

Exercise 5: Interaction

- Two performers stand at a distance from each other and maintain eye contact. They work to feel the space between them, moving back and forth exploring the dynamic tension of space. Once a connection is made, one performer simply assumes a posture and facial expression expressing a specific emotion, trying to radiate that feeling across the space to his or her partner. Anger and defiance are easier to achieve than love or tenderness, but work with a variety of emotions switching back and forth to get a sense of what carries.
- Next have one person enter the performance space and assume a similar emotional stance, this time trying to express that connection to an audience. Remember, it's not charades, so the challenge is to create a dynamic connection based simply on activating the space, rather than doing something that the audience may get. After the first person has assumed a dynamic emotional stance, others join him or her so that the group gradually grows, all working to achieve that dynamic connection with the audience.

Conventional acting exercises often work with various means of maintaining a charged presence between performers, but it is generally something looked in on by an audience, and dancers work in partners and groups to create relationships among themselves and in space and time, but they are often closed off to an audience. Methods like Contact Improv are wholly centered on creating an intimacy of connection between performers as a private act, wholly separate from an audience. A Bausch performance opens up that relationship between performer and audience in any number of ways. Sometimes, they literally break the bounds of the stage/audience divide: serving tea to the audience, coming down to the front row of the audience to share family photos, or even instructing the entire audience in a gesture sequence that leads us to hug each other. But outside of these overt interactions lies a more implicit direct relationship with the audience in the way in which we are included in the space and time of the performed moment and the way in which that boundary is continually transgressed.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS

Bausch's performance practice is created with fundamental building blocks that rely on the actual people engaged in the event, even as they