

The original set designs for *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma*: written and built spaces

Las escenografías originales para *Bodas de sangre* y *Yerma*: espacios escritos y construidos

Aaron Jara-Calabuig

Universitat Politècnica de València. aajaca@doctor.upv.es

Received 2023-05-13

Accepted 2023-09-05



To cite this article: Jara-Calabuig, Aaron. "The original set designs for *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma*: written and built spaces." *VLC arquitectura* 10, no. 2 (October 2023): 31-46. ISSN: 2341-3050. <https://doi.org/10.4995/vlc.2023.19705>



Abstract: Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) was one of the most influential writers of Spanish literature of the 20th century. His particular point of view, influenced by rural and urban experiences, inspired set designs with high aesthetic and compositional value. This research analyzes the original stagings of *Bodas de sangre* in the Teatro Beatriz (Madrid, 1933) and *Yerma* in the Teatro Español (Madrid, 1934). Compiling documentary material and preparing plans and technical models offer a complete view of each proposal, considering the design criteria and construction processes of those designs for which information is available today. Studying the set designers responsible for each project is also relevant. Manuel Fontanals, Santiago Ontañón, and Siegfried Burmann were leading figures in Spanish and foreign theatrical plastic art during the Second Spanish Republic and the following years. In summary, the study shows how the designs for each scenic space were created, analyzing both their compositional and technical details and the transformation process from the written space to the built one. After all, set design is a discipline belonging to ephemeral architecture, which aims to generate atmospheres and structures with a short useful life but with aesthetic, functional, and stability requirements.

Keywords: Set design; theatre; *Bodas de sangre*; *Yerma*; Federico García Lorca.

Resumen: Federico García Lorca (1898-1936) fue uno de los escritores más influyentes de la literatura española del siglo XX. Su particular visión, influida por vivencias rurales y urbanas, inspiró escenografías de alto valor estético y conceptual. Esta investigación analiza los montajes originales de *Bodas de sangre* en el Teatro Beatriz (Madrid, 1933) y de *Yerma* en el Teatro Español (Madrid, 1934). La recopilación de material documental y la elaboración de planos y modelos técnicos ofrecen una visión completa de cada propuesta, teniendo en cuenta los criterios de diseño y los procesos constructivos de aquellas composiciones de las que se dispone de información. También es relevante el estudio de los escenógrafos responsables de cada proyecto. Manuel Fontanals, Santiago Ontañón y Sigfrido Burmann fueron figuras destacadas de la plástica teatral española y extranjera durante la Segunda República Española y los años posteriores. En resumen, el estudio muestra cómo se forjaron los diseños de cada espacio escénico, analizando tanto sus detalles compositivos y técnicos como el proceso de transformación del espacio escrito al construido. Al fin y al cabo, la escenografía es una disciplina vinculada a la arquitectura efímera, que pretende generar atmósferas y construcciones con una breve vida útil, pero con requerimientos estéticos, funcionales y estructurales.

Palabras clave: Escenografía; teatro; *Bodas de sangre*; *Yerma*; Federico García Lorca.

INTRODUCTION

This article studies the original set designs for *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma* by Federico García Lorca, considered reference staging in his commercial production. The universal poet gave space a significant weight within the plots of these two texts, and, for this reason, the treatment of the scenic space was fundamental in the performances. As a branch of ephemeral architecture, scenography aims to generate spaces and atmospheres for theatrical performance, combining beauty, stability, and functionality.¹ Thus, an analysis of the scenographic projects is approached from the formal and aesthetic point of view, but also from the metric and constructive, which gives a detailed insight into creative processes from the design phases to the materialization and staging of the proposals. This study is carried out by focusing on a selection of scenes from each play. Specifically, those where more information is available thanks to graphic and written testimonies and which give a global vision of each project.

It is worth mentioning that the aesthetics of these two premieres are removed from that of the Spanish commercial theater of the time. The predominant scenographic trend in Spanish theaters between the 1920s and 1930s was the so-called traditional one, with a purely realistic character. However, some scenographers related to Lorca, such as Manuel Fontanals and Siegfried Burmann, belonged to a different trend, *Teatro de Arte*, headed by Gregorio Martínez Sierra and influenced by Diaghilev's Ballets Russes.² This movement significantly influenced the writer and his productions, as shown by the designs studied below. Excessively realistic representation was avoided, and the reinterpretation of space was favored.

The case of *Bodas de sangre* is perhaps the clearest example of this innovation due to the collaborative effort of the two set designers: Fontanals and Santiago Ontañón. The latter belonged to an even more groundbreaking scenographic trend, faithful to the European artistic avant-garde of the first half of the twentieth century. It would appear in Spain, especially after the Second Republic's establishment, and marked a

considerable distance from traditional aesthetics. Thus, the set designs of this play broke away from the more conventional trend and introduced renewed spaces and decorations inspired by existing architecture and landscapes but with a modern reinterpretation, as will be shown.

In a context in which traditional aesthetics would not lose its hegemony in commercial theater,³ these two cases represent that innovative circle that turned to scenic experimentation during the years of the Second Spanish Republic. After all, Lorca's proposals, like those of other authors such as Alberti or Casona, were fresh air in a stagnant theatrical artistic panorama. This modernization undoubtedly meant the cultural enrichment of the citizens through the plastic arts and scenic architecture. An enrichment that would come from the hand of such illustrious figures as Alberto Sánchez, Salvador Dalí, Joan Miró, José Caballero, Maruja Mallo, and Norah Borges,⁴ in addition to those that will be studied more extensively in this paper.

Before starting, describing and situating each plot is necessary. *Bodas de sangre* is a story of love, death and misfortune. It is, after all, the tale of a wedding between members of two clans in the Andalusian countryside. After the wedding, the bride abandons the groom and leaves with Leonardo, her previous suitor. Honor and revenge are then mixed in a confrontation between families, which ends with the death of the husband and the lover. The plot is based on a true story.

Ontañón, set designer and friend of Lorca, was present when the poet discovered the details of this event in the newspaper:

It has been said ad nauseam that *Bodas de sangre* is a play based on a tragic event with very similar characteristics, which took place in Nijar, a town in Almería, but this is not true. The genesis takes place well before the premiere —years before— and the event that prompted Federico to write this drama

is found in a news item published in the Madrid press around 1928. It is about a tragic event in Montoro, in the province of Cordoba [...] The newspaper said that a wedding had been held in Montoro and that during the banquet, a groom who had the bride, also her cousin, suddenly appeared and abducted her by force. That unleashed a fierce dispute between the two families, resulting in one death and numerous wounded.⁵

It is the first installment of a rural trilogy, followed by *Yerma* and *La casa de Bernarda Alba*. As a result, old traditions permeate the plot of this play, which depicts social norms, moral principles, ceremonies, and the architecture and landscape of the rural world (Figure 1).

<i>Bodas de sangre</i>						
Act I			Act II		Act III	
Scene I	Scene II	Scene III	Scene I	Scene II	Scene I	Scene II
Indoor	Indoor	Indoor	Indoor	Outdoor	Outdoor	Indoor
Groom's house	Leonardo's house	Bride's cave	Bride's cave	Bride's courtyard	Forest	Funeral wake

Figure 1. Sequence of spaces in *Bodas de sangre*.

On the other hand, *Yerma* describes the life of a woman who cannot have children, despite her desire to be a mother. The protagonist is married to a farmer, Juan, who does not attach much importance to offspring. However, Yerma's obsession with getting pregnant and the feelings stirred up by Victor, a past love, will make her resort to ancestral rites to overcome her infertility. Ultimately, desperation leads her to murder her husband, depriving herself of conceiving a child. The second part of Lorca's trilogy is a tragic poem in which the landscape is essential for its symbolic role (Figure 2). The story is set somewhere in Castile, where the plains and crops are dry relating to the sterility of the main character. Moreover, half of the spaces are outdoors, and at least a couple of them are inspired by real places. Some authors have explained the relationship between the landscapes of fiction and reality, closely linked to the places where Lorca spent part of his youth, such as the Cubillas River (Granada).⁶

<i>Yerma</i>					
Act I		Act II		Act III	
Scene I	Scene II	Scene I	Scene II	Scene I	Scene II
Indoor	Outdoor	Outdoor	Indoor	Indoor	Outdoor
Yerma's house	Countryside	Creek	Yerma's house	Dolores' house	Chapel surroundings

Figure 2. Sequence of spaces in *Yerma*.

As can be seen, these two productions have similarities. Both present a conflict that leads to a fatal outcome. The writer established three acts per play and divided them into several scenes. This organization would be the model to be followed by set designers who had to transform the texts into architecture. Lorca's indications as to the setting are generally concise and are found both on the margins of the dialogue and within it. In this way, the importance of space within the plot structure can be perceived.

THE PREMIERE OF *BODAS DE SANGRE*

The first staging of *Bodas de sangre* took place on the 8th of March 1933 at the Teatro Beatriz in Madrid. The cast was headed by Josefina Díaz de Artigas and Manuel Collado and featured sets by Manuel Fontanals.⁷ However, Lorca requested the collaboration of Ontañón in the scenographic project as well. The tragedy consists of three acts divided into seven scenes in an Andalusian agrarian landscape. To reproduce this rustic character, the set design was inspired by Purullena, a village in Granada characterized by cave houses. Fontanals and Ontañón selected some architectural elements, popular habits, aspects of dress, and landscape features of this area to design spaces similar to those described by Lorca.

Then, the third scene of the first act (interior of the bride's cave) and the first scene of the second act (entrance hall and surroundings of the cave) are analyzed since they are the compositions with the most documentary material available, thus



Figure 3. *Bodas de sangre*, Act I - Scene III. Bride's cave. Teatro Beatriz. Madrid, 1933.

allowing the most complete graphic reproduction possible. In addition, these are probably the most relevant spaces in the play (one interior and one exterior) and clearly show the relationship between the landscape and architecture mentioned above.

The poet's annotations were fundamental to the construction of the sets, as there was scrupulous fidelity between the scenic space and the text. The third scene of the first act is a good example: "Interior of the cave

house where the bride lives. At the back, a cross of large pink flowers. The doors, curved archways, with lace hangings with pink ties. On the walls, a hard white material, curved fans, blue vases and small mirrors."⁸ This description refers to the scene inside the Bride's dwelling, a cave house. Up to five characters are involved: the maid, the bride, her father, the groom, and her mother. For the original performance, the set designers created an interior reminiscent of Andalusian caves, with large arches



Figure 4. Otto Wunderlich. Dwelling in a cave. Guadix, 1923.

and the interpretation of a vaulted ceiling. The color and texture of the walls evoked the whiteness and hardness defined by the writer and represented the whitewashing typical of these constructions.

The furnishings and decoration were also appropriate, although they did not follow Lorca's notes strictly. As can be seen in the surviving photographs of the premiere (Figure 3), the third part of the first act featured a room with various kitchen utensils hanging on the wall, such as a small jug on the right, a ladle to the left, and three casseroles on top. In the middle, there was a pantry in the form of a small niche and, on the sides, some wooden and esparto grass chairs. The only

element that did not correspond to traditional furniture were the chest that occupied the entire room width. These simple pieces were probably used to store the props for other acts and dress the scene.

The accuracy with which this set was composed required a careful study of the underground architecture of the south of the Iberian Peninsula. The typology of the caves was based on the distribution of dwellings around an initial cell, generally square. In terms of shape, the appearance of the façades and the proportions of the chimneys stood out. The main face, covered with lime, often had few openings to maintain good thermal conditions.



Figure 5. *Bodas de sangre*, Act II - Scene I. Entrance to the bride's cave. Teatro Beatriz. Madrid, 1933.

Once inside, to take advantage of the sunlight, all the surfaces were whitewashed, and the openings connecting the rooms were aligned. The barrel vault, despite being common, was not the only solution, as recessed vaults and even smooth ceilings (depending

on the consistency of the strata) were also used.⁹ As craftsmanship was one of the economic activities of these settlements, the interiors were decorated with all kinds of artifacts, such as plates, pots, vases, and pitchers (Figure 4). Considering all these points

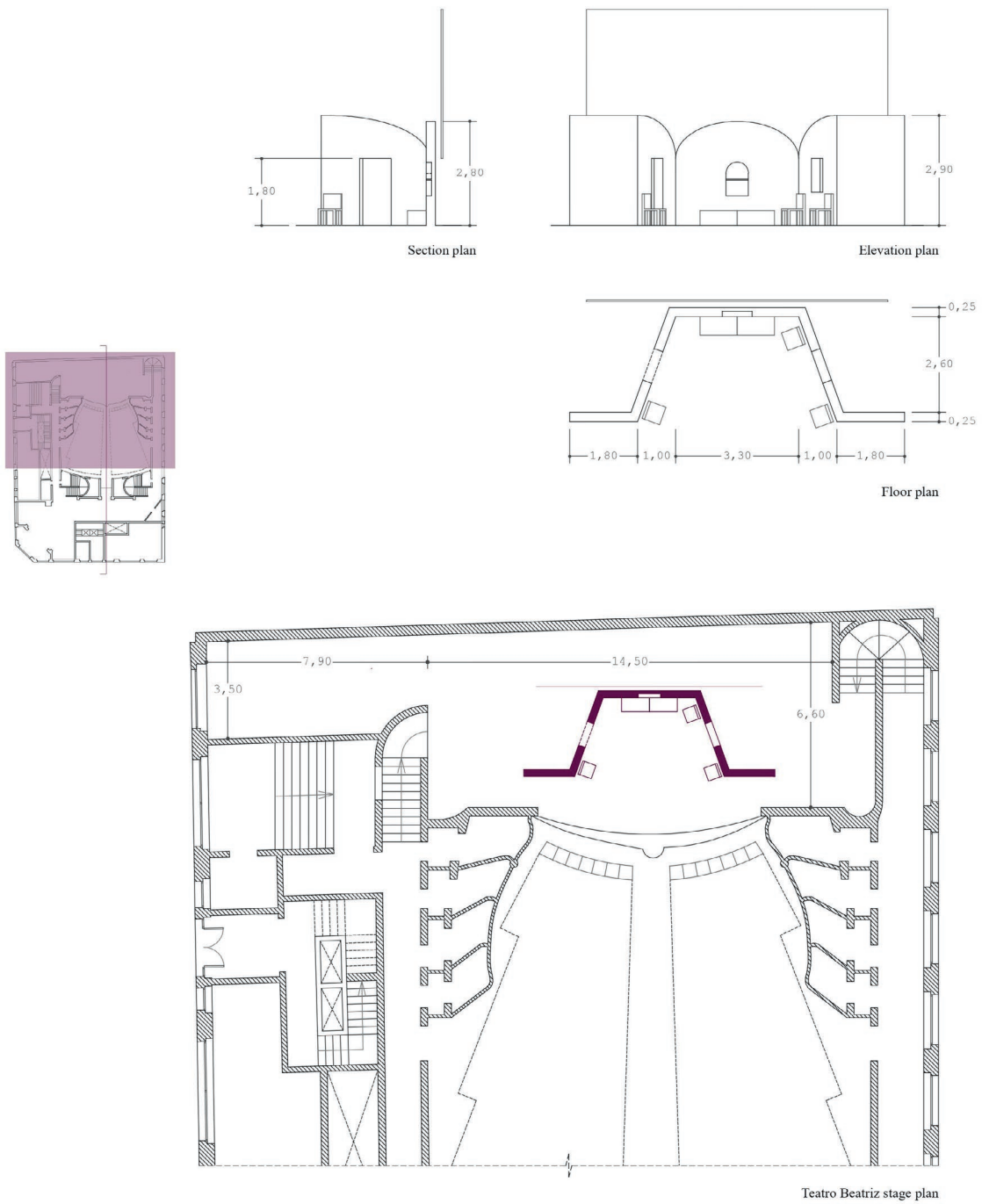


Figure 6. Set design and metrics. Act I - Scene III. Insertion in the stage of the Teatro Beatriz.

and analyzing the images of the representation, it can be deduced that Fontanals and Ontañón paid great attention to the verisimilitude of the decorations.

Lorca wanted the set design for *Bodas de sangre* to recreate a rough atmosphere, so the approximation to landscapes and rustic constructions seemed appropriate. However, this realistic aesthetic called for going further, so Ontañón imposed a more innovative line than Fontanals. This trend involved simplifying geometric forms, using symbolically charged colors, and experimenting with the expressive effects of light. As a sample of this, the first scene of the second act must be mentioned, when the bride gets ready at the entrance of her house for the wedding: "The hallway of the bride's house. The doorway is at the back. It is night. The bride appears wearing a white petticoat heavy with lace and embroidery, and a white bodice. Her arms are bare. The maid is similarly dressed."¹⁰ Here, only the bride and the maid initially appear. However, as the action progresses, several characters participate (Leonardo and his wife, the groom, the couple's parents, and the other wedding guests). For this reason, the set had to allow the actors and actresses to pass through without hindering the flow of the performance.

A staircase in two sections facilitated circulation and simultaneously made it possible to distribute the performers around the stage, leaving the protagonists on the boards and distributing the secondary ones on the steps (Figure 5). This way, crowds were avoided, and a staggered view was achieved to show the public the complete cast. At the bottom, in the upper part, was the doorway described by the poet. In the foreground, however, a silhouette surrounded the whole and perhaps simulated a cut in the cave. This figure, cut cloth, would make the viewer see the scene through a section made by the hall of the house. The composition of this fragment is a compilation of all the formulas proposed by Ontañón without renouncing the distinctive features of Fontanals. On the one hand, the simplicity of the lines and the succession of planes stand out; on the other, the preference for curves and the suggestive use of light and shadows are distinguishable.

It should be noted that the proposal resolved all the technical and formal issues necessary to perform the play. First, it was inserted into the stage box, almost 7 meters deep (Figure 6). The stage of the Teatro Beatriz, built between 1923-1925, was ideal for any type of performance, because it had enough space to install backstage and other structures. It also had a high fly loft and a complete set of lamps. A large curtain concealed this area, when necessary, while the spectators remained in the main hall, with 800 seats spread over five floors (including the two amphitheatres and five floors of boxes). In the basement, connected to the stage, were the rehearsal rooms, the orchestra, the dressing rooms, and other departments. The set designers created the spaces according to the building's resources, establishing a clear link between the container and the content.

At the end of May of the same year, Díaz de Artigas-Collado's company premiered *Bodas de sangre* at the Teatro Poliorama in Barcelona, reusing the same set design. In general, as in Madrid, the reviews were positive. It should be recalled that, after the first performance, Melchor Fernández Almagro (*El Sol*) had given a favorable assessment of the project with these words: "Fontanals and Ontañón have provided the play with an appropriate scenography. All of the settings are marvelously accurate. The pink interior, the white interior, the staircase, the forest... The costumes fit perfectly and create visual sets."¹¹

However, some Catalan media reported technical issues derived from the assembly process.¹² It is possible that, due to the scale of the project, the work of building and moving the structures was somewhat complicated. Nevertheless, this could also be because the original scenography was probably designed considering the metric and mechanical conditions offered by the Beatriz in Madrid. If the performance changed location, the construction had to be adapted to the new theatre's characteristics; therefore, there could be mismatches during the performance. In any case,

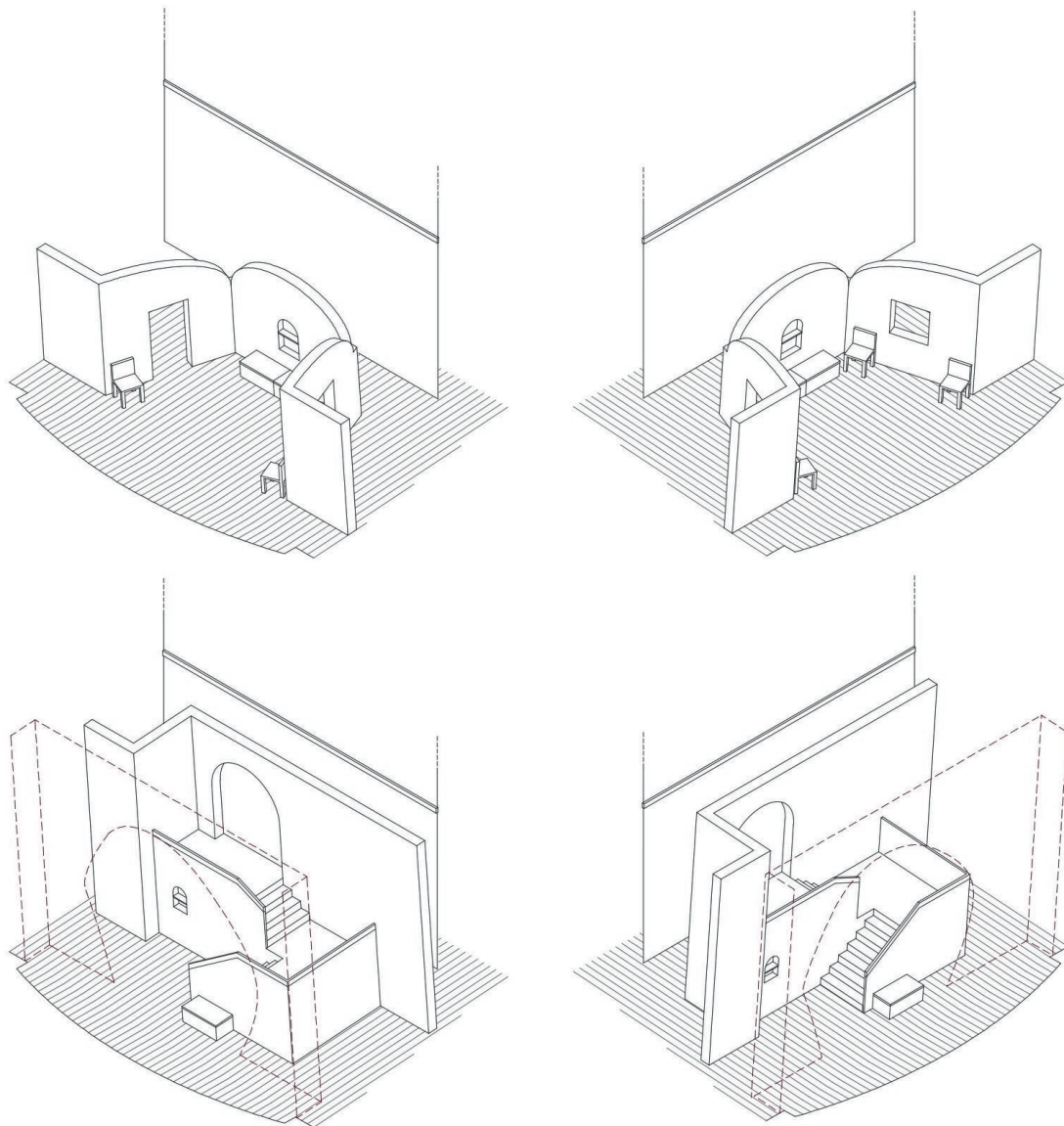


Figure 7. Set designs for *Bodas de sangre*. Act I - Scene III (top) and Act II - Scene I (bottom).

Bodas de sangre was the first work in which Lorca abandoned the minimal elements of other productions and opted for the proper space construction (Figure 7). He created atmospheres of great technical and formal

richness with more sophisticated resources and tools than in previous productions, such as *El maleficio de la mariposa* or the traveling performances of La Barraca.

THE ORIGINAL STAGING OF *YERMA*

Margarita Xirgu's company premiered *Yerma* on the 29th of December 1934 at the Teatro Español in Madrid amidst a political and social upheaval climate. This work catapulted Lorca to the triumph, but it also gave him some ideologically motivated concerns (a section of the audience even tried to boycott the performance).¹³ Alberto Sánchez, an artist who had participated in the design of some of La Barraca's stagings, was the set designer chosen by Lorca at first. However, due to alleged personal or professional disagreements, the poet canceled his commission and entrusted the project to Fontanals and Siegfried Burmann.¹⁴

Three of the six scenes of this tragic poem occur in natural spaces. For example, the second part of Act I is set near the land cultivated by Juan, the protagonist's husband. The annotations and the dialogue indicate that it is an olive grove, so the scenographers devised an effective formula for configuring the view of the fields. The idea was to use a few simple resources to stimulate the audience. It should be noted that only partial photographs of this set could be extracted from archival material (Figure 8). Even so, the observation and confrontation of all of them and the references collected in the press have allowed for generating an approximate and global image of the composition. Again, as in the previous case, three representative scenes are studied (all exteriors). This is due to this premiere's limited original graphic material, which is not incompatible with corroborating the importance of the scenic space since the analysis can be extrapolated to each scene and offers an overall view.

Painting was essential to this project, as there were no built structures or large volumes evoking elements or attributes of nature. The setting of each scene depended fundamentally on the landscape portrayed on the backdrop.¹⁵ In addition, there were also forms to interpret the shapes of the terrain, such as the banks between fields, the slopes, and the edges of the ravines. The set consisted of lightweight,

two-dimensional figures surrounded by large-scale flats. These occupied the entire height of the proscenium arch and emphasized the perspective of the whole. The earth, air, crops, and water reached the viewer through textures, symbols, lights, and silhouettes.

In the first act, a synthetic image of a rural landscape was displayed at the back of the stage. Some curves suggested the presence of mountains in the distance, other geometries imitated reliefs or heaped stones, and the more irregular patches represented trees and vegetal tapestries. Painted similarly, a ground row stood between the gigantic canvas and the performers. Its angular profile simulated the appearance of a slope or a rock wall. This resource established a succession of planes that gave depth to the composition, although there were other ways to achieve it. At the beginning of the performance, the backdrop was transformed into the façade of a dwelling. A conical perspective drawing of the house reproduced a very dynamic urban scene, with the hilltops jutting out from behind the roofs and the door cropped in the painting support, wide open (Figure 9).

The bareness of the scenic space showed that it was possible to project a suitable stage design with few resources. The production had Lorca's approval but also that of personalities such as Miguel de Unamuno, Ramón del Valle-Inclán, and Jacinto Benavente, who attended the dress rehearsal.¹⁶ However, the reviews of the premiere of *Yerma* were, in most cases, based on moral and political positions. Among the favorable comments, the assessment of Eduardo Haro, from *La Libertad*, stands out: "Fontanals demonstrated, once again, that he possesses an admirable vitality of constructive style. His scenographic dynamics always respond to the events unfolding on stage. The set of *Yerma* is a perfect work of art."¹⁷ As expected, the more conservative press disapproved some staging details, especially the content, interpretation, and set design.¹⁸



Figure 8. *Yerma*, Act I - Scene II. Yerma and Juan in the countryside. Teatro Español. Madrid, 1934.

Nevertheless, there was one painting whose composition left no one indifferent. The plot's denouement is set around a sanctuary on the top of a hill. Burmann and Fontanals created a captivating space using the same minimal elements as before: a painted curtain to show the view of the temple, with a sky covered with clouds and the cut-out image of the mountains; several ground rows to show the irregularity of the terrain and establish routes at different heights; and the system of flats on each side of the stage to accentuate the depth. The artists wanted to present a scene that would close the show with an apotheosis finale.

Curiously, the small church described by the poet was inspired by the sanctuary of the Santísimo Cristo del Paño in Moclín (Granada). A pilgrimage is held annually to honor this religious figure, to whom healing properties are attributed in cases of sterility and other

illnesses. Lorca adapted this ritual to turn it into the last part of his tragedy. Consequently, the set designers had to build a metaphysical space that deftly reflected the character of the ceremony. The architecture was faithful, once again, to the writer's indications. The truth is that neither the nudity on the stage nor the formal simplification worked against the spirit of the play. On the contrary, they succeeded in reinforcing its symbolism. The scenography managed to situate the different actions in one place and simultaneously awaken the spectators' emotions.

As had happened with *Bodas de sangre*, the proposal for the premiere of *Yerma* contemplated all the technical and aesthetic issues necessary for the smooth running of the performance. It should be noted that the Teatro Español in



Figure 9. *Yerma*, Act I - Scene I. Yerma and Juan at the beginning of the performance. Teatro Español. Madrid, 1934.

Madrid had been renovated between 1924 and 1929, facilitating the staging work since it offered more extensive facilities and modernized machinery. Its stage, 10 meters deep, had 7.15 meters deep by 5.30 meters wide rear stage. The main hall was horseshoe-shaped and had three fronts of boxes. Fontanals and Burmann took advantage of the possibilities offered by the building, deploying curtains of a large surface area and erecting impressive flats of about 6 meters in height.

For example, the second scene of the third act (the one that takes place near the sanctuary) occupied an area of approximately 50 square meters on the stage. It had two flats placed in a row at each end of this space and, in addition, it included several

ground rows that simulated the steep slopes of the mountain. Behind them, a system of ramps or steps would have been hidden to allow the characters' mobility through the different levels, since the height of the floor increased in the parts of the set closest to the backdrop. It, precisely, passed behind the flats and was bathed in dim light. According to the original text, this scene gets dark as the action progresses. Therefore, it is likely that the scene was gradually darkening. The surviving images of the premiere verify a certain lack of light (Figure 10). However, this fragment was more colorful than the previous ones, probably because practically the entire cast participated, and there were dances and songs.



Figure 10. *Yerma*, Act III - Scene II. Chapel surroundings. Teatro Español. Madrid, 1934.

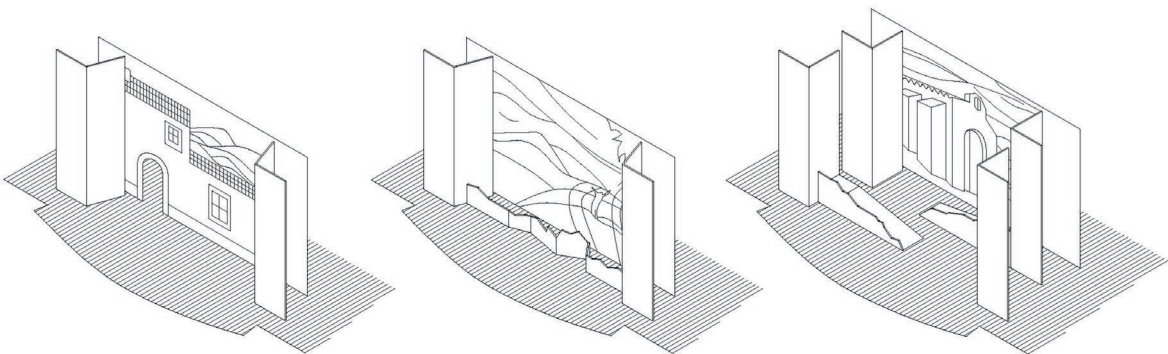


Figure 11. Set designs for *Yerma*. From left to right: Act I - Scene I, Act I - Scene II and Act III - Scene II.

On the 17th of September 1935, *Yerma* was revived at the Teatre Barcelona in the Catalan capital, keeping the same set designs (Figure 11). The transportation of the sets and the assembly tasks were probably more affordable than when *Bodas de sangre* was moved to Barcelona in 1933. The design of stackable or dismountable structures, such as the ground rows and the flats, probably made of wood, facilitated their handling. Likewise, painted canvases were also advantageous since they were stored on rolls and weighed less. Once again, the scenic architecture and the concern for space played a part in the success of the performance. The pages of *Mirador* magazine echoed this triumph.¹⁹

CONCLUSIONS

After the analysis of the two stagings for *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma*, their avant-garde and innovative character from the plastic point of view is verified. Both belong to the period of 1930,²⁰ in which the plastic experimentation of artists linked to the Second Spanish Republic intensified, even though they could not displace the traditional aesthetics that had been developing in the Spanish commercial theater for decades. In any case, the designs for *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma* are undoubtedly part of that evolution in staging mentioned at the beginning of the article. It seems logical that the first was somewhat more groundbreaking due to Ontañón's role in the creative team. It should not be forgotten that he was in line with European avant-garde trends and favored more innovative proposals than those of Fontanals and Burmann.²¹

The study also shows that, in both projects, the scenographers' analysis of the texts played an important role in the creative process. Although this is more evident in *Bodas de sangre*, as it contains more concrete descriptions of the space or the setting, in both productions, the relevance of the indications from the author can be seen, as well as the collaboration with the poet during the design phases. There are even testimonies in which the writer's involvement in the design work is evident, as well as his preferences in terms of style, as when Ontañón points out: "I was more in the modern line by which Federico felt attracted"²² (referring to his participation in the project for *Bodas de sangre*).

Equally important was integrating the sets in two theaters such as the Beatriz and the Español in Madrid, and their preparation for subsequent tours, foreseeing the technical and functional issues to be satisfied so that the representations could be carried out correctly. It must be said that scenography, as an architectural discipline, must guarantee satisfactory results in the aesthetic, structural, and functional aspects. Therefore, after the few references to technical problems during the performances reported in the press, it can be assumed that each production was approached contemplating the necessary logistical and constructive requirements. For example, *Yerma* combined these qualities as it offered an attractive and modern image while optimizing resources, using simple elements relatively easy to handle.

The formal and technical study of the original productions of *Bodas de sangre* and *Yerma* allows understanding in depth the design and materialization of their sets. Both are illustrative cases of what a scenographic project should be: from the approach to the text and the investigation of the places and atmospheres it is inspired to the design, construction, and staging. While it is true that the analysis of a portion of the compositions of each play has been presented, this is due, as noted above, to the limited number of photographs and other evidence about the designs. Most of the information on which the study is based has been extracted from the press, in which descriptions and images usually focus on specific parts of each performance. Private collections and other research from which this analysis has been nourished lead to further details on the selected scenes. For the rest of the compositions, less material or information is available (in some cases, even a few brief notes from newspaper reviews).

However, the resources used to carry out this study are enough to justify the importance of these two productions' designs and their scenic space, both from the perspective of innovation and the creative and technical process. They have also made it possible to verify the importance of space in Lorca's

plays and, therefore, in their staging. Because although sometimes the descriptions of space may be brief in the texts, the truth is that space even acquires a protagonist character within each plot. Reasonable proof of this is the references to real landscapes and their influence on each story, as well as the concern of the set designers to represent them faithfully, although with reinterpretations and artistic licenses. Definitely, and concerning this, it is appropriate to end with a quote from Professor Juan Calatrava, in which he refers to this same subject but about another play by the poet, *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, the third part of the rural trilogy initiated by the works analyzed in this paper:

From it [the text], we are now interested in the specific role played by the architectural space as the protagonist of the plot itself and, by extension, the vital role played by the architecture in Lorca's work as a whole. For Federico, architecture is one of the fields in which the confrontation between the true tradition, the essence of people's issues, and the populism of regionalist folklorism is reflected. The anonymous vernacular architecture, crystallized by a secular tradition and a patient constructive wisdom linked to the materials of the place, which knows nothing of passing fashions, now becomes a metaphor for a people whose essential soul the poet wants to apprehend.²³

Notes and References

- ¹ Jara Martínez Valderas, *Manual de espacio escénico. Terminología, fundamentos y proceso creativo* (Granada: Tragacanto, 2017), 23. Based on the words of the actor and theater director Giorgio Strehler, the author gives a complementary definition to ours: "scenography is the visible body of the scenic space, the plastic expression of the dramaturgy."
- ² Dru Dougherty and María Francisca Vilches de Frutos, *El teatro en España: entre la tradición y la vanguardia (1918-1939)* (Madrid: CSIC, Fundación Federico García Lorca and Tabacalera, 1992), 22-30. Spanish scenographic trends in the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century are described in detail by Dougherty and Vilches de Frutos.
- ³ Juan Aguilera Sastre, *El debate sobre el teatro nacional en España (1900-1939): ideología y estética* (Madrid: Centro de Documentación Teatral, 2002), 230-231.
- ⁴ José Luis Plaza Chillón, "El teatro y las artes plásticas. Escenografía y estética teatral de vanguardia: Federico García Lorca, La Barraca y otros montajes (1920-1937)" (PhD diss., Universidad de Granada, 1996), 73-86. It is recommended to refer to this publication for further information on artists linked to the performing arts of the time.
- ⁵ Santiago Ontañón and José M^o Moreiro, *Unos pocos amigos verdaderos* (Madrid: Fundación Banco Exterior de España, 1988), 137.
- ⁶ Ildefonso Manuel Gil López, "Introducción," in *Federico García Lorca, Yerma* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1993), 11-36. The prologue of this book includes references to the places where some of the landscapes of the play are inspired.
- ⁷ Rosa Peralta Gilabert, *Manuel Fontanals, escenógrafo. Teatro, cine y exilio* (Madrid: Fundamentos, 2007), 151-200. Much of the information related to Fontanals and his career concerning Lorca can be extracted from this publication.
- ⁸ Javier Huerta Calvo et al., *Federico García Lorca. Teatro completo* (Madrid: Verbum, 2019), 381. Original version: "Interior de la cueva donde vive la Novia. Al fondo, una cruz de grandes flores rosa. Las puertas, redondas con cortinajes de encaje y lazos rosa. Por las paredes, de material blanco y duro, abanicos redondos, jarrones azules y pequeños espejos."
- ⁹ María José Lasasa Castellanos et al., *Arquitectura subterránea. Cuevas de Andalucía. Conjuntos habitados I-II* (Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía. Consejería de Obras Públicas y Transportes, 1989), 77-80.
- ¹⁰ Javier Huerta Calvo et al., *Federico García Lorca. Teatro completo*, 386. Original version: "Zaguán de casa de la Novia. Portón al fondo. Es de noche. La Novia sale con enaguas blancas encajonadas, llenas de encajes y puntas bordadas, y un corpiño blanco, con los brazos al aire. La Criada lo mismo."
- ¹¹ Melchor Fernández Almagro, "Estreno de Bodas de sangre, tragedia de F. García Lorca," *El Sol*, March 9, 1933, 8.
- ¹² P.B., "Bodas de sangre, poema trágico de Federico García Lorca," *La Veu de Catalunya*, no. 2 (1933): 6.
- ¹³ Dru Dougherty, and María Francisca Vilches de Frutos, *Los estrenos teatrales de Federico García Lorca* (Madrid: Tabapress and Fundación Federico García Lorca, 1992), 97.
- ¹⁴ Carlos Morla Lynch, *En España con Federico García Lorca, 1928-1936* (Madrid: Aguilar, 1957), 431. Although it is outside the scope of this article, there is an explanation as to the reasons for this replacement by Chilean diplomat Carlos Morla, who was aware of the details of the performance due to his friendship with Lorca.
- ¹⁵ Conchita Burmann, *La escenografía teatral de Sigfrido Burmann* (Madrid: Fundación Jorge Juan, 2009), 92-93.
- ¹⁶ José Luis Salado, "En el ensayo general de Yerma, la comedia de García Lorca, se congregaron, entre otros ilustres rostros rasurados, las tres barbas más insignes de España: las de Unamuno, Benavente y Valle Inclán," (*At the dress rehearsal of García Lorca's comedy Yerma, the three most famous beards in Spain gathered together, among other illustrious shaven faces: those of Unamuno, Benavente and Valle Inclán*) *La Voz*, December 29, 1934, 3.
- ¹⁷ Eduardo Haro, "Éxito extraordinario en el Español del poema trágico Yerma, de García Lorca," *La Libertad*, December 30, 1934, 7.
- ¹⁸ Rafael López Izquierdo, "El éxito de Yerma, de García Lorca, se circunscribió a un mínimo sector del público del Español," *La Nación*, December 31, 1934, 11.
- ¹⁹ J. Cortés, "Yerma, de García Lorca," *Mirador*, September 26, 1935, 5. The review said: "Evocadores i belles, amb forta sentor de cosa popular i viva, acompanyen el poema diverses il·lustracions musicals que en condensen i glossen l'emoció. La presentació escènica, obra de Manuel Fontanals, encertadíssima; la més gran part dels quadros són d'una visió esplèndida dins la seva simplicitat, molt ben entonats i il·luminats amb gran comprensió de l'efecte." (*Evocative and beautiful, with a strong scent of something popular and alive, the poem is accompanied by various musical illustrations that condense and gloss the emotion. The scenic presentation, the work of Manuel Fontanals, is extremely enchanting; The greatest part of the paintings is a splendid vision in the simplicity, very well intoned and illuminated with a great understanding of the effect.*)
- ²⁰ Ana María Arias de Cossío, *Dos siglos de escenografía en Madrid* (Madrid: Mondadori, 1991), 20-45; M^a Carmen Gil Fombellida, "Federico García Lorca y Cipriano Rivas Cherif: una experiencia renovadora en el teatro profesional (1920-1935)," *Dicenda. Cuadernos de Filología Hispánica* 17 (1999): 63-88. These are two publications of great interest to contextualize the period concerning the aesthetics of the performing arts.

²¹ José Luis Plaza Chillón, *El teatro y las artes plásticas: el teatro de Federico García Lorca y su puesta en escena (1920-1937)* (Granada: Fundación Caja de Granada, 1998), 328-329.

²² Ontañón and Moreiro, *Unos pocos amigos verdaderos*, 144.

²³ Juan Calatrava Escobar, "Lecturas: Federico García Lorca, La casa de Bernarda Alba, 1936-1945," in *Arquitectura escrita*, ed. Juan Calatrava and Winfried Nerdinger (Madrid: Círculo de Bellas Artes, 2010), 287-289.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aguilera Sastre, Juan. *El debate sobre el teatro nacional en España (1900-1939): ideología y estética*. Madrid: Centro de Documentación Teatral, 2002.
- Arias de Cossío, Ana María. *Dos siglos de escenografía en Madrid*. Madrid: Mondadori, 1991.
- Burmann, Conchita. *La escenografía teatral de Sigfrido Burmann*. Madrid: Fundación Jorge Juan, 2009.
- Calatrava Escobar, Juan. "Lecturas: Federico García Lorca, La casa de Bernarda Alba, 1936-1945." In *Arquitectura escrita*, edited by Juan Calatrava and Winfried Nerdinger, 287-289. Madrid: Círculo de Bellas Artes, 2010.
- Cortés, J. "Yerma, de García Lorca." *Mirador*, December 26, 1935.
- Dougherty, Dru, and María Francisca Vilches de Frutos. *El teatro en España: entre la tradición y la vanguardia (1918-1939)*. Madrid: CSIC, Fundación Federico García Lorca and Tabacalera, 1992.
- Dougherty, Dru, and María Francisca Vilches de Frutos. *Los estrenos teatrales de Federico García Lorca*. Madrid: Tabapress and Fundación Federico García Lorca, 1992.
- Fernández Almagro, Melchor. "Estreno de Bodas de sangre, tragedia de F. García Lorca." *El Sol*, March 9, 1933.
- Gil Fombellida, M^a Carmen. "Federico García Lorca y Cipriano Rivas Cherif: una experiencia renovadora en el teatro profesional (1920-1935)." *Dicenda. Cuadernos de Filología Hispánica*, no. 17 (1999): 63-88.
- Gil López, Ildefonso Manuel. "Introducción." In *Federico García Lorca, Yerma*, 11-36. Madrid: Cátedra, 1993.
- Haro, Eduardo. "Éxito extraordinario en el Español del poema trágico Yerma, de García Lorca." *La Libertad*, December 30, 1934.
- Huerta Calvo, Javier, Sergio Santiago Romero, and Javier Domingo Martín. *Federico García Lorca. Teatro completo*. Madrid: Verbum, 2019.
- Lasaosa Castellanos, María José, Amalia Ron Cáceres, José Ángel Santiago Lardón, and Ramón de Torres López-Muñoz. *Arquitectura subterránea. Cuevas de Andalucía. Conjuntos habitados I-II*. Sevilla: Junta de Andalucía. Consejería de Obras Públicas y Transportes, 1989.
- López Izquierdo, Rafael. "El éxito de Yerma, de García Lorca, se circunscribió a un mínimo sector del público del Español." *La Nación*, December 31, 1934.
- Martínez Valderas, Jara. *Manual de espacio escénico. Terminología, fundamentos y proceso creativo*. Granada: Tragacanto, 2017.
- Morla Lynch, Carlos. *En España con Federico García Lorca, 1928-1936*. Madrid: Aguilar, 1957. <https://doi.org/10.29393/At378-742CMEF10742>
- Ontañón, Santiago, and José M^a Moreiro. *Unos pocos amigos verdaderos*. Madrid: Fundación Banco Exterior de España, 1988.
- P.B. "Bodas de sangre, poema trágico de Federico García Lorca." *La Veu de Catalunya*, June 2, 1933.
- Peralta Gilabert, Rosa. *Manuel Fontanals, escenógrafo. Teatro, cine y exilio*. Madrid: Fundamentos, 2007.
- Plaza Chillón, José Luis. *El teatro y las artes plásticas: el teatro de Federico García Lorca y su puesta en escena (1920-1937)*. Granada: Fundación Caja de Granada, 1998.
- Plaza Chillón, José Luis. "El teatro y las artes plásticas. Escenografía y estética teatral de vanguardia: Federico García Lorca, La Barraca y otros montajes (1920-1937)." PhD diss., Universidad de Granada, 1996.
- Salado, José Luis. "En el ensayo general de Yerma, la comedia de García Lorca, se congregaron, entre otros ilustres rostros raturados, las tres barbas más insignes de España: las de Unamuno, Benavente y Valle Inclán." *La Voz*, December 29, 1934.

Images source

- 1, 2, 6, 7, 11. Author's elaboration. 3, 5. Centro de Documentación de las Artes Escénicas y de la Música (CDAEM). 4. Instituto del Patrimonio Cultural de España (MCD). 8. Archivo ABC. 9, 10. Fundación Federico García Lorca.