

Performing Art



Visual and Performing Art in Collaboration



AATE WORKSHOP GAMES & EXERCISES 2025

warm ups for ensemble building

BUH

Everyone stands in a circle. Person A turns to the person to their right, Person B, and says "Buh." Person B passes the "Buh" to their right and it continues around the circle. The pace can begin slowly but the goal is to find a rhythm and go as quickly as possible without disrupting the rhythm.

Complication: Encourage players to try to scare each other with their "Buh." This is a good option if the energy is low.

Complication: Let it travel in either direction, determined by whoever has the "buh." This can lead to "buh" arguments stuck going back and forth between two players. This is good but can get tedious- if it goes on too long make a rule that only 4 "buh's" can go between partners before it has to move on.

Complication: Have players use their names instead of the word "buh." Have them switch from using their name to their neighbor's name.

PASS THE FACE

Stand in a circle. Person A looks to their right and makes a face at Person B. Person B mimics the face and passes it on. The "face" gets passed around the circle. Each receiver must try to copy exactly what they are receiving, and in this way it will change from person to person without anyone trying or forcing the face to change. Let it go around for a minute or two, and then change directions.

Complication: Add sound, or full body movement, or both.

Complication: Send it across the circle instead of just to left or right. This requires focus and only works with a small group.

WORDS ON CARDS

Have players write a word on an index card when they enter the room. It is their word for the moment, not yesterday's word or tomorrow's word. It can be an emotion, a color, a noun. Put all cards in a bag.

When everyone has filled out a card have players pick a card out of the bag, they may get their own card, this is fine. Players must now use their card words to try to form affinity teams based on their word. Once they find their team (ex: "happy" "bubble" and "yellow" are now a team) they must share / justify their choice to be a team with the group.

Complication: Have them make more than one group, this encourages getting abstract and working harder to find connection.

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generative exercises / devising content

FOUND OBJECT SCULPTURE

Using found objects participants have on hand (or are in the space), build a sculpture. Each player should have one object, if it belongs to them make sure they are comfortable having other players touch it. Decide on the boundaries of the exhibit, is it a tabletop? A 4'x4' square on the floor? Make sure the group understands the boundary you are using. One by one, participants will enter the area and place their object. The way they enter, place, and exit should be thoughtful, not casual. Once the found object sculpture is complete, ask volunteers to make adjustments. Decide as a group when the sculpture is "finished."

WHITE ELEPHANT

Players choose an object from the FOUND OBJECT SCULPTURE. Once everyone has an object, they introduce their object to the group. Just one or two sentences, "This is a set of keys that unlock a secret closet." It can be literal, abstract, personal, real, or a fabrication.

Once everyone has shared, Player A (can be anyone) will choose another person in the circle to "gift" their object to. Player A will now be without an object and Player B will have 2 objects. Player B then gifts their (original) object to another Player. This continues until everyone has a NEW object and the last person to go will give theirs to Player A.

Players now introduce their new objects to the group using the same prompt from round 1.

THE CONNECTION IS...

Using their gifted found objects, players will begin to create short narratives connecting their objects to art. Depending on your location, the art might be actual pieces in a gallery, photos of pieces, or art made by students. Just make sure everyone understands what the boundaries are. For our workshop purposes, we are using Words of Art cards.

If you have multiple pieces of art, players will move around, holding their objects up to the artworks, looking for a connection. They can hold their objects up, trying to sense a magnetism, or they can focus on more literal connection (ex. my object is blue, this painting is blue).

Once players have chosen a piece to work with they will write a short (1 - 2 minute) narrative that begins with the words "The connection is..."

Dancers, musicians or poets are welcome to move, sing, play or write poetry instead of a narrative. Their work must still only be 1-2 minutes and it must also start with the words "The connection is."

Give everyone 5-10 minutes to work on their performance.

Encourage them to think about the beginning, middle and end of their piece. How do they enter? How do they hold their object? How do we know they are finished.

Share.

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