



Meisner Technique Repetition Exercise for Performers

The Meisner technique is based on a simple partner exercise called 'repetition', in which the two participants repeat a series of slowly developing 'calls' based on their moment-to-moment observations. Meisner called the technique a 'dumbass exercise', where the point is not the intellectual exercise of listening and talking but the more fundamental relation of observing and responding. It asks of the performer that they put their attention fully on their partner and then commit to neither inventing nor denying anything. This implies an important element of de-socialisation in which the participants commit to telling the truth from their perspective and allowing their partner's effect on them to be fully expressed. The exercise operates under the logic that the more one's attention is outward and present the less energy one has to inhibit one's reactions and thus the more free any responses will be. It is in these responses that we see the movement, which comes in the moment the impulses provoked by the fellow performer are liberated from the body and become the next beat in the dialogue between the participants. What we unfailingly see when the impulse is liberated is a quality of voice, of movement, of being that is completely and fully unique to the individual from whom the impulses come. It appears like a rich stream of creative energy in which any act seems possible.

The technique is constantly challenging us to be in an emerging, unknown space in which socially learnt, rational control is side-lined in favour of the unpredictability of the impulse. It is asking us to place a trust in the possibility of the present and this trust is necessarily a blind one. Every time you jump you don't know if there will be water to catch you below and only if you jump will you find out there always is.

Over the 3 days of the workshop we will focus on the repetition exercise and conditioning trainings aimed at activating the column of energy at the centre of the body. The exercises are drawn from Body Mind Centring, dynamic meditations and other somatic practices.

About Jonathan Bonnici:

He followed a philosophy BA with the 3-year actor training at RADA in London. Since graduating he has worked as an actor on stage and screen while also developing his own artistic language and projects. He has had a special interest in the Meisner technique for the last 10 years.

'Finding the Meisner technique completely changed my approach to acting and my focus as a performer. To me it felt like the absolutely heart of what we do as performers and creative people however we choose to define ourselves. Over the years it has helped condition me out of an obsession with the result in favour of a trust in the process of being present and waiting for what will come to come.'