

Practices v1.1

The practices below are at various stages of their formation and formulation, and as such their written formatting differs widely, impacting their respective actionability. A form-of-practice itself, and the exercises and prompts which compose it, is the core-epistemic object of practice-based research. That is, it holds immense knowledge, is the result of knowledge, and is a method of transmitting and disseminating knowledge. As such, tracing the evolution and implementation of various forms-of-practice within any given creation and research process is crucial in thinking on the relationship between practice and research.

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Embodying the Mythology

Active Imagination and Split are two practices utilized to experiment with the mythology, the matrix of references which compose the concept and dramaturgy of Azathoth. Facilitating their becoming embodied, the external knowledge can become internalized and individualized – sedimented and unfolded through embodied knowledge.

Active Imagination

Active Imagination is a psychoanalytic practiced devised by Carl G. Jung, emphasizing visualization as an aspect of embodiment.

Find a comfortable position, laying on your back, eyes closed. (Set a timer for seven minutes.)

Invite an image to manifest. As an anchor, one can either focus on their emotional charge, visceral and cognitive experiences both, and utilize a medium, such as a card from the tarot deck or a reference from the Azathoth mythology.

Allow the image to animate, morph, and transform.

Become actively engaged in the fantasy. Trace its ebbs and flows and observe your reaction and relation to them.

Open your eyes (prompted by the timer beeping, perhaps), reorientate.

Externalize the journey, through movement, automatic writing, and beyond.

Jung describes “Active imagination has two parts or stages: First, letting the unconscious come up; and second, coming to terms with the unconscious.” Further Jungian analysts elaborate on this proposition. For Janet Dallett, “the steps are: (1) Opening to the unconscious; (2) Giving it form; (3) Reaction by the ego; and (4) Living it. She points out that it is useful to divide the process into smaller parts in order to look at it more closely, but ‘It is unlikely that anyone ever actually does active imagination in such an orderly fashion’”. Further, “Johnson proposes: (1) The invitation (invite the unconscious); (2) The dialogue (dialogue and experience); (3) The values (add the ethical element); and (4) The rituals (make it concrete with physical ritual). Each author both reflects and extends Jung’s two-part outline. Looking at them together reminds me that there are many ways to approach active imagination. Perhaps in the deepest sense, each of us has to find our own way.”

“As the inner experience is given tangible form, it may help to be aware of two tendencies that arise: the aesthetic way of formulation and the scientific way of understanding. Each tendency seems to be the regulating principle of the other. For active imagination, a balance of both is needed.”

Notes:

While the practice's practical framework is rather straight-forward, its embodied and theoretical applications and implications are rather complex. By transforming a reference from the mythology into a visualized journey, one can mediate on which qualities of that reference resonate strongly on a subjective level and encourage the reference to sediment through embodied experience. Essentially, one beckons their subconscious to take form through visualization, and then observes the material which emerged with their consciousness. The practitioner is hence active in the sense of actively maintaining and stimulating the visualized journey. And perhaps most crucially, in attending to the thoughts and experiences which the journey evokes, even to the extent of intervening and manipulating the process. If, perhaps, there manifests a giant woman with impressive bosom (Jung's example, not mine), the practitioner may ask: Why am I seeing this? How does this make me feel? And then decide to spend longer with the image, alter it, or move on to another. The practitioner has agency. Then, by externalizing the material of the visualized journey, they can doubly observe their relation to it, and further reflect and elaborate on the qualities of the reference which stimulate them.

This process can be supported by additional practice which encourage the development of performance technique, such as visualization practices and practices which trace the relations between visualization and movement.

For further information:

Jung, C. G., & Chodorow, J. (1997, July 7). Jung on Active Imagination (10th ed.). Princeton University Press.

Split

A practice led by Susanna Ylikoski, foregrounding speech and movement as aspects of embodiment, and their interplay through a "split" relation.

Solo: Internal Split of Speech and Movement.

(One practitioner and one witness.)

The practitioner finds a comfortable position in the space.

They begin a journey, anchored in one of the references from the Azathoth mythology.

Embodying the journey, they express it through either speech or movement, externalizing the narratives and images from the reference, linearly or otherwise.

The witness claps, prompting the practitioner to switch modality of embodiment and

expression, from speech to movement and vice-versa. For several minutes, continue playing with shifting from movement to speech to movement, relishing in the moments of transition and the many ways in which the same material can be experienced and expressed.

The witness signals, inviting the practitioner to switch freely between the two modes, and even find simultaneity of speech and movement.

Duet: Internal and External Split of Speech and Movement.

(Two practitioners and one witness.)

Two practitioners find a comfortable position in the space.

They begin a journey, anchored in one of the references from the Azathoth mythology.

Embodying the journey, they express it through either speech or movement, externalizing the narratives and images from the reference, linearly or otherwise. When one practitioner speaks, the other must move, and vice-versa.

The witness claps, prompting the practitioners to switch modality of embodiment and expression, from speech to movement and vice-versa. For several minutes, continue playing with shifting from movement to speech to movement, relishing in the moments of transition and the ways in which the two narratives weave-through and inform one another.

The witness signals, inviting the practitioner to freely negotiate the switch between the two modes, and even find simultaneity of speech and movement.

Notes:

This practice is predicated on the split model. Various forms of practice function by “splitting” embodiment into two aspects and exploring their interrelations. We can distinguish between three split-narratives. The first, one-and-environment, wherein the practitioner projects onto their surroundings and plays with their relation to that split-object. Within the Azathoth process, we utilized this split-narrative when thinking about Azathoth as an all-encompassing entity, an aura filling up the practice space. The second, one-and-other, wherein the practitioner projects onto another practitioner. Often, each of the practitioners will initially take exclusive stewardship of one aspect of embodiment, swap stewardship, and gradually finding inclusive stewardship of both aspects – as seen in “Duet” above. The third, one-and-self, wherein the practitioner creates an internal split, projecting two aspects of embodiment onto one another. As seen in “Solo”, this can be a potent way to digest one option at a time, and then explore the complexity of their combinations, engendering sedimentation.

Experiment Configurations

A significant endeavor of the methodology was improvisation sessions as experiments, set to explore the interplay of various practices, performance technique, aesthetics, and theory.

DCTV and Open-Azathoth

Dynamic Configuration and Transversal Video is a practice-based research methodology devised by Ben Spatz. Throughout the process, we can distinguish between several different implementations:

Directorship.

Throughout the first beat of the first phase, we conducted several improvisation sessions. For each session, one practitioner chooses themselves to embody the role of director. Directorship invites a practitioner to elaborate their individual experimentation through the group, utilizing tools ranging from speaking prompts to playing music to simply watching. Working through DCTV provided an opportunity to play with the mythology in different contexts, transmuting the mythology into sensory information and actionable terms, emanating from an individual inner-realities in harmony with a collective understanding of Azathoth.

Some notable attempts directed the practitioners to experiencing a fragment from the director's Active Imagination journey, translating the pre-expressive material into sensory experiences and actionable terms. Others invited the practitioners to unfold their own journeys, recontextualizing and reordering the events, or cycling through the events at various speeds and directions; sifting through the material so to find "images" with the strongest, personal resonance.

Utilizing Dynamic Configuration notation, we can mark these sessions as: [A B C] < D. That is, three participants act as practitioners within the practice space, while the fourth practitioner acts as a director. All practitioners take stewardship of certain material – here, their individual Active Imagination journey – exploring the interrelations of that material.

While in the beginning of the first beat we worked rigorously with one reference from the mythology at a time, we gradually allowed the mythology to manifest with haze. This in turn informs a slightly different configuration: [A B C] < D. Here, stewardship, marked by the underline, is softer and less pronounced. The Active Imagination journey is a catalyst for the improvisation session, which can be utilized as an anchor, foregone, and beyond.

Moving and Witnessing.

Moving onto the second beat of the first phase, we place greater emphasis on a division between witnessing and moving. Each session involving two or three practitioners moving, playing freely with the evolving aesthetic and practices of Azathoth, with the rest witnessing. Pausing to discuss between sessions allowed us to gradually specify the approach, and mark territories of knowledge – tools, images, relations, and so on – to attend to. This approach and its terminology draw on the practice of Authentic Movement.

Utilizing Dynamic Configuration notation, we can mark these sessions as: [A B C] | D. That is, three participants act as practitioners within the practice space, while the fourth practitioner acts as a witness. Variations include duets, [A B] | C D, and solos, [A] | B C D. To notate sessions where one witness would choose music to accompany the practice: [A B] < C | D. (Note that the vertical line would usually indicate the role of videographer, while here it indicates the role of witness.)

Open-Azathoth and Informed Open-Azathoth

Extending from the second to the third beat of the first phase, we adjust the previous variation to place an increasingly rigorous focus on the aesthetics, practices, and concepts of Azathoth. Often, we work so that all movers embody the role of practitioner, and Roi as a musician embodies the role of director within the practice space. This change of configuration and approach to stewardship, which can be notated as: [M O Ra S] < Ro.

“Informed” Open-Azathoth then connotes sessions where specific aspects of the aesthetics, practices, and concepts of Azathoth were foreground by various principles, challenges, and invitations. On the level of impulse manipulation and saturation: Stay with and develop one thing for longer than intuitive, isolating and saturating specific qualities and colors; Prolong the transformation from one material to another. On the level of collective composition: Attend to the composition of the space, aware of the serendipitous encounters, accidents, that may be engaged, fulfilled, embraced; Find opposition relative to the other practitioners. And on the level of shaping the temporality of the piece: Provide a “tutorial” for a spectator, an exclamation of intent which inform their intrigue.

For further information:

<https://punctumbooks.com/titles/making-a-laboratory-dynamic-configurations-with-transversal-video/>

Performative Plasticity

Compounding the embodiment of the Azathoth mythology and the improvisation-based experiment-sessions are various practices focusing on the development of contingent performance technique.

Derailment

An evolving practice led by Máté Asbót, primarily used as a tune-in-warm-up throughout the first phase. It is comprised of several, modular exercises, such as:

Joy and Despair Along Three Spectra.

1. Expansion and contraction of the body. Expand the body so that all limbs are extending outwards, feet into the group and arms skywards. From that position, contract the body, so that the knees, elbows, and wrists collapse, gathering towards the torso as it sinks down – perhaps to the extent of reaching the ground, empty.
2. Expansion and contraction of the face. Expand the face upwards, portraying immense joy, the sides of the mouth reaching towards the ears, eye agape and eyelids towards the forehead. Contract the face downwards, portraying immense despair, the mouth and eyes collapsing into the grown – perhaps to the extent of reaching the ground, wallowing.
3. Expansion and contraction of the breath. Expand the lungs, inhaling deeply, and contract them, exhaling deeply.
4. Play with the combinations of this spectra, experimenting with the ways they inform emotional states. Enter a loop, so that with every inhalation, expand the body and the face; and with every exhalation, contract the body and the face. Play with extremes, as the three spectra evolve together, and with different temporalities of expansion and contraction. While it is perhaps intuitive to expand and contract all three in tandem, by challenging and disorienting these relations, different combinations can inform neuroplasticity.

Joy and Despair in Tandem: Face Transfer.

Two practitioners are standing facing one another, in relative proximity.

As one practitioner begins expanding their face, joy, the other simultaneously begins contracting the face, despair. In-sync, they both reach for an extreme of facial expression, and of joy and despair. Having reached an extreme, they begin exchanging roles. As joy becomes despair, and despair becomes joy, finding a “neutral” moment amidst the process. Continue playing, with every iteration finding greater extremities and nuance of expression. After a certain amount of time (prompted by an additional practitioner), undo the synchronization.

Vectors of Gaze and Travelling.

Direct your gaze towards a point in space. Travel towards it.

Direct your gaze towards a different point. Travel away from it.

Play with directing your gaze towards different points, along the floor, walls, ceiling, and beyond; and with travelling towards and away from these points.

Rapidly change your gaze, so it never settles on one point; rapidly changing the direction of travel relative to the point.

Twists.

Direct your toes to the left.

Knees to the right.

Pelvis to the left.

Shoulders to the right.

Head to the left.

Eyes to the right and up.

Forearms to the left.

Find additional twists along the way.

Reverse.

Vocalization

The exercises below are adapted from the chapter “Actor's Training (1959-1962)” in *Towards a Poor Theatre*, written by Jerzy Grotowski and edited by Eugenio Barba. Throughout the two sequences proposed, feel free to stand, lay down, shift your weight, and move around. Note that as Azathoth doesn't utilize fully formulated words, the sequences explore vocalizing rather than speaking – but can certainly be adapted.

Sequence 1: Total Respiration and Vocal Modulation

First Preparation: Total Respiration.

Empiric observation reveals three types of respiration:

- a) Upper thoracic or pectoral respiration, prevalent in Europe.
- b) Lower or abdominal respiration. The abdomen expands without the chest being used at all.
- c) Total (upper thoracic and abdominal) respiration, the abdominal phase being dominant. This is the most hygienic and functional type and is found in children and animals.

Total respiration is the most effective for the performer. However, every individual's breathing varies according to their physiological make-up, and whether they adopt total respiration should be dependent upon this.

The performer should practice different types of respiration, since various positions and physical actions (acrobatics, for example) demand a form of respiration other than the total one. That is, one must be able to control the functioning of the respiratory organs, and aware of the respiratory process.

There are several methods of verifying whether respiration is total.

- a) Lie on your back. Place one hand on the chest and the other on the abdomen. While breathing in, one should feel the hand on the abdomen being raised first and then the one on the chest, all in one smooth, continuous movement. Care must be taken not to divide total respiration into two separate phases. The expansion of the chest and abdomen should be free of tension and the succession of the two phases should not be noticeable. It can feel like the breath is initiated from the below the stomach, at the anus.
- b) Hatha Yoga: Lie on your back. Block one nostril with a finger and breathe in through the other. When breathing out do the contrary: block the nostril through which you breathed in before and breathe out through the one which was blocked at the beginning. The three phases succeed one another in the following rhythm: Inhale 4 seconds. Hold 12 seconds, Exhale 8 seconds.
- c) Classical Chinese theatre: This method can be done in any position. Place the hands on the two lowest ribs. Start the exhalation from the spot where the hands are placed, therefore pushing them outwards and expanding the abdomen. Continuing through the thorax, produce a sensation that the air column reaches right up to the head- all in one smooth, continuous movement. The abdominal wall is then contracted inwards while the ribs remain expanded (contracted outwards).

During total respiration take care not to store up or compress too much air. These exercises are not intended to teach respiration for respiration's sake but prepares for a respiration that will "carry" the voice.

These exercises can be structured into a continuous maneuver:

Start by laying on your back; observe your neutral breathing pattern today; allow the body to relax. Place one hand on the chest, and the other on the abdomen.

Imagine a wave starting from below the stomach, at the anus, and moving towards the top of your head. The breath ripples through the abdomen and chest in a smooth and continuous motion. Inhale – feel the hand on the abdomen rising first, and then the one on the chest; hold; exhale – feel the hand on the chest settling first, and then the on the abdomen.

Find a new comfortable position, with your spine pointed skywards. Return to a neutral breathing. Place both hands on the lowest ribs.

Initiate the inhalation from the spot where your hands are placed; feeling them expand outwards, along with the lower back and the stomach. As the air column reaches towards the top of the head, the thorax expands, creating space in the chest; and finally flooding the buccal cavity through the larynx. Imagine a broad-belt tightening gradually around your waist, compressing (contracting-in) the abdominal walls. Maintain the expansion (contracting-out) of the lowest ribs; aware of these two opposing directions of movement. Initiate the exhalation from the top of the head; patiently allow the stream of air to deplete. The air column smoothly settles through the chest; and as the space created by the opposing contractions gives, the spot where your hands are placed. Enjoy a moment of emptiness.

Try other positions and, using the anchors already experienced, play with shorter and longer inhalations, pauses, and exhalations; play with different emphasis of tension and release; play with anything else that piqued your interest.

Finish by returning to your neutral breathing, allowing the body time to release any accumulated tension.

Second Preparation: Opening the Larynx

The Larynx (the voice box) is an organ in the top of the neck, above the trachea (windpipes) and the esophagus. The release and opening of the larynx encourage an economic use of the voice. Awareness of the larynx reveals opportunities for exploration and expression of the voice. The exercise below reveals that the alignment of the head in relation to the thorax, particularly of the neck and jaw; and the release of the muscles in those areas; are helpful in opening the larynx. Additionally, it gives us sensorial indicators for the state of the larynx. If when breathing calmly a slight sound can be heard; if when producing sound, the Adam's apple rises in a manner like when swallowing; that might indicate that the larynx is closed. Inversely, the sensation of having plenty of room in the back of the mouth when yawning is like the experience of an open larynx.

Find a comfortable position with your spine pointed skywards. Allow the sternum to drop.

Release your head towards your chest, so that your chin is almost filling the gap between the collarbones (the suprasternal notch); let the upper back and the shoulders carry the weight of the head, without collapsing forwards. Enjoy the elongation of the river between the shoulder-blades, the Symplegades.

Imagine the back-lower part of the skull (the occipital bone), sliding down the back of your neck; roll your head up, maintaining the tether between the chin and the gap; loosen the tether, creating space for the Adam's apple (the laryngeal prominence).

Place a hand on your neck in a comfortable choke, so that your jaw can rest some of its weight. Let the skin and muscles give into your palm. Breathe from your nose. How deep within the neck does the air flow? What happens to the muscles of the neck? Can a slight sound be heard? Breathe from your mouth. Does the jaw move? In which way? Swallow. Does the Adam's

apple move? Remember this sensation. Yawn. The cheeks rise, the mouth expands. Feel the space created in the back of your mouth.

Stand with the upper part of the body, including the head, hanging forward, yet not collapsing. Create a nest for you jaw: palms placed together touching at the base of a soft chin; the thumbs a resting place for the lower jaw; the fingers fanned over the cheeks, lips to ear, bringing awareness. Inhale, opening the whole skull: expand the upper jaw, from the ears and the occiput; the wrinkling of the forehead pulls the eyebrows, giving a sensation that the temples are being stretched as in a yawn. Enjoy the stretch dripping into the sternum.

Let the voice come out. Play with the voice: try different pitches, volumes, fluctuations. Imagine reshaping the muscles in and around the larynx.

Exploration: Vocal Versatility

This exercise sets us on an exploration of the vast versatility of the voice. The exercise's simple structure will serve as the base for experimenting with various tools, techniques, and theory. Our goal is to expand our experience of the voice, and our ability to express ourselves with it.

(1) Lay on your back; take three deep breaths; (2) hum a middle pitch with a long, sustained exhalation; repeat three times; repeat in a lower pitch and in a higher pitch; (3) sound a middle pitch 'ah'; repeat three times; repeat in a lower pitch and in a higher pitch; (4) play with the voice freely, modulating the pitch, quality, and sound.

Let's enrich the 'core exercise' with somatic awareness of the respiration and of the larynx:

(1) Start laying on your back; sense the contact between the ground and your body. Place one palm on the abdomen and the other on the chest. Feel your neutral breathing today. Allow the eyes to relax and close. Allow the body to shift and change positions. Take three deep breaths with 'total respiration', preparing the voice base. Allow the breath to sound and vibrate. Try moaning, giving in to gravity. Allow the space around you, including the earth, to be involved in the respiration- cutaneous respiration; imagine inhaling through your skin, sucking in the air; and exhaling, the air pouring out and into the earth and the sky.

(2) Hum a comfortable middle pitch. Sense the vibrations traveling through your body and into the space, including the earth; exciting the nose, teeth and soft palate; expanding from a relaxed larynx- up to the mouth, top and back of the head, ears and jaw- down to the whole chest, upper back, lowest ribs, abdomen, sacrum and anus. Try placing your palm of the soft flesh under the mandible to check for tension in the larynx, and movement of the Adam's apple.

Inhale, and exhale with a hum. Repeat three times each, in a comfortable middle pitch, a deep lower pitch, and an exciting higher pitch. Play with sustaining the hum, patiently letting all the air empty. Play with different volumes and intensity of airflow.

(3) Allow the mouth to open, the jaw to relax. Release an 'a' sound (open central unrounded vowel, ä); sense the difference in resonance, as it travels through your body and into the earth and the sky. Try humming and spontaneously opening the mouth with a 'ma', then letting the

'm' dissipate. Inhale, and exhale with an 'a'. Repeat three times each, in a comfortable middle pitch, a deep lower pitch, and an exciting higher pitch.

(4) Freely explore the voice. Play with modulating the sound by shaping your mouth and larynx: open, mid, closed; front, central, back; stressed, tensed, retracted, airy, released-forming new vowels and discovering new voices. Play with varying pitches and respiration patterns, and the transitions between them. Invite the voice to activate the body, the resonance breathing life into movement – bringing sensation, awareness, and availability. Invite the contact between the voice and the body- interacting and playing with, and reacting to, one another. Gradually, come to sitting, then standing.

Continue your exploration freely. Then, finish with a hearty hum, cleansing any tension or stress that may have accumulated.

Sequence 2: Resonators into Movement

First Preparation: Waking-Up the Face

Massage the face, thoroughly. Bringing heat and awareness into, between, and around the skull. To the temples, behind the ears, besides the nose. This can be done through a massage-like movement, through gentle-tapping, and beyond.

Bring your attention to the mouth. Pass the tongue between the teeth and lips and behind the teeth- creating a figure eight. Slowly widen the lips into a smile, then push them out into a pout. Do not tighten the lips but allow the lips to move easily. Chew gum, or different foods. Extend the tongue outwards, creating a stretch at the base of the tongue. Slowly expand, then contract the nostrils.

Blow bubbles. Modulate the pitch, “sirening”, while rolling the spine up and down. Play with combinations: siren-up as you roll-down, siren-down as your roll-up, and so on.

Second Preparation: Resonators

Throughout this exercise, gradually open the mouth from humming to vocalizing. It is helpful to shift weight and play with different alignments of the body and their relation to the voice.

Humming-softly, bring vibration into your chest. Imagine the vibration oscillating up and down, gradually distinguishing between the upper and lower chest resonators. Attend to the relation between the pitch and register, the intensity of the air which generates the hum. Throughout this exercise, placing your palm on the body can help direct the resonance and amplify the sensation.

Expand the breadth of the oscillation up, bringing vibration towards the throat and jaw. Here, we encounter the laryngeal resonator, producing sounds which recall the roaring of wild animals, old timey Jazz, and Batman – it is helpful to enunciate a Greek Xi, sensing a vibration

in the larynx. And, the maxillary resonator, placed at the back of the jaw, coming into use in so-called "intimate" acting – it is helpful to produce a moaning sound.

Expand the breadth of the oscillation back and down, bringing vibration towards the back. The back resonator can be divided into three: i) Between the shoulder blades. Send the voice up and back. ii) The small of the back. Send the voice back. iii) The lumbar region. Send the voice back and down. These three can be sensed with the help of a partner, placing their hand at the relevant spot. They can also be sensed individually by lying on the floor and feeling the vibrations through the ground. It is particularly helpful to imagine the vectors of the voice and follow their trajectory when finding the back resonators (walking backwards).

Expand the breadth further up, towards the top of the head through the face. Here we encounter several resonators as we travel up. The mouth resonator, producing a buzzing sound, feeling the vibrations in the teeth and cheeks. The nasal resonator, enunciating the consonant "n", sending the voice forwards from between the eyes. The head resonator, functioning through the pressure of airflow into the front part of the head, enunciating a consonant "m", sending the voice towards the ceiling and slightly back. And finally, the occipital resonator, producing a high-pitched mewling sound, sending the voice up and further back.

Expand the breadth further down, towards the belly and the ground. Here we encounter the belly resonator, which can prove tricky for some practitioners to locate. It is helpful to concentrate air in the stomach and send it out with a deep humming voice by squeezing the abdominal muscles, sending the voice downwards through the sex.

Exploration: Total Resonance and Vocal Imagination

Gradually bring the sound into movement, exploring the relation between vocalizing and moving along various spectra and variables.

Having had awakened the resonance of the body through ongoing oscillation, explore the combinations of different resonators. The simultaneous use of the occipital and laryngeal resonators, for example, produces the vocal effects achieved by Yma Sumac in her renowned Peruvian songs. When combining two resonators, one can make one of them function as a "solo" and the other as the "accompaniment". For instance, the maxillary resonator may give the "solo" while a uniform "accompaniment" is provided by the chest resonator.

Sense the body as a total resonator. This can be thought of as using simultaneously all resonators, specifically both head and chest. It is helpful to bring attention to the resonator that is less experienced and intuitive.

Play with forming the mouth in different ways, exploring different ranges and unusual sounds. Try imitating natural sounds and mechanical noises: the dripping of water, the twittering of birds, the humming of a motor, etc. Of cartoon characters, which often find very specific sound profiles to portray sometimes bizarre and completely inhuman characters in a convincing and

immersing way. Examples: Pikachu from Pokemon, Lemongrab and LSP from Adventure Time, etc.

Play with repeating a word while activating different resonators and combinations thereof. Particularly potent options are “meowing” and repeating the words “king” or “goo”.

Imagine the voice as an entity sent into the space. The voice can be thought of as radial, sending the voice into the space in all directions, expanding and echoing the resonance near and far, filling up the space. Internal, keeping the resonance close. And vectoral, send with a clear directionality, as if drawing a line in space with various length and heft, precision aim and spread.

Carrying on with vocal imagination, use the voice to create around oneself a circle of "hard" or "soft" air; with the voice build a bell which becomes successively larger and smaller; send a sound through a wide tunnel, then a narrow tunnel, etc. Use your voice to use your voice to make a hole in the wall, to overturn a chair, to put out a candle, to make a picture fall from the wall, to caress, to push, to wrap up an object, to sweep the floor; use the voice as if it were an axe, a hand, a hammer, a pair of scissors, etc.

Continue your exploration freely. Then, finish with a hearty hum, cleansing any tension or stress that may have accumulated.

Resonators Cheat Sheet

The task of the physiological resonators is to amplify the carrying power of the sound emitted. Their function is to compress the column of air into the part of the body selected as an amplifier for the voice. There is an almost infinite number of resonators, depending on the control the performer has over their own physical instrument. We shall limit ourselves here to mentioning just a few:

- a. **The upper or head resonator.** Technically, it functions through the pressure of the flow of air into the front part of the head. Functions when speaking in a high register. Enunciate the consonant "m". Place a hand on the upper part of the forehead and feeling a definite vibration.
Send the voice towards the ceiling, up and slightly back.
- b. **The nasal resonator.** It can be exploited to characterize certain parts or even a whole role. Prevalent in French. Enunciate the consonant "n".
Send the voice forwards from between the eyes.
- c. **The mouth resonator.** The space of the mouth is unconsciously used as a resonator and is an important part of the voice base.
Produce a buzzing sound, feeling the vibrations in the teeth and cheeks.
- d. **The occipital resonator.** This resonator is commonly used in classical Chinese theatre. Functions when speaking in very high registers.

Produce a high-pitched mewling sound.

Send the voice up and back.

- e. **The maxillary resonator.** Placed at the back of the jaw. Comes into use in so-called "intimate" acting.

Produce a moaning sound.

- f. **The laryngeal resonator.** Commonly used in oriental and African theatre. The sound produced recalls the roaring of wild animals. It is also characteristic of some old timey American Jaz (e. g. Armstrong).

Enunciate a Greek Xi, sensing a vibration in the larynx.

- g. **The chest resonator.** Functions when one speaks in a low register.

Produce a lower register. Place a hand on the chest which should vibrate.

Send the voice forwards from the chest or sternum.

- h. **The belly resonator.** Commonly used in the practice of martial arts and yoga.

Concentrate air in the stomach and send it out with a deep humming voice by squeezing the abdominal muscles.

Send the voice downwards through the sex.

- i. **The back resonators.** There are three main back resonators:

- i) Between the shoulder blades. Send the voice up and back. Can be sensed
- ii) The small of the back. Send the voice back.
- iii) The lumbar region. Send the voice back and down.

These three can be sensed with the help of a partner, placing their hand at the relevant spot. They can also be sensed individually by lying on the floor and feeling the vibrations through the ground. It is particularly helpful to imagine the vectors of the voice and follow their trajectory when finding the back resonators (walking backwards).

Breathing Emotions

These exercises focus on exploration of breath, and on breathing patterns and imprints. A breathing pattern is comprised of the location and emphasis of the breath along the air pathways, muscular tension in the entire body, and intensity and duration of both inhalation and exhalation.

Core Exercise

Phase 1: Preparations and Awareness

1. We are standing in a darkened room. The participants are free to stand, sit, lay down, and change their physical form freely. It is important for all participants to care for their own wellbeing during this exercise, as it invites hyper-ventilation.
2. We pay attention to our neutral breathing pattern.

3. We focus on the passing of the air. We also sense the difference of breathing through the nose and of breathing through the mouth.
4. We take a few total breaths, waking up our breath.
5. We modify our neutral breath:
 - a. Intensity. Examples: Long, controlled inhalations and quick and strong exhalations. Quick and inhalations and long exhalations.
 - b. Muscular awareness and breathing pathway. Examples: Long inhalations focused in the stomach and strong exhalation made by pressing the chest downwards. Quick inhalations focused on the sternum in through the nose, and slow exhalation through the mouth initiated by releasing muscular tension.
6. We return to our neutral breathing pattern and notice if it has changed in any way.

Phase 2- Emotions

7. We start a process of finding the breathing patterns for different common emotions. The breath is a powerful force which can take the body through very intense experiences. Examples of emotions: anger, fear, joy, sadness, disgust, love, anxiety/anticipation. We tailor the number of emotions we cycle through, their order, their duration, and their intensity to the needs of the group.

The cycles go as thus:

- a. We concentrate on the emotion and the images it suggests. Note that each emotion can have very varied and personal interpretations.
- b. We find a breathing pattern for said emotion at Intensity 1.
- c. We gradually climb the scale from Intensity 1 to Intensity 10.
- d. We either drop back down to a neutral breathing pattern, or gradually recline.

Note: while playing with fear, it is helpful to imagine the source of fear to move around the space. Far from the participant, right in front, below, above, behind, moving.

8. We find a breathing pattern for different temperatures. This is an effective way to calm the body down from some of the more intense emotions, as well as give it time to reflect on them. For heat, we climb the scale from Intensity 0 (Neutral) to Intensity 10. Then we recline and dive into cold, going to Intensity -10. It is helpful to associate different temperature intensities with real world weather or locations.

Phase 3 - Exploration

9. We lay on our backs, all practitioners forming a circle with their heads in the centre. We come close to one another, and depending on the familiarity of the group, even have our heads on each-other's stomachs.
10. One participant suggests a breathing pattern, either intuitive or tied to a certain image. The group listens and then lets that pattern develop in their own bodies. It is helpful to start from a "brutal", technical echoing of the proposed breathing pattern. And onwards, relishing in the affect of that breathing pattern as both external and internal, the associations and sensations it brings

11. We go into an open exploration, where the suggestions come and go freely and are organically developed in communion. Take time to go into this trip, not planning or judging where it goes.
12. We finish by humming, which serves well to neutralize the body.
13. We return to our neutral breathing pattern and notice if it has changed in any way.

We gradually leave the exercise.

On further iterations of this practice, repeating certain emotions, invite the participants to find new interpretations and associations for the different emotions and temperature. Notice the various directionalities of emotions: radial, internal, vectoral, and beyond. Discuss these options for an emotion such as anger and joy, laying the groundwork for finding additional, nuanced interpretations of emotions as a breathing-pattern.

Additional Exercises

These additional exercises use the breathing techniques as a core for developing the performer's ability to readily access breathing imprints of emotions, to recall them with great precision, to switch between them at will, and to elaborate on them through repetition.

Emotion Circle

We stand in a circle, keeping the body neutral and available. We choose an emotion and circulate it through the group. As that emotion passes from participants to participant, its intensity is very gradually increased. This is a delicate process. Eventually, we reach intensities that were difficult to attain individually. Additionally, we find additional interpretations for the emotion, inspired by the group and by the passing of interpretation around the circle.

Emotion Hopping

We decide on a succession of 3-4 emotions. We repeatedly cycle through these emotions. From repetition to repetition, the duration for which we stay with an emotion and the duration of the breaks between two consecutive emotions is decreased. Example: 2.5 minutes with 10 second breaks, 1 minute with 10 second breaks, 30 seconds with 10 second breaks, 10 seconds with 10 second breaks, 10 seconds with 5 seconds breaks, 10 seconds with 1 second break.

Beware that matters can get hectic and intense towards the final cycles; therefore, it is important to give the participants a moment of rest and recovery afterwards.

Emotion Score

We decide on a succession of 3-4 emotions, and gradually transition between them during a set amount of time. Example: anger to joy to fear, for a duration of 10 minutes. We can transfer between the emotions in our own time, cycling through them once. In the moments of transfer, we can find additional interpretations to the emotions, and hybrid emotions.

This exercise can be used with those more experienced with the breathing patterns and imprints.

Skeletal Metamorphosis

The exercises below are adapted from the chapter "Actor's Training (1959-1962)" in *Towards a Poor Theatre*, written by Jerzy Grotowski and edited by Eugenio Barba. A metamorphosis integrates, through somatic awareness, breathing, gait, gaze, and vocal "imprints", encouraging experimentations with "total imprints". A core concept of these exercises is the "seed". The seed is the part of the body from which the metamorphosis initiates. The most intuitive ones are the stomach and the sternum. When revisiting a physical imprint, it is important to challenge the metamorphosis process by suggesting different points of origin: forehead, face, palms, spine, sex, feet, ground, skin, and even another body.

Fauna Catalyst

The Cat

1. Ask the participants to lay on the floor, face down with their eyes closed.
2. Start with a guided meditation. Invite the participants to sense the natural tensions in their bodies, the contact between their bodies and the floor, the alignment of their spine, the temperature or smell of the room. Ask them to look in an imaginary mirror and see themselves in detail. Leave the mirror and return to the body.
3. Ask them to visualize a cat. Visualize the cat, deciding on many details: color of fur, color of eyes, fur density, age, breed, temperament. Ask them to look in an imaginary mirror and see themselves as their specific cat.
4. Ask them to sense their own body- the body of that specific cat. Scan the spine, the bone structure, the muscle structure, the sensation of their skin, the smells, the tension.
5. When you say 'metamorphosis', they will awaken as that cat, taking on its body. "Metamorphosis".
6. Give them plenty of time during these next few steps. Once they have awakened, invite them to wander around the space and make sounds. Invite them to notice one another, and perhaps interact with the other cats.
7. Start giving them external stimuli. First, suggest they see a rat. Tell them to prepare for your cue to pounce. Give them the cue. If they caught the rat, they could enjoy it. Otherwise, better luck next time.
8. Warn them of an incoming danger, a predator perhaps. Wait a moment and then encourage them by saying it left.
9. Play with additional stimuli, such as a change of weather.
10. Finally, the cat becomes tired and must find a comfortable spot to fall asleep.

11. Ask them to leave the body of this cat and return to their own. In their free time, they should find their way to standing.

You can repeat this exercise, letting each group member choose another animal they would like to experiment with. They should take time to find videos and pictures of their chosen animal.

Animal-Human Hybrids

One option is to start from an animal's physical imprint, and gradually metamorphose back into a human. Hold the metamorphosis at different moments in the transition and explore the hybrid state.

Another is suggested by Grotowski. This is a metamorphosis with an animal image. It doesn't seek to create a complete metamorphosis to an animal state, imitating it. Rather, it uses animal imagery to attack one's subconscious, creating an animal figure whose character expresses an aspect of the human condition. One must start from an association. Which animal does one associate with pity, cunning, wisdom? The association must not be banal, stereotyped - the lion representative of strength, the wolf of cunning, etc. It is also important to determine the animal's center of vitality (the muzzle for the dog, the spinal cord for the cat, the belly for the cow, etc.).

Flora Catalyst

1. Blossoming and withering. In the first phase, plant the seed in the feet. As in a plant, the sap rises, spreading upwards through the entire body. The sap reaches the arms which burst into blossom as indeed does the whole body. In the second phase, the limbs-branches wither and die one by one.
2. The tree. By means of association with people, situations, memories, metamorphose yourself into a tree. The muscles react, expressing the personal association. Concentrate these associations on one part of the body, where you plant the seed. As the reactions increase in intensity, the rest of the body is included. The vitality of this tree, its tensions, relaxations, micro-movements are nourished by the association.
3. The flower. The feet are the roots, the body is the stem, and the hands represent the corolla. The whole-body lives, trembles, vibrates with the imperious process of bursting into flower, guided by one's associations. Give "the flower" a logical signification, one which is at the same time sad, tragic, and dangerous. "The flower" is separated from the process which created it. Share your flowers with one another, and then lets them wilt.

Character Metamorphosis

The character is an accumulation of different imprints, additional physical and performative attributes, as well as personal, theoretical attributes, symbols, references, etc. A character is often defined in relation to a work-in-progress or another improvisation exercise or score

(*task*). This exercise invites the integration of the different imprints in the search of a highly specific full physical imprint.

A description of this process:

1. Work with the relevant *task*, repeating it for an extended period. Eventually, it becomes clear that the performers begin to develop habits. The habits are a vital anchor in creating a character and a reliable performative consistency.
2. Discuss these habits with the participants. Explain that they indicate characters we naturally gravitate towards. Ask them to describe in writing as many different aspects of these characters. It is helpful to use automatic writing for this process.
3. Structure an improvisation (or use the *task* you are working with) and let them test out the characters they have created. Encourage them go back to their notes and freely change or add content. Doing this several times lets them build a confidence in the decisions they have made.
4. Ask them to make decisions about the way they engage the body. Work through muscular tension in places that might have escaped their attention, the face, the neck, the feet. Work through the breath, the gait, the gaze, and the resonance imprints.
5. Dedicate time to play with these characters outside the context of the relevant *task*. Play with different stimuli such as scenarios, music, atmosphere, duration, etc. Let the participants discover new possibilities within their characters.

To set up this process, after attempting several metamorphosis exercises:

Ask the participants to lay on their backs, body spread. Invite the metamorphosis from the right palm, gradually travelling through the arm and stopping at the shoulder or torso. Do the same with the left palm, and the feet. Now activate more than one at a time. Notice the difference between homolateral and contralateral activations. With the four limbs active, let them meet through the spine and the torso, effecting the head as well.

Saturation of Impulses

Throughout the process of Azathoth – and The New Fire Ceremony, occurring alongside – we experimented with the manipulation of impulses. “Impulse” here connotes the process by which internal and external reality correspond: External information resonates through embodiment and engaging the practitioner’s embodied knowledge. As a reaction and response, a potential for enaction is ignited. This potential collapses into a single “impulse-concept”, which once again interacts with embodied knowledge on its way to externalization. Finally, expressed as an “impulse-action”, bestowing the practitioner with agency in shaping their reality. And the cycle continues. The qualities and intensities of the process inform and are informed by a flow-state, which can in turn allow us to observe and experiment with that very process.

The exercises below foreground the transformation of an “impulse-concept” into action. Shaping that process through performance technique so that the action is dilated, saturated so to convey the practitioner’s intention towards an external eye.

Eye Game

This exercise uses the Tarot decks’ Major Arcana as they are powerful symbols that suggest strong associations.

Core Exercise

The base exercise is done in pairs.

- A- The performer
- B- The guesser

Two cards from the Major Arcana are revealed. It is A’s goal to communicate one of the two cards successfully to B. We are looking for an effective and efficient portrayal, one that is specific and precise without unnecessary physical force or needless illustration.

For the base exercise, there are three main variations:

1. A starts with their eyes closed, transforming their gaze as they open their eyes.
2. B starts with their eyes closed. A prepares their gaze and then invites B to open their eyes.
3. A and B both have their eyes open. This transformation is more difficult, and far more interesting.

By concentrating on the gaze and specifying it, we can convey charged and precise intentions. The practitioner is invited to play with different ways of effectively portraying their intention through both visceral and cognitive mechanisms. On the visceral level, they can for example play with different modes of focus: radial, vectoral, internal, and so on. On the cognitive level, charging the mind with strong imagery is a helpful tool for specifying many of the variables

organically. Thus, informing the use of hands, full facemask, stance, and shape of body for this base exercise.

To increase the challenge, we can reveal a third and a fourth card. Additionally, we can play with the distance between the two participants.

Additional Exercises

Larger Audience

Practice conveying a card to a wider audience, either by having the participants stand in a circle, or as a group frontal to A. Emanating the card from near and far.

Abstraction Scale

Have A stand a fair distance away from the group. Have them choose a card, reveal it, and portray the card with their whole body (as though standing on a giant stage in front of a huge audience). Invite them to work via-negativa; gradually decreasing the amount of physical engagement and specifying what remains. Pinpoint the moment when you can no longer tell which card they are portraying. Maybe there will be a moment when your impression of their intention has shifted. Encourage them to find the moment of perfect abstraction, when the portrayal is the most specific and precise for a set distance.

Gait Compound

We can integrate the gaze with the gait. Notice how the gaze is affected by the gait, and how the gait is affected by the Tarot imagery. Notice how the point of perfect abstraction shifts due to the physical force of walking, and the changes in distances. Play with a sort of 'runway' situation, portraying the cards as well as other characters.

Clarity and Cycles

The two attempts below deal with actively saturating an action with nuance and information, striving for it to find "clarity", internal and external. We are thinking on a certain "sweet spot", where visceral and cognitive information interact to inform a powerful expression. For example, a common Pantomime exercise in which the practitioner acts out swinging a stick. By specifying the qualities of the stick – its weight, material, shape, and so on – the action itself is charged with intention. Similarly, a neutral mask exercise: "The mask runs onto the dock, sees a person on a boat, and waves to them". Again, the practitioner can specify various aspects of that narrative, from their distance to the boat to the person standing on it. The question becomes to what extent is further specification effective. Perhaps specifying the weather is, perhaps imagining seagulls flying above is, but perhaps knowing the type of wood which constructs the docks isn't – at least to most practitioners.

First Attempt: Ignitions and Repetitions

Preparation: Walking and Soft-Focus.

Walk freely through the space.

Scan your body. Notice the contact between your feet and the ground, tensions through the body, shifting of weight, twists of the spine, tempo of strides – your gait. Allow yourself to play with these aspects of the physical body, still walking.

Imagine the pathway or vectors of your body creates in space. Imagine you are being observed from underneath through a glass floor. Imagine you are being observed from up above by a bird. Imagine you are leaving paint imprints on the ground.

Choose one other participant. Challenge yourself to always know where they are in space. Notice what they are wearing today. Notice their pathways and perhaps even the sensory and expressed information of their gait. Got one participant? Good, add another. Continue doing so until you've challenged yourself to maintain awareness to multiple practitioners, keeping in clarity to your own body.

Notice the spaces and vectors created between the other participants. Imagine those are doors that you can pass through. Alternatively, you can decide to refuse passing through certain doors. Allow this game to affect your Soma.

Notice the shifts created as a group. Allow those shifts to excite you.

Exploration: Saturations

Continue walking.

Allow yourself to blurt out any random word, the first that pops into your mind. Repeat this several times until it feels intuitive. It can be helpful for one participant to propose a word, and for the others to respond with an association.

Allow your body a spontaneous tick, originating from somewhere in the body. Stay with it. As you sustain this impulse, its intentions initially unknown, map its qualities. It can be helpful to repeat the initial ignition and imagine that it radiates: from the initial body part until the whole body vibrates with a certain quality.

Now that the impulse radiates through the entire body, develop it. Perhaps it evokes a certain feeling, an identity, a state. Perhaps it informs a certain game, an interplay of movement. Pursue these threads until they crystalize, gain clarity.

Leave the impulse and continue walking. Allow another to take hold. Repeat several times. Explore the degrees of saturation relative to each impulse. When does it feel like you yourself "know what you're doing"?

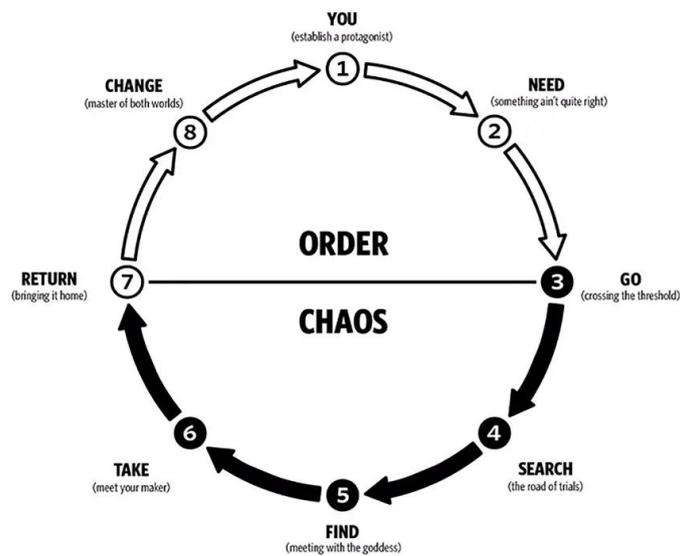
Play with different durations, staying with an impulse anywhere from but a brief moment to several minutes, and the relation of the duration to saturation. Challenge your ability to saturate impulses and action of different qualities and intensities.

Invite a part of the group to watch the others working. Observing: When does it feel like another practitioner knows that they're doing? How does their clarity of intention and sensory information reflect on my experience as a spectator?

Second Attempt: Narrative Cycles

This attempt suggests saturating an impulse-action using Dan Harmon's "Story Circle", adapted from Joseph Campbell's "Hero's Journey". Essentially, proposing pathways for an impulse-action to evolve. The initial impulse-concept, developed into a relatively stable identity through "First Attempt: Ignitions and Repetitions" serves as a provisional "YOU". The practitioner then develops the action by asking: "What does this identity need? What could and would it desire". And so on, working through the circle until a new "YOU" is established. This experiment is predicated on the notion that the evolution of the impulse-process can be softly shaped by rigorously manipulating it, through the story circle for example. Once the rigorous manipulation has sedimented, etched pathways through embodied technique, future impulse-process would theoretically travel along similar pathways, softly.

This attempt was short lived, but nonetheless represents an intriguing field of research and a potential approach.



Acceleration and Deceleration of Impulses

Throughout the process of Azathoth – and The New Fire Ceremony, occurring alongside – we experimented with the manipulation of impulses. “Impulse” here connotes the process by which internal and external reality correspond: External information resonates through embodiment and engaging the practitioner’s embodied knowledge. As a reaction and response, a potential for enaction is ignited. This potential collapses into a single “impulse-concept”, which once again interacts with embodied knowledge on its way to externalization. Finally, expressed as an “impulse-action”, bestowing the practitioner with agency in shaping their reality. And the cycle continues. The qualities and intensities of the process inform and are informed by a flow-state, which can in turn allow us to observe and experiment with that very process.

The exercises below foreground the manifestation of different flow-states relative to the impulse-process, and their effect on the qualities of both impulse-concepts and impulse-actions.

Image-Mania

A practice which encourages awareness and availability to the impulse process, in the emergence of concepts and in their transformation to action. It is informed by the concept of monkey-mind, a Buddhist term evoking a sense of restlessness and capriciousness, whimsical and uncontrollable. Through this modality, the many serendipitous lucidities of the void, of chaos, appear malleable.

Softly awaken the body through movement, tuning-in and warming-up. Invite impulses to emerge, ideas to ignite. As they do, trace their appearance and disappearance. Gain agency in manifesting impulses and enacting them with relative fluidity.

Begin accelerating the emergence and enaction of impulses. Seeking a constant cycle of appearance and disappearance, an ongoing chain of impulses, one idea transitions and transforming fluidly into the next. Trace these transformations, conceptualizing the impulses as both individual units and fragments of an endless sequence.

It is time for an acceleration marathon. For two-minutes, radically accelerate the emergence and transformation of impulses, one by one and all together. Challenge yourself, both in the cognitive tracing of the impulses and in the availability of movement. Take a break to wind down. Now again, for seven-minutes.

Continue experimenting, noticing how the marathon impacted your awareness and availability to the impulse process.

Begin decelerating, suspending each idea and each action, making them dense. Challenge yourself to work with one impulse for longer and longer, squeezing out nuance and potential.

Explore the deceleration and acceleration of impulses freely. Find an ending.

Windows and Flowers

This practice foregrounds and manipulates the emergence of impulse-concepts and their transformation into action. It is adapted by a practice devised by Meg Stuart.

1. Find a comfortable position laying down. Attend to your body's desire for movement. Perhaps slight shifts of weight, realignments, twitches of muscles. Allow these micro movements. Gradually, invite them to grow in scale and physical engagement.
2. Pause, staying in whichever position your body has arrived. Listen to your body in this position: "the longer you stay, the more information you get". Condense the potential "energy" at and of the moment: the body full of heat, never-ending potential for action, but suspends its expression. Allow the body to shift into a new position, knowing that "you're always making the choice". Continue shifting from one position to another, continuously, dedicating time to listen to each position.
3. Direct your attention to the in-betweens, between position-to-position; to the body's enigmatic articulations when transitioning from one position to the next.
4. Direct your attention to the "windows" which present themselves in stillness, the potential for movement to appear, the threads leading into another position. "Listen to the movement, and it speaks to you": one aspect of you is still, the other listening, another moving. Listen to them, and play with following them, suspending them, and deferring them. Allow this play to expand the rate in which you shift positions, your range of motion, and its articulation.
5. Play with two modes of opening windows. You can allow a window to open by itself, allowing the movement to begin. And you can enact the opening of a window to open yourself, initiating the movement, choosing to move. Try, suspending the position, to clearly imagine the upcoming movement: Where will it begin, where and how will it go, and where will it end. If you suspend for long enough, these answers will gradually change. Now, play with both passively and actively engaging that imagined movement. How does the real experience differ from the imagined one? Furthermore, the windows can open we different intensities, burst ajar and creak open with the wind.
6. Unfold your awareness and availability to another body in the space, another participant. How do your suspensions and in-betweens, and qualities of listening to and opening windows, relate? Extending some else in-betweens, meeting in an unstable, unresolved place. It's-not-happening and it's-happening-it's-happening-it's-happening.
7. Another way to think of these windows is as flowers: seeding, blossoming, wilting (drawing on the Japanese concept of Jo-Ha-Kyū and Hana). The suspension is the flower seeding; the movement and transition from one position to the next is its blossoming; the end of movement as it settles into a new position is its wilting. Crucially, this process is recursive: a flower wilts so to grow again. How does this new conceptualization effect your experience of the action and the action itself?

8. Play with deferring and provoking the wilting of a flower. What is the natural momentum of each flower, as it organically comes to an end? What is the relation between that momentum and the antecedental suspension? Gradually find yourself in an ongoing chain of seeding, blossoming, wilting, and so on, the suspensions brief or diminished – yet still pronounced, at least for you yourself.
9. If you'd like to go further, you can play with the concept of kishōtenketsu, a Japanese narrative style: establish, develop, twist, end. Each "wave", each blossoming of a flower and opening of a window can become one such narrative. The initial impulse is given time to establish, is organically developed with time, is invited to twist and change in some way, and finds its ending, only to begin and establish anew.
10. Unfold your awareness and availability to more bodies and entities in the space, along with the space itself. How does the space blossom and wilt together and apart?
11. Experiment and explore freely for a respectable amount of time, ten-to-fifteen-minutes at the least. Allow the concepts played with thus far to resonate, perhaps finding certain ones more stimulating than others; perhaps finding new combinations and games to be played with them.
12. Find an ending.

This version details a full sequence, which can, and often should, be adapted and shortened.

Compositions

These practices begin thinking on improvising and working as a group, collectively composing the practice/performance of Azathoth. We focus on mis/alignment, foregrounding different modalities of harmony and discord within the practice. This process of experimentation was further significantly expanded throughout the second phase of the process.

Slow Motion Rave (Disentangled)

Adapted from a practice devised by Peter Pleyer: <http://www.grandreunion.net/slow-motion-rave/>. Described as:

Put on one of the music tracks and start anywhere, or
It could be nice to start low, lying on the floor, breathing.

Begin with continuous slow motion,
when you started you do not stop.

Moving in and out of the floor.

Use weight shifts
which allow for travel through space – slowly.

Use the spiral, the twist,
in your spine, in your whole body, often – slowly.

Look at each other – see each other –
seeing is being seen.

Once in a while repeat for yourself the question
“How slow is slow?”

Within the Azathoth process, we began with the proposition above, establishing a collective temporality. Then, gradually, we disentangled that temporality, finding gradients of slowness relative to the other practitioners.

Color Gradients

This practice invites thinking on action and composition through the abstract concept of color. Colors are a potent way of describing qualities, as they inform a somewhat coherent system of interrelations that is relatively reliable amongst practitioners with different backgrounds.

Wake up the body, tuning-in and warming-up, generating action.

Play with conceptualizing your action – its qualities and intensities – as a color.

An external participants claps, prompting the others to exclaim their color.

Do this several times.

Extend your attention to the others in terms of their un/exclaimed colors.

Attempt to synchronize your color with the group.

Clap, exclaim. How far are the colors of the various practitioners on the color spectrum?

Once you've found a somewhat collective color, shift to another as group.

The external participant continues prompting-clapping, the others exclaiming.

Play with unfolding the spectrum of that color, an expansion shades and saturations.

Attempt to synchronize once again.

One final clap.

A variation of this exercise more closely examines the relation between two different practitioners in terms of abstract qualities:

Two practitioners are standing on opposite sides of the space, facing the witnesses.

They establish a quality, anchored in a card from the Tarot deck or evoking a color.

For a while, they develop the emergent quality, condensing its saturation.

Once they are both ready, they begin approaching one another, the center of the space.

In that moment of encounter, they simultaneously maintain their quality and allows it to be informed by the encounter of another.

They stay in the center of the space, finding compositions of opposing qualities.

Continuing to travel, they find themselves at, the opposing, opposite sides of the space – changed.

Performance Preparation

These practices are angled towards Azathoth as a performance.

Run

An opportunity to play with the practices and concepts of a rehearsal within the duration of the performance. In the first phase, thirty minutes. From the get-go, we finished each rehearsal with a run. Iteratively developing the ability to sustain the flow-state contingent for the performance, predicated on continuous action and transformation. And, once a stable flow-state has been found, develop the technique to find nuance and control-and-lack-thereof within it.

Accumulation Score

A way of tuning-in before an open Run. One practitioner begins, working alone in the space for several minutes (approx. 7 minutes). Additional practitioners join one at a time, at set intervals (approx. 5). Once all the practitioners are in the space, they continue for an additional 20-30 minutes.

Chakra Fire Breathing

A way to kick-starting the body. Adapted from a practice encountered through David Bloom.

Begin by establishing a “fire breathing” pattern: Quick inhalations, intensely expanding the lung, and quick exhalations, intensely depleting. Allow yourself to vocalize as you gradually increase the speed. Take care not to hyperventilate, taking breaks as needed.

A practitioner prompts the group to cycle through the seven chakras, directing attention and breath to them. The seven chakras used here are:

1. Root chakra, the base of the body. Located at the base of the spine, or in front of the anus.
2. Sacral chakra, located just below the belly button.
3. Solar plexus chakra, located at the solar plexus.
4. Heart chakra, located in the center of the chest, slightly to the left.
5. Throat chakra, located at the base of the throat.
6. Third eye chakra, located amid the forehead.
7. Crown chakra, located at the top of the body.

The pattern is 1 to 2, root to sacral; then 1 to 3, root to solar; then 2 to 3, sacral to solar; then 2 to 4, sacral to heart; and so on. The cycling motion is intuitively directed towards the front of the body, “counterclockwise”.

Once the pattern has reached the crown, take three long and deep inhalation and exhalation, traversing the entire chakric body from the root to the crown. Allow this breathing pattern to dissipate.