

Drama, Film and Theatre Studies
Setting the Stage
Supporting Materials



How Did You Get Here?



Whole group



8-10 minutes



Seated in circle

Description

This is a storytelling warm-up activity.

Method

- Participants sit in a circle, listening to the facilitator.
- The facilitator makes up a story about how they got to the venue they are in.
- The facilitator's story may be as imaginative or naturalistic as possible, with plenty of detail involved.
- Participants now take turns to tell each other how they got to the venue.

Variation

- Participants may share their stories around the circle, work in pairs to share stories or walk the space and share stories when they meet another participant.

Extension

- Working in small groups, participants have 10-15 minutes to prepare a short scene from one of the stories. One participant narrates the story, while the remaining participants in the group perform the scene.

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Elbow to Elbow



Whole group



10 minutes



Open space

Description

This is an active warm-up game.

Method

- The facilitator instructs participants walk around the space at a moderately fast pace, being careful to avoid collision with other participants or objects in the room.
- The facilitator calls out 'elbow'.
- Participants respond by connecting to one other person with an elbow-to-elbow in pairs, trios etc.
- The facilitator calls "go" and participants move again until facilitator calls another body part.
- Continue the sequence using a variety of body parts hand, knee, thumb, toe foot, shoulder, wrist, ankle etc.

Extension

- This warm-up may be combined with the activity, Clumps, to form groups of participants for follow on activities.

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Oide



Clumps



Whole group



2-3 minutes



Open space

Description

This is an activity to help create groups for future collaborative work.

Method

- The facilitator asks participants move around space.
- The facilitator calls out a number, e.g. 3.
- Participants must respond quickly to form groups of the number called out.
- The facilitator calls another number, and the process is repeated several times.
- The facilitator finishes on number of participants they wish to have in each group.

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Lead with Your...



Whole group



10 minutes



Open space

Description

This is an active warm-up game which helps with the creation of characters.

Method

- Participants walk around the space.
- The facilitator invites participants to become aware of their own walk, considering their posture, movement etc.
- The facilitator asks participants to consider if any part of their body is leading their walk, and if so to adjust to make the walk neutral.
- Participants continue their neutral walk around the space.
- The facilitator calls out a body part (nose, chin, elbow, chest, forehead, head, stomach etc.) and invites participants to adjust their walk, led by this body part. They may wish to imagine they are a puppet and the string is attached to this body part.
- The facilitator invites participants to consider a character to match their walk e.g. young child, nosy neighbour etc.
- The facilitator will then call other body parts and participants respond repeating the process.

Extension

- Participants choose one character created by their walk. Facilitator prompts participants to build a character as they are walking by asking questions such as, “where do you live?”, “do you have family”, “what do you work as?”, etc. Participants respond silently. Facilitator now invites participants to greet each other in character as they pass each other by on their walk.

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Park Bench



Pairs



10 minutes



Chairs

Description

This improvisation activity will help participants to think on their feet and react intuitively.

Equipment required



Method

- Place three chairs side by side to form a bench.
- One participant sits on the bench doing an action e.g. drink coffee, reading a book, etc.
- A second participant enters the scene and sits on the bench.
- The second participant tries to get the first participant to leave the bench, without using any physical force.
- Participants on the bench respond and react to each other, without any deliberate blocking. If blocking happens, participants must stop and start the scene again.
- Continue until the first participant leaves.

Extension

- Participants on the bench may be given certain circumstances for their characters e.g. who, when, where, why, e.g. you are an insurance agent, on lunchbreak, planning for meeting etc. Circumstances may or may not be shared with the whole group before the activity and the group may wish to guess who the players are.

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Seated Relaxation Exercise



Whole group



10 minutes



Seated in circle

Description

This exercise is a preparation for performance by relaxing tension in the body and face.

Method

- Participants sit on a chair in a slumped position.
- The facilitator asks participants to raise right hand while remaining slumped.
- The facilitator invites participants to move their hand gently (move around, circle, tense them up, drop, release etc.), exploring any feelings of tension in the hand or fingers.
- The facilitator asks, “Where is the tension?”
- The facilitator invites participants to release the tension by silently asking themselves to let the tension go.
- The facilitator then works through other parts of the face/body taking time with each arm, shoulder, neck, lips etc.
- In preparation for performance: Facilitator will pay close attention to face and neck/throat: neck, cheeks, lips, temples, brow, eyelid, chin, nose, tongue etc. asking each time “where is the tension?”

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Setting the Scene: Verbatim Theatre



Whole group



20 minutes



Working in Pairs

Description

This activity explores how real voices and lived experiences are transformed into performances.

Method

- In pairs, participants interview each other on a clear and simple prompt chosen from a selection of 'prompt' cards.
- The first participant responds to the prompt, speaking for about a minute.
- The second participant listens closely and takes notes on the story, body language, lines or phrases that resonate with them.
- The second participant chooses a few striking phrases or sentences their partner said word for word (no editing — keep the “ums”, pauses etc).
- The second participant now speaks back a selection of their partner's words by speaking them verbatim.
- The second participant performs, choosing intonation, pause, rhythm, gesture, or physicality to highlight how performance shapes meaning.
- Participants swap roles and repeat the process with a different prompt in use.

Materials required



Prompt Cards



Pen and Paper

Reflection/Discussion

- How did it feel to hear your own words spoken back?
- What happens to truth when real words are framed in performance?
- How is Verbatim Theatre both creative (interpretation, staging) and critical (engaging with real voices, context, ethics)?

Possible extension

- Stage fragments of a famous public speech (political, news interviews, etc.).

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Prompt Cards

Verbatim Theatre



Prompt

Tell me about your favourite film.

Prompt

Tell me about your favourite theatre experience.

Prompt

What is the best advice you were ever given?

Prompt

Tell me about a memorable holiday you were on.

Prompt

Tell me about the most inspiring book you ever read.



Notes

[illegible]

Setting the Scene: Non-naturalism



Whole group



20 minutes



Working in Pairs or trios

Description

This activity explores how non-naturalistic theatre uses stylisation, exaggeration, symbolism, and transformation rather than realism.

Method

- In pairs or trios, participants choose a scenario card.
- Improvise a short (30 - 60 seconds), natural, everyday scene based on the card.
- Participants select a non-naturalistic prompt card.
- Participants improvise the scene again applying the non-naturalistic style.
- Each group performs both versions.
- Remaining participants watch performances.

Materials
required



Prompt Cards

Reflection/Discussion

- What is different?
- What feels heightened?
- What ideas or emotions emerge more clearly in non-naturalistic style?

Possible extension

- Introduce further non-naturalistic elements using prompt cards.

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



Scenario Cards

Non-naturalism



Scenario

Waiting for a bus

Scenario

Ordering coffee

Scenario

Getting ready for school

Scenario

Meeting your neighbour outside your house

Scenario

At the checkout in the grocery store



Prompt Cards

Non-naturalism



Prompt

Make every movement 10 times bigger

Prompt

Perform in slow-motion

Prompt

Perform 10 times quicker

Prompt

All characters speak in chorus OR echo

Prompt

Add a prop: characters hold the prop like a 'hot-potato'



Notes

[illegible]

Setting the Scene: Tragicomedy



Whole group



20 minutes



Working in Small Groups

Description

This activity explores the interaction and balance of tragedy and comedy in the genre tragicomedy.

Method

- The facilitator asks each small group to improvise a short scene called “The Gift”.
- In this scene, one character is about to give or receive a gift. The moment must feel both comic and tragic simultaneously from the start.
- Participants prepare their short scene.
- Each group presents their short scene while remaining participants watch and note where they experienced the balance between the tragic and comic in the scene.

Reflection/Discussion

- Where do comedy and tragedy overlap in the scene?
- How does mixing both tones change your experience of the scene?
- How does the genre tragicomedy affect the audience compared to comedy or tragedy?

Possible extension

- Introduce a single object or sound to serve as a comedic/tragic pivot.
- Explore role reversal mid-scene i.e. tragic character becomes comic, and vice versa.
- Use hot-seating or thought-tracking to explore character motivation and emotional contrast.

My Notes/My Reflections



Oide



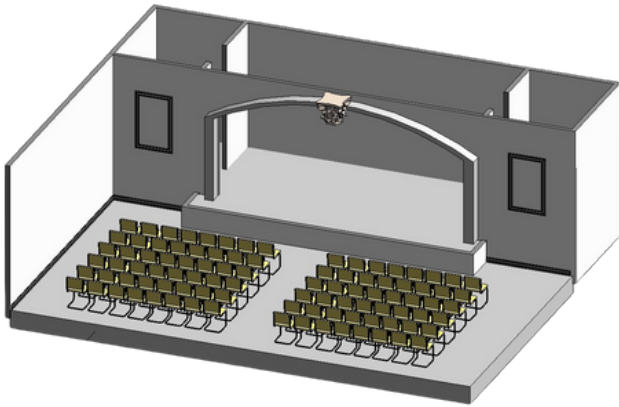
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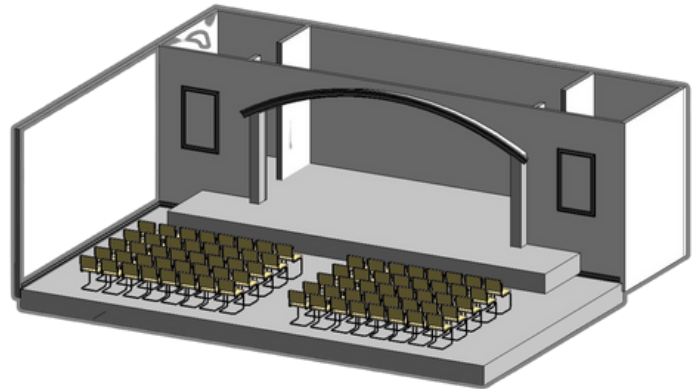
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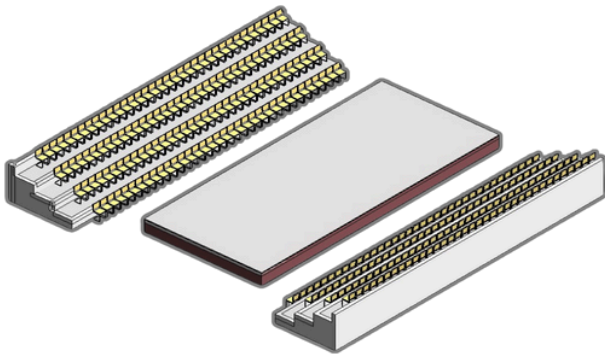
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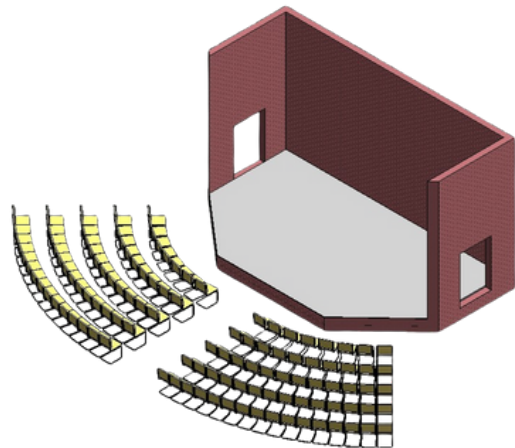


Theatre Stages



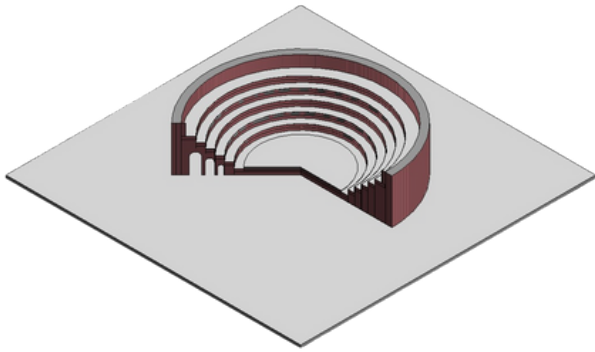


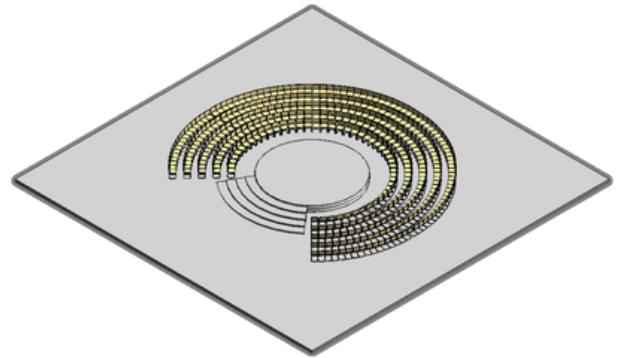


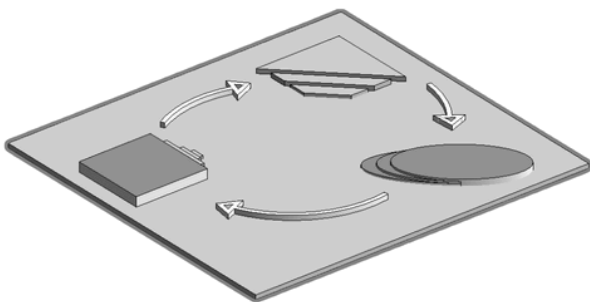




Theatre Stages

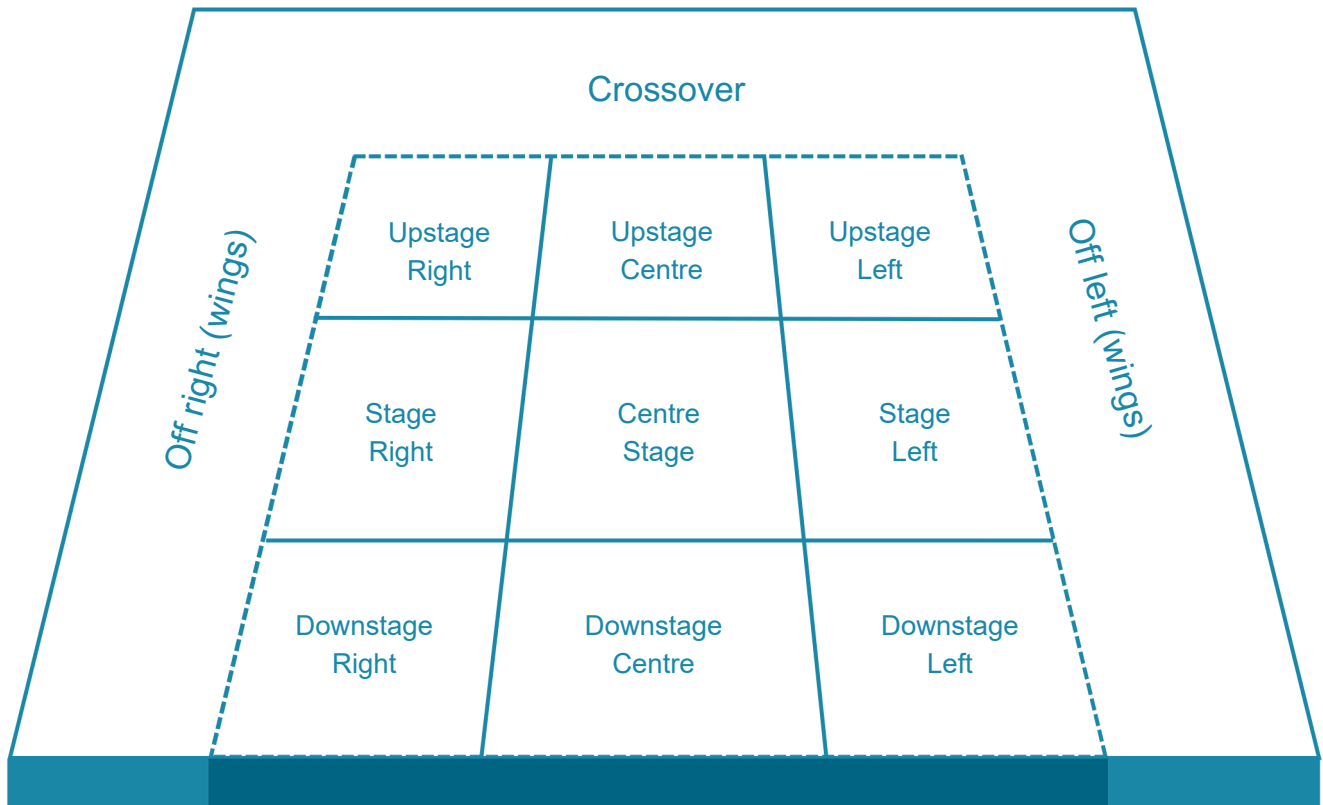








Theatre Stages



House Left



House (Audience)



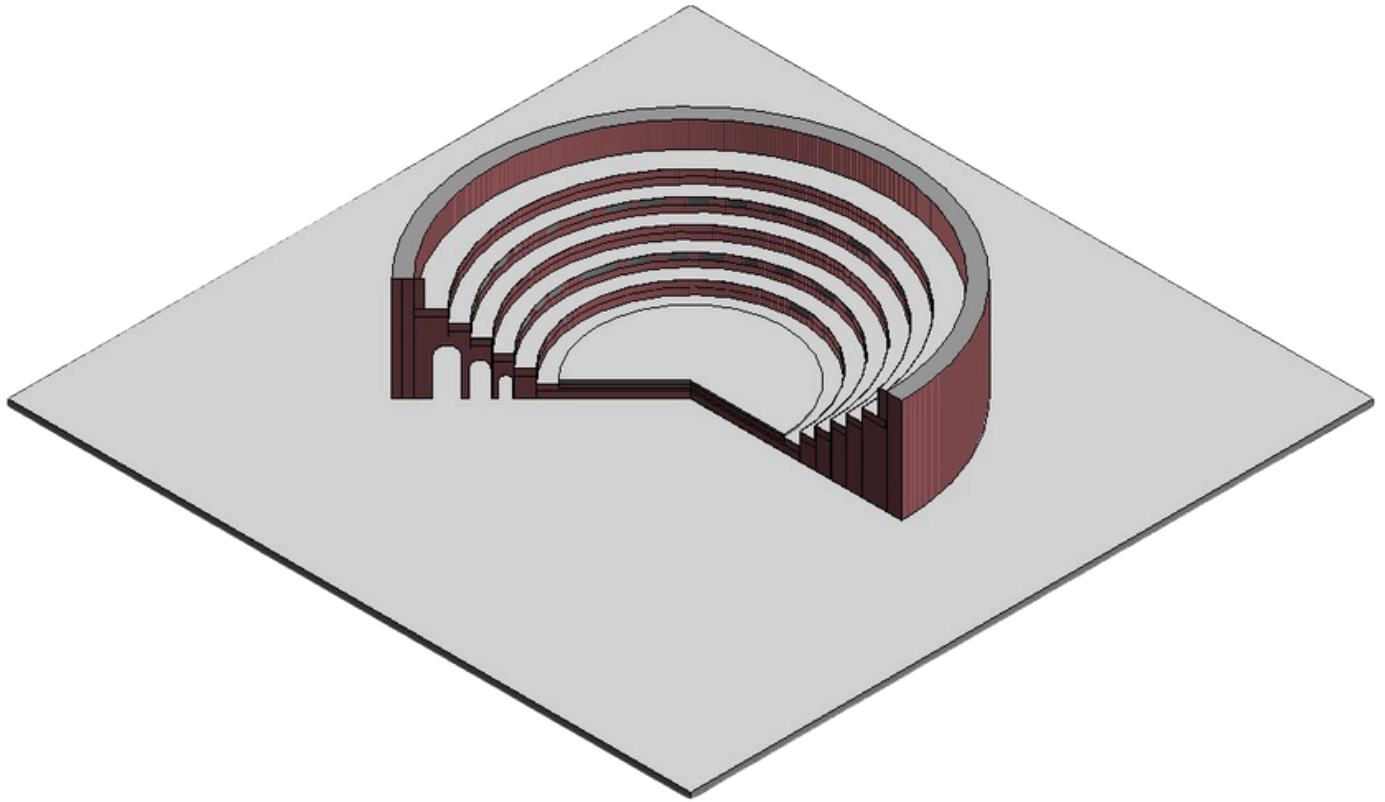
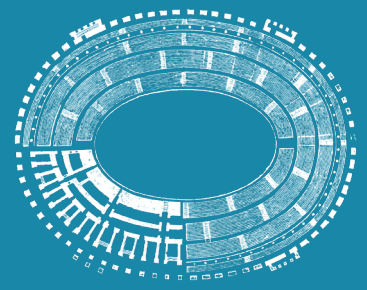
House Right



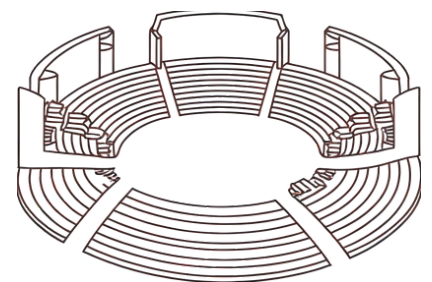
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Theatre Stage Amphitheatre



My Notes/Reflections

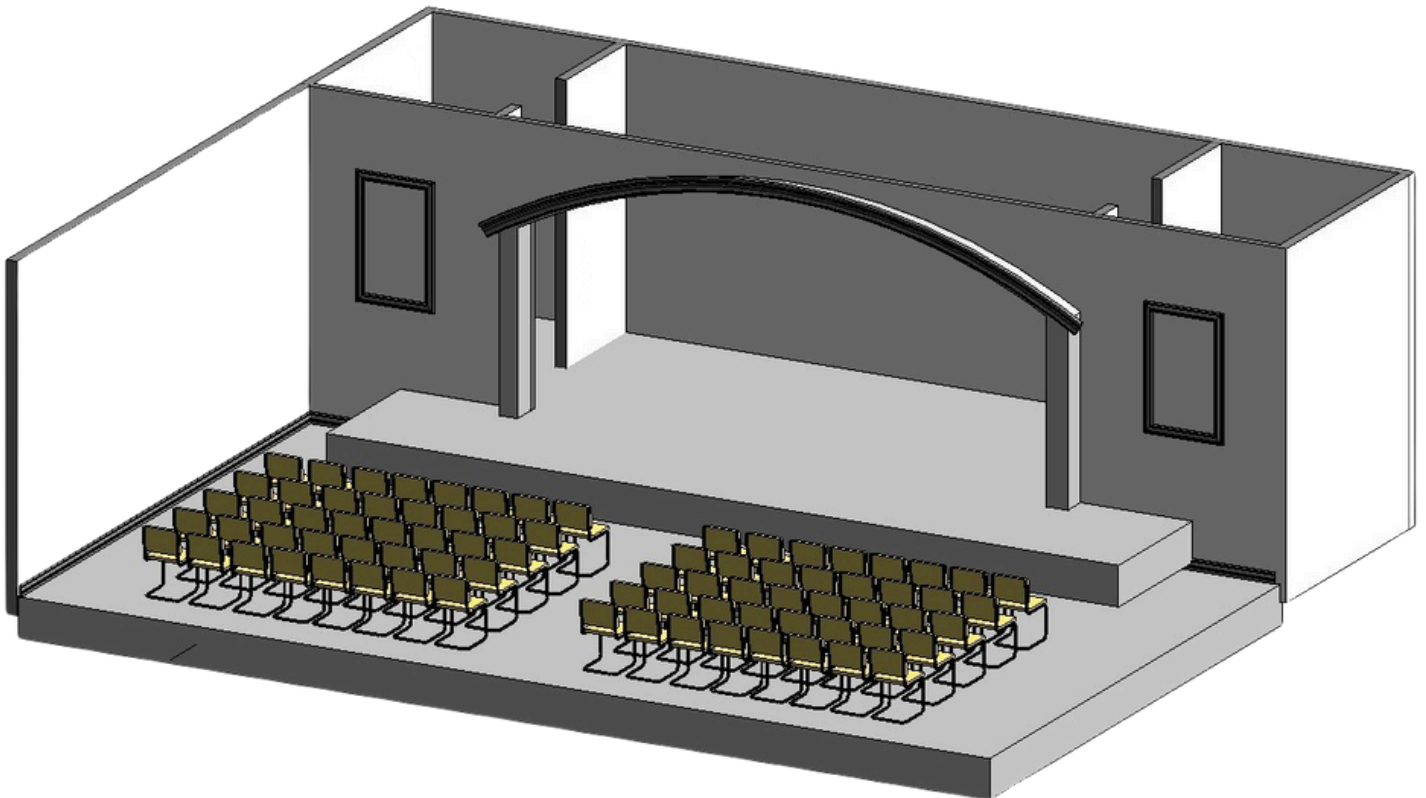
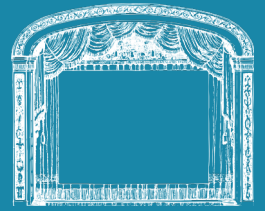


Oide



Theatre Stage

Proscenium Arch



My Notes/Reflections

Stage



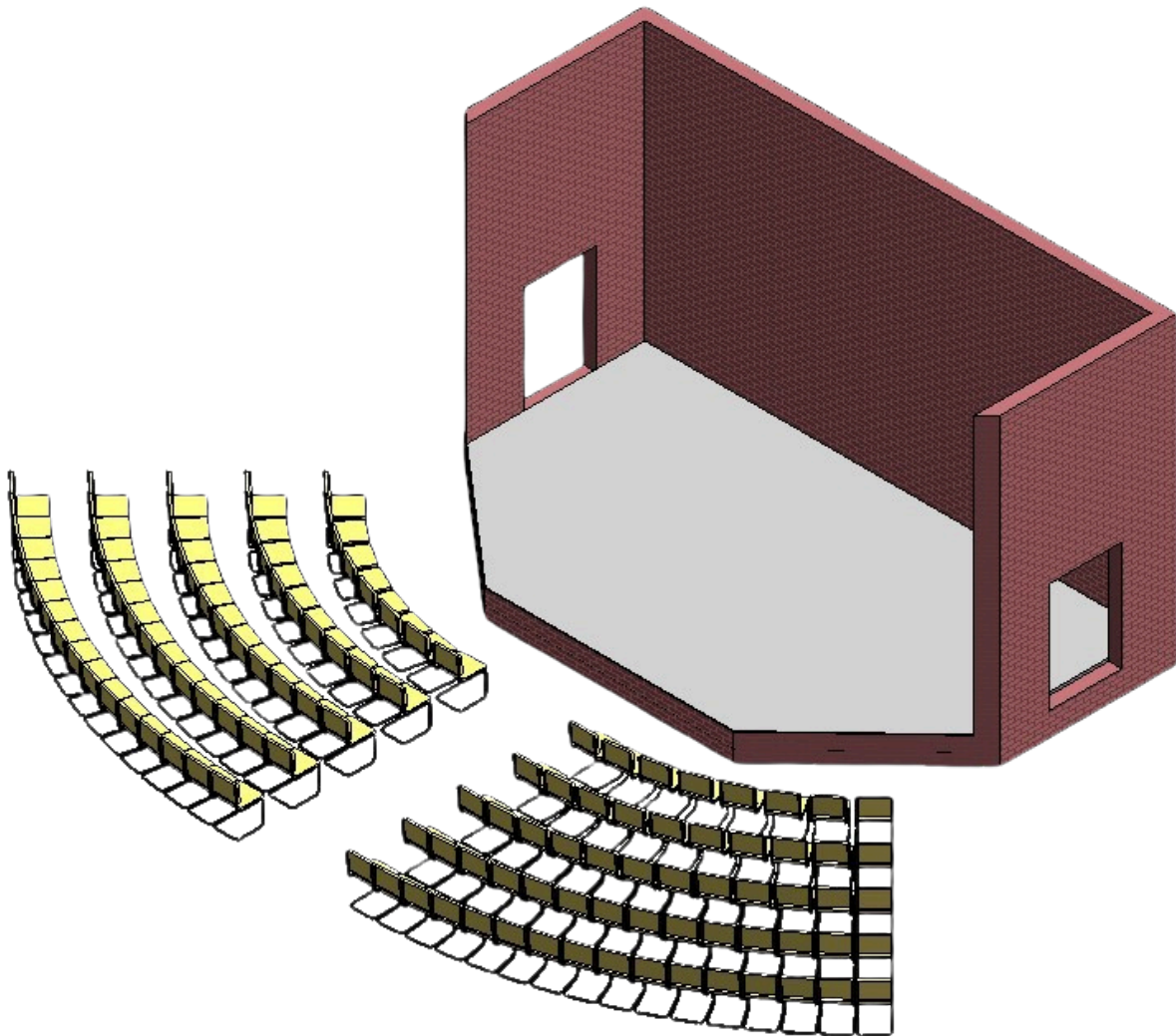
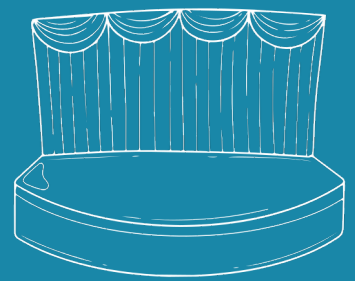
Audience



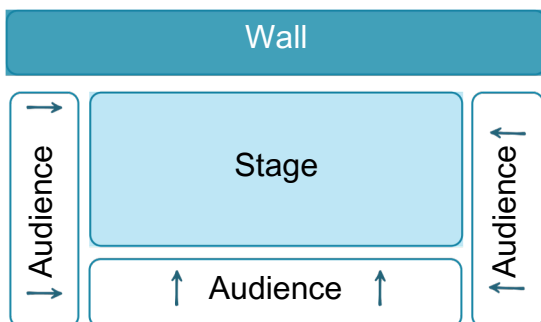
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Theatre Stage Thrust



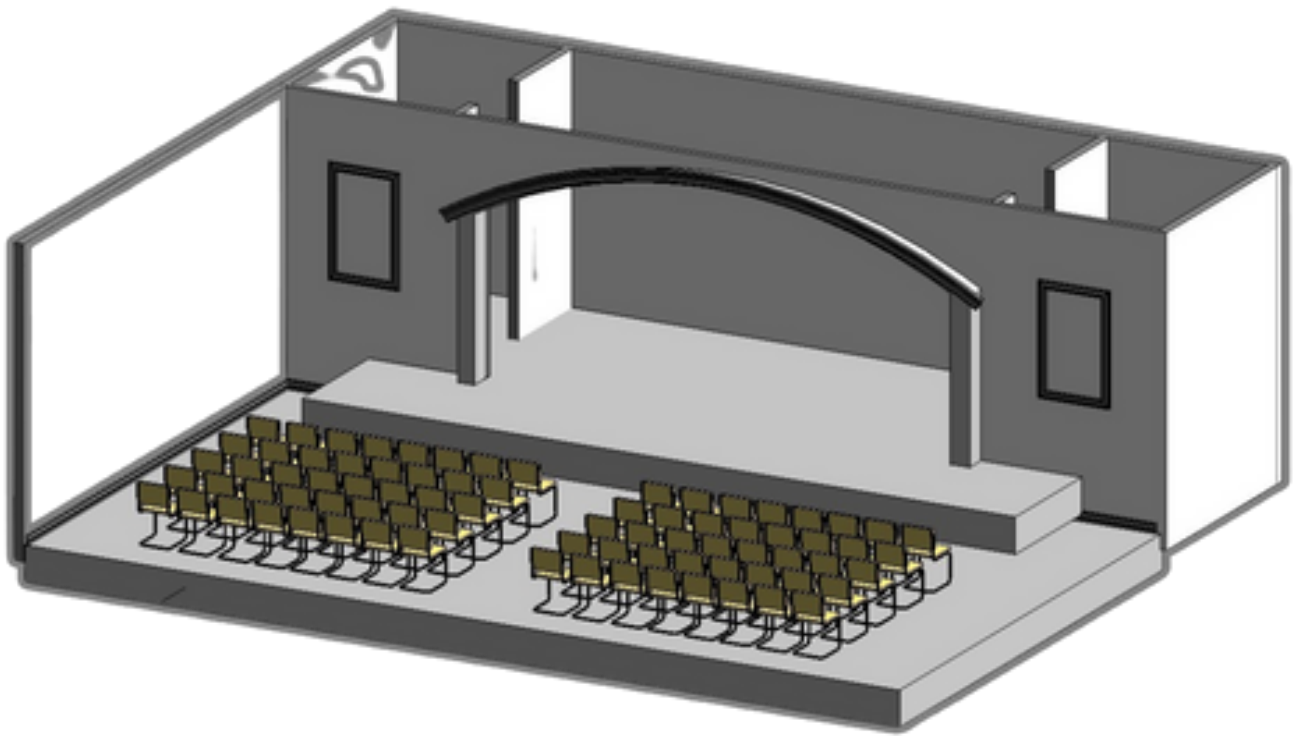
My Notes/Reflections



Oide



Theatre Stage End On



My Notes/Reflections

Stage

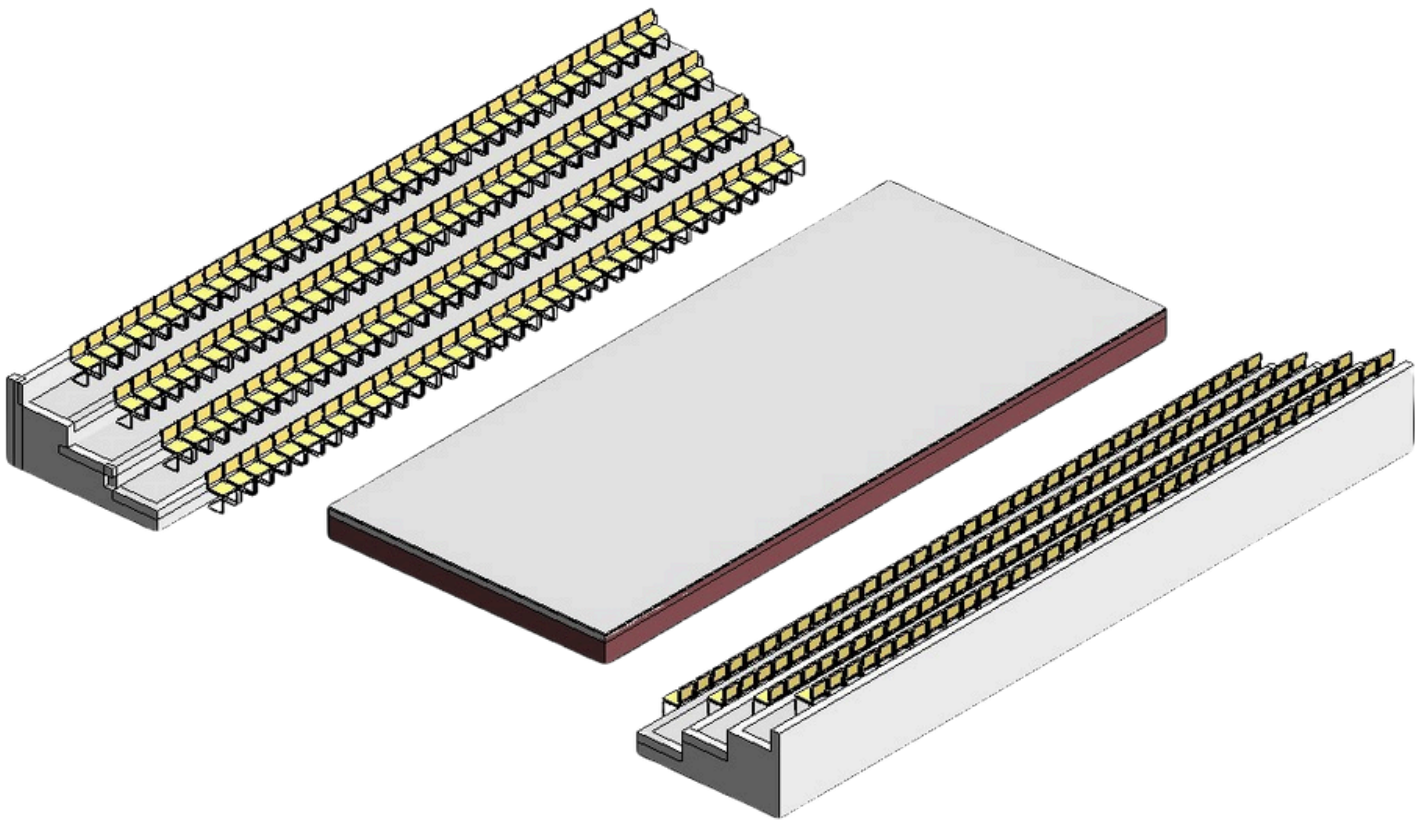
Audience



Oide



Theatre Stage Traverse



My Notes/Reflections

↓ Audience ↓

Stage

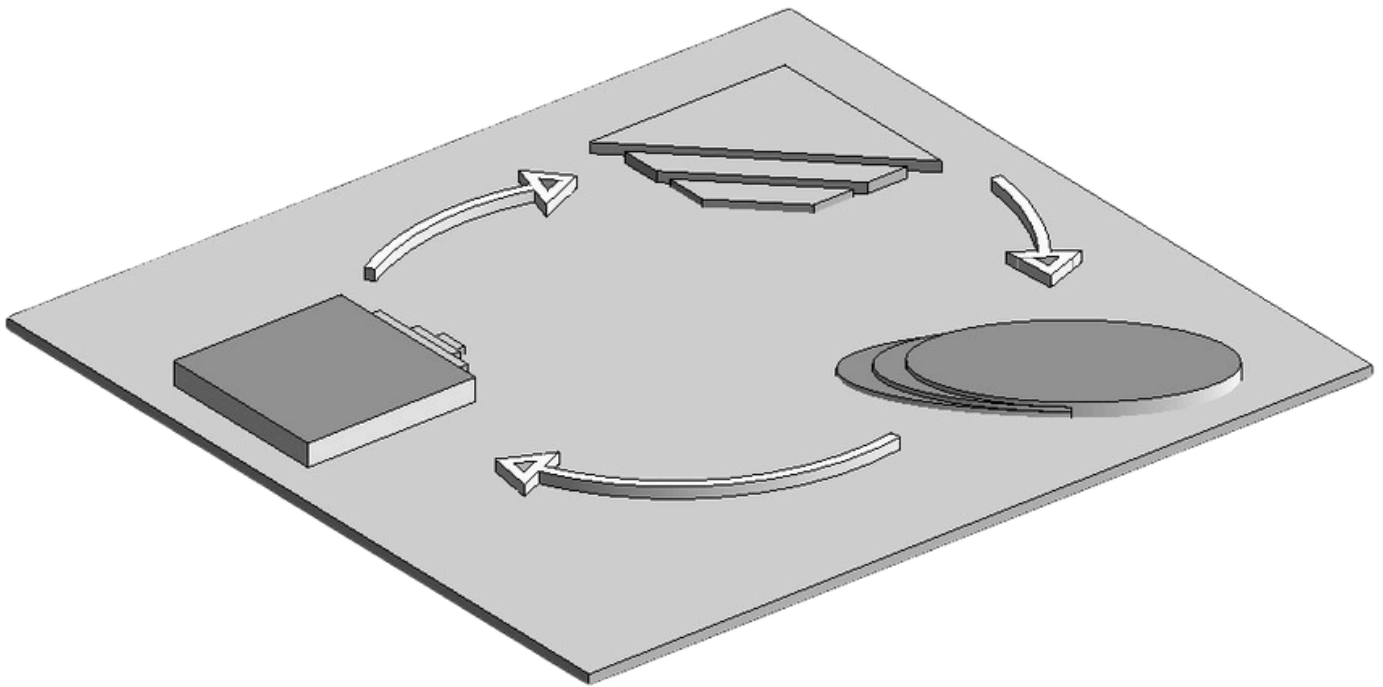
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Oide



Theatre Stage Promenade



Follow the Action

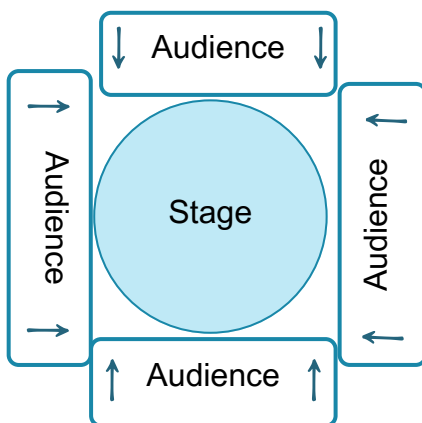
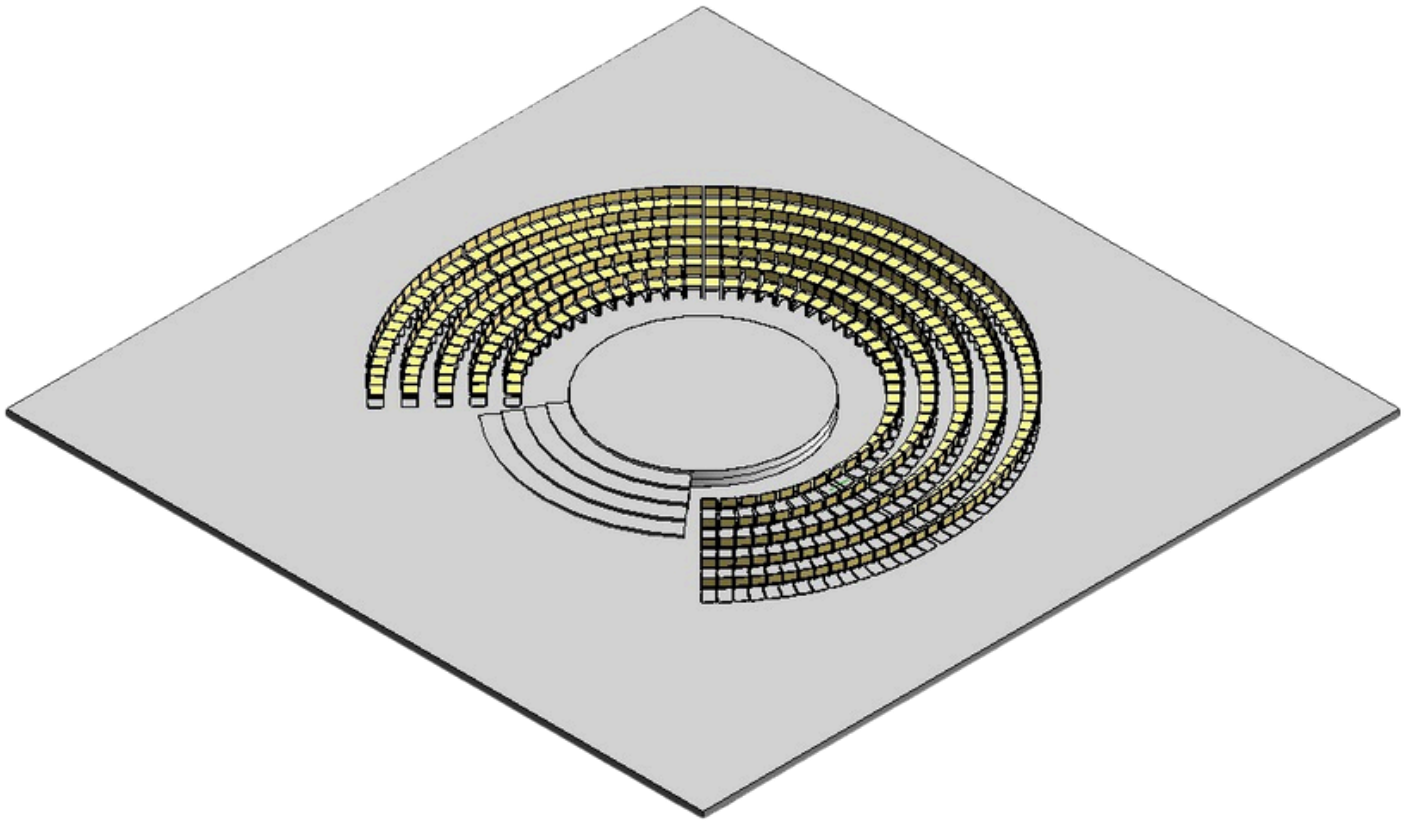
My Notes/Reflections



Oide



Theatre Stage In the Round



My Notes/Reflections



Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Notes

[illegible]

Oide



Notes

[illegible]

Notes

[illegible]