

OUR EDUCATIONAL VALUES

PROFESSIONAL ARTISTIC EDUCATION

We see learning Circus Arts as an integral part of how each student can become an active member of society, and that it enables each person to find a place in our society through a better understanding of themselves and of others. We see Circus Arts as an integral part of society, and the people who practise them as individuals. We see our actions as physical and artistic activities, but also as a means for social interaction and personal development.

This thinking is at the heart of our work in community education. It is also reflected in the way Piste d'Azur is organised as a Société Coopérative d'Intérêt Collectif. This Social and Solidarity Economy structure operates on the basis of multi-partner, democratic and non-profit governance processes. It is deeply rooted in the local community.

**We also fully adhere to the Educational Values
of the French Federation of Circus Schools (FFEC):**

**“CIRCUS IS AN ART
FORM THAT IS TAUGHT
WITH RESPECT
FOR THE INDIVIDUAL”**

**A school for all, a school for each individual,
a school for Circus Arts.**

We start from the principle that practising a physical, artistic and social activity like Circus Arts is a positive factor in the development of each and every individual. Likewise, an individual who is at ease with their development and their environment will be all the more likely to practise Circus Arts in the best possible way.

OUR EDUCATIONAL VALUES ARE DEVELOPED AROUND THREE KEY AREAS

Empowerment

Our aim is to help develop individuals who are capable of making informed choices and implementing the necessary resources. We support them by giving them as many resources as possible, allowing them to make any choice and use any resource that can help them grow. This obviously means physical development, i.e. generating autonomy through their physical abilities. It's vital to know how to find and understand what we need in order to develop our projects.

Assuming responsibility

Responsibility means acting consciously. It requires a good self-understanding so that we can plan our actions according to our motivations, but also according to our own limits.

But it also means looking at our immediate environment: immediate surroundings, equipment, work colleagues, neighbours, etc. We are working to raise awareness of the fact that each one of our actions has consequences for the people and things around us. It is also important to know where we are so that we can interact in our own best interests and with respect for the environment.

This means taking an interest in the world around us, understanding how it works, getting involved and adapting to collective rules.

Meeting and Exchanging

Autonomous choices and responsibility are concepts that can be acquired more quickly by taking our participants out of their immediate environment. To achieve this, we put in place a number of initiatives designed to encourage meetings and exchanges. It's a way of getting to know and understand each other better, participating in community life and learning how to work together rather than against each other.

RESOURCES

We are aware that the implementation of this mission requires a certain number of resources in order to provide our pupils with optimal learning and educational conditions:

A location

We're lucky enough to be working in a facility with a wide range of spaces suitable for all types of circus and live performance. It can accommodate the youngest of our students as well as professional artists. This is why it is such a great place to meet and exchange.

Equipment

The circus and performing arts require a wide range of specific equipment. We want to be able to work on as many circus apparatus as possible, even the heaviest and most awkward.

But we also want to have the tools we need to make learning easier. We also want to go out and meet audiences where they are and be able to move the equipment around when we do.

A professional team

For a long time now, we have opted for a teaching team made up of qualified professionals.

We also attach great importance to the ongoing training of our teams in order to remain up to date with current knowledge.

Specific projects

We work with a variety of audiences, each with its own specific characteristics: Professional Training, Amateur Practice, Early Childhood, Artistic And Cultural Education, Inclusive Circus, etc. To do this, even if the principles and guidelines of the project are the same, we set up a specific programme for each target audience.

THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION OF THE ARTISTIC PROGRAMME

This course is designed to be centred on creativity: all teaching methods are geared towards the creative process and the constraints associated with it. The artistic process is at the heart of our teaching philosophy.

We want to approach the circus arts in their entirety, integrating history, current trends and innovation as much as possible.

We're also particularly keen to respect the specific characteristics of Circus Arts. For us, the circular form is an essential element of our originality. We want to work in and for the Circus Ring.

For us it's fundamental that students in a circus training programme should have contact with a big top. The big top is a distinctive characteristic of circus, and we want them to experience it.

While our commitment to the circus arts tradition is clear, we also know that the circus has been evolving rapidly over the last forty years. Every day, new forms of expression are appearing before our very eyes. We want to be part of this evolution, and be creative and dynamic players in it.

An education programme linked to the professional world of live performance

We have developed close links with circus companies: first and foremost with the many companies in residence at Piste d'Azur, but also with the companies who perform their shows as part of the programming of the THÉÂTRE de GRASSE (a recognised theatre for dance and nouveau cirque) or other nearby venues.

We also maintain relationships with other arts schools. First and foremost, of course, we collaborate through workshops with schools offering circus programmes, in particular with schools in the PRO-CIRK network, but also with higher education establishments. We also work regularly with the region's performing arts schools within the Université Côte d'Azur (UCA), and in particular with the Pôle National Supérieur de Danse Rosella Hightower.

As part of their training, students attend shows throughout the season at festivals such as Circa, the Biennale des Arts du Cirque and other scheduled performances. In all, students attend around ten shows as part of the "audience engagement" initiative.

These relationships are also forged with national networks, notably through meetings organised by the Fédération Française des Écoles de Cirque (FFEC), and internationally through the Fédération Européenne des Écoles de Cirque (FEDEC).

OUR ARTISTIC APPROACH IS DEVELOPED AROUND "THE INDIVIDUAL"

Personal development, self-knowledge and self-esteem are at the heart of the teaching methods we use. The ability to listen and the sensitivity towards others are essential. The exploration of identity and authenticity carried out by the students is the basis for approaching creative work. Judgement is placed in the background to facilitate trust and 'freedom'.

To achieve this, we draw on circus techniques, contemporary dance and ballet, acting, writing workshops and singing. Each of these subjects works in its own way with the different personalities and backgrounds of the teachers, but all with the same aim of developing the personal project of the student.

These future artists have chosen art as their means of expression. In order to better reveal their vision of the world, it has to be as close as possible to their very being. This helps to bring out and reveal their own value, which will take shape in future productions.

We want our students to play an active role in their training, rather than adopting a 'master/disciple' approach. This can of course happen, when visiting artists teach workshops from time to time, however Empowerment is central to our teaching approach.

We encourage people to come together and build relationships without presuming what the outcome will be.

By working on Presence and Open Mindedness at all times during the classes and presentations, we are able to encourage a particular focus on 'feeling' and 'experiencing'. How do we create this presence and make it conscious? The emphasis on presence allows the student to consider other ways of being and therefore stimulate their imagination.

This 'Presence' is the reflection of life that appears in each of us as we experience it: how is this external world felt, perceived, imagined, feared, admired, loved... how is it experienced? Exploring this life as it manifests itself is the starting point for an artistic approach. By proceeding in this way, the risk of 'standardisation' is avoided, because the process is centred around each person's own specific way of perceiving the outside world.

From the very first training session, students are confronted with the "critique" and "self-critique" of their work, which are at the heart of the process of commitment and risk-taking, so that these two acts are treated as normal and enquiry remains the driving force behind their artistic research.

We structure this approach around composition and the artist as the performer, so that the future artist does not suffer from a problem interpreting their own composition or performance.

They will perform in a show under the direction of a stage director or artistic director. By focusing on composition, the emphasis is on the student's own research, without presupposing a particular aesthetic or poetic approach. The artistic support that follows, for example during the 'personal projects', aims to ensure that the work proposed on the stage is consistent with and linked to this writing. The writing is based on the student's background and that of circus arts, so that the student's approach is part of a shared history between these two worlds.

Being a circus artist requires demanding and rigorous physical training.

Physical training and circus technique are important issues for the artist, and we attach great importance to them. In the course of their training and their future career, they will be required to do a great deal of physical training to develop their physical and technical capacities. This also requires a great deal of theoretical knowledge and know-how in order to maintain physical shape to be able to work in the best possible way.

Finally, circus artists need to be integrated into their professional environment and understand how it works as well as possible. That's why, in addition to the daily meetings and input, we are putting in place theoretical resources in these areas.