Some takeaways from Vilnius course on Bodywork and Aesthetics

BW- bodywork

* The text itself will give you ideas on the appropriate BW to use. Check for the movements, descriptions, and situations in the text that you would like the participants to experience.
* Give all the instructions first before asking your participants to break into pairs or groups.
* You do not have to explain to your participants how the activities relate to the text. Most of the time, it is self-evident. Otherwise, you can briefly share how you think an activity connects to the text. A sentence should suffice.
* BW have different purposes, so you have to identify your aim in selecting which BW to use (awareness exercise, retreating from the outside world, energizing, relaxing, improving group dynamics).
* When you do BW, try to simplify the actions and instructions. Too many things to do might confuse your participants.
* Do not close your eyes the entire time. Monitor the participants.
* There are movements you should never ask the participants to do, as they are quite dangerous. (Ex. Circling of head) See text prepared by Andrea B.
* Your main creative output can be inspired by an object in the text. (Ex. Mat where the invalid lied for years).
* Transforming the topic from one medium to another helps in balancing the workshop to have enough time for group dynamics and for working alone.
* DO NOT over stuff the workshop. Prepare to take out some activities if you see the group is having too much.
* To clap or not to clap is something that the group should discuss early on and include in the contract. It should be clear, however, that a play is not a performance to be evaluated but an activity to contribute to everyone’s growing/changing/developing understanding of the text.
* Lead as you would like to be led. I appreciate the style where you give the participants just enough direction/instructions but allow them some space and freedom to explore things on their own. Here, I mainly refer to grand/big play, but it also applies to the general structure of the workshop.
* Some questions that the non-playing participants can answer in response to the play they have witnessed. A) what did you see? B) how did it make you feel? C) what do you associate with what you have seen? D) What are your thoughts about it (reflection).
* In pair-share, you can think of positions or poses to accompany the question and answer. (Ex. Questions to answer while lying down, while sitting, and while standing).
* To create a play representing the text, you may let your participants warm up and develop ideas by letting them do small actions one after the other in their roles.
* When you attend to your participants bodily needs (rest, nutrition, good ventilation, warmth, proper acoustics, touch, stimulation through exercise, etc.) and when you help them become aware of how their bodies feel and what they need, you help them find meaning in the text, maybe even deepen or develop their understanding. You also facilitate their reflection.
* A medium you can use for creative work involves letting your participants explore the area for things they can use/integrate into their work. Ex. Frottage