LIVE IN CINEMA:
A PATTERN LANGUAGE IN THE MET'S LIVE IN HD SERIES

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ABSTRACT

Since their introduction in 2006, live transmissions of performing arts in cinemas have become a rising phenomenon worldwide. Opera broadcasts, as the most popular form, are still exploring the possibilities and particularities of the medium. The design problem lies in the translation of the opera experience from the Opera House to remote cinemas worldwide, which can be understood as a translation of time and space. Because the opera experience not only involves the opera performance itself but how the whole event is framed, the paratexts are definitive in the reception of the performance. In cinemas, the 'paratexts' are the audiovisual contents that surround the opera performance itself. They are able to contextualize the opera experience, which constitutes a relevant subject for design research that has not been analyzed in depth until now. This study attempts to fill that gap. It proposes some design principles for the different practical solutions.

In order to understand the opera paratexts in cinemas, this study analyses in detail the catalyst product of its kind, the Live in HD series of the Metropolitan Opera of New York. The research involves a holistic understanding of the design problem, and content analysis of the paratexts in the Live in HD series. The initial results of this analysis showed the complexity of the subject, which were first classified in four categories: events, spaces, objects and people. The limitations of this classification led to the concept of A Pattern Language as a more accurate system for presenting the results. This research proposes seven patterns composed of invariants and solutions. The aim of this thesis is to contribute with a specific insight into this emergent field of practice and study that could benefit practitioners and scholars.