

# HACK THE THEATRE

TOOLKIT

TEEN AMBASSADORS  
ACROSS EUROPE

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THEATRE  
EUROPEAN  
ENGAGEMENT  
NETWORK



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# HACK THE THEATRE TOOLKIT



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including:
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Note: The 'Hack the Theatre' Toolkit, developed by Teatercentrum in Denmark, is an experimental tool so please feel free to use it as inspiration and to make it your own. If you would like to discuss how to use the tools in more detail, please contact Naja Birke from Teatercentrum via email: [nb@teatercentrum.dk](mailto:nb@teatercentrum.dk)

## WORKSHOP PLAN

To 'Hack the Theatre' is to produce a comment that acts as a conversation starter between Creative Professionals & Artists and the Audience (or between Audience groups) about how a performance is perceived.

Production:

Teacher/ Facilitators:

Date:

Session Duration: 1 Hour

### Resources / Materials needed

Paper, Pens, Post It / Sticky Notes

### Aims / Learning Outcomes

1. For the Teenagers to reflect on their thoughts about Theatre and to engage in a dialogue about it.
2. For the Teenagers to learn our 'Hack the Theatre' methods.
3. For each Teenager to proactively participate in the workshop (either in pairs, small groups and/ or to the whole group).

Timing	Activity
5 Minutes	<b>Welcome and Introduction to the Workshop</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the Teenagers to discuss in pairs what they think 'hacking' means and what it means 'to hack'. Then ask each pair to feedback. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Often people think of hacking as a kind of shady business (for example, stealing computer documents or committing identity theft) so it will be interesting to hear the thoughts they share.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In this workshop, the term 'hacking' means to break down and discuss a small element of a performance.</li> <li>• There are no right or wrong ways of conducting a 'Theatre Hack' as the approach is experimental.</li> <li>• The hacks produced during the workshop should not be considered to be 'finished products' but as being a conversation tool to use when discussing a Theatre performance.</li> </ul>

### 5 Minutes Setting of Group Rules

- Ask the Teenagers to discuss the following questions in groups. They should use the questions to structure their discussion. Ultimately each group should use the questions to help them agree upon a minimum of three ground rules of 'Theatre Hacker Ethics':
  - Who is a good Theatre Hacker?
  - What makes a good Theatre Hack?
  - How can a good Theatre Hack be made?
  - What should we be aware of in the process of producing a hack together?
- Ask each group to present their ground rules in a creative way.
- Write the ground rules on the board or a big piece of paper on the wall.
- These will be the rules for the workshop.



### 5 Minutes Energiser

#### Throw a Face

*Fun exercise, good for concentration and paying attention to others*

- Set up: Stand in a small circle.
- The first person pulls a face (they are allowed to use their hands as part of their gesture) and they show it to the rest of the circle. Then they pretend to peel it off and throw it onto another person.
- The face they 'threw' to the other person is now 'stuck' on that person's face.
- The recipient of the face must try to make the same face before pulling a different face and throwing it to the next person, and so on.





### 15 Minutes Talking About the Theatre

- In small groups, ask the Teenagers to log onto [www.talekunst.dk](http://www.talekunst.dk) or <http://www.talekunst.dk/en/home/>.
- On this site they will find four different 'conversation' tools: the Generic conversation, the Narrative conversation, the Scenographic conversation, and the Experimental conversation.
- This resource was designed by Matthew Reason, York St John University, United Kingdom ([www.matthewreason.com](http://www.matthewreason.com)). It was inspired and adapted from the Project MUSE, Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- Each group should choose one conversation to focus on. They will be able to type in their responses onto the website and download their full notes at the end.
- Give the groups time to discuss their topics.
- Ask each group to share one reflection with the wider group from their conversation that they think is most important.

### 20 Minutes Choose Your Hack

- Stick up posters of the four hacks from the 'Pick Your Hack' resources (you can find this in later pages of this Toolkit).
- These posters should be placed in four different places around the room, with a fifth poster that says, 'Design Your Own Hack'.
- In the same groups as in the previous activity, assign each group to one of the five posters. Give the Teenagers two minutes to write down as many ideas as they can for making a hack about the performance on Post It/Sticky Notes stuck onto that poster.
- After two minutes, all groups should rotate around the room and do the same on the next sheet, and so on.
- When all groups have provided their input on each poster, give the Teenagers a minute to read the Post It/Sticky Notes and each individual should then decide which poster they want to pick (every person picks for themselves, not as a group).
- Ask the Teenagers to stand by the poster they have picked.
- In the new groups formed, ask the Teenagers to discuss which hack idea on the poster they want to produce and how. Give them at least five minutes.



### 20 Minutes Produce Your Hack

- Teenagers should produce a hack in their groups which makes a comment about the specific theatre performance being explored. The hack should not last more than two minutes and should not be a final, polished product. Instead, it is a provocation that the Teenagers are offering to engage each other, as well as Teachers and Creative Professionals & Artists, in a longer conversation.
- As the Teenagers are producing their hacks, the Facilitator, as well as any Teachers or Creative Professionals & Artists present, should move around the groups and answer any questions / support the Teenagers to engage fully in this activity.
- You can choose to shape the hack as the facilitator or to give extra inspiration to the Teenagers to lead them in a certain direction. For example, you could give every participant some fabric, or tell them to use a specific line of dialogue from a performance, or to include a relative of one of the characters etc. This is a really good way of challenging the teenagers – it creates an obstacle which forces them to think creatively about how to solve the task.



### 15 Minutes Present the Hacks

- Each group should present or perform their hack to the wider group.
- These hacks should be followed by feedback and questions from the other participants.
- Repeat for each group until everyone has shared their work back.

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## ACROSS EUROPE

5 minutes    One Word Reflection



- Go around in a circle and ask each participant to share a one-word reflection about what they have learnt/what they will take away from the workshop.

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Dialogue Community Performance (UK) | "la Caixa" Foundation (Spain)  
Scenekunstbruk (Norway) | Teatercentrum (Denmark)



## PICK YOUR HACK

### A COMMUNICATION HACK

- **"How will we share this experience with others?"**

Example Formats for a Communication Hack:

Podcasts, Storytelling, Radio Jingles, TV Commercials, Interviews, Sketches, Social Media Posts etc.

### AN ADJUSTMENT HACK

- **"How could the performance be adjusted in some way?"**

Example Formats for an Adjustment Hack:

Re-enacting a Scene in Your Own Way, Drawing the Adjustment You Want to See, Writing or Creating a Review etc.

### A BEFORE AND AFTER HACK

- **"Should something special happen just before or after the performance?"**

Example Formats for a Before and After Hack:

Scenographic Drawings, Plans for a Related Exhibition, Sharing Ideas for How Audience Should Enter/Leave the Space, Planning an Activity Linked to the Performance etc.

### A THEMATIC HACK

- **"Is there a theme from the performance we want to talk more about?"**

Example Formats for a Thematic Hack:

Discussing a Theme Through Story, Conducting Interviews with Each Other About the Themes, 'Hot-Seating' a Character from the Performance, Producing a Video Clip, Arranging a Debate for Further Discussion etc.



## REVERSE POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

Usually, post-show discussions are always the same.

A panel of Actors and/or Artistic Directors answer questions from the audience - and very often these questions are the same.

In the 'reverse post-show discussion' format, we work the other way - generating a dialogue about the audience experience of a given performance. In our experience, it flips the conversation and produces a dialogue between the Artist and the Audience that has a very different quality to usual. Often, Artists gain a greater insight into what their audience has experienced.

**Here are some suggestions on how to set up a 'reverse post-show discussion':**



Use the 'Pick a Hack' method described in this toolkit for inspiration. You can use these questions and ideas to help the audience-participants produce their comment that they want to share with

the Artists. You can allow the audience-participants to pick any type of hack they want or you can specify what format you need them to use (e.g. produce a short drama sketch). You can also add other instructions - for example, "you need to incorporate a specific object" like a white sheet, their left shoe, a toilet paper roll etc.



Use the 'Talking About the Theatre' activity from the 'Hack the Theatre' workshop plan in this toolkit to help the audience-participants begin conversing about the performance. You could invite

the Creative Professionals & Artists to mingle between the groups to hear what is being discussed.

Arrange with the theatre venue to use the stage after

the performance. Ask the artists to step aside and invite the audience onto the stage. Ask one or two of the audience-participants (depending on the size of the group) to lie down on the stage. Ask the other participants to draw a line around that person's body with chalk on the stage floor. Next, ask the audience-participants to write or draw their thoughts about the performance in and around this chalk outline. They should connect their thoughts to the specific parts of the body that the performance affected (for example, themes that the performance made them think might be in the brain, anxiety about the fate of the characters might be in the stomach, or excitement may be in the tingling toes!) Encourage the artists to ask the audience-participants questions to encourage discussion.



Stand in a circle and, using a soft indoor ball, throw a ball from one audience-participant another. Each time the ball gets passed, the recipient should answer a simple question with a one word answer. For example, "what did you see/hear/smell/experience?"

## EXPLANATION VIDEO

You can find a video explaining the 'Hack the Theatre' methodology, as well as some examples of Hacks produced by Danish Teenagers at this [Youtube link](#).