

May Day

VestAndPage Workshop Concept and Theory

MayDay

is the theoretical base of a range of Art Performance/Theater workshops.

It is primarily conceived for performers, actors, artists of different backgrounds, either normally endowed or characterized by different abilities, of any age, as well as ex-lovers, former drug-addicted individuals, former prisoners, psychiatric patients, homeless, hermits, outsiders, ignorants, bankers and bussiness men, educators, teachers, operators and all others.

MayDay

is focused on the Human Body (and its own signs) as peculiar/predominant mean of communication, but leaving outside virtuosity.

MayDay

working with that body, wants to touch the soul.

MayDay

is investigation of the Human Body throughout its own reading:

- The Human Body and its very own ways of expression

- Real Body – Virtual Body – Hybrid Body - Oniric Body

- The Human Body and its interactions with the others and within a given reality

- The Human Body interacting with auxiliary tools/media (video/sound)

Open Invitation

(looking for new social meanings)

Never as Always. Now as Always. Here and now. Where I am, I do not know it, I will never know it. In the silence, you don't know it, you must go on and, even if I can't, I'll go.
(Samuel Beckett)

Tired of looking at things from an usual and obsolete perspective, with few friends, full of memories and remembrances, with a no-limits imagination, pathological, perverted, deprived, deviant, surreal, overwhelmed and overruled by daily prosaic worries and ordinary thoughts, being still beautiful, in a costant journey towards new productions, slowly moving to an end, living into an irreversible crisis, always clutched by doubts, sometimes radiant, other times miserable, being stuck for an answer, when where is a nowhere or somewhere else, with at least a hope in our hearts- looking at a feeble response, our fragile constituent limits- we invite people to gather those left things they really care- to share them with us and the others.

If you do not teach me, I will never learn. Knowing. Not knowing. Pretending. If you do not love me, I will be never loved. If I do not love you, I will never love.
(Samuel Beckett)

There is no other reality beyond what is conceived by an inimitable imagination. And what is left is just stupidity or mistake.
(Marcel Schwob)

The more I see the less I know. The more I experience the less I know. The more I live the more I like to let it go.
(Tibetan precept)

An artist that primarily recognizes him/herself as a “tool” of his/her own work, improving the knowledge and to investigate the cutting-edge existing between “what I want to do and what someone wants to do of/about me.”

Conceptual Lines

Lately, there has been an increased interest in the problem of the body in theater, especially in connection with the increase of different performance practices, and on the other hand, in the problem of the body and its representation as a theoretical and historical absorption of its approach.

(Bojana Kunst)

Performance Art and Theater cannot do without the human form. As it has been outlined in one of the latest conferences of the American Theatre Association – “*it may seem odd to theatre artists that so many critics, historian and scholars – people who make their livings living in their heads – can’t stop thinking about the body these days. But “the body” is the hot topic du jour, required reading for the tweedy and tenured as well as for new practitioners eager to incorporate (pun intended) the latest cutting-edge theater theory into their performance practice*”.

VestAndPage Project’s experience and research has been motivated from gesture, posture and the sound of silence, and progressed into different areas of body investigation. This is the platform for their string of works- constant fragility of every achieved moment, evolution and transformation. In their performances, of which the essence is not what is said or shown, but the secret, but how and what is communicated throughout the whole body as membrane of spirit. Voices, sounds, said or written words, video images are adopted only as vehicles for a poetry pure expression. Therefore it is consequential that here the body is considered as an unknown landscape that invites one to explore its hidden manifestation- while emotions, feelings, movements and sensation due by them are the unstoppable flowing stream that traverses it.

To come – as one final step – to a range of whether solo or collective works/performances, *MayDay* are workshops aimed to investigate human existential conflicts as well as the often hidden but truly existing relationships between Man and his discomforts, frustrations, griefs and diseases (social - psychic - spiritual) which derive from one each other.

More than a technical one, it is an aesthetic control and a manipulation of space (holy but empty space at the same time) that can drive the spectator through creative and sensitive imagery and body language, into an open confrontation with him/herself.

The Impossible Body

The “Impossible Body” of today is an extreme but however possible concept that deals with one of the most topical subjects in art, science and humanities: the relation between the human body and a machine. Visionaries, fantasists, philosophers, scientists and artists have imagined the impossible body as a machine, an automaton, a model of a digesting duckling, Golem, a homunculus, an electrical soul, an engine, a wax figure, a marionette, an iron woman, an Eve of the future, a glass man. All of these impossible bodies are subjects of an extraordinary study that comprises a period from the birth of modern science in the 18th century until the avant-garde artistic research of the 20th century and the new production of the beginning of the 21st. (Bojana Kunst)

If we look at today Medicine, Science and Technology, we cannot avoid to accept us as witnesses of our own body continuing mutations and, by the way, are we really aware of our body mutations through diseases and the consequent cares we look for fighting them? We realize that we walk only if to walk somehow hurts us.

MayDay research is to explore and lead the vital capability of the body (at whatever condition it is left or subdued) to interact with reality and become a true visual place in which and where meanings (social/individual/spiritual) are produced.

The essence of this particular kind of work is not to produce new models or icons through some demonstrative uses or arid performances of the human body, but to offer through the body new possibilities to understand theater and performance art as distinctive disciplines that can lead us to a profound consideration about our destiny in our time beyond the same boundaries of body representation and valuation- and even beyond also what is enrooted in our collective imaginary, as it can strongly bring back to nature what our deceptive mind sees as hybrid, synthetic, troubled, diverse, impossible, different.

Contemporary visual culture will be obviously *MayDay* participants' common ground of investigation where to follow the traces of our mutations and conflicts- cultural, spiritual, corporal. This chosen direction will necessarily lead all the participants out of that configured space, inviting them to enter into the real and virtual space where each one of them lives, into the so-called exhibition/production spaces of their own, individual and private social and hybrid bodies, the full space of body experience where the “melting pot” is a cosmogony that is both analogical and digital: le lieu d’habitude of our daily life.

I have said to you to speak the truth is a painful thing. To be forced to tell lies is much worse.
(Oscar Wilde)

The truth is that I am very tired and I need a barbwire to puke in a better way.

The truth is that I don't know what I really need.

The truth is that I do not have any argumentation to talk about.

The truth is that if I do not talk anymore with someone, I'll feel lost.

The truth is that whatever discussion I try it is just a contribution to build the graveyard of my self-gratification.

The truth is that if I don't discuss anymore I have no chance, or maybe more.

The truth is that I laugh with no teeth, my tongue has been powdered and that in a while I'll not eat anymore.

The truth is that I like to laugh and eat too much.

The truth is that I'm obliged to come back again, to say and tell once more, to transform myself to be able to be in the present.

The truth is that is better to do so than complaining on memory exercises per se.

The truth is that if I loose myself I also loose my power to make any action.

The truth is that I could kill myself tonight, or die tomorrow, but if I haven't anything to loose it is better to go somewhere and do something- to make an action.

The truth is to be able to give space to my dreams and pursue them.

The truth is to be able to offer a space to the horror I can't escape from.

The truth is to look for a body without soul to be offered to my own pleasure.

The truth is that a body always lives because of its spirit inside.

The truth is that I do not want to waste time with someone who doesn't want to waste it.

The truth is that Time is never wasted.

(Laura Bucciarelli/Andrea Pagnès)

The Performer - A creative person in action (Analysis)

Considering aesthetics itself the basis of ethics- the performer ethical core developed through art is very influential in his later ethical choices. Where can one evade an uncomfortable truth without doing wrong? It is not only a question to seek for a common sense, or to determine social issues and values; it is more a matter of personal decision.

The ethics of the performer-

which values should he determined (normative); how an outcome can be achieved in specific situations (possibility); how his capacity develops in different situation and how his nature transforms (spirit/psyche); what indications people actually abide by (action and representation).

The retraction of the performer's ego-

to work on the inner Self as instrument of Self-knowledge.

A performer must not interpret something a priori assumed-

a performer must act in accordance with his nature to realise his full potential, as *“a self-aware person must act completely within its capabilities to their pinnacle, to become aware of every fact (and its context) relevant to his existence, if he wishes to attain self-knowledge” (Socrates).*

Actually it is completely useless to imitate or interpret something a priori: this will cause distraction both for the one that acts and the one that watches. A performance action is needed to bring to discover and unveil the Self.

To stir up and provoke emotions

(inside us, inside the others) it is primarily necessary to externalize what is hidden inside someone's own heart, soul, and life experience. Only in this way – through the reconciliation with the inner Self - is offered the opportunity to re-establish a contact with the mystery that each one of us carries within himself. To reach this condition the work must be silent, patient, concentrated, meditative.

Signs and symbols or simulacra-

as Jean Baudrillard theorised, had usurped reality, particularly in the consumer world. Post-structuralism and postmodernism are both heavily theoretical and follow a fragmented, anti-authoritarian course which is absorbed in narcissistic and near nihilistic activities.

Performer's actions are at once obligatory and at the same time un-enforceable.

The issue of the questions-

“What are human rights, and how do we determine them?”

“If someone else can make better out of his/her life than I can, is it then moral to sacrifice myself for them if needed?”

Without these questions there is no clear fulcrum on which to balance law, politics, and the practice of arbitration, so the ability to formulate the questions are prior to rights balancing. For example, making ethical judgments regarding questions such as “Is lying always wrong?” and, “If not, when is it permissible?” is prior to any etiquette.

People in general are more comfortable with dichotomies (two choices). However, in ethics the issues are most often multifaceted and, actually, the best-proposed actions address many different areas concurrently where the answer is almost never a “yes or no”, “right or wrong” statement.

Relational and interactive actions are related to an ethics of care.

In Art Performances topics such as the ones that involve the mind and are relevant to that issue- respect, responsibility, development, character, virtue and vice, altruism, egoism, disagreement, evolution, behaviour etc., are assumed with a value-free approach to ethics which examines reality not from a top-down a priori perspective, but rather observations of actual choices made by agents in practice.

The Performer - A creative person in action (Action)

The work of the performer as poetic action

The performer is a poet and an artist at the same time. He doesn't play or interpret- he gives and delivers. His work – and with it the process of making – is an instrument of creative freedom.

At the base of the performer's work

To seek for his/her own archetypes;

To work on concentration, breathing, voice, sounds, body movements, objects.

It's necessary to bring the soul impulses, the mind disposition and the spirit to a minimum degree, in order to re-direct the Self to discover unknown territories, only relying on an absolute creative freedom.

To adopt and form a new own methodology (individual and/or collective)

To search for the most profound, primitive soul qualities.

What is discovered is useful for the performer to externalize his/her own story.

Different exercises to confront his/her own story with others, creating a non-casual synthesis of his/her own biography.

The final work mustn't be a staging (mise en scène) narrative or self-celebrative, it must rather be a revelation from which a number of different experiences can be organize through mutual relationship in order to express something different out of them.

The grammar of the Art Performance.

It is necessary to get completely involved, directly and personally-

to get off the ground, to put ourselves over the barrel, to bring into focus and undermine our own beliefs and prejudices, to arrange, to tune, to compare, to confront, to offer, to sharpen, to bare, to uncover physically and emotionally, to arrange, to put away, to tweak, to put at risk, to hazard, to lay it on the line, to hit for, to strike down, to ground, to dump, to put on, to banish our own beliefs, to try out, to tax to the limit, to meet, to collect, to edge and hive, to drop down our own arms, to hammer away at something, to get started, to break into, to sleuth and get forth.

In this kind of work, our narcissism and egocentrism are obstacles:

“If during this particular work the performer is subdued by personal ambitions, he/she'll never deepen one of the most profound secret of creativity: to see, understand and comprehend his/her own heart. He/she'll never become the “man/women of his/her own side” if his/her heart is busy with other personal things such as- the desire of showing off, of becoming exceptional, unique etc.

The retraction of performer's own ego allows him/her to be re-born as “new Self”.

The psychic action that the performer expresses is not just the result of a profound experience, neither a genial representation of his/her inner life. It is the full concordance of his/her own inner imagination with the context around him. In this moment performer's private personality is put aside, forgotten and a range of completely different moments emerge. It is out of these moments that performer's new Self arises.

To get close to the truth-

a performer must never be artificial, or pretentious, if so it is much better to make mistakes, to be wrong or banal, to simply fail for touching the fragile limits.

MayDay

is a workshop-project by VestAndPage

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