

THE JOURNEY OF MASKS

Masks in theatre and beyond from the Neutral mask to the Red Nose

*A lecture-presentation
with
Giovanni Fusetti*

From shamanic rituals to contemporary carnival, masks have always been essential human expression. As sacred objects mask are connected with the mystery of shape-shifting and journeying into different realms of reality. Peoples in all continents and times have used masks to perform rituals and to connect with the world of spirits.

Masks are connected with the mystery of the human soul, with its multiples archetypes and powers. Carl Gustav Jung used the word masks to describe the different psychic personas that inhabits every human. The possibility of exploring the different powers is the gift of mask to consciousness.

In recent history, masks moved from ritual to theatre, and were already present in the first codified form of theatre, the Greek Tragedy. The actor is the master of shape-shifting, and masks are the ultimate tools of its transformation.

During this presentation the Italian theatre master and fool Giovanni Fusetti, will guide the audience into a journey of discovery of the world of masks. After an anthropological introduction the space will be brought to life with the Neutral Mask, the starting point of Physical Theatre training, as developed by Jacques Lecoq and Amleto Sartori. This mask reveals a state of calm and absence of conflict, bringing the body to a state of silence. Once the neutral state is reached, all stories can be told, like dramatic signs on a white page of silence. The appearance of the first simple forms and dynamics are visible in the Larval Masks, which belongs to the swiss carnival tradition. Expressive masks will present a growing complexity of lines, shapes and dramatic nuances.

Once the mouth is uncovered we enter the world of half masks, from Naïve Masks to Commedia dell'Arte Stock characters, both traditional and contemporary. The final step is the smallest mask in the world: the Red Nose. The mask of sublime stupidity, which reveals the unique comic presence in every human being, based on his unique physical and emotional space and body. The clown is the poetical transposition of the unique silliness of every person.