



3. Open-close (open yourself/close yourself)

Learning Objectives:

- Look for the necessary tension and energy in the gesture
- Looking for motivation and cleanliness of the gesture in improvisation
- Stimulate the creative imagination

Materials: music

Rules of the game: perform every action and gesture as if going against an opposing force

Description:

The workshop leader asks the players to perform "essential" actions with their upper limbs, playing with the following pairs of opposites: open/close-push/pull-offer/receive.

It is not a question of "miming" the actions pretending to be dealing with objects, but of practicing the tension of the body, the cleanliness of the gesture and the dynamics of the movement.

The workshop leader initially invites the players to concentrate on the movements that "start from us" and go outwards (in opening, pushing, giving) and then "return" towards us from the outside (in closing, pulling, receiving).

To perform an action, energy is needed and this is generated by "sensing" the opposing force that goes against the movement: I "open" something that is "closed"!

To help generate this energy, the workshop leader can counteract the player's movement, for example by adhering his arm to the arm of the player, opposing resistance: the player's body will immediately react, "supporting" the arms in their action.

It is important to use all the joints of the hands and arms without stiffness, paying attention to which single part "guides" the movement (shoulder, elbow, wrist, fingers...).

The workshop leader can also suggest to the players to move as if they were underwater and feel the contrast of the element around them: the movement will be fluid and not rapid.

It's good to take breaks that mark the end of a gesture, before starting the next one. Pauses set the pace, they're like punctuation.

It's good not to decide first what you want to do, but to let the images and sensations come while you improvise. If suggestions come up, it's good to cultivate them with the imagination, but also without having problems moving on to something else, with a lot of freedom.

The exercise is accompanied by music that can stimulate the imagination of the players.

As always, it is also very useful to watch the work of one's companions: for this reason the workshop leader can ask the players to divide themselves between "actors" and "spectators", then reversing the roles.





The moment in which one improvises in front of one's companions is important both for those who act and for those who watch: the actors become aware of being observed and train themselves to "have an audience"; the viewer is invited to do so without making judgments, but with complicit curiosity.

The game can be developed and go beyond the gestures of arms and hands, also involving other parts of the body.

Observations: the exercise is preliminary to the exercise "Improvise with a partner on the side".

Development:

When I open my arms I "open myself" and when I close them "I close myself".

The workshop leader can suggest that the players try to apply the exercise done previously by playing this time with the opposites "opening/closing", "offering/receiving".

To react to events that cause an emotion, or simply to express them, the body "opens itself" and "closes itself". The word "emotion" contains in itself the action of motion (literally "moving out"). Even in expressing emotions we make an investment of energy: the emotional tension manifests itself in the physical tension which in this game does not have to "explode", but it is "held" and expanded throughout the body by the actor, generating a "slow" movement.

And even in this case the tension arises from feeling a contrary "force": for example, "I would like to open up, but I'm shy". The resulting gesture will acquire a much greater value precisely because it is not "easy" for the subject to open up and requires a considerable emotional investment on his part.

Observations:

Again, it is easy to pass from a simple initial exercise to an expressive game that can turn into a real improvisation.

This activity can become an individual moment of training to be done all together, each following and developing their own imagination.

Through this activity, to young people it is also offered the opportunity (quite rare today) to discover the strength and beauty that resides in slowness.

In our hand which, without premeditation, slowly opens, we can recognize the opening of a flower, or the simple yet significant act of showing oneself with "bare hands".

