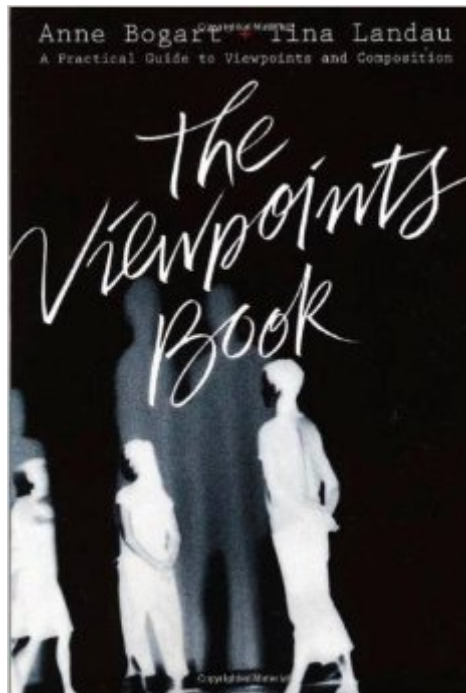


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# The Viewpoints Book: A Practical Guide To Viewpoints And Composition



## Synopsis

The Viewpoints is a technique of improvisation that grew out of the postmodern dance world. It was first articulated by choreographer Mary Overlie, who broke down the two dominant issues performers deal with—space and time—into six categories. Since that time, directors Anne Bogart and Tina Landau have expanded her notions and adapted them for actors to function together spontaneously and intuitively and to generate bold, theatrical work. The Viewpoints are a set of names given to certain principles of movement through time and space—they constitute a language for talking about what happens on stage. Coupling this with Composition, which is the practice of selecting and arranging the separate components of theatrical language into a cohesive work of art, provides theatre artists with an important new tool for creating and understanding their art form. Primarily intended for the many theatre artists who, in the last several years, have become intrigued with Viewpoints yet have had no single source to refer to in their investigations. It can also be used by anyone with a general interest in collaboration and the creative process, whether in art, business or daily life. Anne Bogart is Artistic Director of the SITI Company, which she founded with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki in 1992. She is the recipient of two OBIE Awards and a Bessie Award, and is an associate professor at Columbia University. Her recent works include Alice's Adventures; Bobbrauschenbergamerica; Small Lives, Big Dreams; Marathon Dancing; and The Baltimore Waltz. Tina Landau, noted director and playwright, whose original work includes Space (Time magazine 10 Best), Dream True (with composer Ricky Ian Gordon) and Floyd Collins (with composer Adam Guettel), which received the Lucille Lortel Award for Best Musical, an OBIE Award and seven Drama Desk nominations. She has been an ensemble member of the Steppenwolf Theatre Company since 1997.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It took forever to finally arrive.. both in the sense that it kept getting delayed, but more importantly as a director who has trained with Viewpoints and wanted to impliment them into my work. The book is very accessible to even those who have not taken any Viewpoints classes with a laid out ground plan for how to introduce each Viewpoint as well as how to use them in rehearsals and creating new pieces. The end of each section includes several options to eithe expand or replace, making the plan fit perfect for whatever you're doing. I read it cover to cover in a sitting and will be referencing it in the future as I direct those new to Viewpoints as well as those previously exposed.

Viewpoints is very much a primer on spacial awareness and spontaneous interaction. Like any very basic "technique" or approach, and like like many 20th century American guides to theatrical performance, a major problem may lie in that its componentstents are delineated in a manner so simplistic, hyper-focused, and unrevealing of its purpose or endgame that it can have the effect of encouraging effort and difficulty where ideally, there should and might otherwise be none, and that probably endangers as many unproductive habits as it intends to alleviate. While it might be life-changing for those without a regular movement practice, the emphasis on simple movement as a way through to ensemblework won't speak much to those who already have good movement or improvisation skills and for theorists and pedagogues, the book doesn't really reveal what the approach does differently from others or how its application is useful for creating or supporting the work of real performance. If you have good, healthy physical awareness and control or training, you probably won't need viewpoints except to learn its specific vocabularies in order to work with others who use it. If you are a more advanced in the above areas and want more theory or a more comprehensive approach to creating organic group and work, many other works are probably much more essential and helpful to start or to grow with. Start by studying artists and approaches from post-WWII Europe or Chicago Improv or, if you want something more practical or faster and for immediate and advanced application, take some contact improv and composition and Meisner courses.

Aptly described in the title, "A Practical Guide to Viewpoints and Composition". Perfect for new and veteran artists alike. Great information about ensemble building as well as getting outside of your comfort zone. The kind of book to go back and re-read with every new project. You'll find yourself applying techniques consciously as well as unconsciously.

Any theatre maker looking for a new book to read or if you are someone looking into the art of theatre, this is a great book to get your feet wet. The great thing about Viewpoints is that it is based off of life, everyday life, in fact. Anne Bogart just gave these awarenesses a name to be applied into the art of acting, collaboration and directing. Even as a theatre practitioner myself, reading this book (many times over) it has opened my eyes to new ways of looking at theatre and life as a whole.

This book was highly recommended to me by a dancer friend, and I've found it to be extremely useful for dance improvisation sessions I'm leading with a group of non-dancers. The authors offers numerous exercises that groups can build on, experiment with, and use to generate skill and teamwork. If you're looking for inspiration for your own performance project or creative ideas for group activities, you will find them here.

I wanted a good, basic look at Viewpoints and this book has been exactly what I hoped it would be. It is to the point but still offers enough explanation to make sure the reader understands each viewpoint. If you want a good, basic background of the work this book does well.

As an actor I've worked with viewpoints in college and in various productions. I love it. It's such a fantastic method for ensemble building and sensory work. I've recently started directing and wanted to learn more about the method of viewpoints. This book was essential! I felt so prepared on my first day of rehearsal and as a first time practitioner of viewpoints it made me feel very secure in my teaching.

This book is a well-written discussion of the theories of performance based on Viewpoints. It has practical exercises to develop actors and ensemble as well as discussion of adding music and other directorial choices. I explore the theory with my IB DP Theatre students and they really develop exciting characters both vocally and physically. The book is written in an engaging style and the exercises are laid out logically following each other. It is easy to follow them as written or pick and choose to create your own rehearsal format.

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