



The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition

Anne Bogart, Tina Landau

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The Viewpoints is a technique of improvisation that grew out of the postmodern dance world. It was first articulated by choreographer Mary Overlie, who broke down the two dominant issues performers deal with—space and time—into six categories. Since that time, directors Anne Bogart and Tina Landau have expanded her notions and adapted them for actors to function together spontaneously and intuitively and to generate bold, theatrical work.

The Viewpoints are a set of names given to certain principles of movement through time and space—they constitute a language for talking about what happens on stage. Coupling this with Composition, which is the practice of selecting and arranging the separate components of theatrical language into a cohesive work of art, provides theatre artists with an important new tool for creating and understanding their art form.

Primarily intended for the many theatre artists who, in the last several years, have become intrigued with Viewpoints yet have had no single source to refer to in their investigations. It can also be used by anyone with a general interest in collaboration and the creative process, whether in art, business or daily life.

Anne Bogart is Artistic Director of the SITI Company, which she founded with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki in 1992. She is the recipient of two OBIE Awards and a Bessie Award, and is an associate professor at Columbia University. Her recent works include *Alice's Adventures*; *Bobrauschenbergamerica*; *Small Lives, Big Dreams*; *Marathon Dancing*; and *The Baltimore Waltz*.

Tina Landau, noted director and playwright, whose original work includes *Space* (*Time* magazine 10 Best), *Dream True* (with composer Ricky Ian Gordon) and *Floyd Collins* (with composer Adam Guettel), which received the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical, an OBIE Award and seven Drama Desk nominations. She has been an ensemble member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company since 1997.

The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition Details

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Nora says

This book is so much more straightforward and directly applicable than "A Director Prepares." A great read. By all accounts, this book is the entire Viewpoints training you get during the summer SITI workshops. So, if upstate New York and a couple thousand bucks are not easily at your disposal, the book is probably the next best thing. Although, I don't think anything could full stand in for working with Anne and the amazing artists of the SITI company.

Noah says

No matter how many books are written about viewpoints/suzuki, you will never be able to fully understand it without getting training from Anne or her disciples.

Mark says

I was looking for an introduction to Bogart and Viewpoints.

I'm still looking.

I can't say I "read" this book (it was more "skimming"), and my comments are limited to it as a *book* ... not as a technique. This is a reference work, and might be excellent after you've taken some Viewpoints work and are trying to "bring it home". But as an introductory work it's not presented well, emphasizing lists of exercises over theoretical groundwork.

What little I can extract seems interesting, and a perfect example of codified common sense: we know these things, we just need to name them.

I've been guided by friends toward *And Then You Act*, and it looks like they were right.

Morgan Kail-Ackerman says

Very helpful guide to integrating viewpoints in your theatrical curriculum and within rehearsals. As someone who wants to teach theatre and someone who is currently directing a show, this gave me good exercises and new views of teaching actors to work in harmony, create an ensemble, and get out of the pressure of impressing the director. It teaches people to believe in their instincts and that there is /truly/ no wrong answer. For anyone going into acting, directing, or theatre teaching, I'd recommend this quintessential book.

Shawn says

This is a very clear and practical guide to Viewpoints. I loved that every time I read a chapter I wanted to get on my feet, find some friends, and start trying out the exercises. That is a testament, in my opinion, to how well Bogart and Landau have laid out what this approach to theater (and life) looks like. It's also a weakness though, since relying on the book during a session seems antithetical to the in-the-moment nature of the work, and the energy inspired by their descriptions doesn't necessarily have an immediate outlet. I feel like the best way to experience this approach is in practice. But for those of us looking for an introduction without paying for a workshop, this is a great place to start.

Emily says

I don't think this book will help you much if you've never done or seen any Viewpoints. Most people I've met who've tried to read it without any context have ended up lost and confused. But if you have any previous experience of them, then this is a great resource.

Sarah says

A great intro to Viewpoints, mostly accessible to actors or other theatre artists, because it doesn't illustrate its activities. That being said, I've been partially doing Viewpoints for years and not really known it, so having a name for an exercise is always a bonus, and the freeing language of the authors allows for further thought on creative freedom and all the possibilities we can gift to each other as artists and as people. This book came to me at the right place for the right reason. Glad to have gone through it.

Kyle says

As much as I have taken to theatre education in the past few years, there is much more that I have to learn, and fortunately Viewpoints, Composition and Source Work are laid out in such a way as to not only enhance my understanding of the rehearsal process, but I can also apply it forward to my education courses I will be teaching again. "Same but different" applies to how we learn skills and concepts as embodied truths.

Aidan Johnson says

While the content is excellently written, in order to do all of the material you would need a ridiculous amount of time. A portion of the guide should have been sample workshops and more options of exercises to cut due to rehearsal time.

Zoe says

I previewed this text for my thesis-am finally ready to read it

Tess Van Horn says

Strange, complicated ideas to just read about. Better to "do" viewpoints, and then read the book, in my opinion.

Mark Brown says

Lots of good information. Sometimes directions don't make a lot of sense. I wish it had included pictures as well - it would help with imagining some of the exercises but still a great toolbox.

Ryan says

Wonderful ideas. This is mainly written for actors or anyone with a career in theatre, but it can be applied to all jobs I think. I used many of the ideas to design lessons in my classrooms that are fun and get kids out of their seats and thinking outside the box. Just reading certain passages gave me great ideas on potential lessons I could do. Inspirational to say the least. I would recommend reading it one chapter at a time to allow for practice and application of that chapter's examples and teachings.

Joe says

Having worked with Anne Bogart and Mary Overlie at the Experimental Theater Wing at N.Y.U. it is wonderful to once more find the anchor of my training. As I read I can hear their voices. This is beautiful and groundbreaking stuff.

Jeremy says

life changing - it is a work book though
