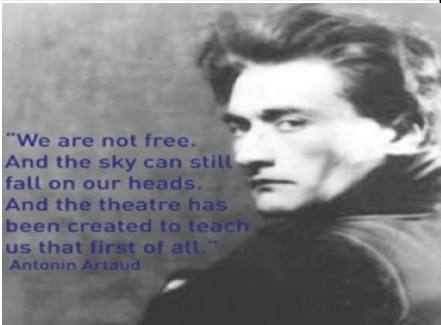


Biographical Info



Born 4 Sep 1896 Marseille
Died 4 March 1948 Ivry Sur Seine
Studied at the Collège du Sacré-Cœur
Drug addict
Psychiatric hospital 1937-1947 (art & electric shock therapy)
Had pancreatic cancer but died of an overdose

Influenced by:

Brecht - the importance was not placed on character as he believed that 'man' was not important. However, Artaud did expect emotional involvement from his audience.

1926 - Artaud founded the [Theatre Alfred Jarry](#) with [Robert Aron](#) and surrealist [Roger Vitrac](#)

Beliefs

- Everything is larger than life but in harmony with each other - acting space, large & extensive lighting, sound, costume, acting style, masks, giant puppets.
- Wanted to get rid of words – thought they were limiting. He used words for their sound quality rather than their meaning.
- Wanted theatre that would shock and absorb the audience – a sensory explosion.
- Actor and audience experience pain and suffering.

Work

1927 - *Ventre brûlé; ou La Mère folle* (Burnt Belly, or the Mad Mother),
The Seashell and the Clergymen – 1928 (film)
1928 – A dream Play
1935 – The Cenci
1938 – The Theatre and its Double (book)



Key Words Relating to Berkoff

Theatre of cruelty	Cruel for actors - exhaustion into a trance-like state where it no longer feels exhaustion: - Stretching the imagination until near breaking point, challenging the body to complete extreme moves - Pushing the physical boundaries to extremes - the body must go beyond its pain & can thus achieve extraordinary things.
Surrealism	Shunned realism and naturalism . Everything should be symbolic. Above or on top of reality.
Avant-Garde Theatre	Experimental Theatre. The word is derived from the French 'Vanguard', meaning, 'to lead in a trend or movement'.

"I would like to write a book which would drive men mad, which would be like an open door leading them where they would never have consented to go, in short, a door that opens onto reality."

Antonin Artaud

