awards and X Factor: He has added Eurovision to the company portfolio with 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2017. Just by the way these designers acquired their assignments, it is possible to observe how national TV channels used to assign their own teams to design the stage, and they preferred outsourcing in recent year: taking pride in technical capabilities was replaced with being able to afford as much as possible.

Eurovision was significant for all three designers while their views on it varied. For Grogan the song contest has a personal sense of achievement attached to it, as it sets the milestones for his career development: 1981 was a "make or break situation" for him as someone new in the company, 1988 was a collaboration with a coworker which they had the major responsibility to "change the company policy for the

future” and in the last one he achieved being the head of design for a large team. On the other hand, Işık was already Head of Design for TRT in 2004 and for her the experience of designing for Eurovision was a matter of national pride more than a personal one; in the interview she highlights the importance of first Turkish victory, and adds how the scale of the production was a source of excitement. For Wieder, the scale of the show is not as impressive, there are many similarly large scale productions, however it is an honor to be asked to work on a show with so many different countries involved. So, the set design of Eurovision is an important project for designers, for many reasons varying from a personal sense of achievement to national pride,

The designers were asked about the demands made by the hosting TV stations and European Broadcasting Union. Grogan said he was asked for a representation of Irish culture for the set of 1981, which is the reason why he chose applying an abstraction of Celtic accessories. On the contrary, he was asked for “a modern state of art” with “no national culture representation” in 1988, which resulted in a black box concept with lots of special effects. When the same question was directed at Servet Işık she told that TRT did not especially ask for a cultural motif on the stage, however, as the team they were inspired by the host city, Istanbul, anyway. Işık also mentioned EBU’s requirements list for the production extending from accommodation to stage, size of the stage, zones for food and meetings etc. So EBU was solely interested in assuring the needs of the participants were met. Meanwhile, Wieder mentioned neither the broadcasters or he found a national representation on the set necessary and he was free in developing concepts. So, the producers of the event prioritizes the technical needs and sometimes have extra requests. National representation was requested by the host TV only once in the eight editions examined in the interviews, however the identity can also be designers’ own source of inspiration to make a difference.

Another question to designers was on their inspirations and how they think their work stands out from the other editions? Grogan pointed out different features as distinctive for each stage he worked on, in 1981 they used lighting as a color, in 1988 special effects were utilized, and in 1997 design and graphics were combined. Işık and her team observed examined the older stages however felt the need to be original and new: the concept they developed was “Under the Same Sky” which is

based on Hagia Sophia and Istanbul. For Florian Wieder, it is important that “the set looks unique and outstanding compared to previous shows”. To achieve this he tries to improve the visuals for characteristic elements of the show. For instance, “there is a lot of variety on the show” and because of it, he tries to create “a maximum of flexibility” so that the set works with “every performance from a creative point of view”. Wieder also tried to improve the voting experience by placing the green room closer to the audience. The biggest wow effect he ever planned for Eurovision was “to bring in a new technology and create a hybrid set: half real, half virtual”, the plan failed due to budget restrictions. All in all, the designers seem to feel the urge to stand out either in a technical or conceptual way.

Grogan, Işık and Wieder also shared their opinions on time and technology’s impact on the Eurovision stages through the history, Işık mentioned “everything changes and develops very fast: the idea of design, technology, communication, materials” while Wieder said even though the tools become different, the creative process does not change. The creative process for him, is “not influenced by technology. These are just toys and tools”. First, there has to be a vision and then the designer needs to discover the right tools to realize it. To further understand their perception of other editions, a question was on their favorites. It was interesting how Russian set of 2009, was named both by Grogan and Işık. The Irish designer was especially proud of the designer of Moscow stage as, the designer of it, John Casey was also an ex RTE employee, he also added that after 2009 he felt “less inclined”, either because the business went a bit over the top, or he was too old to adapt. It is important to note at this point, the production of 2009 (p.54) checked most of the boxes in the timeline proposed for this thesis: It had strong national representation, both through the discourse and utilization of architectural references; there were all kinds of versatility and technology-wise it was glamorous. This, by itself implies the timeline can work as a checklist of expectations.

Eurovision is a television show however, it also has live audience that experience the event from a different perspective. When asked how they balanced both experiences, Grogan said television was the focal point, however the audience also was taken into consideration with large screens for them if necessary. Işık said, she thought of the event both as a concert and a show, with one not being more important than the other.

Lastly, all of them were asked their favorite Eurovision act where the stage contributed to the quality of the performance. The magical moment was Riverdance of 1994 for Michael Grogan, despite it being an interval act. Servet Işık was impressed by the performances of Ruslana and Athena on the stage she worked for. Florian Wieder on the other hand, refused to name a favorite, and mentioned how some creative concepts were very professional compared to other less inspired ones. However, the staging on its own, can not turn a bad song into a great performance. It all starts with music, and how it's staged can only support the song.

9. CONCLUSION

Eurovision Song Contest, started with the purpose of bringing Europeans together and testing technical capacities of the European Broadcasting Union. Over the many years of its existence, it has been a perfect environment to communicate national pride, stories, objects, cultures and ideas internationally. Even though the effects of globalism diminish the national representation in some levels, the contest is still not an ordinary talent show and will not become one easily, so there will always be clues to interesting insight waiting to be discovered. Evidently the contest's low reputation in the academia seems the main reason of limited study on the subject.

The expansion of the contest continues as Australian participation is rumored to be followed other non-European nations. Expanding for more viewers even in non-participant regions, the EBU tries to push the contest into new markets in new continents, trying to get more reach. At the same time they continue to lose ground in Europe, where some state television channels are closed and can not join the organization, while some others are too disappointed with the voting system to even bother with participation. The scale of the audience is important, as it reflects on the scale of the stage. The grand reach of the physical as well as televised aspects of the competition reflect the new diversity and origin of the audience, further influencing the creative choices for musicians and designers alike.

Eurovision Song Contest is an interesting subject for design research, as plenty of exterior events have reflected on its sets. The principles of staging and the contest remain the same, just the tools change, as mentioned by Florian Wieder. The tools of Eurovision changed from flowers to fire. The black and white is replaced initially with subtle beige colors and later with dark and bright contrasts. The general attitude changed from a classical music recital where people sat and listened to singers that barely moved, to a massive party where people dance, waving flags and listen to singers as they perform stunts on treadmills. All these changes are the results of technical and cultural progress. A deeper understanding of how they developed in the past will help foreseeing the future.

The overall trends of the staging design follow the ages as they showcase classical, than modern and even futurist elements as they inevitably latched on to postmodernism.

A developing technological curiosity made its appearance with a few early attempts at digital visual and audio experiments. The contemporary trend is for more polished and technically competent presentations that compete year to year in sheer scope. As new technologies reach development worthy of the big stage they become incorporated into the show. Initially these advances are celebrated as gimmicks and performative stunts, but they work their way into the commonplace and standard over brief spans of time. The vergining virtual technology is on the cusp of making an appearance at eurovision as its current developmental trends imply. Developments show a tendency to come in waves, with a periodic resurgence of older ideas. Periodically individual acts continue to feature physical interactive elements and this suggests an upcoming stage that takes on the tectonic as well as digital interactive qualities. The background and surfaces of the stage itself can begin to employ kinetic transformations similar to the stages of the 90's, as the purely digital minimalism runs its course.

The possible trend for generative ideas of the stages can be derived from history. There is a tendency to focus on national identity in the initial hosting experience, that shifts to a more technological focus in subsequent years. The ongoing trend to hire international freelance designers instead of the hosting television station staff further suggests a general preference for showing off technology rather than local culture. A correction is due any year in which local folklore and traditions will become the core of the stage concept once again.

The scope and scale of the Eurovision song contest continues to expand. It is now beyond Europe, it is becoming global. The rich cultures of the participants are just waiting to find their expression in the digital wave of the technological revolution. The interactions between audience and performers grow ever more intimate and the event is raising the bar of quality even higher.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

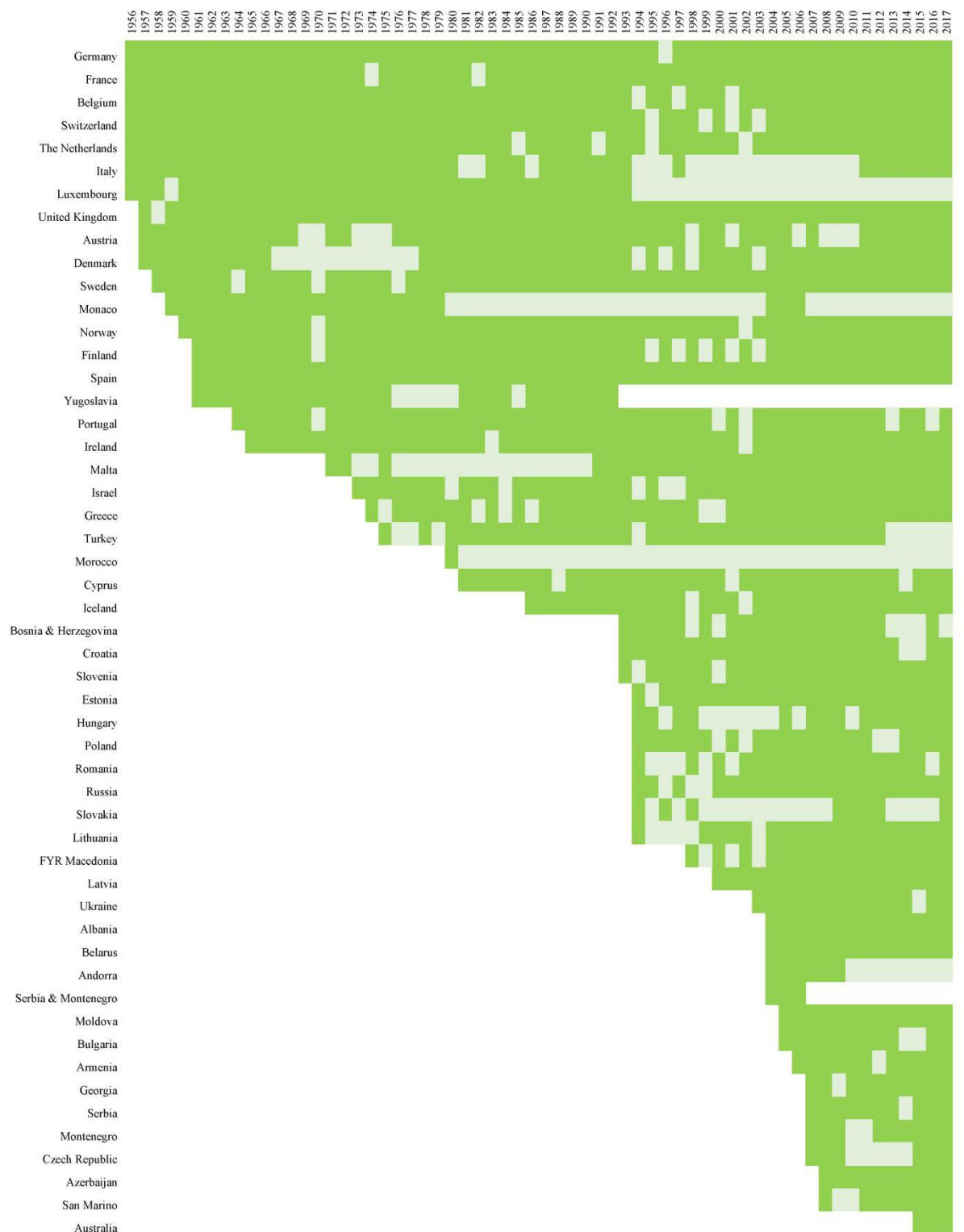


Fig A.1: Chronological Participant List

APPENDIX B:

Appendix B.1 Interview with Michael Grogan

How significant were the Eurovision stages for your career? What makes them different than or similar to your other work?

Eurovision project were very significant in my career development ,
1981 I was not very long with company so being chosen to design was a make or break situation, luckily my boss was very trusting and appointed me. Happily it all worked out well.

1988 was a shared appointment with Paula Farrell which was quite a different approach team work on design concept etc it worked v well and was to change the company policy for the future.

1997 I was Head of Design which helped with a new stage in my career responsibility for the entire design team was different graphics and all relevant design areas.

The event has always had many stakeholders. EBU and RTE were the main companies to work with, in your case. What would be your brief and what kind of restrictions did you face?

The brief was very simple design the stage for the contest, we were allowed three months for concept and the make presentation to senior production staff

1981 The design concept was to reflect Irish culture in some way ,hence the Torc and the Petrie crown which was the rostra area.

1988 the brief was v different no national culture representation on stage ,a new modern state of the art ,black box concept with lots of special effects used therein lots of agonizing among the traditionalists.

You've worked on three stages, designed two of them. And they look very different. How would you, as a reputable production designer, describe the reasons of this difference? (Technology, trends...?)

The design concept was different because time and technology dictated so. Also producers were a significant influence.

If you were asked three words to describe the mutual aspects of these sets, what would they be?

1981
Using lighting as color.

1988

Use of special effects

1997

Design and Graphics combined

Is it an additional challenge to consider the present audience's and TV viewers' perspectives, how do you make a stage look beautiful for both?

TV were primary in production values audience were accommodated when necessary with large screens but atmosphere was always high special occasion etc

A video in RTE archive shows you with a model and says the stage is based on "Celtic Torc". Could you tell me more about the inspiration behind 1981 stage?

1981 was based on ancient Celtic artefacts early and pre christian civilisations Both Torc and Petrie Crown were worn as clasps for formal dress ware i can get you references if you wish.

In 1988, the focal point seems to be on an optical illusion. Where are the mirrors located? And is there a reference to Irish culture that I failed to capture?

1988 no reference to Celtic culture on stage but lots in opening title Ancient Mythology used by graphic designer using film combined with technology a defining moment for graphics in the company and in the industry.

Paula Ferrell designed the 1997 stage. Online comments mention how it looks like a sci-fi movie set, perhaps aiming a younger audience. Is this accurate, what was the concept?

Yes it was aimed at younger audience i,m sure you could track her down online for her input.

Did you watch the later Eurovision's? Is there a set that you specifically admire? Why?

I watched some i was impressed by John Casey who did Russian production, he was ex RTE good training! Lately i am less inclined to perhaps the whole business has gone a bit over the top, maybe I'm getting old!

Nowadays, the stages are very adaptable to different acts thanks to big screens and lighting shows. I understand versatility has become something to consider in Eurovision, as early as 1957. How important was it for you? And what were your solutions?

Versatility was so important to the because of so many acts particularly nowadays 1981 i considered lighting to be the one to give the palette to.

Some performances shine on the stage, and the stage shines with them. Can you name a favorite act, a magical moment that made you feel like all the effort you put was worthy?

Riverdance has to be it even though it was the interval act breathtaking in the auditorium.

Appendix B.2 Interview with Servet Işık

1- Eurovision için sahne tasarlamak sizin için nasıl bir önem taşıyordu?

Türkiye ilk kez Eurovision Şarkı Yarışması'nı kazandı. Ve böyle bir ilki yaşamak, büyük bir sahne tasarlamak çok önemli ve heyecanlı oldu.

2-Daha önceki işlerinizin ölçeği ve bütçesine kıyasla nasıl konumlandırırsınız Eurovision 2004'ü?

Çok yüksek bir bütçe: 11 milyon Euro

3- Projenizin tasarımında nelerden etkilendiniz?

Bu bir ekip çalışması idi.. TRT'de çalışan tüm arkadaşlarımın bu organizasyonda yer almasını istedim. İstanbul gibi özel bir şehirde yapıldığı için "UNDER THE SAME SKY" teması altında Ayasofya dan esinlenildi..

4- Önceki sahneleri incelediniz mi, ortak bir Eurovision dili oluşturmak amacınız var mıydı?

Her sene teknoloji çok hızlı geliştiği için önceki sahnelere tabii ki baktık. Fakat özgün ve yeni olmak zorunda idik

5- TRT'nin, katıldığımız zamanlarda tabi, şarkılarda yerel bir öge talebi olduğunu biliyorduk sanatçılardan. Benzer bir zorunluluk sahne için de söz konusu muydu?

Hayı r..

6- Yapımcıların bu işi kotarabileceğinize olan inançsızlığını neye bağlıyorsunuz?

Evet aynı tavırla ben de karşılaştım. O dönem de yönetici olmam ve bu işi bizden daha iyi yapacak kimsenin olmadığı nı onlara anlatmam işimi kolaylaştırdı.

7- Tasarımda ne kadar özgürdünüz? EBU ile olan ilişkiler bağlamında soruyorum, yetkilerin ne kadarı sizdeydi, hangi konularda (ışık ve animasyon tasarımında belki) uluslararası firmalar devreye girdi? Size önceden verilen bir kriter listesi var mıydı?

Tasarım konusunda müdahale olmadı. EBU'nun Eurovision konusunda kalın bir kitapçığı var, olmazsa olmazları. Büyük bir organizasyon: Konaklama, sahne, büyüklüğü, yemek, toplantı mekanları vb. gibi bir liste ile hareket ediliyor.

8- Teknik anlamda, ses, ışık ve kamera teknolojisinin üretim sürecinde radikal değişikliklere yol açtığını tecrübe edindiniz mi? Kamera açılarını sahnenin tasarım aşamasında mı hesaba katıyorsunuz?

Tabii ki onlarca toplantı yapıldı . Dekor ilk biten çalışma ..Onun üzerinin de kamera açıları, kamera yerleri, performans alanları , ışık, efekt ışıkları gibi teknik detaylar hep beraber konuşuldu tartışıldı ..

9 - Hem arenadaki seyircinin hem de televizyon başındakilerin tecrübelerini değerlendirmeniz gerekiyor, bu ne kadar zorlayıcı? Birbiriyle çelişen şeyler mi? Siz bir TV şovu olarak mı, konser olarak mı yaklaşmıştınız?

Show ve konser beraber. Sonuçta ekran başındakiler için show, arenadakiler için konser.

10- İdeal bir Eurovision sahnesi, her performansta tamamen farklı bir Dünya'ya dönüyor ve bu konudaki çabalar ilk yıllardan beri görülüyor. Sizin için ne kadar önemli bir kriterdi bunu sağlamak ve hangi elementler bu amaçla tasarlanmıştı?

Teknolojik gelişmeler işleri artık kolaylaştırıyor. Her ülke kendi şarkısı ve içeriği ile ilgili bilgi veriyor..Sahne ve Işık tasarımcısı beraber bu içeriği değerlendiriyor ve görseller hazırlanıyor.

11- Daha önceki konuşmalarımızda “Şimdi olsa daha farklı yapardım” dediğinizi hatırlıyorum. Biraz detaylandırır mısınız? Neden? Tekrar kazansak ve tekrar tasarlamamız istense ne farklı olurdu?

Zamanla yarışmak biraz zorladı. Detaylarda, üretim yöntemlerinde zorlandık. Tekrar kazansak da başka keşkeler olabilir bu tarz büyük işlerde.

12- Devir değişiyor, ve her devrin ruhu da farklı. Aynı amaçla hazırlanan 61 sahneden bahsediyoruz ve görebileceğiniz üzere, adeta evrim geçirmişler. Bu durumu bir profesyonel gözünden nelere bağladınız?

Herşey çok hızlı değişiyor gelişiyor, tasarım algısı, teknoloji, iletişim, malzeme.

13- Sahnenin performans alanından çok daha fazlası olduğunu bazen göz ardı ediyoruz. Seyirciler, basın, beklemekte olan sanatçılar, sunucular.. Onların gecedeki konumları sizin projenizde hangi önem sırasındaydı? Green Room'u ya da basın odalarını saklamak yerine, farklı bir görsel öğe olarak kullanan sahneler de olmuş. Bu konudaki düşünceleriniz nelerdir?

Seçilen mekan çok önemli. Biz Abdi İpekçi Spor Salonu'nda yapmak zorunda idik. Büyük mekanlar ve değişik çözümler mümkün. O dönem başka yer yoktu ve çok zorlandık. Çadır kent inşaa etmek zorunda kaldık, sosyal mekanlar için.

14- Sizce Mayıs 2004'te sahneye en çok yakışan performans hangisiydi?
Ruslana ve Athena.

15- 2004'ü bir kenara bırakırsak, geriye kalan Eurovision sahnelerinde en çok beğendiğiniz ve altında imzanızın olmasını dilediğiniz hangisi? Neden?

Rusya da yapılan yarışma ve sahne çok başarılı idi.

16- Son olarak özellikle belirtmek istediğiniz bir şey var mı ?

Türkiye tekrar katılsa da o heyecanı izleyici olarak bile olsa tekrar yaşasak.
Teşekkür ederim, iyi çalışmalar. Başarılar.

Appendix B.3 Interview with Florian Wieder

1- What does Eurovision mean for you? Is it different than your other projects?

There aren't many projects like this from a global point of view.
It's a great honor being asked to work on a show like this.
In terms of set there is not a huge difference to other large scale projects.
What makes it special is that there are so many different countries involved.
It has to work for all of them in the same way.

2- Where would you say you stand for Eurovision as you are the designer of 4 editions, sharing the record with Roland de Groot?

I never spent any thoughts on this fact to be honest.

3- What are the main principles of your designs, if you wouldn't mind naming 5 of them?

There is a lot of variety on this show.
It has to work for any performance from a creative point of view.
I've tried to create a maximum of flexibility.
The LED backdrop will give us this flexibility.
Another important thing, that's important to me is that the set looks unique and outstanding compared to previous shows.
Especially when it comes to the generic look which defines the home of Eurovision 2017.
Also important is the logistics of the show.
The set has to be practical.
There are just a few minutes to get from one performance to another.
This is a huge logistical challenge for the people working in the backstage area.
To create a set like this also includes lighting, screen content etc.
There is a lot of creative conversation between director, lighting designer, screen designers and myself.

4- All of your designs looked significantly different. Could you describe the inspirations for 2011, 2012, 2015 and 2017?

Before 2011 the greenroom used to be in a different room, disconnected from the rest of the show.

I tried to do something different.

Don't know if you remember, but the greenroom got revealed for the voting and was placed behind the LED screen.

2012 we continued with this idea and placed the greenroom within the audience. The idea behind this was to bring the show and talent as close to the audience and viewers as possible.

The voting is a huge part of the show and it didn't feel right to me, that the audience in the house has to watch it on screens.

2015 was the most exiting Eurovision for me to work on so far.

The team was amazing and there haven't been many restrictions in the creative process. In fact this show was created by a tiny group of very ambitious people.

For my understanding an ideal scenario from a creative perspective.

In terms of 2017 the original idea was to bring in a new technology and create a hybrid set: half real half virtual.

But unfortunately a few weeks ago this feature got canceled for financial reasons.

It would have been a huge wow effect.

5- Did broadcasters demand “something German / Azerbaijani / Austrian or Ukrainian” or did you personally intend to reflect these cultures in the stage?

The set design itself is not influenced by the country that hosts the show.

For my understanding the set has to work for all countries.

But there are certain moments where the hosting country can present some cultural backgrounds if wanted.

The opening of the show is one of these moments.

Same goes for the interval act.

6- The staging plays an important part in Eurovision results now. Sometimes the set boosts the performance, and the performance makes the stage memorable. Among the performances on these four stages, which are your favorites?

This is really hard to say.

There have been so many good performances in the last couple of years.

The creative concept of some of them have been outstanding.

Some of the delegations came up with very professional creative concepts.

Others feel less inspired.

For my understanding it's a combination of music and how the performance gets staged. You can't turn a bad song into a great performance.

It all starts from the music.

The way how a song gets staged can only support the song. It can't make it better.

7- Technology changed our expectations from TV shows, and productions of this scale. Could you identify milestones in the recent history?

The tools became different.

But in fact this doesn't change the creative process.

There has to be a vision and then you have to find the right tools for it.

In my case, the creative process isn't influenced by technology.

These are just toys and tools.

8- Related to previous question, how do you envision the future?

I have absolutely no idea to be honest.

This year's show feels very political to me.

This never was the idea behind this concept.

The counties should take all their political issues away for a few days and try to celebrate together in harmony.

9- Have you had moments when you pushed the technical limits of production team to create your vision?

This happens on almost every production.

Sometimes there are weight issues in terms of ceiling.

There are also financial restrictions I have to be aware of.

CURRICULUM VITAE

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