

JOANTHAN KIPP BECKER

Teaching Artist Statement

I draw from the work and teachings of Stanislavski, Lecoq, Grotowski, Rodenberg and Alexander. My teaching style is designed to guide the student to an understanding of: universal rhythms, the ability to access honest emotional responses, the movement of the human body and the relationship of these elements to the performance space. These understandings provide for the actor a physical state of readiness leading toward a constant state of discovery. In my teaching I apply an integrated approach to learning that requires of the student a holistic understanding of process and a total understanding of the human body. This involves an extensive use of exercises geared toward guiding the learner to an understanding of the play of the actor, dramatic structure, the dynamic connections between the actor and the space, the role an audience plays in the dramatic act, the effect scenic design has on the action and how all of these are linked. Proper alignment, strength and issues of tension are addressed as well as a technical overview of human anatomy. Each exercise has elements of all other exercises presented. Once a student truly understands the fundamental concepts of a single exercise then success in the others comes quickly. I find this way of teaching and presenting concepts tremendously helpful because it addresses each student's different approach to learning and allows the learner to come to the work as an individual.

Kindness, compassion, a celebration of the other, a reach for understanding, provocation of empathy and the building of community are the principles upon which I guide myself as an artist and teacher. The rest is a personal exploration and attempt to gain understanding of my own humanity. I capture understandings in rhythmic form, in movement and in poetry.

I fundamentally believe that artists are the keepers of culture and the revealers of our humanity. We create quality of life and through the sharing of story and the bringing of people together. It is the celebration of our extraordinary differences that allows for profound understanding of what we share in common.

What we share in common exists between us.

Learning and creating is based on an understanding of the spaces between. The spaces between the actor and the character, the spaces between the character and the audience, the spaces between the actors themselves and the imaginary world they are in; the spaces between the collaborative artists and the work they are focused on. It is in an understanding of the spaces between where success is found. It is in these spaces we find common ground.

The focus of artistic work and learning is to define individualized process intended to lead the artist to create work that has not yet been seen before. The commitment is to find work that reflects the authentic voices, experiences and struggles of the world as it is today. The world we currently live in bases its understandings of the other on a fictional narrative. It is therefore essential to begin with the question; who are we in the present? Followed quickly by what experiences belong to all times rather than of just this time.

The exploration of performance languages and different approaches from different times and cultures aid in a universal understanding of underlying principles in the work as well as the extraordinary diversity of perspectives present.

The approach to the understanding of a theatrical moment is much like seeking to understand a sculpted form. The approach begins on a very technical level in an effort to define and recognize the immediate elements present, such as the body in space and its rhythmic relationships to everything around it. These rhythmic relationships of developing form become the guiding force for discovery. The approach becomes a journey of defining the dynamic connections between the actor and the audience.