

Harrington  
21M.604 Fall 2005  
Week 9, Handout

In-Class Exercise: Composition

Divide into groups of 3-5.

Each group will create a 5 minute piece which is an expression of a Sam Shepard/ Fool for Love world.

The piece will be in three parts, each with a clear beginning, middle, and end, and each separated by a theatrical DEVICE such as a blackout, a voice-over, a bell, etc.

The 3 parts are titled:

1. The way things look in this world.
2. The way things sound in this world.
3. The people are in this world.

You MUST include:

1. A setting which is the perfect architectural environment for your piece.
2. A clear role for the audience. Are we voyeurs? Judges? Historical archaeologists?
3. A Revelation of Space. Example: The curtain rises and we see the stage, OR a door opens and we see endless corridors behind it.
4. A Revelation of Object. Example: Someone opens a box and there is a gun inside it (or a head...)
5. A surprise entrance
6. Music from an unexpected source. Example: The doctor opens his medical bag and the aria of an operatic soprano emanates from inside it.
7. 15 seconds of simultaneous unison action.
8. A broken expectation.
9. A staged accident.
10. Two uses of extreme contrast: loud/quiet, fast/slow, dark/bright, violent/gentle, still/chaotic.

The objects:

A red dress  
A rocking chair  
A suitcase  
A shotgun  
A bottle of whiskey  
A rope  
A shoe  
A musical instrument

The sounds:

Door slam—exaggerated

Head beating against a wall  
Car tires squealing on pavement  
A gun shot  
Whispering  
A scream

The actions:

Clutching a leg  
A slap  
A kiss  
A door slam  
Head banging against wall.

The only text you can use:

I got a piece of ground in Wyoming.  
Your neck.  
I'm a nice guy.  
You can take it, right?  
I don't understand how I could hate you so much.  
I promise.  
Don't go.  
That's the woman of my dreams.  
He's gone.

You have 30 minutes to make your piece. Go.