

# Performance Ecology:

is Jairo Cuesta's term for a line of research he has conducted since working in Jerzy Grotowski's Theatre of Sources. He traces the word *ecology* to its Greek root *oikos*, meaning "house," and relates Performance Ecology to humanity's increasing alienation from the "first house"—the body in the natural environment. The residential work sessions in Performance Ecology are designed around the rudimentary performative elements concerning one's humanness and relationship with the physical world. As we enter the post-human age of high technology, Jairo Cuesta and James Slowiak have organized various aspects of their respective research into a flow of detailed exercises (individual and collective), songs, dances, texts, and creative work that serve to reclaim our vital forces and capacity for contact.

New World Performance Lab members lead participants through the intensive program (which usually lasts from three days to ten days) in an attempt to rediscover the urge to act. As the participant struggles to remember, to reveal, to accomplish or to create, he/she fights for mastery of the body and voice, vitality and purpose. Participants express themselves in patterns of voice and movement whose tension, composition and energy uncover a unique and untamed power and precision. **Performance Ecology** seeks to liberate the dormant energy and creative impulses in the participant/performer—in solitude or in company, with the space or with the partner.

**Performance Ecology** involves creative training in the basic elements of the actor's craft: physical exercises, voice work, attention and perception, precision and flow, seeing, listening, meeting and the montage of physical actions. The work with songs from the Shaker culture and other traditions, exercises in coordination, individual actions, structured improvisation, dramaturgy, montage, and the acting tools culminates in a Rendering that provides the opportunity for each participant to engage in the dynamics of performance.

Performance Ecology is more than a workshop; it is a performance event that encourages the task of creating active culture. Cuesta and Slowiak have constructed a structural tool that builds community and compassion while exploring the participant's individuality, creativity, and cultural dignity.

The New World Performance Lab also offers workshops in acting skills such as : Physical Action: A Psychophysical Approach to the Actor's Craft; Creating Performance; as well as workshops devoted to the voice or physical training techniques. Costs vary depending on the extent of activities and persons involved. Contact NWPL for more information.