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THE MEISSNER TECHNIQUE: UNLOCKING AUTHENTICITY IN ACTING

The world of acting is in a constant state of evolution, and one of the significant contributors to its development is Sanford Meissner's technique. Meissner, a renowned American actor and teacher, devised his own system after disagreements arose among actors studying Lee Strasberg's methodology in the Group Theater. Although the Meissner technique is not as popular in some countries, it has been widely embraced by celebrated actors and directors worldwide, such as Meryl Streep, Leonardo DiCaprio, and Tom Cruise. This article delves into the three main components of Meissner's technique and how it benefits actors of all levels of experience. It also highlights the importance of embracing one's true self and the power of authenticity in captivating audiences.

Sanford Meissner, an American actor and teacher, is known for creating the Meissner Technique. He was among the 28 actors who formed the Group Theater in 1931, where they not only performed plays but also studied Lee Strasberg's methodology. However, conflicts and misunderstandings arose as the actors had different approaches to studying acting. This inspired Meissner to develop his own system.

Not many people are aware of the Meissner technique, but those who have experienced it firsthand are highly enthusiastic about it. While it incorporates elements of Stanislavsky's system, this technique uniquely emphasizes improvisation exercises, emotional release training and practice, which enables actors to approach acting from a new perspective and learn more easily. Despite being less popular in our country compared to others, those who have had the opportunity to learn about and use the Meissner system are fortunate. It is centred around exercises designed to encourage actors to «naturally exist in an

imaginary environment», which allows them to express genuine reactions and emotions. The real-time communication between actors helps them to visualize and enact character actions as realistically as possible in the given environment.

Meissner's technique consists of three main components that work together: emotional preparation, repetition, and improvisation. Each exercise is designed for training. Meissner believes that the most difficult thing for a theater actor is the ability to listen, so these exercises attract attention, spontaneous feedback, and most importantly, teach interaction with partners and characters.

The Meissner technique involves authentic expression of emotions and improvisation, as well as genuine interaction with a partner in given circumstances. It requires confidence in one's actions and feelings, speed and productivity, inspiration and creativity, and releasing facial and body muscle tension. While other systems may seem similar, the Meissner technique stands out for its simplicity and widespread use among renowned actors and directors such as Sandra Bullock, Ashley Atkinson, Meryl Streep, Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Cruise, and others in the global film industry.

It's recommended that everyone become familiar with Meissner's technique and work to master and understand it. This technique is useful for those pursuing a career as an actor, regardless of whether they are just starting out or have been involved in the industry for years. If you have the chance to attend a master class, it can be an invaluable experience and provide you with valuable knowledge. There are many teachers in Ukraine who use this system, and you can easily find courses and training sessions through a search engine. If you have the opportunity to attend master classes hosted by foreign actors and directors, it's highly recommended that you take advantage of it as you won't regret it.

Sanford Meissner once said that to be a captivating actor, or even just an engaging individual, one must embrace their true self. Only then can one truly be authentic and liberated from the burden of others' opinions. It's a powerful feeling, and one that we should all strive for.

In conclusion, the Meisner technique has revolutionized the world of acting by emphasizing the importance of authentic expression of emotions, improvisation, and genuine interaction with a partner. While it may not be as popular in some countries, it has been widely embraced by celebrated actors and directors worldwide. Aspiring actors at all levels of experience can benefit from mastering this technique, which can help them approach acting from a new perspective and captivate audiences with their authentic performances. Moreover, Meisner's emphasis on embracing one's true self highlights the power of authenticity, not just in acting but in all aspects of life.

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