



# Augusto Boal

## PRACTITIONER CONTEXT AND THEATRE STYLE

'**Theatre of the Oppressed**' is an interactive theatre form invented in the early 1970s by Augusto Boal. Boal's aim was to help audience members identify their "internal oppressions" in order to begin to overcome them. He believed that theatre could be used to **liberate** and **transform** people, especially those that are **oppressed**.



## SPECT-ACTOR SKILLS

*Be a confident speaker*

*Give appropriate feedback*

*Be specific with your responses*

*Observe the action closely*

*Be an active listener*

*Think creatively*

*Offer constructive ways to challenge the oppression*

### Image Theatre

Is a tableaux exercise where a sculptor, seeing the participants as clay, moves them into a tableaux which depicts their understanding of a theme. It is designed to uncover essential truths, opinions, and observations about society, culture and self. Sculptor's may also use their own body in the tableaux effectively creating "human sculptures." The frozen images represent the sculptor's experiences, feelings, ideas, oppressions, and/or dreams for the future. The sculptor changes between each tableau so that the exercise explores many participants ideas.

### Forum Theatre

Forum Theatre takes place in a circle with all participants in the role of '**spec-actors**'. An improvisation is placed into the centre of the circle. This explores any real theme/or situation from day to day life. The spec-actors watch the action and shout 'stop' to develop the Drama. They can either give an instruction, take the role of one of the characters or demonstrate an idea before letting the original improviser retake the role. It was a way for participants to explore their own experiences through theatre.

Originally it was a problem-solving technique during which an unresolved scene of oppression is presented in improvisation. It was replayed with the audience invited to stop the action, replace the character they feel is oppressed, struggling, or lacking power, and improvise alternative solutions the future.

## WIDER RESEARCH



*"Theatre is a form of knowledge; it should and can also be a means of transforming society. Theatre can help us build our future, rather than just waiting for it."*

*Augusto Boal*