

# DRY RUN

## Notes to director:

[order Pizza for your anticipated audience]

Find some friends to help you. Make a big sign for the theatre door that reads *Extras Entrance*. Include a big directional arrow that points to the door. Set up a table next to the ticket sales table. Ask the ticket sales agents to direct visitors to your table after they have purchased a ticket. Pay your audience back (as much as you can afford.) Hire them as extras. Make your audience official receipts for this transaction. Do not let the audience into the theatre until the moment you are ready to perform.

Find two or more special fx artists to work with. Set up tables with lights and chairs. Design placemats for the makeover supplies.

Position your friend Scott onstage with a large dry erase board. Ask your friend Scott to perform a drawing based on any experience Scott may have during the performance. Scott will have no lines. Scott will draw lines. The lines will disappear and change throughout the performance.

Find two friends to perform the roles of lighting technician and lighting assistant. They will perform in the exact manner in which they would during a rehearsal.

Make copies of the script for the size of your anticipated audience. Highlight the lines for your extras.

Wear what you are wearing. Carry a camera with you.

From here on in read everything in this text outloud, including the directional notes enclosed by brackets [ ]. Consider this performance a cold read of a script and a rehearsal with a live audience performed by extras. Take your time. Re-read passages that need more work. Improvise. Block a scene. Take notes. The script can always go to rewrite.

## Scene I.

Open the door.

[extras enter theatre door and take places]

That's it. Fantastic. Act like you just got here.  
Yes. That's it! Perfect. Walk to your seats.

[take photos intermittently]

They arrive. They move to their seats. Slowly.

Yes, this is good. You know what to do. You have done this before. Keep moving through.

Act like you just got here. Act like your choosing your seat. And take it! Join the crowd. Blend in. Refuse to sit. Stand up. Be an individual.

Walk up the stairs. Like you own them. You've got it! Go to your seat. Take off your jacket. Turn off your cell phone. Find a comfortable position. Watch your neighbors settle in.

## Scene II.

[directed to self]

Where do *you* see yourself going with this?

Do *they* see what's going on here?

[directed to extras]

Do *you* see where this is going?

It's a performance.

Do *you* see what's going on here?

It's a rehearsal. It's a rehearsal.

It's a rehearsal for an experience.

## Scene III.

Why do we need to rehearse for an experience?

I'll tell you why. It might not happen for a while. You may think that you are having "a moment" with this performance tonight, walk out that door only to find 28 days later that you are still experiencing it, and there is even the possibility that it could get better with age.

Experience lives in the space of memory. It is lodged there with everything else you are still chewing on. It does not die young. Years later, you are standing in line [somewhere] doing [something] with [someone], and whammo, it's right there again, and it doesn't seem to be ending anytime soon.

Our experiences inform our expectations, our anticipation of future experience. The best indication of future performance is past performance. I hate to disappoint you, but if you came here tonight to experience this performance right here and now, you may experience disappointment. This performance may have an effect of lowering your expectations of future performance.

It's true. I cannot guarantee that you will have an experience here tonight. This is afterall a dry run for an event that may never happen. But I am going to ask you

to do something for me while you are here. I am going to ask that you take photos, tell stories, take notes (mental and otherwise) about any experience that you may be having. Consider this rehearsal a training exercise for locating experience.

[change location]

#### Scene IV.

[gesture toward Scott who is standing at dry erase board]

[light goes up on dry erase board]

Scott, over here will be drawing on his experience.

[rotate position]

There ... here ... are tables.

[point to tables]

The tables are dressed

[lights go up on tables]

... with lights.

[rotate position]

The makeover artists

[gesture to makeover artists]

... prepare, as if for patients. They are ready. They have done this before. They know what to expect. They do not know what to expect.

They anticipate the arrival of their subjects. It is as if they have been preparing for this event for their entire lives.

Picture them as patients. 5, 6, at least 8 or 10, RISE from their seats, WALK DOWN and WAIT, patiently. They make their way to the tables.

[Several extras move into positions upstage.]

Yes, here they come. They are wearing what they would wear if they were attending a performance, an event. They wear a "this and that" look.

[position an extra]

Could you sit here, please? Thank you.

It's as if the event is unfolding right before my very eyes.

#### Scene V.

The audience, hired extras, watch from their seats.

They are just like them. They move in the same familiar way. They identify with them. They empathize with them and see themselves reflected back in them.

[Some of the audience shift in their seats.]

They are an experienced audience. They scan the theatre for exit signs.

Some of them move in for a closer look. They are infected with curiosity.

#### Scene VI.

The makeover artists are creating wounds. At first bruises, gang green, scrapes, cuts. It looks bad for the Exploratorium. This is definitely an abnormal situation though this is not what the funders had in mind.

But wait. The makeover artists are not creating wounds. Rather openings for unleashing experience, ruptures in time, entryways and exits. This is only a cosmetic treatment. This is only a rehearsal.

[A few long sighs can be heard from the back of the theatre. Listen for them.]

The exchange is intimate in the triage center, in this intensive care lounge. It seems necessary to fall out of routine - to remove boundaries - in a supportive environment. This is a rehearsal.

[A few more of the audience rise from their seats. They are empathetic. They have forgotten about their exit strategy, although, they still wonder how long this can possibly go on? What is the end of an experience? What is the end of a performance? Do they have the time for this experience? How much effort will be involved? Will it take up too much space?]

You! Stroll down for a closer look. That a way! Act like your move is on cue. Noone will notice that it was not planned. You fit right in, naturally. Go ahead. Try it. Choose your seat as if randomly, then sit straight down. On second thought, stand. You've been sitting all day. Stand up for yourself. Protest the chair! You'll sit on the floor. Or stand on the stage. Ok, how about this...

[gesture to edge of stage]

... sit on the edge.

I am waiting. It is imperative that I fill these seats with bodies. How will I do it? The suspense is killing me. Just a little. The audience are testing my patience.

[Someone takes a photo of an itch that needs a scratch. This serves as a weak transition into the next scene. There is an awkward silence. Decide to strike take this line to rewrite.]

### Scene VII.

Can I get a light over here?

[The lighting tech responds to the request but it takes some time. This is a rehearsal.]

We wait. The absence of the light passes the time.

[The light switches on. The technicians investigate the quality of light and make adjustments. They talk about it outloud.]

This becomes a distraction, a window for uninhibited behavior by the audience without risk of drawing attention to oneself. It seems necessary if only to break the tension.

### Scene VIII.

The makeover artists continue. Time is not on their side. They have a lot of work to do. There are many unanswered questions.

[Hand scripts to extras. Ask them to read the highlighted lines. Remind the extras that this is a cold read.]

This is a cold read. Don't worry about making mistakes. We can repeat this scene as many times as we like.

[directed to makeover artists]

Extra: How long does it take to recover?

Extra: What will we recover from?

Extra: Social anxiety? Parasites?

Makeover artist: No. There are remedies for that.

Extra: It looks to be worse than they initially thought.

Makeover artist: It is further under the surface. We will need to build up the surface in order to reveal it.

[ask audience if there are any other questions]

[gesture to extras receiving makeovers]

The plasticity of the makeover is a reminder.

Noone can remember where the infection came from but everyone has it.

This is becomes apparent with the application of the base layer of the makeover.

Extra: Is the illness progressing or healing? Maybe both.

[Scott pauses at the dry erase board to think about this. The question is repeated.]

Extra: Is the illness progressing or healing? Maybe both.

How will Scott draw that?

The makeover artists have the answer.

### Scene IX.

[gesture to extras receiving makeovers]

They are hungry. There is something growing inside of them. It makes them feel... They feel they have to feed it.

Have the pizzas arrived?

Try that again. This time say "The pizzas have arrived."

[Bring in the pizzas.]

Extras volunteer to help distribute the pizzas.

[Meanwhile, use pizza delivery as a metaphor for a makeover.]

They are making pizza with extra toppings.

[Now use pizza delivery as a metaphor for social illness.]

They are used to filling orders. They don't carry change with them anymore.

### Scene X.

[More audience rise from their seats.]

They have been infected too. They need pizza.

[They proceed without the need for cues. One by one, they rise from their seats and slowly move toward the stage.]

### Scene XI.

This is the improvisational section. This is where the performance has the potential to fall to pieces.

### Scene XII.

[Ask everyone to get into position with a piece of pizza.]

[Ask if anyone plays piano.]

[Ask lighting designer to prepare that special over-the-shoulder spotlight.]

[Direct the consumption of pizza like musical chairs. When the music starts, the extras begin eating pizza. When the music stops, the extras freeze in place, the theatre and table lights go down. The only lights in the room are the exit signs and a special over-the-shoulder spotlight carried by the lighting assistant. The lighting assistant walks slowly past each extra illuminating the frozen poses one at a time.]

[Repeat this scene X times.]

### Scene XIII.

Extra: I am hungry.

Devour a piece of pizza.

Take your time. Have patience.

Look around you. Practice with your nearest neighbor. Perform a synchronized chewing.

[The extras perform synchronized chewing with the makeover artists.]

The patients are consensual.  
This is a painless procedure.  
They will recover.  
By now they have internalized it.  
Their whole area becomes numb so we have to imagine the pain.

[gesture to extras]

You are a natural! This comes as no surprise.  
It is automatic for you!  
You know what it is like to be an extra.  
You have been preparing for this your entire life.

#### Scene XIV.

[Flip pages of script as if looking for more pages.]

Announce "That's about it."  
That's all we have to work with.  
I think we should block some of this out now.

[Distribute copies of the script.]

This is where the performance really breaks with convention.

[Remind the extras that before leaving we need to block the ending. There are generally a lot of questions now. Always a good idea to pull out the spare microphone.]

#### Scene XV.

"So and so" need to get going we are going to block the ending now.

[Thank your cast and crew. Tell them how the performance would not have been possible without them.]

[gesture to extras]

Act like you are leaving. Gather your coats. Your belongings. Look under your chairs. Collect your thoughts. Walk out the door. Make your way. Good night. Keep practicing!

THE END

DRY RUN PREMIERED AT EXPLORATORIUM IN  
SAN FRANCISCO ON THURSDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2005 AS A PART  
OF THE SITUATION ABNORMAL PERFORMANCE SERIES.

DRY RUN WAS WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY KRISTIN LUCAS.

DRY RUN WAS PERFORMED BY:  
(in order of appearance)

Mischa Shoni, front table  
Virgil Polit, front table  
Moira Murdock, front table  
Kristin Lucas, director  
Scott Hewicker, drawing on dry erase board  
Terrance Graven, special FX makeover artist  
Monique Motil, special FX makeover artist  
Elaine Buckholtz, lighting  
Designer/technician  
Geoff Morris, lighting assistant  
Julie Chang, guest piano

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