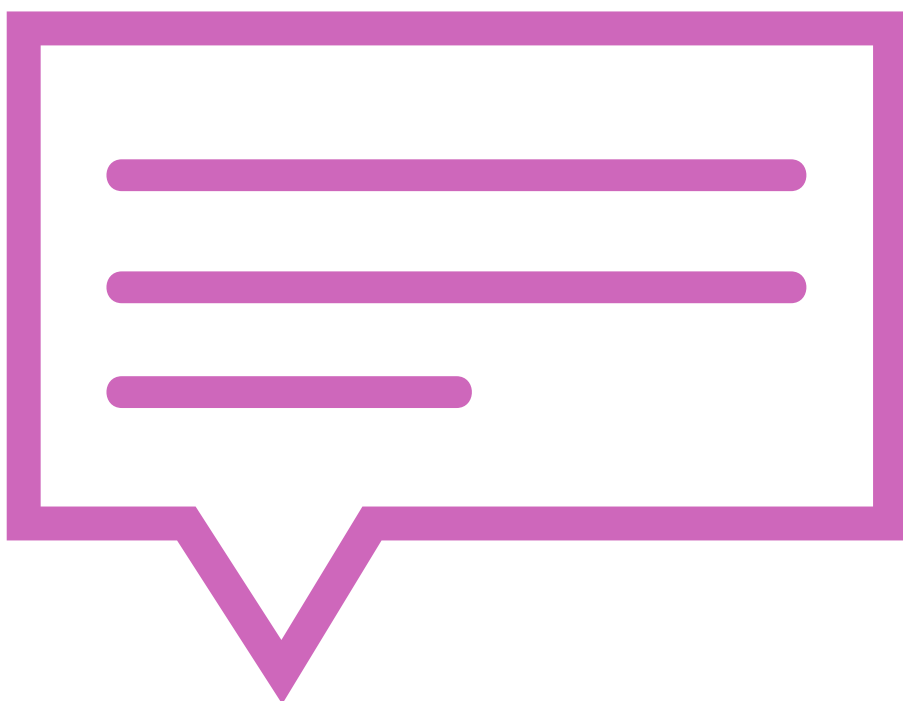


# FORUM THEATRE

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# PROJECT MANUAL

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1

## STEP 1- Research and Brainstorm

- first consultation with client
- meet the field experts
- research and exchange ideas on the subject
- draft realistic characters
- create a script outline



2

## STEP 2- Create, Rehearse & Refine

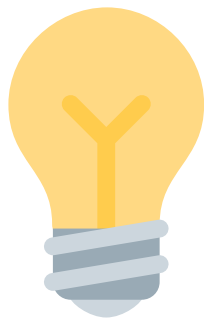
- meet the client in their environment and brainstorm together on the issue
- present a stumble through of the piece to the client
- work through script drafts and edit according to feedback
- develop the design for the show
- rehearse with actors



3

## STEP 3- Present & Evaluate

- present the final forum piece and facilitation
- gather and organize feedback
- discuss as a team what needs to be improved, what worked and what challenges appeared and how you tackled them



# I-GENERAL PROJECT TIMELINE

# II- DETAILED PROJECT TIMELINE AND DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS



Forum Theatre Performance

## **MONTH 1- Research and Creative Brainstorming**

*Day 1: Initial meeting with Project Coordinator*

- Project Coordinator and Project Leader meet to discuss the details of contract, the upcoming project and the client's request
- Project Leader creates a Google Drive platform for collaborators to communicate and exchange project-related information
- Project Leader drafts general project timeline and creates a meeting schedule.
- She reaches out to collaborators and communicates to them the details of the project
- Collaborators are on board and development team is confirmed

### *Day 2: 1st consultation meeting with Client*

- Each team member introduces themselves and explains what they can bring to the table
- Team discusses with client and project coordinator what the intentions and expectations are for the piece, both on artistic and social levels.
- Team discusses what the main road blocks will be and how to tackle them (in this case the main roadblock named was the engagement of the audience)
- Team discusses what kind of experience we want the community to have during our workshops and starts brainstorming strategies to achieve this
- Team discusses what the client's objective is for the piece and what she hopes the impact will be.
- Client shares the research materials (e.g. course readings, articles, videos)
- From the discussion, the team creates a list of questions that will help guide their research and artistic explorations

### *Day 3: Individual research*

- Collaborators conduct their individual research
- Collaborators pick 3 academic articles from the class readings the client has provided and investigate them
- Collaborators provide a short summary for their 3 readings
- Collaborators extract concrete ideas for scenes based off what they have read.
- Collaborators present to the group 2 additional audiovisual sources (an image, a sound, a sculpture, a painting, a documentary) that they have discovered in their own research and find inspiring for the project.
- Collaborators upload their findings and research to the common file on the Google Drive platform for all to consult and comment

### *Day 4: 1st research/creation meeting*

- Team shares what they have learned from readings
- Team exchanges their research and ideas for the piece. Each piece of research must be tied to a concrete idea for a character, line or scenario in the play
- Team write personal journal entries and answers journal questions closely related to the topic of the project, to allow collaborators to connect with the themes, reflect on their experience, and build openness and trust across the team
- Team starts building a mind map that connects all initial ideas, themes, characters and situations

### *Day 5: individual research*

Collaborators conduct their individual research

Collaborators pick 3 academic articles from the class readings the client has provided and investigate them

Collaborators provide a short summary for their 3 readings

Collaborators extract concrete ideas for scenes based off what they have read.

Collaborators present to the group 2 additional audiovisual sources (an image, a sound, a sculpture, a painting, a documentary) that they have discovered in their own research and find inspiring for the project.

Collaborators upload their findings and research to the common file on the Google Drive platform for all to consult and comment

### *Day 6: research/creation meeting*

-Team shares what they have learned from readings

-Team exchanges their research and ideas for the piece. Each piece of research must be tied to a concrete idea for a character, line or scenario in the play

-Team write personal journal entries and answers journal questions closely related to the topic of the project (What is your personal understanding of feminism? where does it come from? At the end of the Engendered Species reading, the authors ask, “[W]hy (is) gender difference so important to us, why (do) we cling to the notion of gender differences so tenaciously...?” How would you answer this question? Has there been a moment when you could not let go of a difference?)

-Team continues building mind map that connects all initial ideas, themes, characters and situations.

-Team does theatre warm ups to connect, open to one another and develop better creativity and listening

-Team reviews image theatre and forum theatre exercises (see Annex) to sharpen theatre skills and acquire forum theatre techniques. Through these exercises, they explore the themes and ideas they have researched

-Team does a series of creation exercises to start workshopping their script ideas and testing their potential characters

-At the end of the meeting, the team has created a list of 6 potential scenes that they believe encapsulate the topic and research and will engage the audience



### *Day 7: individual research, writing and planning*

- Collaborators prepare an étude or activity for the group (between 10mins and 45mins). This étude might be an activity exploring one of themes of the piece (masculinity, patriarchy, feminism, homophobia, justice, violence) or it might be an activity exploring a forum theatre technique you want to teach (a specific forum exercise we should try out, a writing exercise, a physical theatre workshop) or it might be a combination of both
- Collaborators read more about forum theatre and remind themselves of the rules and methods of this specific genre, using the uploaded resources on the Google drive platform
- Collaborators prepare 3 facilitation exercises and start brainstorming how they will lead the workshop with the students
- Collaborators start outlining story arc

### *Day 8: 3rd research/creation meeting*

- Collaborators lead the thematic études they have prepared and the whole group participates
- Team summarizes the main insights they gleaned from the études and brainstorm on how they can apply them to the play
- Team reviews and agrees on the plot outline and characteristic of each character
- Team improvises the scenes they have outlined, recording each improvisation
- After each scene, they discuss the intention of the scene, review what worked and what needs to be adjusted
- Using improvisation helps us create characters on our feet and helps the script sound as natural as possible

### *Day 9: individual planning and writing*

- Project Leader uploads the audio recording from the improvisation, which will be used when drafting the script and can even be transcribed if the team feels the scene worked as is
- Team starts writing the first draft of the script
- Project leader creates a document that charts the general themes explored in each scene of the play (male violence, female objectification, masculinity as homophobia, male competition etc....) This is made to ensure all the ideas, academic findings and issues brought up during the research period are represented
- Project leader drafts "feedback questions": a list of questions that are useful to think about when seeing the first version of the forum play. The goal is that these questions help guide the audience members giving the creators feedback, highlighting what aspects they should look out for and what problem areas the team has already identified

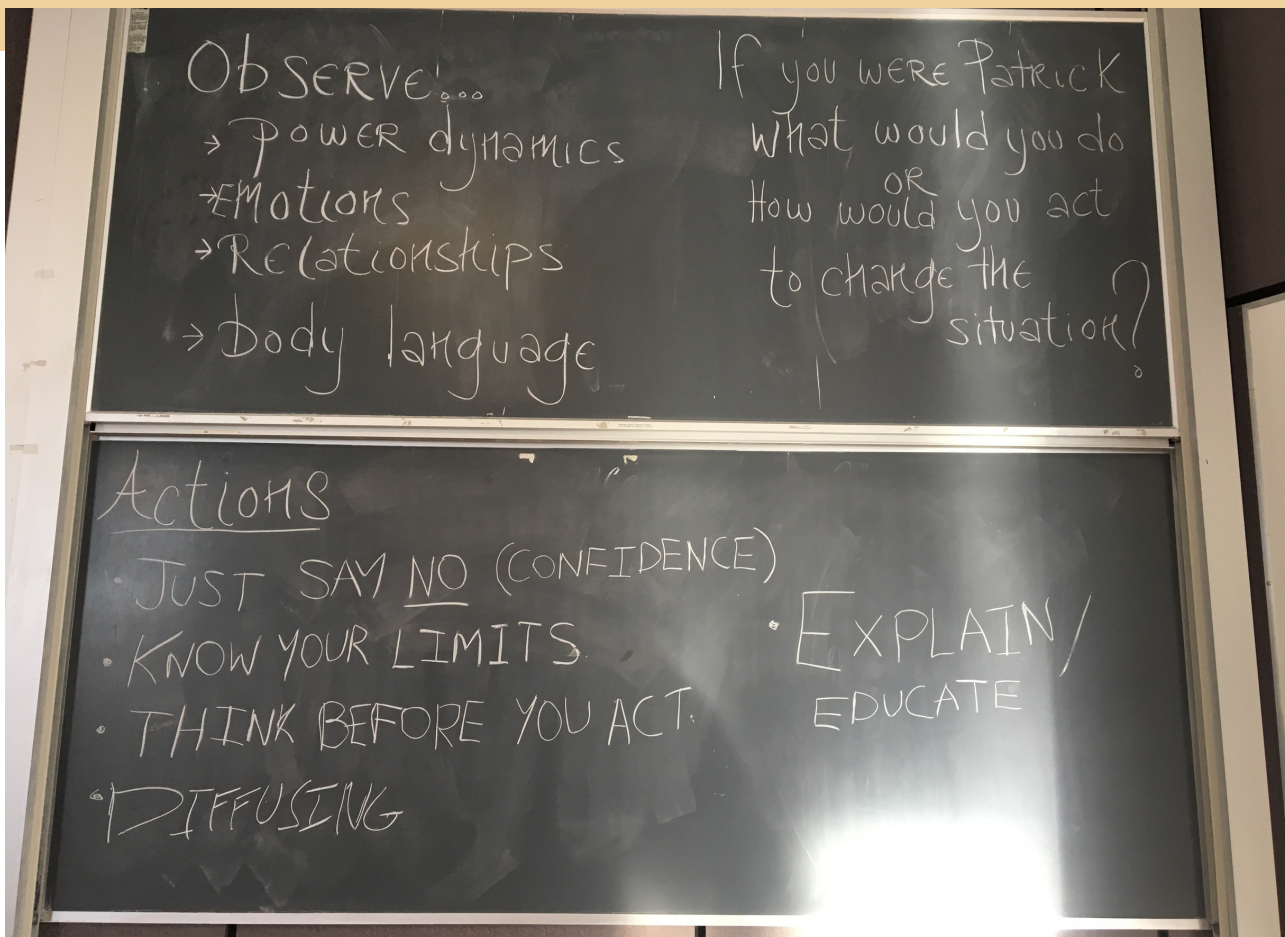
## MONTH 2- Create, Rehearse & Refine

*Day 10: 4th research/creation meeting // 2nd consultation meeting with Client*

- Collaborators read first draft of script, discuss it and make edits
- Collaborators discuss the design elements of the show and casting
- Project Leader determines basic blocking
- Collaborators have 2nd consultation meeting with Client. They read the play, discuss what works and receive feedback

*Day 11: individual writing and planning*

- Project Leader has transcribed and summarized the feedback received on October 2nd
- The creative team reviews the feedback and comes in with clear ideas on how to address the changes that were proposed
- Creative team devises the "facilitation script" and decide how they will introduce the piece, warm up the audience, discuss strategies with the audience and keep them engaged in the process (see Annex)



List of actions the forum audience proposed

*Day 12: 5th research/creation meeting*

- Creative team reads new script and starts rehearsing
- Creative team devises and rehearses facilitation

#### *Day 13: individual writing and planning*

- The final script is sent to the whole cast and creative team
- Cast starts learning the script by heart and doing individual character work
- is very familiar with script and is close to off book
- The director determines the final blocking and makes all design decisions (props, costumes, set)
- The facilitation is reviewed and facilitators feel comfortable with the discussions they need to lead

#### *Day 14: rehearsal 1*

- With all actors present, the team and facilitators rehearse the entire workshop and go over potential problems

#### *Day 15: rehearsal 2 + individual writing and planning*

- With all actors present, the team and facilitators rehearse the entire workshop and go over potential problems

#### *Day 16: 1st performance*

- The team sets up the classroom for the workshop
- The team leads the workshop
- The team gives feedback sheets to students at the end of the workshop to collect their feedback

#### *Day 17: 3rd Consultation meeting with all collaborators and Client*

- The team and Client debrief and go over the workshop
- The team reads and reviews the feedback they received
- The team discusses what changes they should implement for the next performance based on feedback and each person's experience

### **MONTH 3 - Present & Evaluate**

#### *Day 18: 2nd performance*

- The team sets up the classroom for the workshop
- The team leads the workshop
- The team conducts a focus group at the end of the workshop to go over the process with students (face to face) and to collect feedback

#### *Day 19: individual writing and planning*

- Project leader organizes and summarizes the feedback received by the students
- Based on the feedback, the creative edits the script and sends the new version to collaborators for approval

### *Day 20: rehearsal 3*

- The actors meet up to rehearse the new script and go over changes and problem areas

### *Day 21: 3rd performance*

- The team sets up the room for the workshop
- The team leads the workshop
- The team debriefs on the experience. We highlight successes and problem areas.

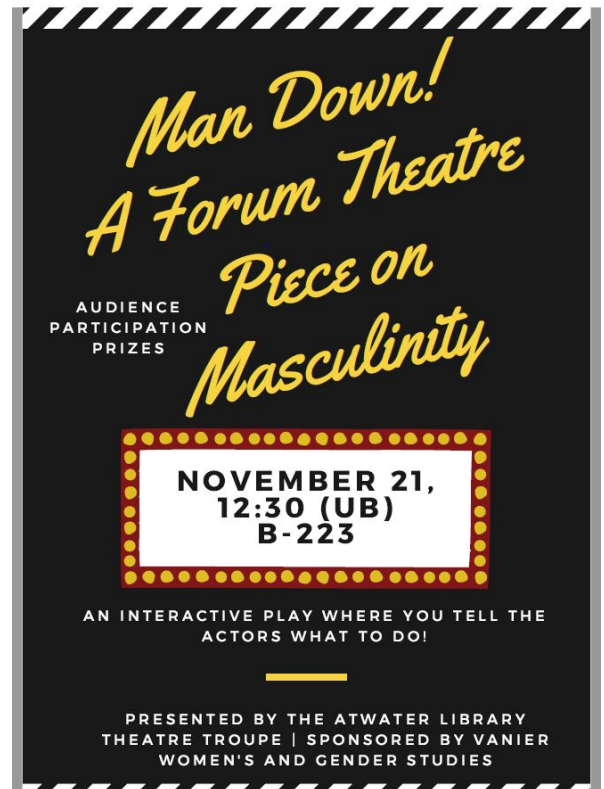
### *Day 22: individual writing and planning*

- Collaborators make final adjustments to script and facilitation

### *Day 23: 4th performance*

- The team sets up the room for the workshop
- The team leads the workshop
- The team debriefs on the experience, highlighting successes and problem areas

## Publicity for our forum Theatre Performance



Forum Theatre Performance



# III - FACILITATION GUIDELINES

## A) HOW TO FACILITATE: SOME HELPFUL LINKS AND SOURCES

<https://cardboardcitizens.org.uk/forum-theatre-and-joker-training>

For a good piece of Forum to work; the story must be clear, there must be a clear protagonist that the audience can sympathise with, and want to help, and of course there can't be a happy ending – otherwise you have no problems to forum!

The most interesting part of this weekend was seeing just how different everybody's style was, and how they all still worked. Jokering allows you to bring your own personality onto the stage and engage with the audience in a way that works for you.

--- it's not about adopting a certain style, it's about engaging with the audience.

<https://www.slideshare.net/openstagetheater/guide-to-forum-theater>

*What is forum theatre?*

"A form of interactive theatre that allows you to tackle oppressive situations on stage so we can all be better prepared to face them in real life"

*What is the role of the Joker?*

"She breaks the ice, she encourages, she invites, she regulates, she appreciates, she explains, she concludes, she translates the audience's interventions"

*Other notes:*

design is always good

realism is good- but so is metaphor and surreal elements- it invites audience members to express themselves artistically and think creatively about the problem.

the play should have a negative ending

The Joker introduces the principles and the rules of Forum Theatre to the audience (you can find a version of the rules under supporting documents)

Introducing the participants to what is going to happen can happen at different stages. They can be introduced to the theatre form in advance, and be given time to reflect on it and prepare the scenes. They could also be presented to it on the day, and then given the task to set up and act out scenes. Expectations to the length of the scene and level of complication should be adjusted in relation to the amount of time the group is given to work on it.

Apart from introducing the method and the rules/principles of forum plays, the Joker invites the audience to join him/her and the actors in warm up exercises. This should tear down the gap between the actors and the audience so they become spect-actors. After warm up, some value clarification exercises could be introduced. This is a good way to get everyone actively participating by forming an opinion, since they leave little room for participants to be neutral. The value exercises could also serve as a starting point for dividing the larger group into smaller play groups, which can then create plays from their mutual interest.

### *Digital forum plays*

The prepared or improvised forum theatre scenarios will be played through. The Joker will act as the mediator between the actors and the spect-actors, and will introduce the forum theatre instruments he/she finds necessary (e.g. the speech bubble or interviews). The facilitator should also keep in mind which post activities he plans to implement, e.g., if the intention is to make video speech bubbles, perhaps this feature will take up less of the time during the event itself.

Otherwise, the forum theatre event follows the pattern of a traditional forum event, with playing the scene through several times, without and with questions, and swapping actors.

## **OTHER TECHNIQUES**

### *Speech Bubbles*

The joker holds an imaginary speech bubble over the head of an actor, "Say what the character is thinking, as the person would say it". Then some of the spect-actors can tell what they imagine the character is thinking. It can go on with doing different speech bubble over other characters. This exercise gives more insight into background, character and motivation. It can help provide input to some of the underlying motivation that is not immediately visible in the play.

### *Interviews*

Interview the characters for more information, similar to an interrogation. "Who would you like to interview", and the spect-actors get to ask the character whatever they want. The actor must then answer in character. The joker can also jump in, pause the actor and instead ask the audience: "what do you think he or she would answer to that question". A good point to move on is then to ask: now that you have more information about the situation, does that change your point of view?

## **B) FACILITATION GUIDELINES ATWATER LIBRARY DEVELOPED**

### **I- Before the piece:**

Before the piece, the facilitator should  
welcome the audience to the event  
explain what our intentions are with this workshop and why we are here  
explain what forum theatre is  
explain how forum theatre works

We will run the play once.  
We will have a short discussion following the play  
We will invite you to propose solutions to the problem presented  
We will run the scenes again and will ask you to replace one of characters.  
We will encourage you to think and try out alternative solutions, brainstorming technique

### **II- Directly after the piece:**

Directly after the piece, the facilitator should  
say “stop” then thank the actors  
break the ice between actors and audience members by engaging the audience in a  
discussion about what they have seen. During the discussion, the facilitator should always  
ask for everybody’s name. She might start by asking the following questions:

Did this situation seem realistic to you? Why, why not?\*

What irked you in what you saw? What lines stood out?

Did anything hit close to home?

Did you feel empathy for the Sacha character? Why, why not?

How would you react if this were a real situation happening in front of you?

What seems to be the problem here?

What solutions do you envision?

Once the discussion is starting to take off, the facilitator might choose a person who has  
participated and invite them to try out what they are proposing. They might ask them  
what character it makes most sense for them to replace.  
If the audience members agrees, the facilitator should encourage them, remind them  
what role they will be playing, clearly identify what strategy they are trying and  
recapitulate what will happen now.

### **III- To move the action along:**

If the facilitator sees that the conversation is going nowhere or that the audience  
members are too shy to go on stage

1) She can prompt the group by asking “what if” questions. For example:

What do you think will happen to Sacha if she stays in the group?

What do you think should happen to Alex?

What if the teacher strongly disapproved Alex’s behavior?

2) She can use the speech bubble or interview techniques

3) She can ask the audience to choose the scene they found most problematic

4) She can ask the actors to try that scene again and tell the audience members to yell “stop” when they see something problematic. Instead of bringing them on stage, she can ask them why they yelled stop, what the problem is and how they would solve it. Most probably, this will lead to someone volunteering to doing the scene.

IV- During the audience’s interventions

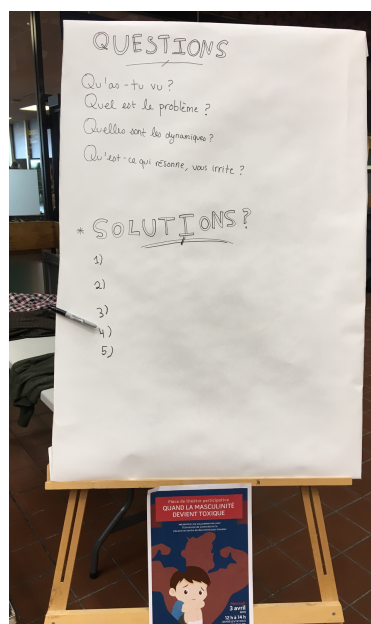
During or after an intervention, the facilitator might stop the act, recapitulate and appreciate what she’s seen. The facilitator can ask if someone else in the audience saw the situation differently. She should regulate the conversation and stay neutral by asking different open-ended questions. It is important for the facilitator to identify when a solution suggested is “magic”

V- To conclude:

The facilitator might summarize all the different solutions that have been proposed. She can emphasize how a real-life crisis always has room for change to occur

+++ Important to remember:

The facilitator should remain : open, enthusiastic, engaging, available and neutral. She should have a non-judgmental voice and be eye-level with the audience.



Questions and Solutions Sheet



# IV - FORUM THEATRE GAMES AND ACTIVITIES



## < Games that achieve GOAL 1: empower participants to take a stand and take action

- 10 Similarities

Explanation: participants must walk around the room. When the facilitator claps their hands, they must turn to the person nearest them and find 10 things they have in common. The fastest group wins.

- Take a stand on the line

Explanation: Facilitator says general statements. One side of the room means no, the other side means yes. Participants must think about how much they agree with the statement and place themselves along the line.

## < Games that achieve GOAL 2: gain their trust/ provide the audience with a safe environment to try each other's shoes

- If my shoes could talk...

Explanation: participants and facilitator sit in a circle. They have a minute to observe their shoes. They then go around the circle and each person completes the sentence : "If my shoes could talk, they would say..."

## < Games that achieve GOAL 3: initiate discussion but not lecture or educate/ focus on the reality of our participants and bring forward realistic, problematic issues/ pose good questions but not provide the answers

- Writing exercise

Explanation: participants sit in a circle with small slips of paper. Facilitators ask them to write down the most problematic thing they have heard or have said about conforming to gender. We will read a couple and discuss them.

## Discussion questions:

During our process, one activity we find very valuable is to free write or journal on the topic, starting from a question. We then discuss what we wrote.

- When was the moment you realized you were a boy, or a girl?
- When was a moment when you internalized gender norms about men or women?
- Did you ever feel you had to perform your gender? Describe the situation
- Why is gender difference so important to you? Why not?
- Are our institutions gendered? Give a personal example.

## < Games that achieve GOAL 4: use the body and stage images to tackle the heart of the issue/to tackle power dynamics

- Image theatre: Chair dynamics

Explanation: 4 participants per group. Person 1 places 3 chairs in different formations where a clear power dynamic is established. Person 1 then places the 3 other participants into the environment as characters. Person 1 sculpts them into a problematic situation relating to masculinity. Then participants switch roles.

After a couple turns, those in the tableau can make a sound. The next round, the characters can speak one sentence to someone else in the tableau. Finally, when the joker taps the shoulder of a character, we can hear the internal monologue from characters



Forum Theatre  
Facilitator

## Forum Theatre Performance

