

Michael Chekhov

June 24, 1937

LIGHTING
LANGUAGE OF COLORS ON THE STAGE
TECHNICAL REHEARSALS
INSPIRATION

LIGHTING: Designers:

The Fishing Scene:

For the quarreling scene we must have more green and yellow, and more red, brown-red. During this scene there must appear more red spots in shawls, handkerchiefs, etc. When the boat is nearing, try to paint everything yellow, a primary yellow in the costumes, in the spots. This will give a greater activity and more streaming somewhere. Change all black things to blue. At the moment when the boat is seen, gradually more yellow must appear. In Mother Gillard's moment, take away all possible red spots. We need some gray here. For this scene, after the yellow, it is very good to have a lot of gray. In John's scene there must be more blue and green - no longer gray but blue.

LANGUAGE OF COLORS:

~~This was our first real attempt to find the language~~
of the colors on the stage itself, not only by drawing and painting. We have got some new ideas as to how to change them. It is an attempt, and we must realize that we will always get some new things when we see things on the stage. Also some difficult problems will arise, and this is the problem for the director and designer and the assistants. They must decide

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how to do this changing of the colors in a sensible way, so that it will not call the attention of the audience to it, but still the changes will be there.

What kind of shawls, headcoverings, aprons, are possible, and how can we justify them? Please try to justify all the changes in color, and show us next time the right lights and settings - changing as if acting the whole scene. You will not have your cast act, but they will take their places in the *mise en scène* of the moment, and then you can change many things.

TECHNICAL REHEARSALS:

The purpose of all technical rehearsals is always for some special aim - for finding, exploring or exercising some special things which we need to find or exercise consciously. For example, if you have to do a very complicated movement on the stage, and you have to rehearse it - this is a technical rehearsal. Or let us say the director has to find a *mise en scène* for a particular moment - this is a technical rehearsal. For the actors it means that they know why the rehearsal is technical. In the case of the director who wants to find a *mise en scène*, then the actors must be just like bodies, but for themselves they must explore something, and justify and awaken the feeling of truth. The actors must always be active for themselves, but they must be

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like puppets for the director at certain times. It depends very much upon the circumstances, and the aim of the director. It is not a set law.

INSPIRATION:

I have mentioned once that the actor may be inspired during a technical rehearsal. This is very possible because during a technical rehearsal the actor's soul feels free, and this is the moment when inspiration comes more often than otherwise. If inspiration comes, everyone will understand that you are acting because you have some inspiration. But what is not allowed is half-doing, half-acting, half-technical. This is very disturbing for us. Of course such rules are relative, because they must be flexible, but this is the idea of the technical rehearsal.