

# Foundation Course in Acting and Theatre-making (Digital)

## Performance | Creation | Dramaturgy

The Foundation Course in Acting and Theatre-making (Digital) is a six month, full-time course in fundamentals of performance-making. This course will be conducted completely online and covers handpicked elements of theatre training that can absolutely be taught, practised and applied in the digital format.

The Three Pillars of the Course are Performance, Creation and Dramaturgy. Each Pillar is further divided into STRANDS that focus on specific areas of learning. The strands for the Foundation Course in Acting and Theatre-making 2020-21 are as follows:

## Performance

### 1. Conditioning:

Conditioning is an integral part of the performance strand and it aims to create a strong foundation for an expressive body through daily practice.

**Yoga:** The emphasis of the yoga practice is on building flexibility, awareness of the breath, flow of movement and focus.

**Kallari:** The practice of Kallari is aimed to build strength, grounding, rigour and discipline in the performer's mind and body.

### 2. Voice:

Through a holistic approach and a variety of techniques (Alexander Technique, Linklater, Feldenkrais, Fitzmaurice and Dudley) the students are going to understand what goes into voicing/vocalisation/phonation (sung and spoken word) and their body-breath-voice connection.

Students are going to be provided with a range of tools that facilitates them to assess, address and explore their professional vocal demands and they are going to co-build a vocal routine/regime that fits their vocal make and addresses demands. This includes working on articulators for speech and diction and it shall be constantly reviewed so as to

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match up to the constantly evolving state of every student, in group classes and during one-on-one time with the faculty.

### 3. Movement:

Feldenkrais Method is used to build physical awareness, recognition of personal physical habits, the release of unnecessary tension, ease of movement and the tools to achieve physical transformation (at even highly demanding levels) while the actor's body is still fully inhabited emotionally and with reducing the possibility of injury.

### 4. Acting:

Through the 6 months of the course, the acting classes are going to provide the students with the necessary tools for their professional journey.

- During the first unit, the focus is on the seeds of performance: the actor's presence, playfulness and individual creativity. Emphasis is placed on following acting and physical impulses.
- In the second unit with the use of the Lecoq Method, the students are going to begin identifying emotional/psychological qualities with nature and elements outside of their own body. Observation of animal movement and the application of certain principles will be used as guidance to discover the building of characters.
- In the third unit with the application of the Michael Chekhov Acting Technique, the students will work holistically on their physical and emotional expression, imagination and how to expand their expressive capabilities through a variety of tools.
- The fourth unit through the combination of the Suzuki Method of Actor Training and Viewpoints will begin to open larger dramatic territories. Through rigorous training, it aims to enhance the students' performative energy, build movement precision and increase physical awareness. The students will also begin to play in collaboration with each other, practice listening and discover theatricality and theatrical space even in the ordinary space.

## CREATION

### 1. Collaborative Creation Lab:

Collaborative Creation Lab is an exploratory module that happens at the middle and end of the 6-month course. The Lab is a guided investigation by the faculty for its students in the

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act of working creatively with others, and how one can develop these elements under the constraints of working through mediated spaces like video conferences.

It is intended to give the students a chance to apply their newfound creativity in partnership with one another, taking co-creator roles, writer roles, director or "outside-eye" roles to learn and discover methods and tools with which to work.

## **2. Creativity through Acting:**

In each acting unit, while learning the fundamentals of performance, the students are going to be provoked to access their individual artistic voice with the guidance from the faculty. The faculty will do this by providing students with tools to access their own creative potential.

## **3. Scratch Nights:**

It is the space for students to try out their own creative endeavours which may or may not be attached to the curriculum. Each year, the learning journey at the DSM gives students many inspirations and ideas which they seek to express. Scratch nights provide students a chance to work on their own initiative to play with and present some of these ideas to an invited audience.

# **Dramaturgy**

This course strand comprises of modules aimed to equip the students with fundamental skills with which to be an artist: namely: a capacity for strong critical thinking and articulation of ideas, a capacity for building their ability to communicate their ideas clearly in writing keeping the reader in mind and an understanding of the context in which they make, participate and present an act of theatre.

## **1. A Context for Theatre:**

By exploring a variety of plays from across time, geographies and politics, students are taught how to understand the context of a play and how this context dictates creative choices thus often determining the nature and shape of the theatre-maker and his work. Through this, they begin to cultivate the awareness with which to begin their own explorations of the question 'why theatre?'

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## 2. Writing:

Students are taught to think creatively and critically about theatre. They are taken through a process of birthing an idea, feeding and developing it through various stages until it becomes a dramatic text. They are introduced to fundamental principles of writing text for performance as well as multiple approaches to it. Through tools, essays and reflection journals, they are trained to be organized, disciplined and sharp in their thinking while developing an imaginative, expressive and unique artistic voice.

## 3. Aesthetics:

Students are familiarized with some fundamental concepts of design thinking. They explore the world of fine art and the aesthetic experience offered by it in order to develop among them ways of seeing and consequently, ways of imagining. They are demonstrated how this world informs and adds dimension to the conceptualisation and development of ideas of theatre-making. Through this journey, they develop an understanding of ways in which complex expressive worlds are created through artistic expression.

## 4. Curated Conversations:

A series of moderated panel discussions with theatre practitioners of different backgrounds and specialisations with a view to deepening student's understanding of performance, creativity and dramaturgy, and by looking at the work of these highly experienced theatre-makers. to gain their insights into how the students' training can find practical application.

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In addition to the three pillars, the Foundation Course will also include the following elements in the curriculum:

## Individual Student Mentorship and Attention

### 1. One-on-One Teaching Units:

Depending on the Strand, faculty have been assigned individual one-on-one or small group sessions with the students in order to deliver individualized learning and coaching, and for the faculty member to develop a better understanding of each student with which to run their group sessions.

### 2. The Student Convener:

The Student Convener is a member of the Drama School Mumbai faculty dedicated to tracking student progress. They act as a mentor and guide to each student in order for them to understand their learning journey on the course. They help the student to recognize successes and challenges, and to build the students own capacity to adjust and improve upon their learning processes and attitudes.

Students meet each unit with the student convener (as individuals or in groups) to understand and evaluate their learning progress. This will be done using the students self-reporting journals, and faculty progress reports on the student, and the conversation with the student convener, which the student is expected to turn into action points for further self-growth and development.

### 3. Self Reflection Journals/Reporting the Self:

Students are made to develop a culture of reflective practice through reviewing their experiences in training and reflecting on their learning journey on paper in a methodological and critically aware manner. This is an essential part of cultivating a life-long learning capability in the student. The better articulate the notes the more absorbed has been the learning.

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## COMMUNITY

The staff and faculty of the DSM are fully aware of both the potential of teaching via digital media and its challenges. One of the key aspects of the course that we are committed to fostering is a sense of community and shared experience. To that end, there will be multiple methods followed - digital-spaces, chat-rooms, and regular ongoing opportunities for students to check in with one another, hang-out and share, and generally discover the friends and collaborators in more informal student-run settings that are created in virtual spaces by DSM. This will be for faculty, students, and the wider DSM community to participate in.

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