

YOUR WHY

A directing practice is something to be discovered and is as individual as the person pursuing it. It is defined by your 'why': your politics, your individual aesthetic, your taste – what you're fascinated by, what your biases are. All of these things inform your 'what' – the play you choose to direct and your vision for it, and your 'how' – how you choose to direct.

Think of directing as the direction you want to head in. It is to do with what you want to interrogate or pursue and should be driven by curiosity, a spirit of uncovering. It's about why you want to make theatre.

Start to think about your 'why' through these questions:

What is important to you? What do you care most about?

What ideas, themes or questions do you keep returning to? What are you fascinated by?

Why theatre? What about it are you drawn to?

CREATIVE RESEARCH

We're going to conduct an experiment for the rest of this lab, imagining that you have been given *my sister feather* to direct. This is so:

- 1) I can share my directing process using *my sister feather* as a case study;
- 2) you may consider a variety of rehearsal room processes, as this play includes both fixed text that cannot be changed and that you as a director must find creative solutions for in its staging, and unfixed text, which you may use as a guide for your own devising and improvisational processes.

For this week, read *my sister feather* and imagine you've been hired to direct this play. It's up to you to produce your version of it in performance. So, what do you connect with?

Record your first impressions and questions either during or after your first read. You can do this by:

1. Working through the different elements of performance (see lecture);
2. Mapping your sensory response to the world of the play;
3. Recording your associative responses. Your own memories, who reminds you of these characters, what other art works do you think of when thinking about the play? What conversations have you had or overheard, what incidents have you witnessed, moments you've glimpsed in public or private spaces that come to mind whilst reading?

Answering these questions will launch your creative research for this production.

TEXT ANALYSIS

If you are choosing to direct a play, the text is your starting and end point when creating your production – it has all of the information that you need to transform it from page to stage. This information is found through the process of text analysis, which is the practice of breaking the script down into bite-sized chunks to work out what is going on in given moment of dramatic action.

First of all, analyse the world of your play.

Your play has a particular situation – what sort of behaviour dominates? What's the body language? What is at stake? Who has the power simply because of the space itself?

Now, pick a scene from *my sister feather* and follow the lecture's example of breaking it down into its component units and beats.

With each unit:

1. Mark it in your script and name it;
2. What is each character doing – what are their actions?
3. What are their objectives? Consider their behaviour against the given circumstances of the unit and/or scene (remember these given circumstances can come from your analysis of the play world);
4. What are the strategies they use to pursue their objectives? How are they trying to get what they want?
5. How are their objectives in this unit tied to their overall objectives in the play?

The information about the play-world that you gather through this text analysis can then be combined with the practice of creative research, an intuitive process that is *you directly responding* to this information. It is through the back and forth between these two processes that you create a clear creative vision, choosing what is meaningful to you and using this personal connection to define the frame of your production.

THE PROJECT

The final three lectures consider the practical process of directing text, devising and improvisational processes, and a broad range of questions that were raised by the original Directing Lab group. Watch these, and then **spend time defining the frame of your own production of *my sister feather* by continuing the processes of creative research and text analysis, drawing out your own personal connection(s) with the text.**