



THEATR CYNEFIN



Academy
of CoArts

TURNING POINT
2020

**“ONE LIVES
AND THINKS
DIFFERENTLY AFTER
WALKING THROUGH THE
LABYRINTH.”
A TRAVELLER**

Dénouement

Anagnorsis

Catharsis

Character

Peripeteia

Suffering

Imitation



Theatr Cynefin was established in 2000 as a Millennium Festival Project. In the last 20 years the company has pioneered immersive theatre with artists and communities around the world.

The method it has developed, inspired by the Sensory Poetics of Colombian theatre anthropologist, Enrique Vargas: is called Sensory Labyrinth Theatre (slt). And the theoretical framework in which slt works is called Context Oriented Arts, or CoArts for short.

By now, there are many artists and companies using slt to create professional productions that are wowing audiences, or to create transformative spaces for working with diverse communities.

In order to spread and maintain the quality of the practice Theatr Cynefin established an informal network in 2008 called The Republic of the Imagination and in 2019 established The Academy of CoArts. This is the first training programme for the academy and details the three main trainings that we provide at the moment.

We are living in a time of transition from a paradigm which no longer works for us and our planet into an uncertain future. It is an uneasy change that needs supporting with sensitivity and creativity. Theatr Cynefin exists to use immersive theatre as a tool to explore, integrate and deliver transformative processes to support people and society through this transition.

Welcome to the Academy of CoArts training programme for 2020 – 2025: called **Turning Point**. We invite you to join us on an adventure. An experiment in applied theatre. Where together, we will take the risk of falling awake to the miracle of being alive.

There are three stages through which we will progress on our adventure: each asking for greater commitment and offering greater rewards.

The Art of Looking At Ourselves

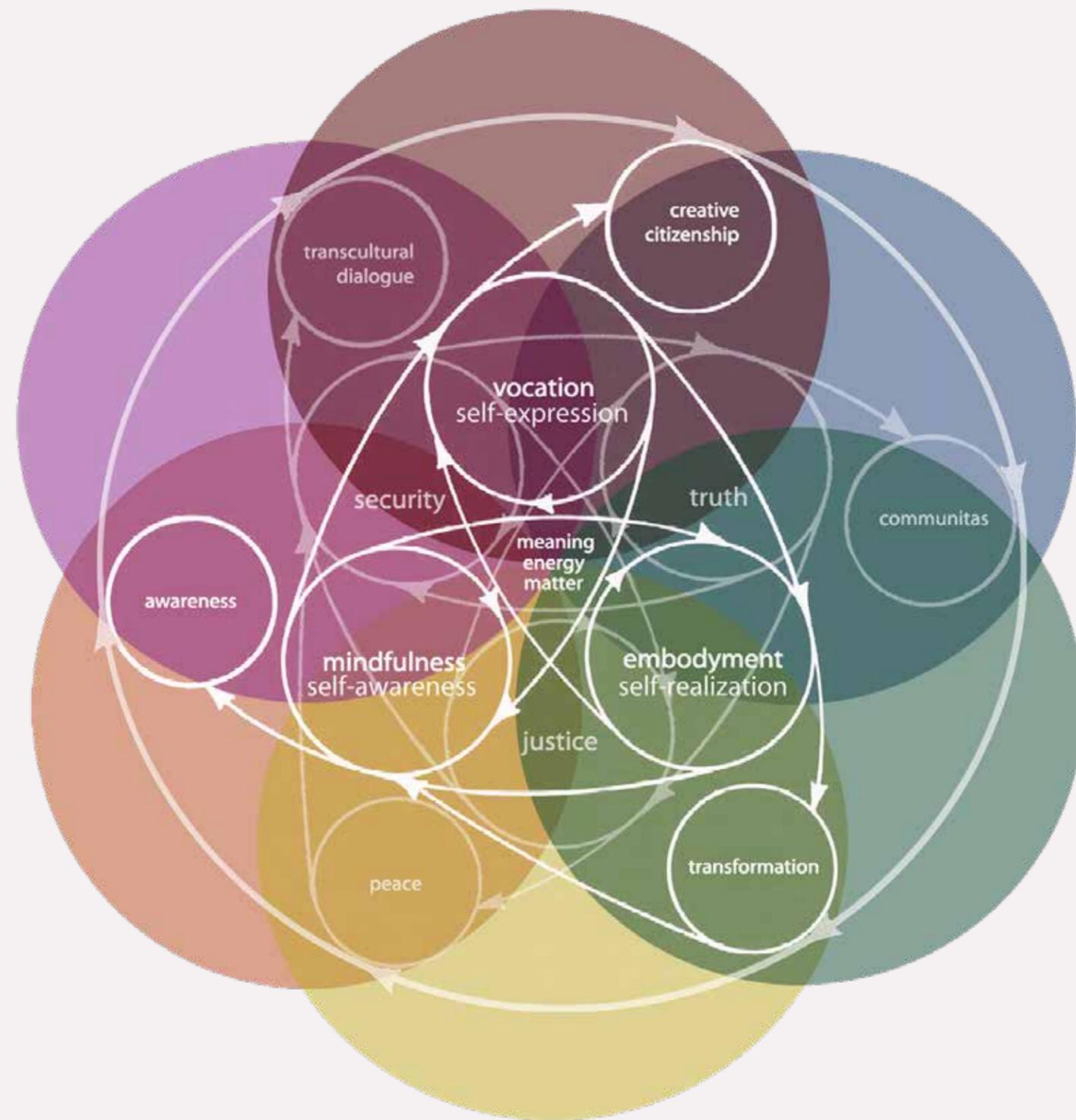
is a 3 day intensive introduction to the approach to Context Oriented Arts (CoArts).

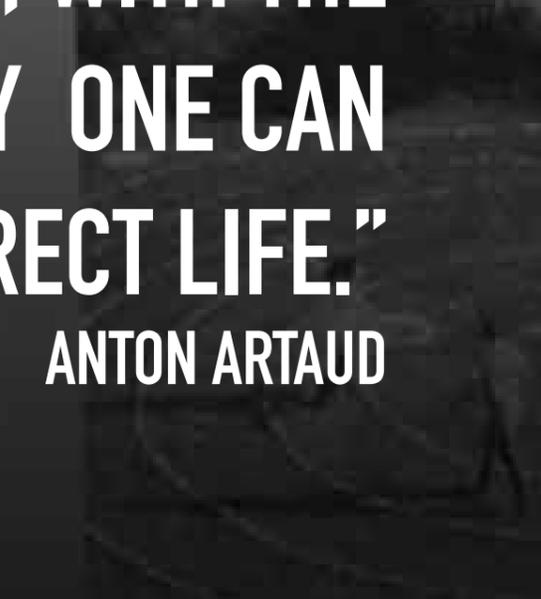
Connecting Matter, Energy and Meaning

is a 14 day training in the practice of Sensory Labyrinth Theatre (slt)

When Inner and Outer Become One

is a 6 month project to pilot a parallel infrastructure based on the principles of Rheocracy.





“THEATRE IS THE STATE, THE PLACE, THE POINT WHERE ONE CAN APPREHEND THE HUMAN ANATOMY; WITH THE HUMAN ANATOMY ONE CAN HEAL AND DIRECT LIFE.”

ANTON ARTAUD



The Art of Looking At Ourselves

Approach: The process

What if all that there is, is this –

This space, these objects, these smells, tastes, sounds, sights, thoughts and feelings? What if they are not happening to anyone?

In this space make a new world as you would like it to be. Place yourself where you most want to be. Now where you least want to be; and now where you feel you belong. If where you belong is not where you want to be ask yourself why?

Wherever you belong make it your home, your temple to this aliveness. And when the traveller enters, invite them to fall with you through this sensory portal where time and space collapse.



The Art of Looking at Ourselves is a three day participative arts workshop that leads to the creation of a site specific installation performance. In the process we explore together the possibility of theatre as a source of awakening and liberation from the illusion of separation, not through striving but through effort-less mindfulness.

During the workshop, participants enjoy a range of art and image making, movement and mindfulness activities through which they develop their own 'sensory portal', a site-specific installation. The week-end culminates in a performance, where participants invite friends and family to experience journeying through the sensory portals they have co-created.

The workshop and performance offers an opportunity to step out of time and enter a 'being' instead of a 'doing' mode. What we find is that people who engage with our work report greater confidence, clarity, joy, peace and aspiration. But even more than this is a feeling of having touched something deep inside of themselves, something sustaining which was always there but hidden by the day to day stresses and busyness of modern life.

Reacquainting with this inner strength creates a strong and sometimes unspoken bond between people. The opportunity to give this profound experience to others through the performance allows for a deep sense of connection and a feeling of boundless capacity to grow.

What to expect

CoArts invites participants to take the risk of falling awake to the miracle of being alive.

You will

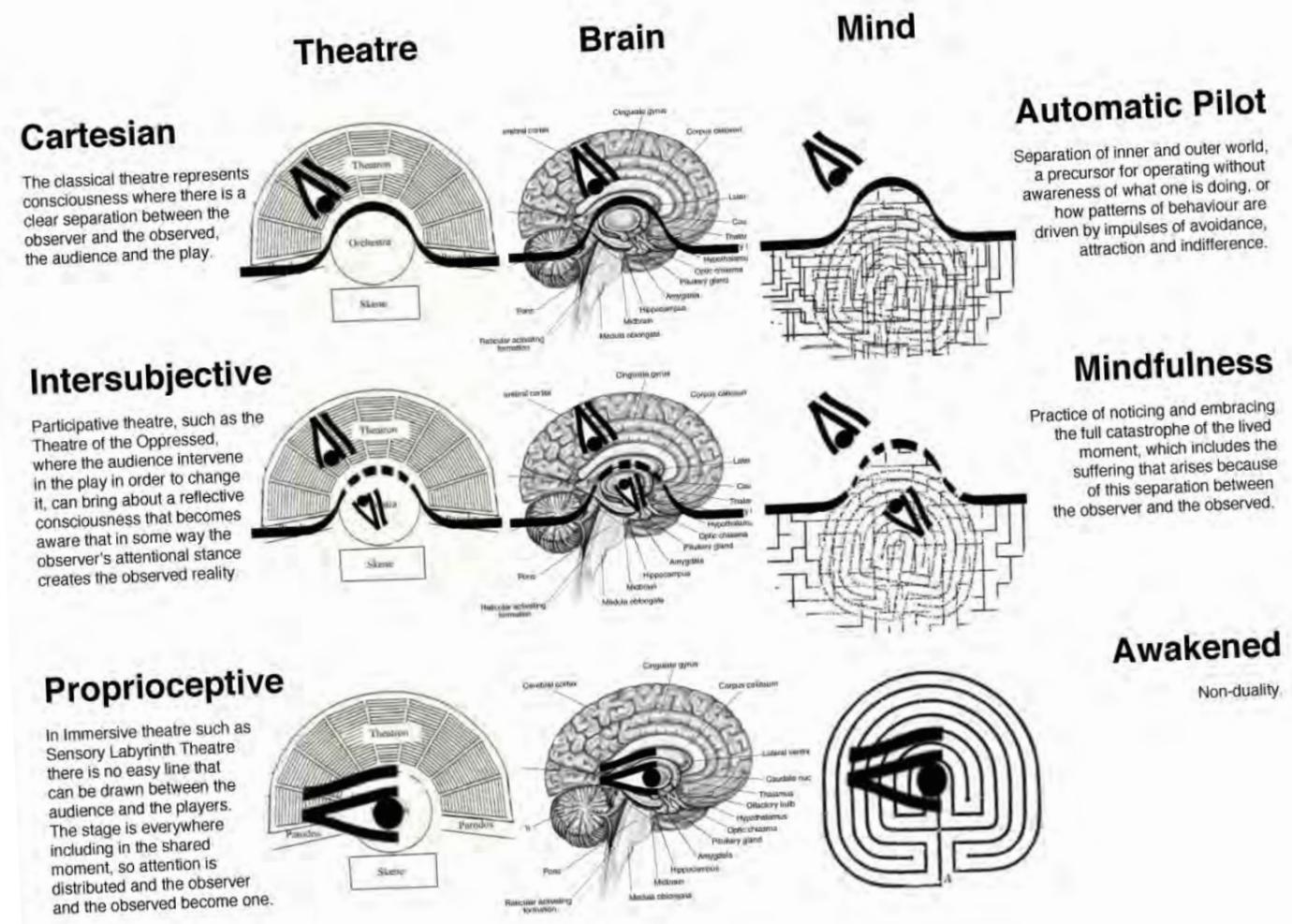
- Reconnect with the senses, awaken a feeling of 'aliveness' through art and image making, movement and mindfulness
- Experience a range of supportively facilitated activities through which we explore our relationship to self, other and the world around us
- Support each other in identifying and overcoming that which inhibits us from growth and connection

Who it's for

The Art of Looking at Ourselves offers personal and professional development for: therapists, performers, theatre makers, dancers, artists, activists, community organisers, social leaders, educators, third sector professionals, innovators, change-makers, yoga teachers, health & well-being professionals.

"Our normal sensation of self is a hoax, or, at best, a temporary role that we are playing, or have been conned into playing — with our own tacit consent, just as every hypnotized person is basically willing to be hypnotized. The most strongly enforced of all known taboos is the taboo against knowing who or what you really are behind the mask of your apparently separate, independent, and isolated ego."

Alan Watts



Connecting Matter Energy and Meaning

Practice: The performance

Imagine yourself alone in a dark passageway. You have walked barefoot around a corner and for a moment you are lost. Totally lost like you were lost as a child: knowing nothing but this feeling of being alive. The soles of your feet, the tips of your fingers, the hairs in your nose and the bones in your ears become your eyes and lead you on. There are sounds, voices singing in the distance. Or is it near? On this winding path, what is near and what is far?

The performer is the gatekeeper of a sensory portal, a multi-sensory installation in the labyrinth. They invite you to fall with them into this moment, this movement, this path. A path that makes itself from your walking it and is unique to you. Always flowing, the portal is never the same twice.g



Connecting Matter Energy and Meaning

This second (14 day) training for those who have completed The Art of Look At Ourselves, acquaints participants with the creation and performance of a Sensory Labyrinth Theatre (slt) production. Adapted by Artistic Director, Iwan Brioc, as an applied theatre methodology from Enrique Vargas's 'Poetics of the Senses'; slt ramps up the inherent but suppressed sensitivity of human sensory perception and the suppressed capacity of luminosity inherent in everyday experience.

Individual audience members journey alone through a darkened three dimensional labyrinth and along the way encounter moments and meetings that provoke sensory memories (sensory portals) through which constructs such as time and space, me and you, the inner and the outer start to collapse.

Framed for the audience as 'theatre,' this space also takes on the added dimensions of the aesthetic space – memory and imagination: so that consciousness and this conditioned process of construction can become an observable phenomenon – observed by the 'character' of the traveller in the performance.

In theatre terms this is an internalization of the Brecht's Verfremdungseffekt or distancing technique – *"which prevents the audience from losing itself passively and completely in the character created by the actor, and which consequently leads the audience to be a consciously critical observer"*.

The 'character' the audience is challenged to observe critically in slt is the 'I' that is experiencing.

In Brecht's Epic Theatre distancing is achieved because – *"the artist never acts as if there were a fourth wall besides the three surrounding him. The audience can no longer have the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is really taking place."*

In slt there is no fourth wall at all, the aesthetic space permeates all areas including the audience member's internal mental state, so that the 'I' thought can no longer have the illusion of being the unseen spectator at an event which is taking place out there.

In some instances proprioception occurs, which can be described as a sudden perception that... *"All there is is being. And what arises in that being is the idea that 'you' exist. It's just a thought, that there is someone."* And this brings about an indescribably profound sense of peace, connectedness and flow for which sages through the ages have used different terms e.g. wu wei, satchitananda, theosis, non-duality.

slt is to Rheocracy what the Eleusinian Mysteries were to Athenian Democracy. It is the practice of slt which brings about the capacity of practitioners to perceive and instigate a parallel infrastructure consistent with the reciprocal wellbeing model, which is implemented in Connecting Matter Energy and Meaning.

This is why the 'practice' is the performing, day in day out, of the Labyrinth to the public. So this training produces the Labyrinth in 4 days and performs for 10 days, afternoon and evening with de-brief and notes and one to one tutoring.



When Inner and Outer Become One

Integration: The Parallel Infrastructure

The world is not the same. There is brilliant light that sparkles around all living matter. Spontaneous acts of kindness flow unbidden, unconditionally and as a matter of course wherever you are and with whomever is around you.

Your practice has not taught you how to behave, how to be good or how to be an useful citizen. It showed you your natural state and in that state nothing is more natural than compassion. Inner and outer become one.

You join with others to form a community of practice, creating sensory portals wherever you tread. You map them digitally and connect them into pathways, to guide others, so that the city becomes a labyrinth of sustainable pathways: a parallel infrastructure that lies a hair's breadth from the prevailing one.





One strong effect to performing and being an audience member in SLT is the emergence of ‘communitas’; the quality, first described by anthropologist Victor Turner, without which community is just a term to describe a group of people and not a feeling of common humanity. It arises from a unifying flow of meaning from having touched together the ineffable mystery of our being: undermining any cultural, religious or ethnic barriers that otherwise divide us.

Those who wish to continue after the first two stages of the Academy are invited to explore the possibility of using this communitas as a source of energy to transform society and to integrate their inner experience with their day to day lives. Through a 6-month practice-based course, students of the Academy help build a parallel infrastructure which reflects the principles of Reciprocal Well-being – the driving force behind Rheocracy – an ecological economy that emerges from slt practice.

In partnership with NGO’s and well-being agencies, we will expand the Labyrinth outwards to include the whole city or town. The parallel infrastructure is a network of locations and a program of timed events that allow people to make the cultural shift to a Rheocracy as an alternative to the neo-liberal economic model that is represented by the prevailing infrastructure and which Plato identified as an inevitable consequence of democracy.

The parallel infrastructure is both found and created just as a path is made by the walking of it. It is aspirational and inspirational rather than prescriptive or conclusive and flows around and through the prevailing infrastructure without coming into direct conflict with it. In this way, through critical mass, the parallel infrastructure in time becomes the prevailing one.

With input from international trainers from several sectors, Labyrinth Gatekeepers become Curators of Sustainable Pathways that are mapped digitally and made available for the public to ‘perform.’ We must act the change we seek, and our role will be to create the stages in which the public can enact that change.

At the end of their year at the Academy students will have –

1. A knowledge base – Reciprocal Well-being combines cutting-edge thinking in Well-being, Neuroscience, Social Psychology, Creative Learning, Sustainability and Participatory Arts.
2. A skillset that enables one to facilitate this process – CoArts is a methodology that will enable creative practitioners to create a space with all kinds of groups where Reciprocal Wellbeing can be experienced and nourished.
3. A personal practice – While being something that creative practitioners can integrate into their current practice the training will also introduce, enhance or inspire their professional practice as an artists/activist/therapist and their personal practice in learning to be in this world.
4. A chair at the seat of the Rheocratic Government of Rheopolis. A network of parallel infrastructures governed according to the principles of Reciprocal Well-being.

In future years alumni will be able to invite Theatr Cynefin to set up an Academy of CoArts in their city or town and support them in delivering a Turning Point and creating a parallel infrastructure.

A group of diverse people are gathered around a campfire at night. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the warm, orange glow of the fire. The individuals are dressed in winter attire, including jackets, scarves, and hats. Some have their eyes closed, suggesting a meditative or reflective state. The background shows the dark silhouettes of trees and a night sky. On the right side of the image, a white text overlay contains a quote by Charles Eisenstein.

**RETURNING TO ESSENCE,
WE REGAIN THE ABILITY TO
ACT FROM ESSENCE.
RETURNING TO THE SPACE
BETWEEN STORIES, WE CAN
CHOOSE FROM FREEDOM
AND NOT FROM HABIT.”
CHARLES EISENSTEIN**

Schedule

Available at www.cynefin.org/academy

Hosting

A bit like a vampire, the Academy only enters where it is invited! So it depends on alumni or people inspired from reading about CoArts to host a training in order for the work to expand, breathe and grow. This invariably starts with bringing 'The Art of Looking At Ourselves' to your local city, town or village and dealing with the consequences, which is usually a surge of interests in creating an slt production - the aim of the second training.

Further details are on our website, linked above. and an information pack about hosting is available on request for each training level.

Enquiries

For further information please contact
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"I have learned to think more outside the box and be more creative, to be more aware of the life that surrounds me."

Miryana Mezeklieva, Friends of the Earth, Croatia

"All my perspectives changed. It's a different way to see, to feel, to listen. It's a new way of making art... the art of living."

Cinzia Brogliato, Actor, Italy

"It's a free-play zone in a chaotic world that desperately needs to learn again how to be sincere. An ephemeral space, lost in time, in which spectators subconsciously lose their egos and thus true, unaltered connection naturally appear between the spectators and the actors."

Sebastian Dobrescu, Director, Romania