

FARMERS DREAM

DRAFT 5/21/10

PART 1: PERFORMERS GUIDELINES

These are a series of performance guidelines and choreographed moments. They are intended as a menu of choices/options from which to choose from, and add more to throughout the night. Please read and annotate. We will discuss it together on Thursday night.

Note: We will be barefoot. (But Rosi & Lori may wear white shoes because their voices may need protection from the cold.)

1. Silence, and its exceptions: Performers must be silent at all times. But you may emit visceral or emotional sounds, like deep sighs, laughter (ha!), smack your lips, and exclamations of approval or disapproval (hem!).
2. All: A performer may indicate a “gendered moment,” in which all the men or all the women must do something together.
3. Labor: Generally, the men will work separate from the women, and vice versa. But a man or woman may walk across “the great divide” to engage the opposite sex in a noteworthy way.
4. Explorations: Explore the tools. Allow them to play with your body. Explore the body, allow it to play with the tools. (But be careful, they can cut: we need to avoid tetanus.)
5. Speed: Tools may trigger gestures. Carry them out without hurry. Be slow. Be very slow. Repeat a gesture within the same moment, or many times throughout the night. Farming is about repetitive cycles: the mantra of predictability. The blessing of boredom. And be aware that while you’re being slow, someone else might balance you out by being very fast on the other side of the floor.
6. Up & Down: You can run, climb, jump, fly, dance, walk in circles (forwards & backwards), stand still. It is a dream-like state.
7. Background: You can gesture during the silence, during poetry, and during song. You are free to sit still or gesture at all times. You can also pause/stop in the middle of your gesture to listen to poetry & song. They can affect you; they should affect you. Allow them to inspire and trigger gestures.
8. Railroad: If the train rolls by, you can turn around in your chair to watch it go by, or get up and walk/run to the edge of the pool of light to watch/waive it goodbye.

9. Same-Sex Partner: If you need to use a tool with a partner, go to their chair and gesture to them an invitation to follow you. It would be nice to create groups of people using tools, particularly as we have several copies of one (2 two-men saws, 4 cutters, 2 milk cans, 3 watering cans, etc.)

10. Grace: Be graceful; always be graceful. You are being watched, studied, and scrutinized by the public.

11. Breathing: You can sigh audibly; you can breathe deeply.

12. Rest: You can lie on the floor.

13. Breaks: Don't fight sleep. Go into the apartment for coffee, tea, a nap, cold water on your face.

14. Mirroring: Imitate others. Feel free to imitate a gesture you see and like in another, right after they did it, or later during the night. Repetition & imitation are key to farming. Learn gestures from others throughout the night. Teach each other.

15. Stillness: You can stand & do nothing. You can sit & do nothing. But be generous with the audience.

16. Dirt: It's okay if your whites get soiled throughout the night. If you cut yourself, go into the apartment and wash your wound. And come back into the performance if you can. Or change into lay clothing and ask someone to take you to an emergency room. Do not panic and take care of yourself. The rest of the performers should stay in place and keep performing as if nothing had happened.

17. Return: After you use a tool, put it back on the table where you found it. The table is an installation, a giant still life. But if someone gets up and approaches you while you are making a gesture with a tool, give it to them at the end of your gesture, unless they nod a no.

18. Noise: Ignore chatting, children, dogs, traffic, drunks, etc. The silence of the performance can take it.

19. 2 Voices (Rosi & Lori): Experiment with the acoustics of the space. Keep writing the text and exploring modulations of voice all night long. This is a laboratory for the body AND the voice.

20. Stage Presence: Only 2 performers can take a break at the same time. We are a small company, so the absence of 3 would be devastating to holding the space. Therefore, be mindful of others when you take a break.

21. Speech: You are free to speak inside the apartment when you take a break. But be aware that we can hear you outside. So, please whisper. And remember to close the red door behind you very softly. It can bang.

22. Classical: This is a Shakespearean summer night's dream. So you can be surreal and do the nonsensical, like farming the concrete, watering the concrete, planting seeds in the concrete, etc.

23. Memory: These archaic tools give us old bodies. Feel what it's like to be in that old body. Seek your deeper emotions. Experience real emotion.

PART 2: CHOREOGRAPHED MOMENTS

Note: *The genders perform gender for each other. And subvert it.*

1. A woman puts on an apron and performs a task (all the women take turns putting on the same apron throughout the night).
2. 3 women put on long-sleeve gloves and walk around looking at their hands as they hold them high, blocking the sun. Play. Maybe they climb on ladders to be even closer to the sun. (But they're shaky. Be careful not to fall.)
3. An angry woman arrives with a stack of dishes. All the other women arrive. They're angry. They all break the dishes. (And laugh, out of nervousness, or with relief. But only if it's a real laugh. Or cry, or sob. If you start sobbing, we will respectfully leave you alone in the pool of light until you're done. If anyone screams, we will do the same. This goes for the men too) The women slowly sweep up the pieces (no rush). We are barefoot, so we must make sure that no residual miniature fragments can cut us.
4. A woman works the water pump to fill a bucket (with make-believe running water) and then sprinkles the floor (with real water) and scrubs it. Spend the night scrubbing.
5. A woman sprinkles a cloud of flour into the air (with a sifter?) and draws on the ground. She either walks away from it or immediately sweeps or mops it. (Wait until it's dark, so we can see the full dramatic effect of the cloud of white.)
6. A woman lays out a quilt and lies down on it looking at the sky.
7. 2 women unfold a tablecloth and begin to work it in the air, many times. One may hide underneath. It can be fun or ritualized.

8. A man sneaks out a woman's glove and tries it on, puzzled.
9. A woman walks around showing the public the photo of her sweetheart. (But don't pass it around.)
10. A woman works the water pump to fill up a watering can, and then waters her garden, drawing a water circle around the circle of light. Another woman comes after her and mops it up. The second woman can be annoyed.
11. A woman gestures all the women to get up, form a circle, and run in the circle. You may laugh.
12. A man gestures for all the men to get up, form a circle, motions to three, and clap three times. They sit down. (Nonsensical moments.)
13. 2 men dance together. 2 women dance together. (The women do it first, and the men imitate.) It is interesting for the men and the women to visibly watch each other across the table, like looking across a field. You may even stand to do so, to get a good look, put your hands on your hips, or rest them on the back of a chair, as if looking out a window.
14. A man washes his feet. A woman washes her feet. They dry them with a towel. Be slow and tired. (In a tub)
15. 3 men open holes at the same time, spiraling the tools. (The women imitate them immediately.) How does the same tool look when operated by a man, or by a woman?
16. 1 man picks up the fly snap, and asks a second man to carefully (it's fragile) help him untangle it. After the first man spreads it out (in the air, on the floor), the second man gets down on the floor on all fours, and the first man puts it across his back. The man who's playing horse gallops around with it. The first man eventually takes it off him, when he's done playing. They walk away.
17. Steal the 2 rugs from the 2 voices and play with them, standing on them at a distance, bound by them like islands, trying to touch each other across the divide. Return them afterwards.
18. Women play with the turkey feathers. Make moustaches & sideburns. Flash a penis for a second and then cover your mouth in embarrassment. Tickle each other.
19. You can yawn and stretch for real. Use your sleepiness. (But go take a break if it's getting out of hand.)

20. A woman or man milks a cow using the milking stool. But you need to invite a member of the opposite sex to just stand there. You need to put your head against their back or bottom, to steady you.

21. A man hangs the bones of a cow around his head and stands still, eyes closed. A woman does the same.

22. A woman walks around with a sunflower, like a homecoming queen.

23. A woman rocks a bird's nest like a baby.

And many more you might think of in the moment. Spend time in the space with the tools, early in the morning, late at night. Make secret plans, recruit accomplices, and tell me but not the others. I need to know, but surprise your peers. But don't act. Don't clown around. Less is more. If in doubt, minimize the gesture(s).

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