



ACTING NOW
THEATRE COMPANY

PHYSICAL
THEATRE WORKSHOPS



THEATRE FOR
SOCIAL CHANGE



WORKSHOPS
FOR KIDS AND
YOUNG PEOPLE



Bringing theatre training and
creativity together for social change

Acting Now
Training Programme

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ABOUT US

Creative workshops led by Marina Pallarès-Elias

MA Drama Therapy; BA (Hons) Social Education; BA Physical Acting using Jacques Lecoq's techniques.

Marina is a professional actress and applied theatre practitioner, with over 10 years of experience working across Europe and South America using theatre as a tool for social change. She has developed exciting theatre projects with traveller communities, ex-offenders, adults with learning disabilities, people with mental health challenges, women, youth groups and refugees all over the world.

In 2014, Marina founded Acting Now in Cambridge (UK) and has since led the company as Artistic Director. Theatre and movement are her passion and she loves to use them to help participants believe in and express themselves. Her specialty lies in physical theatre and applied theatre, and she is also a professional facilitator of Theatre of the Oppressed. She regularly teaches at Anglia Ruskin University (UK), the University of Lille (France) and La Casa Encendida and Matadero (Spain).

In 2018, Marina was awarded a grant by **Arts Council England** to develop an international theatre project in Mexico with communities at risk.

She teaches in the following languages: Spanish, Catalan, English and Italian.

Acting Now is an applied theatre company and social enterprise based in Cambridge (UK) committed to bringing about change in communities and participants from all walks of life, especially those who experience disadvantage.

Our core work involves the use of drama in community, health and education settings as a catalyst for personal and social change. We work with refugees, youth groups, women, adults with learning disabilities or mental health issues, and for councils, charities, schools, universities and cultural centres, in the UK and abroad.

We have developed our very own methodology through working with these communities by drawing on the ethics of applied theatre and the aesthetics and principles of physical theatre. We call this **Raw Theatre (or Theatre of Yes)**.

Alongside this, we run physical theatre courses and training programmes, which bring together theatre practitioners, educators, community organizers, charity representatives, social workers, activists and many others who are interested in using theatre as a tool for communication, empowerment and debate.



1. PHYSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOPS



» Duration

Three to five days recommended. Longer programmes are available.



» Who the workshops are for

Theatre-makers, performers and anyone interested in developing their physical storytelling skills. The workshops can be adapted for different skill levels (from beginner to advanced) or mixed-level groups.

1.1. Physical Theatre:

Introduction to Lecoq's Pedagogy

Created in 1965, Lecoq's pedagogy uses a range of techniques that include neutral mask, dramatic stories, melodrama, Greek chorus, commedia dell'arte, buffoon and clowning to stimulate the body, imagination and creativity.

This introductory workshop will focus on:

» The fundamental journey: students will observe and embody the movements and dynamics in nature - fire, water, air, animals, ground, objects and human beings. Through improvisation, observation of the world and its movements, spacial awareness, exploration of truthful expression and personal creativity, Lecoq's pedagogy is brought to life as 'a theatre that moves'.

» The poetry of the movement: the body will be trained to transform life into poetry. By using the poetry of the body students develop creative possibilities. Stories go beyond realism into another stage of imagination. By the end of the course, the students will have acquired a broad palette of physical theatre techniques.

» Action -emotion-voice: the course will make the students highly conscious of how their own bodies can move. Following Lecoq's approach, you first discover the world (action) and then you rediscover yourself (emotion). Creative ideas come from the body (instinct), connect with an emotion (heart) and finally a voice emerges (mind). Examples of the exercises used are based on Lecoq's seven levels of tension and rhythms.

1. PHYSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOPS

1.2. Mask Work: from neutral masks to larvarian masks

Getting down to the essentials, and stripping away anecdote

The mask workshop encourages students to search for balance and to find energy economy in their movement.

Without any facial expression, **the neutral mask helps the individual to remove the focus away from expressiveness via the face** and to develop the body as the main motor of expression. As a result, the participant experiences calmness, increases bodily self-awareness, develops sensitivity and perceptivity to external environments, expands listening capacity and awakes stage presence. The neutral mask is the symbol for all masks and a reference point for understanding how the world moves. It allows a state of receptivity, balance and curiosity in which to explore the neutral world of elements and materials.

The **larvarian mask** complements the neutral mask through its subtle lines, colours, shapes and asymmetries helping students go through a range of emotions, actions and conflicts. By completely covering the face, we are pushed to a non-verbal interpretation where all the significance resides in the body, gestures and emotions.

Masks are a magnificent tool that invite us to immerse ourselves in a poetic language, out of the ordinary, where nothing is banal. The masks become the perfect vehicle for the actor to explore the world of feeling while teaching them to create from the evidence of their reality.



1. PHYSICAL THEATRE WORKSHOPS

1.3. The Greek Chorus

Tragedy using physical theatre language

The course in Greek chorus is designed to analyse and research contemporary physical theatre movement applying Greek chorus. The chorus in Classical Greek drama is a homogeneous, non-individualised group of performers, who comment with a collective voice on the dramatic action.

The study of Classic tragedy is extended with individual and collective exercises and improvisations, to develop the following points: the tragic space and the great movements, searching for the different degrees of physicality to which to direct and push the gesture and the world.

The next stage is the formation of the chorus as interpreter of the tragedy of the human condition lived through the protagonist, and the development of a collective choreography. Reduced to a single figure and with a single text, the chorus is thought of as a compact body that follows and amplifies the movements of the protagonist.

The last part is the figure of the tragic hero/heroine, where we turn to a more focused study of interpretation.



1.4. Applying Physical Theatre Language to a Contemporary Script



This course explores how physical theatre can work perfectly well with any theatre text. The students will be immersed in a contemporary text and its creation of it from interconnecting text and body movement, using emotions actions and conflicts. The extract text that the group will use is by Wajdi Mouawad "Forests".

The group will analyse the spatial tensions between characters, the emotions that characters have latent and the poetry of the texts. This terrain of physical theatre presents us with the challenge of how to combine confrontive languages, voice and movement.

As a result of the synergy of both, a new dimension is formed: comprising the social, the human, the tragic and the emotions of the story.

2. THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE



» Duration

Three to five days recommended. Longer programmes are available.



» Who the workshops are for

Anyone interested in using theatre as a tool for communication, debate and social change within their communities, including theatre practitioners, artists, social activists, teachers, community workers, charity representatives and youth workers.

Theatre can be a powerful tool to explore day-to-day issues, tackle social preconceptions, develop new ideas and foster positive change in a meaningful and creative way. Through drama-based techniques and methods, participants are given the opportunity to reflect, explore and analyse the issues that affect them in a safe and encouraging environment, while experiencing the holistic benefits of creative participation.

2.1. Raw Theatre

Working with groups at risk

After many years of working with communities at risk of social exclusion (from adults with learning disabilities or mental health challenges to homeless people, refugees and youth groups), we have developed our very own methodology by drawing on the ethics of applied theatre and the aesthetics and principles of physical theatre. We call this Raw Theatre (or Theatre of Yes).

Raw means raw: raw meat, pure, frank, wounded, natural, fresh, not cooked, wild, clear and true. Raw is hard to see. Raw is not easy to find. It connects us with internal spaces that

are asleep yet alive. Raw also means collective, looking at the wound for collective healing. Raw means connecting with emotions, with ourselves, by taking off our daily masks and discovering our inner selves.

In the world in which we live, people at risk of social exclusion do not have safe spaces to express their voices. **In this workshop, students will explore how theatre, especially physical theatre, can offer a space where participants feel free to articulate their ideas and be creative.** They will also focus on how to devise a performance that emerges from participants' personal stories, creating theatre that is unique to them.

This method is intended for those interested in developing theatre that reveals the complexities of communities at risk or those looking to integrate creative approaches to their social practice.

2. THEATRE FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

2.2. Theatre of the Oppressed Workshops

The Theatre of the Oppressed workshop is an introductory workshop designed for people who want to learn Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. This theatre form was created by influential practitioner Augusto Boal, who was inspired by the vision of Paulo Freire and his pedagogy of the oppressed. This is a **community-based education technique that uses theatre as a tool for transformation.**

The Theatre of the Oppressed technique develops critical thinking through analysing community situations and engaging the participants and audience in an active dialogue. The Theatre of the Oppressed technique is implemented around the world for social participation, community building, therapy, political activism and conflict resolution.

This workshop will focus on:

» Introducing Theatre of the Oppressed as a tool for social transformation;

» Providing the participants with an understanding of applied theatre;

» Developing non-verbal communication by exploring the full potential of the body;

» Encouraging critical thinking and reflection around social issues.

In this workshop, we will use a range of Theatre of the Oppressed techniques, including:

» Theatre games;

» Image theatre, in which “spect-actors” are invited to recreate concepts or emotions through static expression;

» Forum Theatre, which involves the creation of a performance that centres on a situation of oppression and ends with an unresolved problem for the protagonist. The “spect-actors” are then invited to offer suggestions on how to help the protagonist and they take the stage to rehearse their suggestions with the other performers.



3. WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



» Duration

Three to five days recommended. Longer programmes are available.



» Who the workshops are for

Children and young people over five years old. The workshops can be adapted for different age groups.

At Acting Now, we believe theatre is a platform that empowers young people in their journey to adulthood. We regularly develop participatory theatre projects in schools, working with children and young people around a variety of issues (bullying, internet safety and social networks or sexual health) and run physical theatre courses for kids, in which we focus on expression, creativity and body movement.

3.1. Physical Theatre for Kids

Our workshops are an alternative to conventional drama lessons and are based on body movement, freedom and creativity.

Through a range of fun theatre games and physical theatre techniques, we aim to promote emotional and physical awareness, self-confidence and self-expression in the

participants while having fun and learning theatre skills.

We will be working/playing with:

- » Rhythmical movement, pace and the energy of the body;
- » Artistic expression (the many ways we can express ourselves);
- » Creating characters;
- » Collaborative story creation.

3. WORKSHOPS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

3.2. Forum Theatre for Young People

Forum Theatre is a type of theatre created by practitioner Augusto Boal as part of his Theatre of the Oppressed to provide a forum for teaching people how to change their world.

In short, **Forum Theatre is a fully interactive performance followed by a safe group dynamic and discussion with particular emphasis on the emotions involved on both sides of a dilemma.** In this workshop, the participants themselves take ownership of the process of creating their very own Forum Theatre pieces and take the lead in the discussion.

In the first part of the workshop, we use Theatre of the Oppressed techniques and image theatre games to encourage participation and enjoyment and help participants to articulate their own experiences and identify those issues they want to explore more deeply.

In the second part of the workshop, **students work together in groups to create their Forum Theatre pieces** and present them to the

other groups.

Forum Theatre has three stages:

- » Participants dramatize a situation of their choice (usually involving a conflict).
- » Young people in the audience work out solutions to the characters' problems through role play. Rather than simply offering suggestions from the side lines, they will need to come up on stage to play out each solution for themselves.
- » Open discussion. The group is prompted to analyse the issues presented and discuss how their views may have changed after the workshop.

By using drama and Forum Theatre techniques, we offer fun and effective tools that encourage young people to explore day-to-day issues, tackle social preconceptions, develop new ideas and foster positive change.

Suitable for ages 12–18. The workshops can also be tailored to pre-selected topics such as bullying and cyber-bullying, internet safety and social networks, smoking, drugs and alcohol or sexual health and teenage pregnancy.



"It opens your heart to other people and gives you a new perspective on how theatre can influence social change; I felt welcomed and engaged throughout."

Irene Arroyo,
Theatre of the Oppressed
workshop participant

"All the participants found the Theatre of the Oppressed workshop absolutely fantastic, so we will programme your workshops next year. Marina has a big fan club in Madrid!"

Ángeles Tebar Medina, Education
Manager at La Casa Encendida
(Spain)

"Marina is an inspiring and motivating teacher. She is demanding in a very warm, supportive and encouraging way. She allows us to get the most out of the physical theatre experience by highlighting our strengths"

Valerie Fabre, physical theatre
course participant

"I commissioned Marina to teach a short course on physical theatre (introduction to Lecoq's pedagogy) to our arts students at a master level and it was a very inspiring, creative and poetic experience. I look forward to programming more of her training programmes next course"

Marie-Pierre Lassus, Head of the Master
of Arts, Université Charles De Gaulle Lille
3 (France)

What people say about us



**Anglia Ruskin
University**



**UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE**



**Université
de Lille**
3 SCIENCES HUMAINES
ET SOCIALES

We have worked with



ELY COLLEGE

**MATA-
DERO
MADRID**

LA CASA ENCENDIDA
de fundación montemadrid



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Click here to watch a video about our Theatre of the Oppressed training