

## **Scene Work handout**

Skills: Immediacy, improvisation & active listening

Based on Meisner techniques: “The reality of doing” and “to live truthfully under imaginary circumstances.”

This series of techniques and exercises is designed to increase an actor’s instincts as well as providing tools for improvisation to help actors respond naturally to their environment and to other actors. How can these exercises inform the relationship between directors and actors?

This two-step exercise is effective when people partner 1-on-1 and then bring their work back to perform to a larger group. Break into multiple 1-on-1 groups and perform the exercises with each part lasting 2-4 minutes. Then, try having each pair work on a new set of ideas in front of a larger group. Alternately, try re-grouping into new 1-on-1 partnerships for exercises in front of the large group.

### **1. The repetition exercise**

Two participants stand or sit facing each other, the first actor then shares an observation about the other participant. “You look like you’ve slept in the woods.” The second participant then repeats back the same comment and this builds with the participants altering their verbal expressions, perhaps adding irony, humor or empathy, “Yes, I’ve slept in the woods and it was amazing”. Participants should be encouraged to increasingly incorporate physical gestures as the exercise progresses and builds.

### **2. Independent activity**

By adding an independent activity to the repetition exercise, performers learn to complicate the scene work they engage in. Have one performer pick an independent activity such as texting with a friend, or washing the dishes. Then the other performer starts the repetition exercise and the participant performing the independent activity follows along with the repetition dialog as they try to focus on performing their independent activity. Expect breaks in the independent activity as that performer attempts to concentrate on the dialog.