

**Complicité**

# DRIVE YOUR PLOW OVER THE BONES OF THE DEAD

conceived & directed by  
Simon McBurney

based on the novel by  
Olga Tokarczuk

A resource  
pack for  
teachers and  
students





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This pack will include various **spoilers**, so if you are engaging with it before seeing the production, we suggest leaving pages 6, 7, 25, 27, 29, 32 until after you have been to the play.

# Credits

## Cast

Thomas Arnold, Johannes Flaschberger,  
Tamzin Griffin, Amanda Hadingue, Kathryn Hunter,  
Kiren Kebaili-Dwyer, Weronika Maria, Tim McMullan,  
César Sarachu, Sophie Steer and Alexander Uzoka

## Creatives

Based on the novel by Olga Tokarczuk  
Published in Great Britain by Fitzcarraldo Editions  
Director **Simon McBurney**  
Set and Costume Design **Rae Smith**  
Lighting Design **Paule Constable**  
Sound Design **Christopher Shutt**  
Video Design **Dick Straker**  
Additional Direction **Kirsty Housley**  
Dramaturgy **Laurence Cook** and **Sian Ejiwunmi-Le Berre**  
Movement Direction **Toby Sedgwick**  
Original Compositions **Richard Skelton**  
Additional Movement **Crystal Pite**  
Associate Lighting Designer **Lucia Sánchez Roldán**  
Sound Associate **Ella Wahlström**  
Video Associates **Jachym Bouzek** and **Jakub Xiv** for Mesmer  
Design Assistants **William Fricker** and **Ruth Hall**  
Original novel translation **Antonia Lloyd-Jones**  
Assistant Director **Gemma Brockis**  
Casting **Amy Ball CDG**

## Production

Production Manager **Niall Black**  
Company Stage Manager **Fiona Findlater**  
Deputy Stage Manager **Sarah Coates**  
Assistant Stage Manager **Jeannie Fong**  
Cover Stage Manager **Bethany Alexander**  
Associate Costume Supervisor **Johanna Coe**  
Wardrobe Supervisor **Heather Judge**  
Wardrobe Technician **Lesley McNamara**  
Wigs Designer **Susanna Peretz**  
Lighting Programmer **Tamykha Patterson**  
Lighting Supervisor **Tom Pritchard**  
Production Electrician **Samuel Baker**  
Stage Supervisor **David Hill**  
Sound Supervisor **Amir Sherhan**  
Video Programmer **Salvador Bettencourt Ávila**  
Video Programmer **Neil McDowell Smith**  
Associate Video Designer **Ross Flight**  
Video Supervisor **Ben Walden**  
Animator **Gustaf Lindstrom**  
Script Assistant **Austin Yang**  
Model Box Assistant **Catherine Morgan**  
Dramatherapist **Wabriya King**  
Access Consultant **Aisling Gallagher**  
Audio Description Consultant **Benjamin Wilson** for Hear The Picture  
Audio Describer **Jo Mousley** for Hear The Picture  
Poster artwork **Patryk Hardziej**



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## Complicité

Senior Producer Tim Bell  
 Proiect Producer Josie Dale-Jones  
 Creative Engagement Producer Rima Dodd (Maternity Cover)  
 Executive Director Amber Massie-Blomfield  
 Artistic Director Simon McBurney  
 Administrator Sarah Osgerby  
 Assistant Producer Nur Khairiyah (Khai)  
 Creative Engagement Producer Natalie Raaum (Maternity Leave)  
 Company Assistant Annabelle Sami  
 Finance Manager Louise Wiggins

## Tour

General Manager Jennie Green for Great Leap Forward  
 Production Assistant Sara Cormack for Great Leap Forward  
 Production Assistant James Miller for Great Leap Forward  
 Marketing Director Emma Laugier for Emma Laugier Marketing  
 Marketing Manager Fabienne Sinclair Morris for Emma Laugier Marketing  
 Marketing Assistant Matthew Meldrum for Emma Laugier Marketing  
 PR Kate Hassell and Ben Chamberlain for Bread & Butter  
 Tour Booker Kayte Potter for Great Leap Forward

A Complicité co-production with  
 Barbican London  
 Belgrade Theatre Coventry  
 Bristol Old Vic  
 Comédie de Genève  
 Holland Festival  
 Les Théâtres de la Ville de Luxembourg  
 L'Odéon-Théâtre de l'Europe  
 The Lowry  
 The National Theatre of Iceland  
 Oxford Playhouse  
 Ruhrfestspiele Recklinghausen  
 Theatre Royal Plymouth.

## Complicité thanks

The Mirisch & Lebenheim Charitable Foundation  
 John Ellerman Foundation  
 John Lyon's Charity  
 Backstage Trust  
 Maria Björnson Memorial Fund and the  
 Polish Cultural Institute London for their  
 generous support of this production  
 and the surrounding education and community projects.

Thank you to the following actors and creatives who worked with us in R&D and rehearsals: David Annen, Bronya Deutsch, Joe Dines, Vicky Eames, Naomi Frederick, Ben Grant, Stephanie Levi-John, Richard Katz, Robert Luckay, Susan Lynch, Clive Mendus, David Riley, Surenee Somchit, Grzegorz Staniewicz, Miles Yekinni.

Complicité is an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation.



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## 2

# Introduction

How do you create a piece of theatre with no script? What is the process for turning a novel into a story that resonates with audiences from the stage? And how do you bring a creative team, a production team and a cast of actors with you on a journey that demands everyone to have confidence in uncertainty?

These are the challenges that Complicité and artistic director Simon McBurney set themselves when they decided to bring the novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* by Polish author Olga Tokarczuk to the stage. This pack offers a window into the making of the production - excerpts from rehearsal diaries, interviews with the team, a production timeline, and reflections on the process - to give you a flavour of how Complicité made the show.

Throughout the pack you will also find practical tasks linked to the information offered. Getting quickly into making, creating and trying things out is key to how we approach embodying text. Trying out the tasks will give you a way into that experimental creative process.

In the rehearsal room, Simon would take a piece of text, an idea, or a theme, and set a task for groups of the company to create... something. These short explorations were shared with the wider ensemble and might be changed, merged, enhanced, or scrapped, but many of them influenced the next steps in the devising process, and some of them even featured in the final performance.

Just like these experiments, not every task you try will result in a scene that you want to put on the stage. But they might lead to the next idea, or help you see your subject matter through a new lens. Try not to worry about getting it "right" - instead we encourage you to be bold, take creative risks and experiment with new ways of working.

**Never stand still —  
always keep moving.**

You never know what you might discover.

The tasks are interspersed and contextualised throughout this resource and can also be found collated at the end of the pack.





## 3

# Synopsis and Themes (contains spoilers)

This production is an adaptation of the novel *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* by Olga Tokarczuk. Not everything from the book has made it to the stage, but the book's themes and story has fueled the production.

Tokarczuk, in addition to being one of Poland's most critically acclaimed writers, is also an activist and public intellectual. She was awarded the Nobel Prize in literature in 2018 for "a narrative imagination that with encyclopaedic passion represents the crossing of boundaries as a form of life" (nobelprize.org).

Some of the central themes and motifs included in both the book and the production are:

## Horoscopes and Astrology

The main character Janina devotes much of her time to studying and calculating horoscopes and exploring them in relation to human characters. Astrology is important in this story as an ancient art connected to nature and to human temperament, and as a rebellion against those who view it as worthy of ridicule.

## William Blake

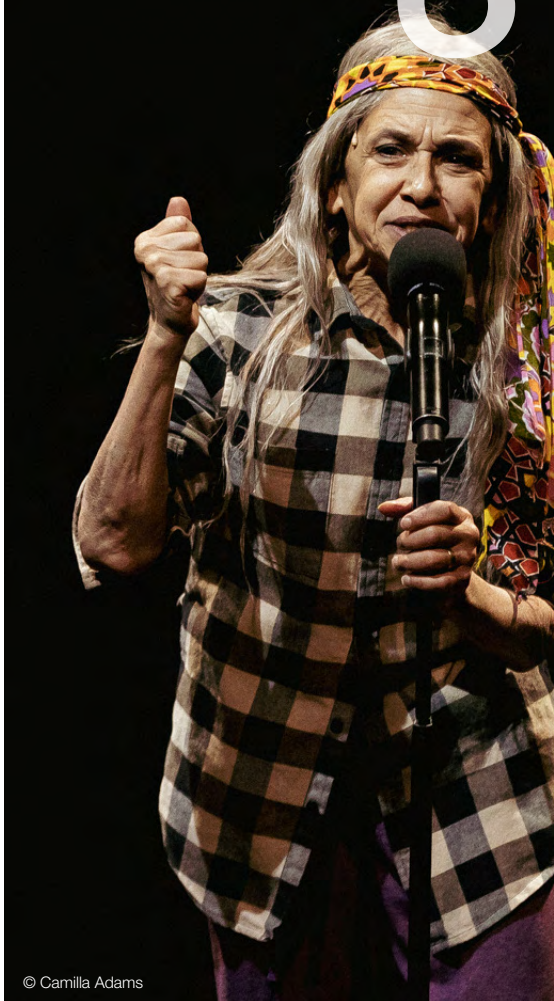
Blake was an English poet, painter, engraver and visionary in the mid 1700s. Much of his work focused on respecting the innocence of the natural world and he was a prominent advocate for the rights of animals. The novel takes its name from his poem 'Proverbs of Hell' and each chapter opens with a quote from one of his poems.

## The Natural World

Much like Blake, Janina is concerned with animal rights and animal welfare. She is horrified by hunting and killing animals for food or leather and spends time observing and learning the habits of the animals that live nearby. She is concerned about humans exploiting and destroying the natural world for profit.

## Borders

Janina's rural village is on the Polish border with the Czech Republic - so close that an emergency call will sometimes reach Czech services instead of Polish ones. She loves the freedom she and the animals have to cross the border, remembering a time when it wouldn't have been possible.



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### 3 Synopsis and Themes (contains spoilers)

Janina Duszejko lives on a plateau near a rural village in the Silesia region of Poland. She is a former engineer, an environmentalist, a devoted astrologer and part time English teacher. She had two dogs before the story starts, who she calls her 'Little Girls', but they have since mysteriously vanished. One night, her neighbour Oddball comes to tell her that he has found another neighbour, Big Foot, dead. She accompanies Oddball to Big Foot's house where they discover that he has apparently choked on a deer bone while eating. Janina also discovers a shocking photograph of hunters and their kill. When the police arrive, one of them is Oddball's son who tells off Janina and Oddball for disturbing the body.

Janina suspects that Big Foot, a member of the hunting society, has been killed by animals as a form of vengeance. She writes to the police about her theory but doesn't receive a response. Not long after, on a frozen evening, Janina spends the evening with her friend Dizzy, translating the poet William Blake into Polish, as they do every week. Dizzy is preparing to leave Janina's house when he notices a car in the distance. Dizzy and Janina go to investigate and find the police commandant [a leading rank in the Polish police force], also a hunter, dead.

Janina is questioned several times by the police as a witness to the crime scene, but is unbothered. She has been suffering "ailments" but now spring is approaching and she is starting to feel better. She has also been having a recurring dream that her mother and grandmother are in the boiler room, a place that she deems "for the living".

As she is observing the animals in her neighbourhood one day, she follows a familiar Fox into a field and finds a young Wild Boar who has been shot and died painfully. She goes to the police station to submit a report about the brutal killing and ends up in a confrontation with some of the officers about the value of animals' lives in relation to human

lives. Although she realises with anger that the officers have started to tune her out, a Poodle has been brought into the waiting room and is watching her, so she continues her speech about human responsibility towards animals and the horrors and cruelty of hunting and killing animals to the Poodle.

She takes her car, which she calls her Samurai, and in which she carries a number of necessities, on various trips, including to her job teaching English in the local primary school. She also tells us about her first encounter with her friend Good News, a woman who owns a second hand shop in town.

Spring finally arrives, along with the local dentist who tends to the townspeople's teeth outside in the square. Innerd, a wealthy fur farmer, disappears, but many people believe he has run away with his lover, letting all of his foxes free before leaving. Janina remembers the first time she met Innerd and his wife near the woods, during which encounter he threatened her and warned her to keep her dogs near her house.

Summer brings the return of many of the warm-weather inhabitants of the plateau. Janina encounters a stranger roaming in the forest. While at first suspicious of him, she soon finds out that his name is Boros and he is an entomologist researching endangered beetles. She befriends him, eventually suggesting he stay with her. They soon develop a romantic relationship.

Janina continues to write letters to the police explaining her theory that animals killed both Big Foot and the Commandant. Dizzy arrives at Janina's house one day with the news that Innerd's body has been found in the forest, trapped in an animal snare. Boros leaves town.

The mushroom pickers in town are having a ball at the firehouse which Oddball wants to attend, so Janina goes to Good News' shop



### 3 Synopsis and Themes (contains spoilers)

to find a fancy dress costume to accompany him - they decide to dress Oddball as Little Red Riding Hood and Janina as the Wolf. At the ball, the local priest, Father Rustle, and the President of the hunting society are among those attending.

Janina talks with the President's wife while he enjoys the party. They discuss the recent deaths, a folk tale, and Janina's dogs. The President's wife is soon overwhelmed by the ball and decides to go home so Janina offers to wait for the President and drive him home. Oddball has been having fun at the ball but decides to leave with another guest, while Janina remains to take care of the President. That night, Janina has another dream about her mother and grandmother in the boiler room.

Two days later, everyone has learned that the President is dead, found the previous evening at the firehouse. Janina writes yet another letter to the police calling attention to astrological evidence to support her theory.

Janina is brought into the police station again for questioning, and after several hours, they obtain a detention order for her and a warrant to search her house. Janina spends the night in jail and is picked up the next morning by Dizzy, Oddball and Good News. Even though she is back at home, she can't stop thinking about the people who searched her house and becomes absent minded and unwell. She ends up in hospital for a while and when she leaves she spends time resting while Oddball, Dizzy and Good News care for her. Meanwhile, official investigation into the deaths is continuing and Dizzy is eventually asked to leave his job working for the police department.

Sometime later, Janina is at a mass for Saint Hubert, the patron saint of hunters, attended by many of the school children she teaches who are dressed as forest animals for a performance afterwards. She is struck by the contradiction of the story of virtuous Saint Hubert

and the killing of animals and starts to yell at Father Rustle who is delivering a sermon from the pulpit. Following this, the headmistress calls Janina into the school and says she is ending Janina's teaching contract due to the outburst.

Janina makes mustard soup for Dizzy, Good News and Oddball. As she is serving it, Oddball notices through the window that something is on fire in the distant village. All three of Janina's friends watch the fire and then slowly turn to look at her.

Dizzy gets a call from his work: the church is on fire and Father Rustle is dead. The three friends confront Janina, saying they know she has killed the men. Janina explains that she found a photograph in Big Foot's house after he died, showing the hunting club of Mustached Men with a pile of dead animals, including her Little Girls. She explains how she killed the Commandant, Innerd, the President, and Father Rustle. Janina's friends don't know what to say and leave her house.

The next day, Dizzy leaves Janina a secret message through a piece of Blake's writing letting her know that the police are coming to arrest her. She packs a few essentials and hides in the boiler room while they search her house. After they leave, Janina departs on foot under the cover of darkness and walks over the border into the Czech Republic, arriving at the bookshop of a friend, Honza who is unsurprised to see her.

Boros comes to fetch her, bringing clothes and wigs sent by Good News, and moving her to his research station where she spends her time resting, observing insects and writing to Dizzy.





## 4

# Excerpt from an interview with Olga Tokarczuk

by Claire Armistead for *The Guardian*,  
translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones  
20 September, 2022

**CA** Did you know about Complicité before they approached you? What is it about them that made you agree to a production of *Drive your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*?

**OT** Yes, of course I had heard of Complicité. I'd never actually had the chance to see any of their shows live, but I had seen videos of excerpts from their shows, and I'd read a lot about them. It's a great, extraordinary theatre company that seems to me to express a sensitivity that's characteristic of our generation, while also harking back to the earliest foundations of the art of drama. I felt extremely honoured when I received their request to adapt my novel, and I didn't hesitate to agree.

**CA** I know Simon came to meet you in Poland. What did you show him to help him get a sense of the work? (the landscape for instance?)

**OT** We met in March this year at my house in the countryside, and – so I believe – we immediately sensed that we have a lot in common. It's rare to find that someone you've never met before shares your way of looking at the world. We did a lot of walking about the neighbourhood. The early spring in southern Poland is the most "classic" time of year – the landscape is calm, sunlit, and rather sedate, or even austere. Maybe a little hostile. Perhaps it would be better for my guests to come in the autumn, when the landscape becomes baroque. Then in winter it's completely modernist – full of dark lines, angular shapes and colour contrasts.

We were keen to capture the spirit of the district together, because it's very much present in the story of Janina Duszejko, the ageing woman who defends animals.

I showed them the things that matter as I see it – my house, which is a bit like Duszejko's house, the ruins of a manor house nearby, local nature and how human beings try to drive a wedge into it wherever possible. We talked a lot and Simon gave me several inspiring books.



**CA** How actively involved have you been? And are there any particular notes you have given them?

**OT** I had no ambitions to have any specific involvement in the adaptation. They know what they're doing and they have the best sense of theatre. I think I've done my bit by writing the novel in a way that's able to inspire other artists to produce their own work. It's a great asset if one work of art can prompt the creation of another. It means culture is constantly in conversation with itself.

**CA** *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* has already been made into a film. What do you think theatre can add?

**OT** Theatre can take a freer approach. Its energy goes deeper and alludes to the most ancient ways of experiencing a story. In the theatre you can do anything. And the energy of real live people is at work, performing right before the spectators' eyes. You can sense their effort, and their artistry, which can't be duplicated, it's all happening here and now — the flow of energy between the stage and the auditorium makes the message very powerful and often unforgettable.

# Task

## Experiment - Landscapes

In small groups, look at how Olga describes the Polish landscape where she lives and where the book is set. What allusions does she make to evoke the different times of year?

### Choose a Landscape

Think about a neighbourhood you are all familiar with - perhaps near your school, it could be countryside or the local high street.

How does it feel to walk through this landscape at different times of the year?

What sounds do you hear?

Make a list of all the sounds.

### Create a Soundscape

Choose a specific season or moment in time and create a soundscape of this landscape using objects around you or your own voices or bodies. Take into account how you want your audience to feel in this place.

For example, is the landscape you're creating peaceful, bustling, confusing or something else altogether?

Think about the volume, pace, repetition, overlap and stage placement of the individual sounds.

### Share your Work

Invite the rest of your class to close their eyes as you present the soundscape to them.





# 5 Timeline

An overview of the key events from the publication of the book to the first performances of *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*. Some of the key moments in the timeline link to longer reflections written by Laurence Cook at the end of this section.

## 2009 25 November

Olga's book *Prowadź swój pług przez kosci umarłych* is published in Poland by Wydawnictwo Literackie.

## 2018 12 September

*Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* is published in English by Fitzcarraldo Editions, translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones.

## 2019 7 December

Olga is awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

## 2020 Summer

Complicité Artistic Director, Simon McBurney is searching for possible projects and reads *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*. Producer Tim Bell begins assembling a team to explore the book, starting with dramaturgs Sian Ejiwunmi-Le Berre and Laurence Cook.

## 2020 Winter

Simon, Tim, Sian, and Laurence begin to discuss the book on Zoom, teasing out the themes and stories that feel important.

## 2021 January and February

Simon brings together a group of actors at a residential venue near Stroud for two weeks to explore the book - a process of 'Research & Development (R&D)'. Also present are a sound designer and associate, beginning to play with the soundscape of the book.

Find out more about this in [Exploring in a Bubble](#)

## 2021 May

The group gathers in Stroud again for further R&D, exploring the role of Janina's voice in the story.

Find out more about this in [Back to Stroud](#)

## 2021 October

A team of actors and creatives gather together again to learn how scenes from the story and characters might 'stand up' and what the physical language of the play might be.

Find out more about this in [Developing a Language](#)

## 2022 February

Simon, Tim, Laurence, and set and costume designer Rae Smith visit Poland to meet with Olga and to get a sense of the real and social landscape of the story.

Find out more about this in [Vodka with Olga](#)

## 2022 March

R&D continues in the UK, working on a raked stage to add perspective. The creative team in the room now also includes sound designer Christopher Shutt and a video designer adding more production elements into the devising process.

## 2022 July

Individual and ensemble auditions take place to cast the production, and a full creative and production team are brought on board.

## 2022 August

Production meetings take place with Simon, the design team and the production manager.

## 2022 September

The production team gets ready for rehearsals to start, carefully setting up a space for creativity and bringing in sets, props, and costumes from Complicité's storeroom for the company to use in their explorations.

## 2022 October

Rehearsals start in a studio in London as the whole team comes together to begin the process of creating and shaping the production.

## 2022 November

The whole team moves down to Theatre Royal Plymouth for two final weeks of rehearsals.

## 2022 December

First performances at Theatre Royal Plymouth.

## 2023 January

The team reconvenes for rehearsals to continue developing the production before continuing on a UK and European tour. A Complicité production is never fixed on opening night, the work continues to evolve throughout its whole run.

## 6

# Exploring in a Bubble

January and February 2021



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Over the two weeks, the actors read the entire book aloud, stopping after every chapter to discuss. The dramaturgs begin to map the structure, timeline, and mechanics of the story as well as exploring the context of rural Poland, hunting, religion, and our relationship to nature. A quote from William Blake begins each chapter, and his poetry and personal philosophy is often mentioned throughout the book, so we explore the relationship between Janina, Olga, and Blake.

As the group's understanding of the book grows, Simon moves from having actors reading on their feet to tasking them with cutting the novel and sketching scenes. Through this, we explore the role of narration in the performance, including where and when the narrator Janina exists in the stage world.



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Because of the strict second lockdown, the group is a bubble and must stay within the venue. This leads to lots of extra discussion of the book over dinner and around the fire in the study. Everyone leaves energised by the work and discussion. For many, it's the first in-person rehearsals we have been in for some time.

We discover that the novel is virtuosic and complex, and Janina is such a compelling character and storyteller that we have a challenge ahead of us to translate that onto the stage. There's much discussion about when or if murder can ever be justified, especially when it's an act born out of powerlessness. We think of myths like Antigone. It becomes clear in translating *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* we must carry over the mythic contained in the novel. Simon uses Karen Armstrong's definition of myth: it happened once but it's also happening all the time.

**We also ask, what conversation is this myth having with the audience?**

**Why does this story feel so vital now?**



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# Task

## Consider & discuss - Myth

Consider Karen Armstrong's  
definition of myth:

"A myth was an event which, in some sense, had happened  
once, but which also happened all the time."

*A Short History of Myth*

What do you think this means?

Why do you think it was useful to the team in  
exploring the book?

Based on what you know so far about *Drive  
Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, why do  
you think it might be an important story to  
be telling now?

What stimuli or stories are you using in  
class, or in other projects, and what makes  
them relevant to today?



## 7

## Back to Stroud

May 2021

This time, there's a focus on exploring the form of the storytelling the narrative demands onstage. We have big questions to explore, including; what relationship the play and the book have to each other, whether we can (or should) riff on the text of the translation, if there's one or many versions of Janina, and what structure the story is and if that can be changed. While the book is a first person narrative we ask if it is a singular voice and what kind of form can hold this.

Simon explores the rhythm of the story by cutting chapters down to the essential elements and tasking groups to select key moments from several chapters, resulting in a few minutes of action. There are initial scripts produced from scratch performances. We begin excavating how the story uses time, especially when Janina begins a story in the present and then leaps to an event in the past. Janina's trustworthiness as a narrator is a key discussion. It's these tasks that teach us that, just as in the novel, Janina must be in control of the story. She needs to be both in the action, in control of it, and be able to speak to the audience.



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# Task

## Experiment - Narration

In small groups choose a story or myth you are all familiar with, and improvise telling the story from the perspective of one of the main characters. Identify four key moments in the story.



### Tableaux and Position of the Narrator

Create tableaux for the four key moments in the story. Add in a narrator who speaks as the central character for each section. For each moment, try out a different position for the narrator on the stage.

### Narrator's Relationship with the Audience

As you're creating these moments, consider what happens if:

- The narrator character tells us the story from within one of the tableaux
- The narrator is outside the tableau looking at another actor playing that character
- The narrator is within the audience or is off stage

How does the narrator's relationship with the audience change in these different versions?



### Share your Work

Are there any common themes that emerge from the various tableaux? Was there anything surprising or exciting about another group's work that you would want to explore further?

## 8

## Developing a Language

October 2021



We know the most urgent questions to explore with actors, such as: how we create animals, how we translate Janina's viewpoint and descriptions of characters into performance, how we play sections of the book that are theory - such as Janina's conception of the 'spark' or soul of a person. Key locations and scenes from the book are selected for these tasks. And we are joined by designer Rae Smith to think about the demands on the playing space and how the design speaks to the story.

Now, the animals come alive. Simon's task is not to get humans to mimic animals but to find out how Janina sees them - as noble, wise, and plugged into forces beyond human understanding. While we work, Rae sketches the performers in order to see how they use space.



For the first time we're working with a Polish actor, bringing both the rhythms and textures of the words in Polish and vital context into the room. They help us to understand the ascending status of the murder victims and how Poland's hunting culture is different from the UK. Forests and land are state owned - a hand me down of communism. Although hunters are people with the spare time and money to do so, it's associated with positions of authority (like police and other state workers), not with an upper class.





# Task



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## Play - Animals

Think of the different types of animals you are familiar with or come across in everyday life - cats, dogs, mice, foxes, sparrows etc. being as specific as possible (eg, robins and crows, not just birds).

### Movement and Centre of Gravity

Choose one of these animals for the whole group to embody and try moving around the space as the animal might. Pay attention to your own movement and your relationship with other animals in the space. Allow time for stillness as well as movement. What might cause an animal to be still in this space?

Find ways to play with levels in the space and explore where the animal's centre of gravity might be. You don't necessarily need to crawl to be an animal on all fours. (Your arms might hang down as if front paws, or your hands might be ears, a beak or wings.)

Consider Janina's perceptions of animals as "noble, wise, and plugged into forces beyond human understanding". How does that change the movement in the space?

### Interactions

Allow yourself to continue to be playful and interact with other animals in the space and to form packs or flocks.

### Introduce an Element of Shock

At the sound of a clap, all the animals react as though there has been a sudden, surprising noise like the sound of a twig snapping. The animals will slowly return to their movement.

A second clap is a louder noise, perhaps a rock falling. The animals react and return to their movement.

A final clap is a gunshot that has gone off. Again the group reacts and organically finds its way back to animals moving comfortably around the space.

## 9

# Vodka with Olga

February 2022

Simon, Tim, Rae, and Laurence visit Poland to meet Olga and to discover the landscape of the story. A few days before they leave, Ukraine is invaded by Russia and because Poland shares a border with Ukraine, it is foremost in the minds of everyone we meet. But we discover that war and violent takeovers are never far away. Olga lives in Silesia, an area that was invaded by the Mongols, later becoming Bohemian, Prussian, and German. Poland itself didn't exist between 1795 and 1918. It makes us think of Janina's joy of stepping freely over the Polish-Czech border and the phone signal which pays no attention to national borders, just as animals don't. The living memory of violence also puts into perspective the nightmares Janina has about the ghosts of relatives occupying her boiler room.

In Wrocław, we visit Olga's institute, a handsome 19th century villa which she refurbished with her Nobel Prize money. Over vodka and cake, the institute staff tell us the villa was intended to be for translators to visit and work. Now it will be home to a Ukrainian family.

We drive out of the city, through the snowy hills and to rural Silesia, where Olga lives with her partner and dogs. Like Janina's home, it's some distance from a main road, among an eclectic jumble of houses, and next to the Table Mountains. In white winter sun, we toast the meeting of Simon and Olga with homemade vodka.

Over the next few days, Olga shows us the area which inspires *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*. We explore dense forests littered with animal bones and surrounded by hunting pulpits and the small town of Nowa Ruda which leaves us smelling of coal fires. And an even more remote town where the air is still, grey, and reeks of chemicals. What makes these towns so different from anywhere in Britain is that there are no cafes or pubs, little communal space, and no green space.





## 9 Vodka with Olga

Olga is hopeful this can change. She shows us her recently set up cafe, called Dobra Nowina ('Good News'), and we walk the hills where she and her partner run a literary festival. She gifts us a scroll, a short story given away as part of Wroclaw's Christmas celebrations.

Her work as a storyteller doesn't stop with books, she's trying to help the people of her region connect over stories - whether they are on paper or over a pot of tea.

We also use the opportunity of being with Olga to discuss *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* and come away with heaps of ideas. Foremost is that this adaptation cannot lose the magic, myth, and mystery of the book.





## 10

# Rehearsal Diaries

The rehearsal diary were written by one of the two Dramaturgs on *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, Laurence Cook. Much of the R&D and rehearsal process was active and started with movement - these excerpts are a record of some of the themes and ideas that arose from exploring the text and offer a window into key moments in the development of this production.

They are largely in note form and reflect some of the thoughts, anxieties and moments of discovery along the way. There are tasks throughout, but you may also find it useful to note what questions - or provocations - arise for the team during the R&D and rehearsals.

Some names mentioned in the excerpts are actors who spent time helping to investigate the book in the early stages of R&D.

## Introduction to the Rehearsal Diary Excerpts

*"Adapting a novel in a devising process (rather than a single person writing a script) means paperwork. The purpose of the diary to begin with was to collect ideas and help us capture the thorough understanding of the story we arrived at after reading and working on it during R&D. Whenever we got lost, we had a map of the route we'd come from."*

*When we moved to start cutting, editing, and re-ordering the text of the novel, the diary allowed us to know what we'd covered and link from there to transcriptions, photos, or videos."*

*By the time we'd moved into a rehearsal room, Sian (the other Dramaturg) and myself had split the entire book into units - some very short, some a page long. These were numbered, titled, and indexed (and searchable) which allowed us to quickly find or reference sections of text from across the book. The rehearsal diary then switched into keeping track of the units we'd explored, staged, or turned into scripts."*

Laurence Cook



# 10 Rehearsal Diaries



05 February 2021

*"Encouraging to look at the cuts from yesterday - it's good to be on the same page on what needs to be in, what a version of this text might look like."*

*We know also we need the sweet spot of not too mythic and not too mundane.*

*And we haven't got very Polish - we've not found the Polish maleness.*

*Another thought is that how many people are in this play - one man and four men who constantly hover in the background? Simon mentions Richard III and the fact that a man woos a woman but Shakespeare actually shows her surrounded by men with spears....*

*And we've not even scratched the surface of who Oddball is, what is his relationship with Janina? We need to isolate all the dialogue and put it together to play, just to see it and make it come alive.*

*I think Oddball is an accountant, he loves order and he's got this godlike role of checking up on all the people of the Plateau. It's why he checks on Big Foot. But he's not judgemental. He doesn't care what people are doing as long as he understands there's order in it.*

*Oddball and Black Coat's relationship - we've not explored that. The usurping son.*

*Dizzy - the autodidact [a self-taught person], we saw some of that when he put 'childlike brevity' in air quotes, like an academic opinion.*

*We think actors will have more fun making the characters if they have something like a script."*





# Task

## Write - Relationships

Choose a character in a play you have read recently or in a piece you are devising and imagine their backstory. What is their profession? What do they do for fun? What can we learn about their character based on their actions and choices within the play?





# 10 Rehearsal Diaries

11 October 2021

*"We've cut the ensemble moments out of the book in order to try and see how those will work in our storytelling - who else will speak for Janina?"*

*Simon is talking about the narrative of the individual self and how we might rethink that.*

**Showing back from the Anger task:**

## The Chorus of Men

**Miles, Bronya, Robbie and Tim** - they speak together to narrate and Simon is interested in the idea that speaking together demands a conductor. That's an idea we've touched on before.

*Could it be that speaking in unison is also a good metaphor for connection? Interdependence? And when things are out of line, unmatched or off beat - is that useful for thinking about when the narrator deviates from the truth/ is breaking down?*

*The multiple voices also bring emphasis.*

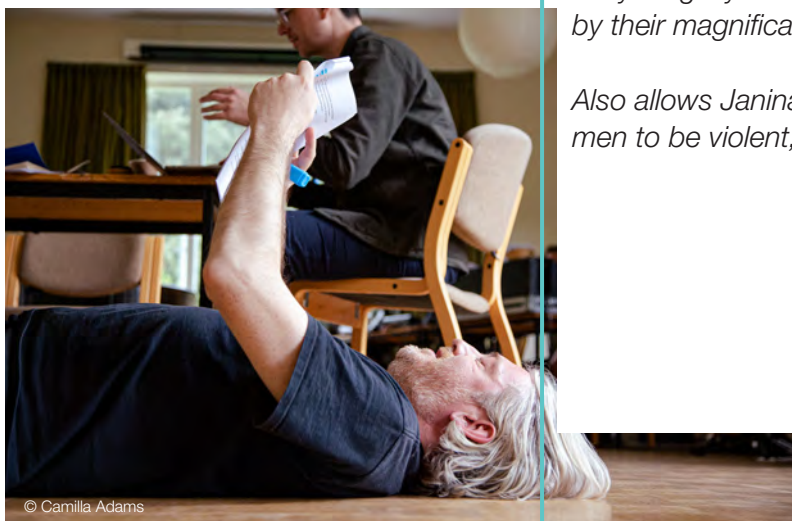
*Simon moves Bronya to be a 'lead' voice and the guys as backing singers, who can echo what's said by Bronya. Interesting to see a chorus of male voices backing up Janina.*

*We try the guys taking on the physical sensation of the word or line rather than being literal backing singers.*

*We can see the male chorus being quite useful - to physicalise and echo Janina.*

*Also can see them being subjugated, the men sent back to echo a woman rather than being front and centre. They magnify. We can see the tiny details she focuses on by their magnification.*

*Also allows Janina to be incredibly reasonable - and the men to be violent, screaming. Putting the heat into it."*





## Play - Chorus

Work in groups of 4-6 with one member of each group as the leader. The leader chooses a personal story to tell outloud, while the rest of the group - the chorus - stands behind echoing, or mirroring, the actions of the leader. Practise this a few times, paying careful attention to detail in the movements and gradually adding in speech, or fragments of speech, as the chorus becomes familiar with the text.

### Heighten the Work

Then increase the intensity and scale of the mirroring or echoing to further amplify or exaggerate the storyteller's words and actions. A slight glance to the right becomes a full body turn, a slight exhale becomes an exaggerated sigh.

### Share your Work

Discuss what happens to the stories that are being told when they are amplified like this? As an audience member, how do we interpret the chorus? Do we infer a relationship to the storyteller or the story?

# 10 Rehearsal Diaries



14 October 2021

*"We need to think about the stacking, the layering in our scripting. We need to work on naturalistic scenes which hold smaller scenes - things like the scene we work on today - which is 'set' in the Guard's station but includes the fieldfares, consul, boar etc.*

*One of the questions Simon is asking is how do the animals speak and how do we see their intelligence?*

*In the scene we're working on, Janina is wandering through different worlds. The scenes are stacked. Among that there are the movie close ups, the hyper realistic details.*

*Tim says that we need to capture the joy Janina has in the natural world. We try some clowning with the scene, like the fieldfares and a leak in the roof of the guard station - dripping on the guard. Seeing her fun.*

*We also want the feeling of her dogs - the 'Little Girls', producing in the audience the same joy we have of watching cute videos."*

7 March 2022

*"We are going to look at the boiler room dreams and Simon gives the task of breaking into groups and bringing those to life.*

*Interestingly, the instinct is not to put Janina into the dream but have her stand at the front and narrate it, so we have to read it - like her eyes. But when Janina is on stage next to the dream, David says he didn't know what his relationship with the audience was, what he was meant to do.*

*We think about the fact that the brain can't create a new face in a dream, so our dreams are populated by the people we've met, passed on the street, etc. And how that means that Janina's dreams are a 'world within a world' - they might be populated by the people of the story, not 'performers'. Perhaps the moustache men, or the murdered men themselves?*

*When we look at the next group, Simon mentions it might be interesting to use different languages in each dream, so they are recognisably part of the same story or a development of an idea - but they're not just the same thing.*





# 10 Rehearsal Diaries



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© Camilla Adams



© Camilla Adams

For Boiler Dream 1 - Simon talks of GUILT.  
For Boiler Dream 2, it's ANGER.

*There's an element of testimony, court room, self-examination, I'm trying to tell you something, and everyone who populates the stage is part of Janina's effort. How's it looking? Does it look as if the animals did it? Or me?*

*Maybe part of the language is that she can control people - she moves her hand and people fall over. And maybe sometimes they don't listen, they come for her. And the story begins with an intrusion - the story is a crunch between this brilliant storyteller and this messy world.*

*For the third dream showback - mother and grandmother come and fetch Janina into the dream. A loss of agency, also a 'you live the dream' moment - fairytale.*

*Simon thinks that Janina might narrate the first dream - then have less and less control over it in the second and third. And it's interesting that in the fourth, she's ill and has lost all agency. Then she ends up literally having to flee, to hide in the boiler room in the story with real people looking for her. It could be an interesting set up.*

*We can do what we want with them but we should remember the sense of GUILT and ANGER, then perhaps the LOSS OF AGENCY in the third."*

# Task

## Devise - Dreams

Working in small groups, share a dream that you remember having recently. Make sure to describe how the dream made you feel.

Choose a dream, or a combination of several dreams, as a stimulus for a short, wordless devised piece considering three key things:

- Make a decision about whether the dreaming character will have agency in their dream or be out of control, and how you will show this.
- Assign an emotion to your dream and explore ways to demonstrate that emotion throughout the dream sequence.
- Finally, make clear transitions into and out of the dream for the dreaming character - how does the dream begin? When does the dreamer wake up?

Try to create this piece in ten minutes.

## Share your Work

Watch all of the pieces and share constructive feedback. What was clear or unclear in the pieces? How did they make you feel?

## Re-work your Piece

Return to your groups and spend five minutes either tweaking something that didn't work the way you wanted it to, or incorporating an idea from another group that you found interesting or exciting.



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© Ali Wright

# 10 Rehearsal Diaries

11 October 2022

*"Thinking about the ending. She's solitary. She escapes human law, but not justice - is the ending 'fitting' for someone who has taken lives... She would feel this too?"*

**How does Dizzy feel towards her?** *There are clues that he feels very strongly that she has committed a crime - when he says 'you've murdered people' - and then his warning to her later is 'we are all subject to error: who shall say that we are not all subject to crime?'*

**What do we want OUR ending to be?**

**The Sound of Music ending** - triumph over evil, good wins

**The horror/noir ending** - there is a cost, it's complex, messy - protest and being a revolutionary meaning you're lonely, outcast among outcasts

**Seasonal - dormant winter ending.** *Long fade to nothing - her footsteps vanish, she still has plenty of time....*

**Enigmatic** - plenty of time, in which to do what?

*All endings demand complicity....*

\*\*\*\*\***crescendo 1**\*\*\*\*\*

*The Aaron Sorkin [American playwright, screenwriter and director] ending - the confrontation in church, the emotional climactic confrontation scene playing out the central conflict in public*

\*\*\*\*\***crescendo 2**\*\*\*\*\*

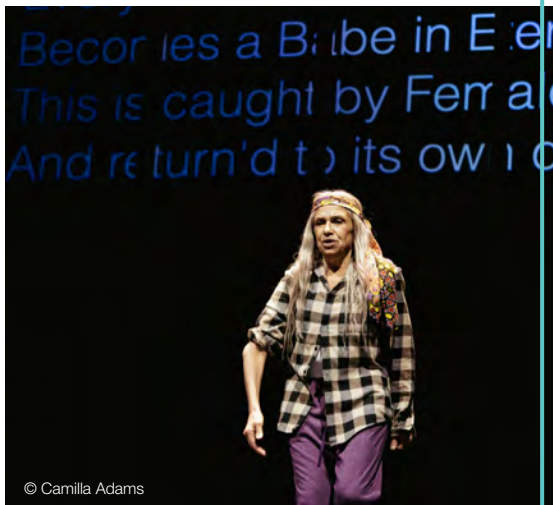
*The Agatha Christie [English detective fiction writer] ending - all is revealed. The locked door. The justification - it wasn't entirely me. The reveal of a secret or the first time she's even confronted all this?*

\*\*\*\*\***crescendo 3**\*\*\*\*\*

*Dizzy says 'you need to acknowledge you've committed a crime' - The chase + the confronting of the fears, laying the ghost in the boiler room to rest*

\*\*\*\*\***coda?**\*\*\*\*\*

*The funeral, isolation and a kind of death? The dissolving into the winter.... The witch in the forest, the 'this is how it works Dizzy. But I know I still have plenty of time'."*



© Camilla Adams



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# Task

## Consider and Discuss - Endings

Think of an ending to a film, play, tv series, or book that has really stuck with you.

Why was it an effective or interesting ending? How were you, as the audience, treated or involved in the ending?

What do you think Laurence meant when he wrote, "All endings demand complicity"?

### 10 Rehearsal Diaries



13 October 2022

*"We come back and think about how to present the men.*

*We try some men approaching - and it makes us think of the landscape*

*Lots of discussion around the landscape of men - the fact that if you read the book you get the impression of men everywhere. But if you look at just the scenes of the book, you'd miss out on that. So we need to put them in, make them ever-present.*

*We know that no one is going to be off stage - in principle. We're making whatever the scene is, here. Everything is Janina's story".*



# 10 Rehearsal Diaries

18 October 2022

*"We go back to the beginning and try a new version which is about the experience of waking up - knocking at the front door wakes up Janina. Fear, tension, exploiting the "grace period" before starting the show.*

*The compressed and stripped back version, it gives us room to go somewhere.*

*We have to construct her memory, her consciousness out of the dark.*

*Perhaps we see a silhouette of the scene with the dead body - perhaps we don't introduce the REAL as it were, until later. We hold on to that.*

*First we have to build her, her feeling revisiting this place, the setting for the action, in her memory.*

*And who are these people around her?*

*We have the past, present, and perhaps future or unreal - we're moving between those planes*

*We have three voices for Janina - her voice in the world of the drama, her direct address to the audience - and perhaps a third one which does something else? A visionary voice?*

*We start in the future - perhaps beyond the end of the story?*

*Kathryn asks: What propels her? What's the "in"? Is it 'I need to tell you this, Dizzy'?*

*Simon says: We have to include the audience, so Simon mentions the bit in the text beyond talking to Dizzy - which is about 'I'm justified in killing these people'*

*She's speaking to the audience. Just as Olga is addressing the reader.*

*Is she in control? Or is she being assaulted by these memories?*

*When you write something down, are you absolutely sure where it's coming from?"*





# Task



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## Devise - Memories

In small groups, share memories of a time you did something you weren't supposed to - make sure this is something you are comfortable sharing with the group, it can be small or silly.

Choose one of these memories to explore as a group. Take care to describe the details and textures of this memory - the sights, the sounds, the smells - as well as the actions.

### Divide the Story

Choose a central character, a central prop, and a central item of costume and divide them up among three actors. The actors with the prop and costume can control these items independently from the central character.

Explore a way of representing the memory with the prop and costume separated from the central actor, thinking about the pace of movement and why you are calling attention to these objects in the storytelling.

### Add Narration

Add in an element of narration. This could be from the actor playing the central character or it could be an additional actor looking at the scene. Make a decision about the narrator's opinion about this memory and how that is being communicated to the audience.

### Share your Work

Consider what theatrical languages each group used to indicate to the audience that this is memory.

# 10 Rehearsal Diaries

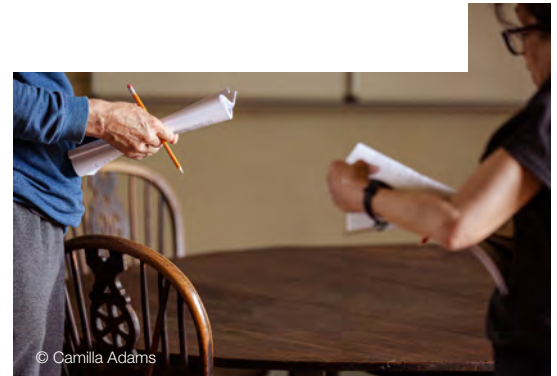
26 October 2022

*"Simon thinks here that there are moments in the show that are only Janina smoking a cigarette. Or her with a bucket of water, cleaning an animal bone. When we just get to look at her, and think about her.*

*Simon is thinking about the repetition of the Innerd meeting scene. We're looking for the language of memory, the repetition of that. We might want to repeat something of the image of the Innerd Girl from the Pheasant Hunt.*

*We meet Olga via Zoom, introducing her to the rehearsal room and our creative process and exchanging ideas about the play. She says it's not important to understand everything about astrology - more that it's about reading signs and stories everywhere. And what Janina takes from it.*

*She says she is flattered to see we are taking so much care with her work, that we have done so much research and excavation into the book. She is excited to see us acting her words. But more importantly she wants us to know we are the authors of something new."*





## 11

# In Rehearsal: A conversation with actors Alexander Uzoka and Weronika Maria

Recorded on 4 November, 2023

**Can you talk about something in the rehearsal room that's helped to develop an exciting moment or a theme on stage?**



We are working with music composer Richard Skelton and he explained how he uses everyday objects to play and create different sounds. He even tries to capture silence. Silence is not ever empty; there is the sound of silence. So having that in mind, we played with the sound of Janina's dreams. What are the sounds of dreams? That's very inspiring as an actor: when we've got a sound, we move differently compared to without the sound.

One day we used the projector: we had Janina smashing a tomato with a hammer, which was then projected on the back wall. Someone was standing against the back wall, their head perfectly in line with the tomato, and when Janina smashed it they fell as if they had died. I didn't even know that was allowed - I realised there are no limits.

**Have there been any exercises that helped you to discover something new in the devising process?**



Moving together as a company, we try to find ways to create something without even planning to do it. We start the day with yoga and then we get into exercises where we'll follow someone, they'll turn and then everybody follows the next person. You can attach a story to what it is that you're watching, especially when you add music as well. As an actor, music just does something and you're not thinking about it. We're slowly starting to create stories, which we then realise we could use in a part of the play. We wouldn't have discovered that if we were sitting down looking at the script thinking these are the things we need to do, you know?



# Task

## Warm Up - Shoaling

This exercise is called 'shoaling' as the group are moving together as one like a shoal of fish.

Form a group in the space, standing close together, with everyone facing the same direction. You should be in a clump rather than a line, but as shoulder-to-shoulder as you can. Spend a few minutes standing in your group and see if you can start to breathe at the same time as the people around you.



### Start to Move

The individual who is closest to the front of the group starts moving through the space with everyone else following, copying their movements as closely as possible so that the movement ripples through the group. The leader should use controlled movement to make it possible for the group to follow them accurately.

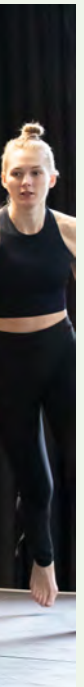
### Change the Leader

After a while, the leader can turn in a new direction, shifting the whole shoal so a new person emerges at the front as the leader.

### Play with Space

As you are moving around the space, feel free to play with levels and the different ways of moving. How are your arms moving? What part of your body is leading the movement forward? Continue turning and finding new leaders for the shoal.

This is best done in groups of three to ten people. If you have a larger class, you can also do this work in several smaller groups that can interact with each other.



# 11

## In Rehearsal: A conversation with actors Alexander Uzoka and Weronika Maria

WM

Because it is a devising piece, sometimes we've got a piece of text and we have to offer something in response - perhaps a movement or a text. And sometimes through mistakes you learn what you need and what you don't need. So the first two weeks we experimented with lots of different tasks, for instance movement, being an object, being an emotion, and that really helped us to see what we needed to tell the story.

### What is the role of play in the rehearsal room?

WM

It's so important because even the sad moments and difficult moments and heavy moments in the play, they need to start from a joyful point and an openness, a childlike quality, curiosity. I think that's the essence of working with Complicité. So we always find togetherness through playing a ball game or even singing together. That opens the channel to tell Janina's story.

### So, how do you feel about being in week four of the process and not knowing yet what shape exactly the production is going to take? What is it like to work through that uncertainty?

AU

It is scary. But having said that, it's an exciting place to be. It's about trusting in the process, trusting your company - actors, directors, lighting, sound, everyone who is part of it - we have each other's backs. So that's what I'd say to that. Just embrace it.

WM

It's amazing to be out of familiar territory and experimenting with uncertainty. It creates openness and being here now. I'm learning so much about myself and about my characters. It's like the stage is an invisible box and you can put anything there and anything can exist within the space.

### What tips would you give a young person who is interested in exploring devised theatre?

WM

Whatever idea is there, just bring it to the table, as Simon says. Try things out and what will work will stay there. But that playfulness - every single object can be part of the journey of your story. You can take a piece of paper and start your devising piece from that. That's what I learned working with Complicité.

If you want to start something, just take a spoon. Think about the story of the spoon. In rehearsal, we're playing with a spoon and it would become a part of the scene when it's an actual spoon. Then we would take it and it becomes a constellation or a star. This project is about dreams and imagination. So it's unlimited. There is a quote by William Blake, he says "Everything possible to be believed is an image of truth" (*The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*). So anything you can imagine is the truth. There's not a total truth.





# Task

## Experiment - Everyday Objects

In pairs, choose a small everyday object you have with you - a pen, a paperclip, a bracelet, a book etc. Spend five minutes exploring all the different things from the natural world that this object could represent.

### Transform the Objects

Find ways as actors to help transform these objects for the audience by moving them in space and changing your relationship to the object. Make sure to include the objects' original uses or purposes as contrast to their transformed lives.

### Create a Sequence

Find another pair to work with and share your objects and a few of the transformations you've explored. Are there any overlaps or connections? Work in your group to create a short movement sequence of the object transformations. Feel free to add in more objects to help complete a set or a group.

### Share your Work

Are there any overlapping ideas of themes? Could two or more sequences join together to create a longer piece?

A photograph of a shovel lying on a dark, metallic surface. A white rectangular sign is taped to the shovel's head. The sign contains the text "PLEASE ONLY USE UNDER SUPERVISION FROM IRAC MANAGEMENT" in bold, black, capital letters. Below this, in a smaller, handwritten font, it says "Thomson - Kansas". The shovel has a dark handle and a metal head. The background is dark and industrial.

[illegible]

# Backstage: The role of the Assistant Stage Manager

I was very excited when I found out I would be working with Complicité on *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*. I've been a long time theatre maker, working in stage management, technical theatre and education. I think theatre as a form of learning and play is crucial to how we see the world around us. There is so much to theatre beyond what is seen on stage, and it really does take a team of people to make ideas come to life.

One might think that sourcing props is just going out and buying items off a list, but there is so much more to it. With the **Theatre Green Book** in mind, you really have to consider where the props are coming from and what impact it might have on the environment, as well as if it's suited for the show. I've had fascinating conversations with Rae about the social context of the play, the context of the author Olga herself and what drove her to write this novel that we are adapting. A lot of research goes into props to ensure that the image on stage is exactly what we want to communicate. In the past few weeks, I have learnt so much about Polish culture, environmentalism and associated beliefs, taxidermy, you name it! I've had the joy of going to charity shops, vintage sales and haggling on Gumtree and Ebay for some amazing finds.

One thing I love about this process of devised theatre is that I've been able to contribute so much to the creative process. Ideas are constantly bouncing back and forth in the rehearsal room, and it is fascinating to see these



ideas develop over the course of even just one hour in the room. It is magical to witness when all the elements come together; such as when sound designer Chris and video designer Dick seemingly read Simon's mind and know exactly what needs to be played in a scene. All of this play in real time happens so quickly and it's so rewarding when you see something and think, **"yes, that's it! That's what we're looking for in this scene"**.

# Task

## Research and Write - Props

There's an infinite number of versions of a prop that can be used. If the director asks for a teacup - what kind of teacup is it? What time period is it from? Who's using it, and what's their story? Getting the right prop can define an actor's performance onstage and shape how they interact with it, as well as how it is interpreted by an audience

Pick a prop from a play that a character uses. Identify what their story is. Where did they buy the prop? Was it given as a gift? What time period is the play set in, and what time period is the prop from? Is it new, old, beautiful, ugly? What does this prop say about this character?

Find out if you can source this prop in person or online. Are there environmentally friendly ways to source it - maybe secondhand or by borrowing or repurposing something. See what price you could get for it.





# Backstage: An Interview with Sound Designer Christopher Shutt

Written on 9 November, 2022

**How is your job different when working on a piece of devised theatre like *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* rather than a scripted production?**

In a scripted show at least there's a text to begin with to read or, better still, hear read out loud. You can make notes on it, draw up a plan of action, come up with your own concept for it or tag onto someone else's, all before the rehearsals begin. You know vaguely what the parameters are – how many people are in it for instance, what the characters are, the set design and visual context and so on. Here in devised theatre there's nothing but an idea so you need to find out the reason for doing it in the first place - that's possibly your only way into the show and the only way to be able to plan ahead. The rest you need to be patient for, as it will gradually reveal itself over the whole rehearsal period.

**What is your day-to-day role in the rehearsal room?**

You need to be present all the time if you want to have any influence over the show or help shape it. That allows you to contribute and propose ideas, and Simon expects that from everyone in the room, not just the actors. You need to throw ideas around, not be afraid of having disasters as well as some successes, and have fun while you're making it.

**How does sound contribute to the storytelling of this production?**

We rehearse with music all the time, as it helps the mind to think in bigger pictures rather than just what is in front of you, so it's essential to be there to keep tabs on what and how music is being used. Simon and I have a very long-standing working relationship so there's a lot of shorthand going on – waving the hand or clamping the fingers together – so you need to be able to interpret this



# 13

## Backstage: An Interview with Sound Designer, Christopher Shutt



very particular sign language on the fly, as sections are being devised in front of you. I'm always looking for opportunities to animate the inanimate or heighten the perception of something – if an actor holds a stick in their hand it's just someone holding a stick in their hand, but play an interesting piece of music or a drone under it and move the stick in slow motion and suddenly that becomes a really important stick with a meaning and a story to it.

### How do you approach the balance and blend of the various sound elements available to the production?

Although music may lead to an improvisation in the rehearsal room in order to get things moving, when it comes to the actual show you have to think beyond that and tie all the elements of a show together, maybe using natural sound combined with artificial sound, live effects processing [creating vocal effects like reverberation or echo to actors' voices in real time], miking and everything else at your disposal. Something needs to be leading the storytelling at any given moment so the balance depends on making a decision about what that is. With a Complicité show only sometimes is it the text. Often it's an object, a sound or a piece of music so my job is to make that choice at every single moment to keep the audience involved and enthralled with what's going on in front of them.

### Can you talk about a particularly exciting moment of collaboration or discovery in the rehearsal process so far?

There have been many moments where we've been working on a particularly gnarly bit of the story and something has happened and we've all collectively gone "yes that moment really landed". It's often down to a particular combination of words, music, natural sound and movement. When we go outside into the frozen forest amongst Janina's beloved animals there's a rich sound palette that should wrap around the whole space. In combination with the style of movement that that requires, and when it's all working in harmony with the story-telling it can be very satisfying.

### What advice do you have for young people who are interested in sound design or devised theatre more broadly?

If you have a mind that thinks in a non-visual way and you love playing with sound, devised theatre is the best way to harness your ideas as it allows you to be in the room and contribute right from the start of the process. It's hard work and you need to be able to work at great speed and respond creatively in the moment, but if you're up for that sort of challenge then it's very rewarding and a lot of fun.

# Task

## Experiment - Movement and Music

### Create a Scene

In small groups, create a simple improvisation of a group task - for example, cleaning up an art studio, baking a cake, gardening, rearranging furniture etc.

### Add Sound

Choose three or four pieces of music or sound that have contrasting moods. Try playing the different music or sound options while performing the scene.

How do the different sounds change the story being portrayed in the action? Does the choice of music or sound make you want to modify the action to suit the mood? Do some of the music or sound choices feel more interesting than others?





## 14

# Backstage: In Conversation with Set and Costume Designer Rae Smith

Recorded on 11 November, 2022

**How do you first approach designing for a devised piece like this one?**

It started with a visit to Poland and the world where Olga lives - her local village, the landscape, the cottages, how far people are away from each other, how you walk over hills to get there, how you sort of think and dream, what the weather's like.

On arriving, we immediately went to a square in which Olga has a cafe, and Simon and I went into the second hand clothes shop and bought all the chorus's black coats there so that was our starting point really, the sense of buying *actual clothes* as opposed to *costumes* to begin with. As Simon developed the ideas, those coats would eventually be used to clothe chorus moments in the play as it materialised - for the moustached men, for example. So by visiting a place, the context of it materialises in the actual show eventually, the atmosphere, the visual signals.

In following the methods that Simon has of workshopping the show and keeping that experimental creativity in the rehearsal process, what you're doing is designing a space which can contain the story - so landscape space, an intimate space, and a space in which all the scenery is stripped out and you have almost an experimental environment. So there's no decoration, nothing unnecessary is there, and with that we are keeping it imaginative and constantly evolving.



© Rae Smith

© Camilla Adams

# 14 Backstage: In Conversation with Set and Costume Designer Rae Smith



## Can you talk about your thoughts around designing the landscape?

The space in which the story is told needs to be a landscape of the mind so we talked about the landscape in which Olga lives, how you approach her house and go inside and who her neighbours are, and how close they are to her in the little woods that are nearby that weave in and out of the hills. That landscape is very much part of the storytelling - how you observe a neighbour and are intimate and distant at the same time - that's to do with the difference between 25 and 50 steps towards their house, how you are very aware of their life, but also not that aware.

So we've created a stage space which is at least 25 to 30 steps wide. It's more a landscape space than it is an interior, but we've got machinery which can allow us to shut down the space, which means it can go very small to an interior, to one person. It goes from the tiniest thing like a twig or a leaf to the biggest thing which is like the Sahara Desert, so we need a very flexible space which can contain those things.

The design is part of a whole - the set designer contains the physicality of the story and the lighting designer focuses and enhances where the eye goes - what to see and what not to see as well. There will be times when our lighting designer won't want you to see something so you'll be going "what is that, I can't quite make it out - oh I didn't expect it to be that" - and that mirrors the revelation of writing really.

And of course the use of sound is really important in creating a world as we disappear into the depths of the forest from an interior. This is not just the sound of the forest, but also the voluminous quality and the overall wraparound feeling of the forest. Sound does that in tandem with visual cues including the projection. A series of words can take us from one scene to another, one space inside a cottage to another space outside, into the depths of the primordial old Polish forest in which you can get lost, and also study insects and moths and small creatures in a jar.

It's trying to be a space that creates all that possibility, the same fluidity that Olga has in her writing, Simon is interpreting that on stage. So it means that he has a team that has got his back and supports him in telling the story with all of us representing the different senses, and we try and work together to create what he needs in order to make the story come to life.



# 14 Backstage: In Conversation with Set and Costume Designer Rae Smith



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## Can you tell us about your rehearsal drawings and how they contribute to the devising process?

As a designer, I spend some time in rehearsals, watching the beginning of the scenes occurring and developing and what I do as I'm watching is I draw. My drawings are very much trying to record the moment of what's happening in the scene and they have been really useful because they're a visual mnemonic [a device to help aid the memory of something] of the scene so when the actors look at them, they remember that's what the scene was. A video or a photograph also tells you what occurred but a drawing is a much more personal observation not only of what occurred but that it was seen by somebody. They're actually noting the scene for what was happening in it. It's not a naturalistic representation. It could be a wiggle or something.

So when you look at the drawings, you kind of go 'what's happening there?' – that person's got 3 faces and one of them is turning round and then – that seems to be clapping with the hands or flapping all together. Or then, that person seems to be clapping and then falling on the floor. And what it is is physical theatre storytelling and someone is describing the unspeakable heaviness and irritability of pain management through drugs - sometimes it's so heavy what's going on you just have to fall on the floor like a dead lump and sometimes it hurts so much, and sometimes you take so many pain killers you're floating. So all those things I tried to copy, put down. How do you write that down, you don't, you draw it.

## Do you have any advice for young people who are interested in pursuing a career in design?

When I was a young person, I was obsessed with watching films, as is my niece who is 12 and she draws films from beginning to end without stopping. So she draws quickly and she draws all the scenes and all the characters. So at the end of the day she's got a whole book full of drawings with monsters and all kinds of stuff that tell a story. It's like a type of storyboard. I recommend anyone who wants to start off designing to try to do something like that, because what you're doing is, you're copying storytelling in a visual medium. Either you can draw it, or you photograph it, but you're observing from storytelling, like films because they're easy to get to.

I also think it is important to keep sharp your observation of everyday life. What kind of different houses people live in, what's the story behind them and also what people





# 14

## Backstage: In Conversation with Set and Costume Designer Rae Smith

wear. Can you, as an observer of everyday life, see someone walk past and then describe them. If someone catches your eye, remember what they were wearing. You can even draw it to yourself, make a visual note of it, or just go through in your mind what it was because that person is wearing a costume, their clothing tells you what kind of character they are and tells you a story about that person. As a designer, you've got a load of language either recorded inside your memory or recorded by drawing it or recorded by photographing it that you can develop into a palette in order to tell stories.

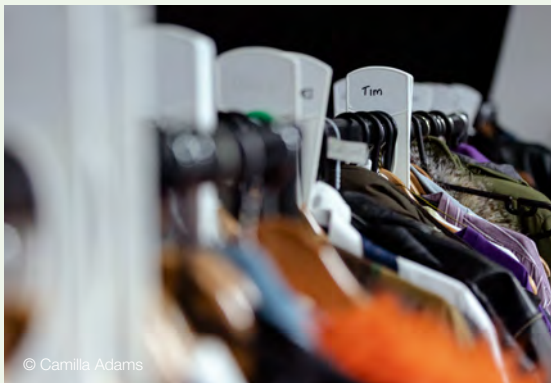
# Task

## Draw - Sets and Costumes

This task is a homework assignment.

Over the course of a week, when you are watching TV or films, try sketching, very roughly, what you are seeing on the screen. Don't worry about getting the drawings "right", focus instead on conveying feelings, or actions, or images that stick out to you.

Look back through these drawings and consider what they tell you about the story that was portrayed on screen. What stood out? What visual language did you translate from the screen to the page?



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## Backstage:

# 15 Producing with the Theatre Green Book

Complicité is committed to understanding and reducing the environmental impact of our work. To do this, we are using the **Theatre Green Book** in the making of *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*. The Theatre Green Book is a toolkit of practical guidance created by theatre-makers and sustainability experts that supports theatre companies to move towards working more sustainably.

There are three versions of the Theatre Green Book: Sustainable Productions, Sustainable Venues and Sustainable Operations. Each one has three standards that companies can work towards: Baseline, Intermediate and Advanced.

Some key guidance from the Theatre Green Book:

- Do more with less
- Use more reused components and recycled materials
- If it has to be new, think about where it comes from
- Reduce harmful chemicals
- Reduce travel and deliveries
- Make sure everything gets used again

For *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*, we are using the Theatre Green Book, Sustainable Productions, aiming for the Intermediate Standard. We agreed the standard with the team at an early stage of the production, before rehearsals began. The Intermediate Standard requires, among other things, that 75% of all materials used must have had a previous life and 80% of all materials used must be reused or recycled. The production manager tracks all materials - including set, costume and props - throughout the production process to make sure that we are on target.



## 15 Backstage: Producing with the Theatre Green Book

*“Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead is a work of activism, and the relationship between humanity and nature is, of course, the urgent theme at the heart of the story we are telling together. We have all been working with this in mind, across the scope of the production - from considering the significance of Blake’s poetry to sourcing set sustainably and supporting company members to reduce their environmental impact.”*

Amber Massie-Blomfield  
Executive Director, Complicité

There are particular challenges to making a piece of devised theatre in this way, as the company will explore a wide range of ideas and options for what happens on stage during the rehearsal process. We had an early design meeting at the office to pull out as much as possible from our storage to use in rehearsals. The team also found a haul of second hand coats during the trip to Poland and sourced additional materials as needed from second hand shops in London.

We held a second dedicated meeting of the creative and production team before the rehearsals started to ensure that all departments were working together to achieve these goals. As Rae Smith said, “We need to do things in a new way, to do that you use a new part of your brain and you can’t do that on your own, you have to do it collectively.”

All vehicle mileage associated with the production - including tour travel, company travel to rehearsal and deliveries - is also tracked and recorded, and company members are encouraged to use public transportation wherever possible. We hope to get a picture of specific aspects of our activity so that we can make measurable targets to reduce our emissions in the future.

The **Theatre Green Book** is a free resource for anyone to access and use as they make theatre.

# Task

## Research and Write - Theatre Green Book

Explore the Sustainable Productions Toolkit guidance and think about the types of productions you might work on in school.

Make two lists, one of the sustainable measures that are already in place - do you mostly use recycled sets from old shows, for example - and another list of measures that you think could be implemented or enhanced. Share these with the class to create a full list of achievements and goals for future productions.





# Research: Notes on William Blake

Written by Laurence Cook

We have been discussing William Blake and the relationship the play has to him since the very first meetings about the project. And that discussion is ongoing, in part because the way one of England's most complex poets connects to Janina in *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* isn't straightforward.

It would be easy to say that Janina loves him. But in the book, Janina says she doesn't 'get' Blake and his bizarre imagery. She even says she doesn't like poetry and can't understand why any poet wouldn't want to write in prose. Janina is more interested in certainties than in metaphor. That would seem to align with her background in engineering, a practice which works on the laws of physics, logic, and material properties. She would, in theory, be more likely to connect with Isaac Newton, Blake's sworn enemy.

In the story, it's Janina's former pupil, Dizzy, who loves Blake and is translating him into Polish. Janina is helping him in that task and, over the course of the story, does seem to develop something of a taste for the work of Blake. But the passage she connects to most is indeed prose. She tells us that an extract from his letters captured her imagination:

**"I found this captivating. I read and read, unable to stop. And perhaps it was just as the Author would have wished – everything that I read pervaded my dreams – and all Night I saw visions."** (*Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*)



# 16 Research:

## Notes on William Blake

Written by Lawrence Cook

Visions are a key in understanding Blake's role in *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*. Visions connect William Blake and Janina Duszejko. Each chapter of her story begins with a Blake quote, variously from *Auguries of Innocence*, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, *Songs of Experience*, and *Proverbs of Hell*. They reveal a major concern of Blake's, his passionate belief that actions in the physical world have ramifications on a spiritual and mythical scale.

### **A Robin Red breast in a Cage Puts all Heaven in a Rage.**

*(Auguries of Innocence)*

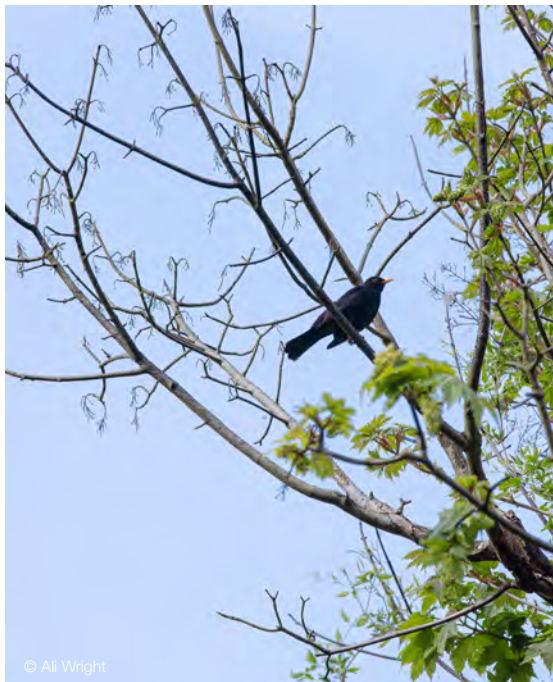
Similarly, Janina's vision is of a deeply connected world where animals feel just as much as humans and where objects and concepts are, just as in Blake's writing, deserving of capitalisation. Night, Being, Sun, Accident, Anger.

There are also connections between the lived experience of Blake and Janina. Both are outsiders. Both are at odds with the dominant ideology of their time. Both see beyond the human and the present. Blake had discussions with angels and long-dead philosophers. Janina confirms the events around her with the movement of the stars and planets. And she is in a kind of conversation with Blake throughout. She quotes him to other characters and uses him as a reference point for her own beliefs on everything from feet to how we interpret reality.

But most obvious of all, Janina and Blake both centre animals. Blake wrote about tygers of wrath, larks of joy. *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* includes the experience of deer, foxes, boars, magpies, fieldfares, and beetles. Both use animals as metaphors for understanding ourselves. And for both, the connection between us and the animal world is revealing. Perhaps even prophetic:

### **A dog starv'd at his Master's Gate Predicts the ruin of the State.**

*(Auguries of Innocence)*



## 17

## A Letter to Olga

A Letter from Simon McBurney  
to Olga Tokarczuk

Dear Olga,

I think you are marvellous.

My name is Simon McBurney and I am a British theatre maker, director and actor.

I am writing to you from where I live, in a remote valley in the west of England. I am trying to picture you wherever you are.

Here it is morning, the frost has not been so strong this early March, and the birds are singing as if it is already spring. I can hear a woodpecker and, for some reason, even though it is daylight, an owl, who has, perhaps, got out of sync.

I am writing to you because a little while ago I read *Flights* and then *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead*. And then I re-read them. Not because I thought I had missed something, but because I found that I lived in them. Sometimes a story can feel like a journey through a landscape. But your books felt like a site to be inhabited.

There was a hospitality which meant that I felt absolutely at home. Even though I was with you, in *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* for instance, on a plateau on the Polish/Czech border, I was also... everywhere.

The Turkish writer Elif Shafak talks about how in the middle of this pandemic 'board signs appeared randomly in public parks across London. When all this is over, how do you want the world to be different, the signs asked. What all this meant was not explicit in the question, passers-by were expected to work it out by themselves.... And someone had etched out in bold letters underneath it.... I want to be heard.'

That is what I felt reading you. I felt heard.

Of course, that led me further. I wanted others to listen, hopeful that they too might find a home in your words. So I shared your books. I re-told them to others. Aloud. And this is why I am writing to you now.

I want to ask if you would allow me to adapt *Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* for the stage. There is so much more to say. Forgive me. I feel clumsy with these few words. But I feel, in fact I know, that the living presence you create in your pages would find another voice on the site of the stage. Our stage.

Rather than trying to throw a further sea of words as to why, how, where and what this might become, I am writing to ask if there might be a possibility of talking about this as an idea. And if we are able to do so, I could explain myself further. We could meet online/telephone, or I am happy to come to you in Poland.

Please know this letter comes with the most immense respect and love for the work you create, and a profound hope for an opportunity to meet, virtually or in person, to talk further.





## 18

## A Complete List of Tasks

**This list is not intended as a specific lesson plan, but some of these exercises will build towards further experimentation in a subsequent task, and so they are grouped in an approximate order.**

Many of these tasks could be set up or followed by exercises or activities described in the *Devising Notes for Teachers* resource available for free on the Complicité website.

You may also choose to rent our documentary, *Complicité Does A Level Drama*, which follows a group of Complicité practitioners exploring exercises and tasks like these to create two new pieces of work under A Level conditions.

But as we hope you have gathered from this resource, there are no “right answers” and these tasks can be explored in many combinations and orders.

The company will often play games to start a rehearsal and we suggest you have your students play some of their favourite games before working on the more active tasks.

In the rehearsal room, the company often warms up or works with music in the background. Some of these tasks include sound or music already, but we encourage you to have your students work while listening to music if you find that it inspires them.

It can be helpful to set quite short time limits for devising and experiment work, with an option to rework or edit a piece after getting feedback from the group. Incorporating ideas from other groups’ pieces during these edits is encouraged!

**These tasks are written out as direct instructions to the participants, and include page numbers and links back to the section of the resource that they are prompted by, as a reference.**



# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Consider and Discuss - Myth page 12

Consider Karen Armstrong's definition of myth:

"A myth was an event which, in some sense, had happened once, but which also happened all the time." (A Short History of MythI)

What do you think this means? Why do you think it was useful to the team in exploring the book?

Based on what you know so far about Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead, why do you think it might be an important story to be telling now?

What stimuli or stories are you using in class, or in other projects, and what makes them relevant to today?

## Play - Animals page 16

Think of the different types of animals you are familiar with or come across in everyday life - cats, dogs, mice, foxes, sparrows etc. being as specific as possible (eg, robins and crows, not just birds).

### Movement and Centre of Gravity

Choose one of these animals for the whole group to embody and try moving around the space as the animal might. Pay attention to your own movement and your relationship with other animals in the space. Allow time for stillness as well as movement. What might cause an animal to be still in this space?

Find ways to play with levels in the space and explore where the animal's centre of gravity might be. You don't necessarily need



# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

to crawl to be an animal on all fours. (Your arms might hang down as if front paws, or your hands might be ears or a beak or wings.)

Consider Janina's perceptions of animals as "noble, wise, and plugged into forces beyond human understanding". How does that change the movement in the space?

## Interactions

Allow yourself to continue to be playful and interact with other animals in the space and to form packs or flocks.

## Introduce an Element of Shock

At the sound of a clap, all the animals react as though there has been a sudden, surprising noise like the sound of a twig snapping. The animals will slowly return to their movement.

A second clap is a louder noise, perhaps a rock falling. The animals react and return to their movement.

A final clap is a gunshot that has gone off. Again the group reacts and organically finds its way back to animals moving comfortably around the space.

## Warm Up - Shoaling page 33

This exercise is called 'shoaling' as the group are moving together as one like a shoal of fish.

Form a group in the space, standing close together, with everyone facing the same direction. You should be in a clump rather than a line, but as shoulder-to-shoulder as you can. Spend a few minutes standing in your group and see if you can start to breathe at the same time as the people around you.





# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Start to Move

The individual who is closest to the front of the group starts moving through the space with everyone else following, copying their movements as closely as possible so that the movement ripples through the group. The leader should use controlled movement to make it possible for the group to follow them accurately.

## Change the Leader

After a while, the leader can turn in a new direction, shifting the whole shoal so a new person emerges at the front as the leader.

## Play with Space

As you are moving around the space, feel free to play with levels and the different ways of moving. How are your arms moving? What part of your body is leading the movement forward? Continue turning and finding new leaders for the shoal.

This is best done in groups of three to ten people. If you have a larger class, you can also do this work in several smaller groups that can interact with each other.

# Research and Write - Theatre Green Book page 46

Explore the Sustainable Productions Toolkit guidance and think about the types of productions you might work on in school.

Make two lists, one of the sustainable measures that are already in place - do you mostly use recycled sets from old shows, for example - and another list of measures that you think could be implemented or enhanced. Share these with the class to create a full list of achievements and goals for future productions.



# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Research and Write - Props page 37

**A Task set by Assistant Stage Manager, Jeannie Fong**

There's an infinite number of versions of a prop that can be used. If the director asks for a teacup - what kind of teacup is it? What time period is it from? Who's using it, and what's their story? Getting the right prop can define an actor's performance onstage and shape how they interact with it, as well as how it is interpreted by an audience.

Pick a prop from a play that a character uses. Identify what their story is. Where did they buy the prop? Was it given as a gift? What time period is the play set in, and what time period is the prop from? Is it new, old, beautiful, ugly? What does this prop say about this character?

Find out if you can source this prop in person or online. Are there environmentally friendly ways to source it - maybe secondhand or by borrowing or repurposing something. See what price you could get for it.

## Experiment - Everyday Objects page 35

**In pairs, choose a small everyday object you have with you - a pen, a paperclip, a bracelet, a book etc. Spend five minutes exploring all the different things from the natural world that this object could represent.**

### Transform the Objects

Find ways as actors to help transform these objects for the audience by moving them in space and changing your relationship to the object. Make sure to include the objects' original uses or purposes as contrast to their transformed lives.



# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Create a Sequence

Find another pair to work with and share your objects and a few of the transformations you've explored. Are there any overlaps or connections? Work in your group to create a short movement sequence of the object transformations. Feel free to add in more objects to help complete a set or a group.

## Share your Work

Are there any overlapping ideas of themes? Could two or more sequences join together to create a longer piece?

## Write - Relationships page 21

Choose a character in a play you have read recently and imagine their backstory. What is their profession? What do they do for fun? What can we learn about their character based on their actions and choices within the play?

## Draw - Sets & Costumes page 44

This task is a homework assignment.

Over the course of a week, when you are watching TV or films, try sketching, very quickly, what you are seeing on the screen. Don't worry about getting the drawings "right", focus instead on conveying feelings, or actions, or images that stuck out to you.

Look back through these drawings and consider what they tell you about the story that was portrayed on screen. What stood out? What visual language did you translate from the screen to the page?





# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Experiment - Movement and Music page 40

### Create a Scene

In small groups, create a simple improvisation of a group task - for example, cleaning up an art studio, baking a cake, gardening, rearranging furniture etc.

### Add Sound

Choose three or four pieces of music or sound that have contrasting moods. Try playing the different music or sound options while performing the scene.

How do the different sounds change the story being portrayed in the action? Does the choice of music or sound make you want to modify the action to suit the mood? Do some of the music or sound choices feel more interesting than others?

## Experiment - Landscapes page 9

In small groups, look at how Olga describes the Polish landscape where she lives and where the book is set. What allusions does she make to evoke the different times of year?

### Choose a Landscape

Think about a neighbourhood you are all familiar with - perhaps near your school, it could be countryside or the local high street.

How does it feel to walk through this landscape at different times of the year? What sounds do you hear? Make a list of all the sounds.



# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Create a Soundscape

Choose a specific season or moment in time and create a soundscape of this landscape using objects around you or your own voices or bodies. Take into account how you want your audience to feel in this place.

For example, is the landscape you're creating peaceful, bustling, confusing or something else altogether? Think about the volume, pace, repetition, overlap and stage placement of the individual sounds.

## Share your Work

Invite the rest of your class to close their eyes as you present the soundscape to them.

## Play - Chorus page 23

Work in groups of 4-6 with one member of each group as the leader. The leader chooses a personal story to tell outloud, while the rest of the group - the chorus - stands behind echoing, or mirroring, the actions of the leader. Practise this a few times, paying careful attention to detail in the movements and gradually adding in speech, or fragments of speech, as the chorus becomes familiar with the text.

## Heighten the Work

Then increase the intensity and scale of the mirroring or echoing to further amplify or exaggerate the storyteller's words and actions. A slight glance to the right becomes a full body turn, a slight exhale becomes an exaggerated sigh.

## Share your Work

Discuss what happens to the stories that are being told when they are amplified like this? As an audience member, how do we interpret the chorus? Do we infer a relationship to the storyteller or the story?



# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Experiment - Narration page 14

In small groups choose a story or myth you are all familiar with, and improvise telling the story from the perspective of one of the main characters. Identify four key moments in the story.

### Tableaux and Position of the Narrator

Create tableaux for the four key moments in the story. Add in a narrator who speaks as the central character for each section. For each moment, try out a different position for the narrator on the stage.

### Narrator's Relationship with the Audience

As you're creating these moments, consider what happens if:

- The narrator character tells us the story from within one of the tableaux
- The narrator is outside the tableau looking at another actor playing that character
- The narrator is within the audience or is off stage

How does the narrator's relationship with the audience change in these different versions?

### Share your Work

Are there any common themes that emerge from the various tableaux? Was there anything surprising or exciting about another groups' work that you would want to explore further?





# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Devise - Dreams page 26

Working in small groups, share a dream that you remember having recently. Make sure to describe how the dream made you feel.

Choose a dream, or a combination of several dreams, as a stimulus for a short, wordless devised piece considering three key things:

- Make a decision about whether the dreaming character will have agency in their dream or be out of control, and how you will show this.
- Assign an emotion to your dream and explore ways to demonstrate that emotion throughout the dream sequence.
- Finally, make clear transitions into and out of the dream for the dreaming character how does the dream begin? When does the dreamer wake up?

Try to create this piece in ten minutes.

### Share your Work

Watch all of the pieces and share constructive feedback. What was clear or unclear in the pieces? How did they make you feel?

### Re-work your Piece

Return to your groups and spend five minutes either tweaking something that didn't work the way you wanted it to, or incorporating an idea from another group that you found interesting or exciting.

## Consider & Discuss - Endings page 28

Think of an ending to a film, play, tv series, or book that has really stuck with you.

Why was it an effective or interesting ending? How were you, as the audience, treated or involved in the ending?

What do you think Laurence meant when he wrote, "All endings demand complicity"?



# 18 A Complete List of Tasks

## Devise - Memories page 30

In small groups, share memories of a time you did something you weren't supposed to - make sure this is something you are comfortable sharing with the group, it can be small or silly.

Choose one of these memories to explore as a group. Take care to describe the details and textures of this memory - the sights, the sounds, the smells - as well as the actions.

### Divide the Story

Choose a central character, a central prop, and a central item of costume and divide them up among three actors. The actors with the prop and costume can control these items independently from the central character.

Explore a way of representing the memory with the prop and costume separated from the central actor, thinking about the pace of movement and why you are calling attention to these objects in the storytelling.

### Add Narration

Add in an element of narration. This could be from the actor playing the central character or it could be an additional actor looking at the scene. Make a decision about the narrator's opinion about this memory and how that is being communicated to the audience.

### Share your Work

Consider what theatrical languages each group used to indicate to the audience that this is memory.





***Drive Your Plow Over the Bones of the Dead* resource pack  
produced by Complicité**

Complicité's education programme informs and reflects its artistic programme, finding connections and ideas that contribute to the creation of new work, as well as complementing current productions. At the core of Complicité's education work are its workshops which offer an insight into the company's working process.

Complicité associate performers teach a range of workshops on physical preparation of the body, the neutral mask, ensemble, clown, improvisation and text-based work. Workshops may relate to a specific production or explore particular techniques or styles of work.

If you have enjoyed this resource, or you would like to find out about more ways to bring Complicité into your classroom, please email us at [creativeengagement@complicite.org](mailto:creativeengagement@complicite.org)

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This resource was created with funding from Backstage Trust  
Complicité is supported by Arts Council England

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