The modern ‘art’ theatre

Martin Puchner, in his book, *Stage Fright: Modernism, Anti-theatricality, and Drama* (see details below), charts modernism’s resistance to theatre, drawing a boundary between what he calls avant-garde theatricalism, and modernist anti-theatricalism – pointing out that both offer ‘a critique of the actual theater’. This week’s seminar will concentrate on the poetics and politics of theatre in modernity, through exploring such modernist anti-theatricality, and how the theatre responded by inviting audiences to become absorbed in apparently autonomous performances (ie performances apparently independent of their audiences). In particularly we will be considering how the advent of technological modernity influenced perceptions of representation and the person.

Dramaturgies:

- The fourth wall
- The poetics (and politics) of autonomy in art
- Antitheatricality

**PRIMARY (essential)**


**FURTHER READING**


Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, ‘Modernism and theatrical performance’ [http://www.js-modcult.bham.ac.uk/articles/issue1_barr2.pdf](http://www.js-modcult.bham.ac.uk/articles/issue1_barr2.pdf) (overview of the concurrent antitheatricality of modernism and the essential place of theatrical experiment in the history of modernism)