

THE
Air Talking
MANUAL



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Air Talking is a practice inspired by Air Guitar, a discipline in which fans of the most famous guitar solos, as playful aesthetes, mime the gestures and stage movements of the original guitarists. Their performance is judged both on how life-like it is and on its interpretation of the original piece of music. Intensity, self-mockery, staging and drama are major criteria in judging an Air Guitar performance.

By imitating a discipline, one captures its aesthetics without necessarily mastering its techniques. *Air Talking* is one extension of Air X, where X stands for any physical, social or behavioural event, be it virtual or real, that can be simulated. It is the observation of simulation integrated at the social level, the domain of appearance, or of “being good enough at pretending”, raised to the level of a discipline in itself.

The trajectory of the simulation is cut back, deliberately kept in its early state, like those dwarf trees whose shoots are pruned, or those animals that are constantly crossbred so as to keep them pygmy-size. The simulation becomes reality, not as a simulacrum intended to replace it, but as a simulation kept as such, consciously approached and developed as a practice in itself.

Air Talking groups together a series of postures, stances and gestures that belong to the body language of society situations. During the mundane ritual, the body surrenders to the crisis of presence, *which decays into absence and becomes a pure echo of the world*. This makes the society situation similar to an out-of-body experience, in which—while the proprioceptive capacity expands into the space around it, to other bodies, to the relationship between them—consciousness is abstracted from the present moment, and detached from the subject to enter a state of fluctuation and latency. Indeed, it enters a state of torpor, enchanted by the effect of its own substance. The society situation is a paradoxical moment, fraught with desire and at the same time with suspended possibilities.

Air Talking aims at being a strategy of withdrawal from the work inherent in socialization and from the duty of presence. It uninhabits presence by constructing a body and a gestural system suitable for a new kind of strike: a strike of the “third nature”, a nature that has gone beyond any dichotomy between real and unreal, and has integrated simulation into itself as actual reality.

An *Air Talking* performance is designed as a workshop, an amphitheatre course or a conference of the Third Kind. This manual presents a number of postures, gestures and body language capable of producing collective behaviour and an awareness of the economy that relates to it.

LIST OF POSTURES
AND THEIR TECHNIQUES

Here and There

Here and There is about presence. It is the set of postures which reveal the attitude of an individual who is both present and absent at the same time: being material, the body is present in its space, but the look and the posture make its substance more ethereal. This effect is achieved through tiny twists of the neck. The neck is turned towards the opposite side of the chest, as though in order to observe an object you have to gaze in the direction opposite to the one in which you are going. The eyes stare at something and not at someone, but without insisting, with laziness, listlessness. This materializes the ubiquity of a person stretched between opposite directions, among multiple points of interest: an individual who runs away from his own appearing.



The Barber

Hand on elbow, palm over mouth. The hand moves from left to right or from right to left. The eyes are immersed in the void, more or less at the interlocutor's chest height.

The Barber reflects an attitude of careful, worried listening.

It bears witness to a reflective, very measured nature.



Malcom X

This gesture may replace or complete the posture of *the Barber*.

Fist/hand on the elbow. Index finger pressed to the temple, with the rest of the hand closed in a fist. Eyes lost in the void (at interlocutor's breast height) or resting directly on those of the interlocutor. Like the posture of *the Barber*, *Malcolm X* indicates careful listening and being slightly “elsewhere”. It reflects a willingness to listen, but at the same time it is dreamy and ambitious because it is politically and intellectually engaged.



Parkinson's

One hand/fist under a bent elbow, the other an up-turned fist. The fist shakes with restrained tension that is ready to be released. The head is turned slightly outwards. This combination offers the choice of a number between 1 and 5 (except 4). A few seconds after the tremor, which symbolizes the end of the reflection, that number is shown with the fingers.

Parkinson's can also be performed with the eyes looking directly into the interlocutor's eyes, as though directly addressing their intellect. *Parkinson's* supports a reflection or aids the expression of an opinion. It is an outburst that leads to the verbalising of an adjective or a shocking phrase.

This gesture bears witness to a passionate temperament, a fiery spirit.



Coco & Co

The left hand forms an upturned cup. The other hand, placed above the left hand, forms a cup turned downwards. The right hand traces an arc and then, when it reaches the same height as the left hand, forms a cup turned upwards. The left hand traces an arc and then rests above the other hand, forming a cup turned downwards.

This gesture reflects a constructive, at times schematic, nature. It shows an ability to solve complex problems with a simple gesture, and emphasizes an interest in the substance of things.



The Hair

The hands are in front of the chin.

You roll an imaginary hair between the index finger and the thumb of each hand. The eyes meet on the invisible hair, which can be projected in different trajectories. This gesture reflects a feeling or a delicate, fine situation, which “hangs by a hair’s breadth”. It is a very expressive gesture that reveals the delicate nature of your proposal and your thoughts.



Smiling Monk

Arms crossed. Head slightly bent. Half-smiling.

This compassionate smile reflects your magnanimous, elevated nature. You cannot smile fully, even if you are listening to a very funny story. Certain complex issues, which require your attention and your thought, keep you from partaking in the futility of the moment. You no longer belong to this world: you are already elsewhere.



The Very Last Piece

You indicate the spatial position and direction of a work. Extend your gestures to describe the effect that the work has produced on you. Space is your home. Your hyper-awareness fills all its gaps.



RELATION TO SPACE

Closed, also called “Engagé” *

Your entire body leans towards the other. What the other person is saying even changes your main axis, which forms more of a diagonal and is no longer centred. The eyes of the two interlocutors remain within a circle.

*For two people.

**Alert (also called *Scanning*
or *Checkin'out*)**

Only mouth and hands are directed towards the other person, while the rest of the body is receptive to the overall context. This means that the main axis is centred and slightly rotated outwards. All the molecules of your body are receptive. The eyes scan the situation whenever a new subject or object appears on the horizon, or just give it a cursory glance.

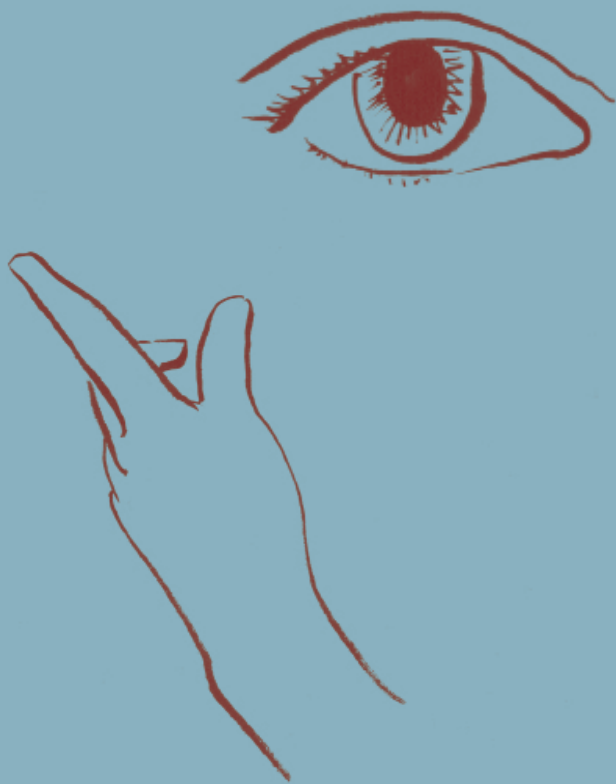








Ambra Pittoni and Paul-Flavien
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