

Workshop in the Meisner Technique

with Kate Maravan



This Workshop is an introduction for those interested in exploring the Meisner Technique as it is taught at the Neighbourhood Playhouse in New York and at many renowned drama schools all over the world

In 1931 Sanford Meisner formed the 'Group Theatre' with fellow theatre practitioners such as Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler. Its aim was to explore and practice truth in performance rooted in the methods of Konstantin Stanislavsky. As the work developed the members branched out and Meisner created what is now called Meisner Technique. He defined acting as 'Living living truthfully under a given/imaginary set of circumstances'. He would focus on the truth of the moment and abandon Strasberg's idea that actors had to bring in and re create their personal experience to play a part. In 1935 Meisner headed the drama department at the Neighbourhood playhouse in New York and remained there refining and developing his technique for the large part of his career until his death in 1997.

The weekend course will focus on the exercise central to Meisner Technique - The Repetition Exercise. Repetition teaches participants to take the attention off themselves and put it on to their partners' behaviour, allowing it to affect them and cause a spontaneous and truthful reaction. It develops a moment to moment capacity to listen/observe and respond with an emphasis on staying firmly rooted in the present. You will be encouraged to extend your emotional availability, deepen your observation skills and hone your hair-trigger impulses for use on camera, on stage, and in the rehearsal process. Repetition asks that we put our 'daily' selves, our 'masks' aside and observe and respond from as true a place as possible. We will explore how to challenge our defences and habitual ways of seeing and responding in order to discover what lies behind our armour and open up all that is available to us. Time will also be given to explore how the repetition exercise applies to working with text.

This introduction is open to both beginners and those who have tried some of the technique before. Our aim with this workshop is to provide actors and actor students with a continuing professional development of the highest quality and the opportunity to enhance their craft with new ideas and new viewpoints. Host for the workshop is *unSWEAP* in collaboration with *Frank Kelly Production*.

More About Kate.

Kate is an actress/director and teacher, educated at RADA in London. She has worked extensively in TV, radio and theatre and has written scripts for the BBC and Channel 4. She has worked closely with Scott Williams exploring and developing the Meisner Technique. A co-founder of WhiteBox, she co-created and wrote their debut production, *Angel Filth*, which was performed at the Tristan Bates Theatre (London). Kate Teaches weekly at the Actors Centre in London and teaches regularly for the Institute of Performing Arts in Paris as well as teaching many individual courses aimed at actors and directors.



More About the Technique

Meisner emphasized 'doing' with early training heavily based on actions. The questions "what are you playing" and "what are you doing" are frequently asked in class to remind actors to commit themselves to an objective rather than a script. Silence, dialogue, and activity all require the actor to find a purpose for performing the action. By combining the two main tasks of focusing one's attention on one's partner and committing to an action, the technique aims to compel an actor into the moment (a common Meisner phrase), while simultaneously propelling him or her forward with concentrated purpose. The more an actor is able to take in the partner and the partner's surroundings while performing in character, the more Meisner believed they are able to leave himself or herself alone and "live truthfully".

INFORMATION

Date: **Sat 8th - Sun 9th May** each day **10.00-17.00** (a total of 18 study hours á 40 min). Participants: **8-12 persons**. Place: TeaterStudio Ledeman, Gästrikegatan 13. Fee: 3200 SEK (TF-members, Stagepool and students at Teaterhögskolan/DI get a 10% discount). **IMPORTANT!** This workshop will only be held in **English**. Participants need a good understanding and the ability to work with exercises and conversations in English.

For more information, call course manager Tommy Lexén at +46 (0)70 176 22 28. For booking, e-mail bookings@frankkelly.se or go to www.frankkelly.se/meisner/

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