

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910807882303321
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Titolo	Theorizing the Angura Space : Avant-garde Performance and Politics in Japan, 1960-2000 // Peter Eckersall
Pubbl/distr/stampa	Leiden; ; Boston : , : BRILL, , 2006
ISBN	1-281-39957-4 9786611399573 90-474-0995-7
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (262 p.)
Collana	Brill's Japanese Studies Library ; ; 23
Disciplina	792.095209045
Soggetti	Experimental theater - Japan Theater - Japan - History - 20th century Theater - Political aspects - Japan
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Note generali	Bibliographic Level Mode of Issuance: Monograph
Nota di bibliografia	Includes bibliographical references and index.
Nota di contenuto	pt. 1. The 1960s space : performance and protest -- pt. 2. Culture after the bubble : performance and performativity -- pt. 3. Rethinking radical spaces in the Japanese avant-garde theatre.
Sommario/riassunto	This is the first history of Japan's avant-garde underground theatre (angura) in a time of its most intense, creative, and original productions, viz. 1960-2000. It closely investigates the interrelationship of aesthetics and politics and explores contrasting examples of contemporary performance in relation to social context and cultural history. Part one considers the 1960s era of protest and theatrical invention. The second part examines theatre in the 1980s, a time of unprecedented economic boom. The final section considers the work of four of the most important companies of the 1990s and explores how they are grappling with manifold new political and artistic challenges.