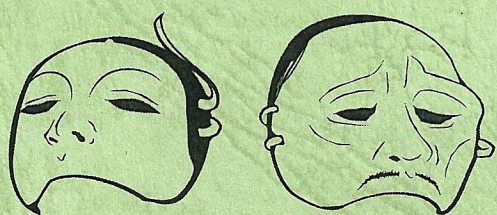


2014 義大利面具工作坊講義



同黨劇團

LIFE MASKS



Mask maker Donato Sartori instructing the students in his workshop how to make a life mask in plaster. The model is Professor Tom Wheatly.

MAKING A LIFE MASK FROM ALGINATE

The subject who is having his face copied must be willing. A model with tendencies toward claustrophobia may have a real mental struggle about submitting to the ordeal. Sometimes someone can be enticed into cooperating with the promise of a copy of his face for his very own to take home. Vanity can overcome fear.

Make your model as comfortable as possible. Put a pillow under his head and lay him flat on his back.

When the alginate is applied over his face, all of his breathing will be done through soda straws (the larger size, such as those that come with a milk shake). At this point have the model fit

straws into his nostrils to see how it feels, and to be assured that breathing will indeed be possible and comfortable. As soon as our model has a measure of confidence, the straws can be removed till later.

The model's face should be washed thoroughly: a man should be well shaven; a woman must remove all her makeup.

Although a release agent is not absolutely necessary when working with alginate, a light coat of petroleum jelly on the eyelashes and eyebrows makes them lie close to the skin's surface, and keeps the pattern of crossed hairs from getting embedded in the hardened alginate.

Protect your subject's hair with a tight fitting shower cap or a nylon stocking.

Swathe your model's head with a piece of muslin, loosely wrapping it around, from chin to crown. This helps control the alginate, keeping it on the facial features while it is in a liquid, runny form (and keeping it out of the model's ears).



Cured alginate is very flexible. It is therefore necessary to back it up with rigid reinforcement

made of cheesecloth and plaster. The plaster reinforcement is called a "mother mold."

So, while the model is preparing and before you mix the alginate, cut three pieces of cheesecloth 12" x 24", and mix up about a quart of plaster to make this reinforcement. Look ahead to the section on Mixing and Using Plaster (page 57) for detailed directions on how to mix plaster.

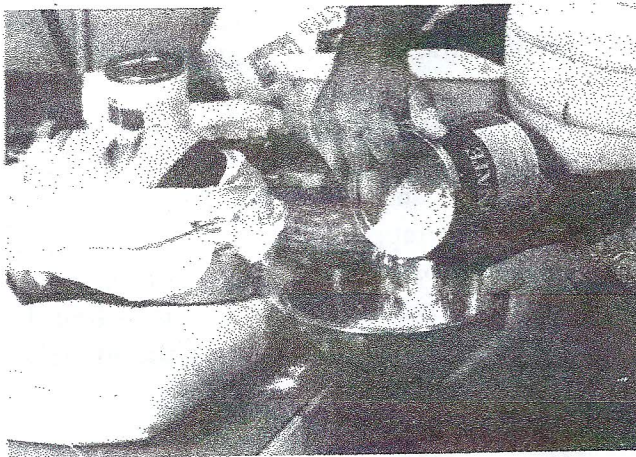


It takes mixed plaster about 20 minutes to begin to get firm, so it will be just about ready to use when you are finished with the alginate, if you have the materials prepared and proceed with confidence. Add the plaster to the water as suggested in the text but do not stir the ingredients. You will do the actual stirring after the alginate has set up solidly.

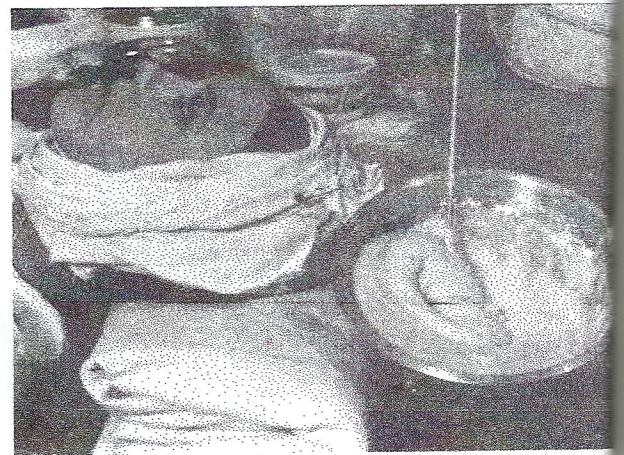
Alginate comes in powder form. It should be mixed with water and used *immediately*. It must be thoroughly mixed in one minute, and then poured directly onto the desired casting pattern (the face). In three minutes it will have set up and be ready for removal. Now, that's not much time for false moves. If you mix the powder with very cold water, you will have more time. (Ice water more than doubles the work time, but ice

water gets uncomfortable.) Anyhow, you won't need more time; just be ready to act, and proceed with confidence.

The alginate mix comes with a scoop for measuring the powder and a small vial for measuring the correct amount of water. One measure of each is presumed to be ample for making a dental impression; however, to make a life mask you will need 25 times this amount. Measure out 25 scoops of powder into one mixing bowl and 25 vials of water into another. (When you have gained experience with this product, you may not want to continue measuring the components. You will estimate the amount of powder and stir in water till the consistency seems right. But that's for later.)



Pour the powder into the bowl with the water, and your three minute countdown begins. Put all of your attention to the task of mixing these ingredients. You may use an electric cake mixer or an electric drill fitted with a paint stirring



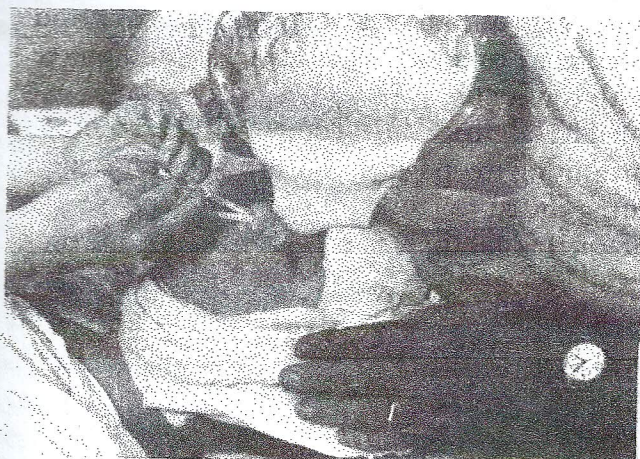
paddle, or you may stir with a spatula and concentrated energy. Mix the paste as if you were mixing up a cake; in fact, the mixed alginate will look almost like cake batter.

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Tell your subject to place the straws in his nose (When he sticks the straws in himself, it is less likely to tickle the nose hairs.) After a minute of mixing, pour the alginate onto subject's face.

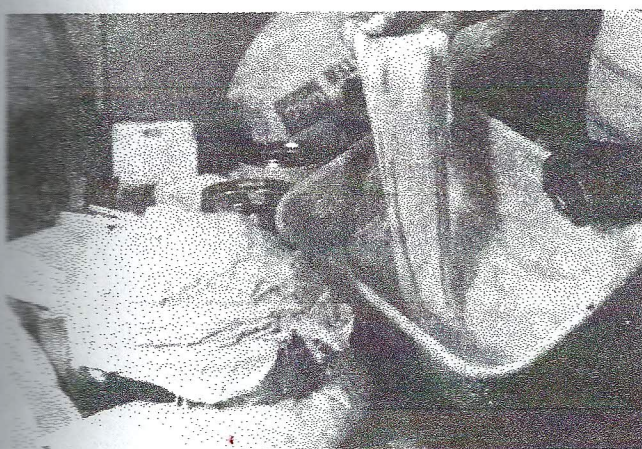
From this point on, the subject must keep his eyes closed. At this stage, therefore, you should begin a narrative of everything you are doing, so as to keep him informed, comfortable, and confident as to what is happening in his surroundings. Use your most soothing bedside manner.

As you begin to spread the alginate, advise the subject that you are beginning to apply the mixture to his right cheek and that it will be cold. Warn him not to flex his facial muscles, and assure him that if he feels panic at any time he can abort the process by simply sitting up. All you will have lost will be a few minutes time and a

little alginate.

If the process is being observed, all joking on the spectators' part must now cease. Any uncontrolled facial movement will ruin the cast.

Soon, the alginate will be set up to the consistency of very firm gelatin. It must now be reinforced with the plaster mother mold spoken of earlier. Without it the alginate can flex out of shape, and the features will distort unrecognizably. Ask your subject to begin patiently flexing his facial muscles in an effort to loosen the gelled casting from his skin. This will give him a diversion while you are making the mother mold.



Fetch your tub of soaking plaster. It should have been no more than 7 or 8 minutes since you introduced the water, and it is now ripe for use. Give the mixture its first stirring, and it will become fluid. Dip in the prepared pieces of cheesecloth, saturating them thoroughly in the plaster.



Drape the plaster-cloths one at a time around the alginate mold. Press and work the plaster-saturated gauze onto the form of the alginate. The plaster will not stick to the alginate, rather it conforms to the precise shape offered by the mold, making a hard shell support for the alginate.



When the plaster has solidified, you may free your model from his confinement. Loosen the forehead first and then carry the mold down toward the chin. This will slide the straws out of the subject's nostrils.

MOLDING AND CASTING

We have already defined one important term: "mother mold." There are just a few more that you should know to help you understand the text to come.

Almost every mask you construct will be produced using a technique of molding and casting. The terms "molding" and "casting" can easily be confused. We can clear up this semantic problem, however, with one sentence of explanation. *A mold is the pattern from which a casting is taken.* This single sentence defines both words.

It is not at all unusual for a casting to be used as a mold (from which subsequent castings can be made).

In mask making, the pattern (usually that of a sculpted form of clay, in the previous case a model's face) acts as a mold when it is covered with plaster. This plaster reproduction is called a casting until the moment it is pressed into service to make copies of its shape. Then it will correctly be referred to as a mold.

Positive and Negative Molds

A clay sculpture is considered to be a "positive" shape; the protruding features project forward, and the sunken features recede into the mold. A plaster casting taken from this form is called a

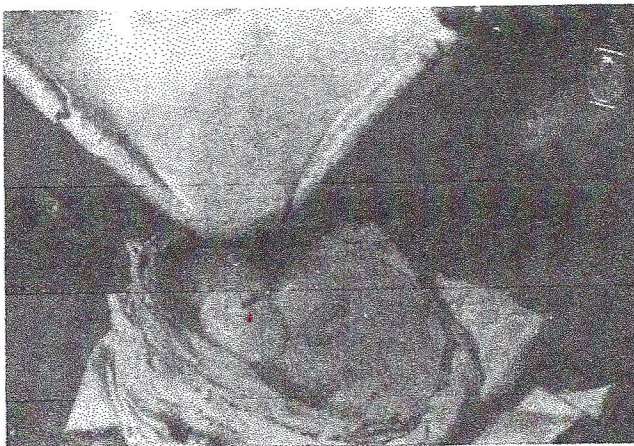
"negative" shape; the eye sockets lie nearest to you as you view the casting, and the nose and chin appear as the deepest hollows in the form. The alginate casting is negative.

Mold Release

The use of a mold release (an agent to ensure the casting doesn't stick to the mold) is normal in any casting procedure. It is a fact that alginate

will not stick to skin, and you will find that plaster will not stick to Plasticine, but a thin coating of a release agent can only be helpful.

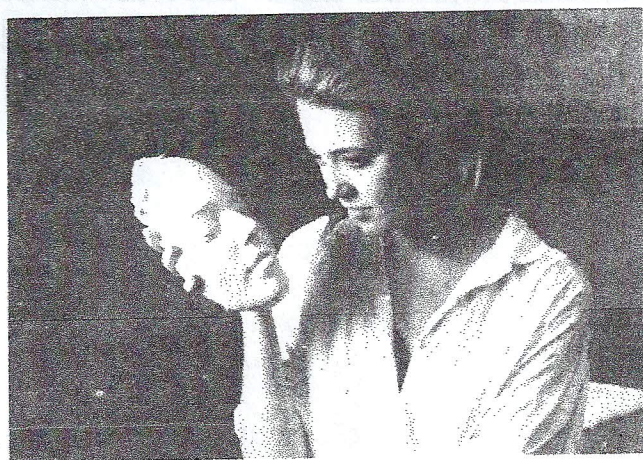
Making a Positive Plaster Copy of the Life Mask



This copy can (and should) be made immediately. An alginate mold will shrink as the moisture dries out of it. This shrinkage is not a big

Make a positive copy of your subject's face by mixing a fresh batch of plaster and pouring it into the supported alginate. The alginate is now acting as a negative mold.

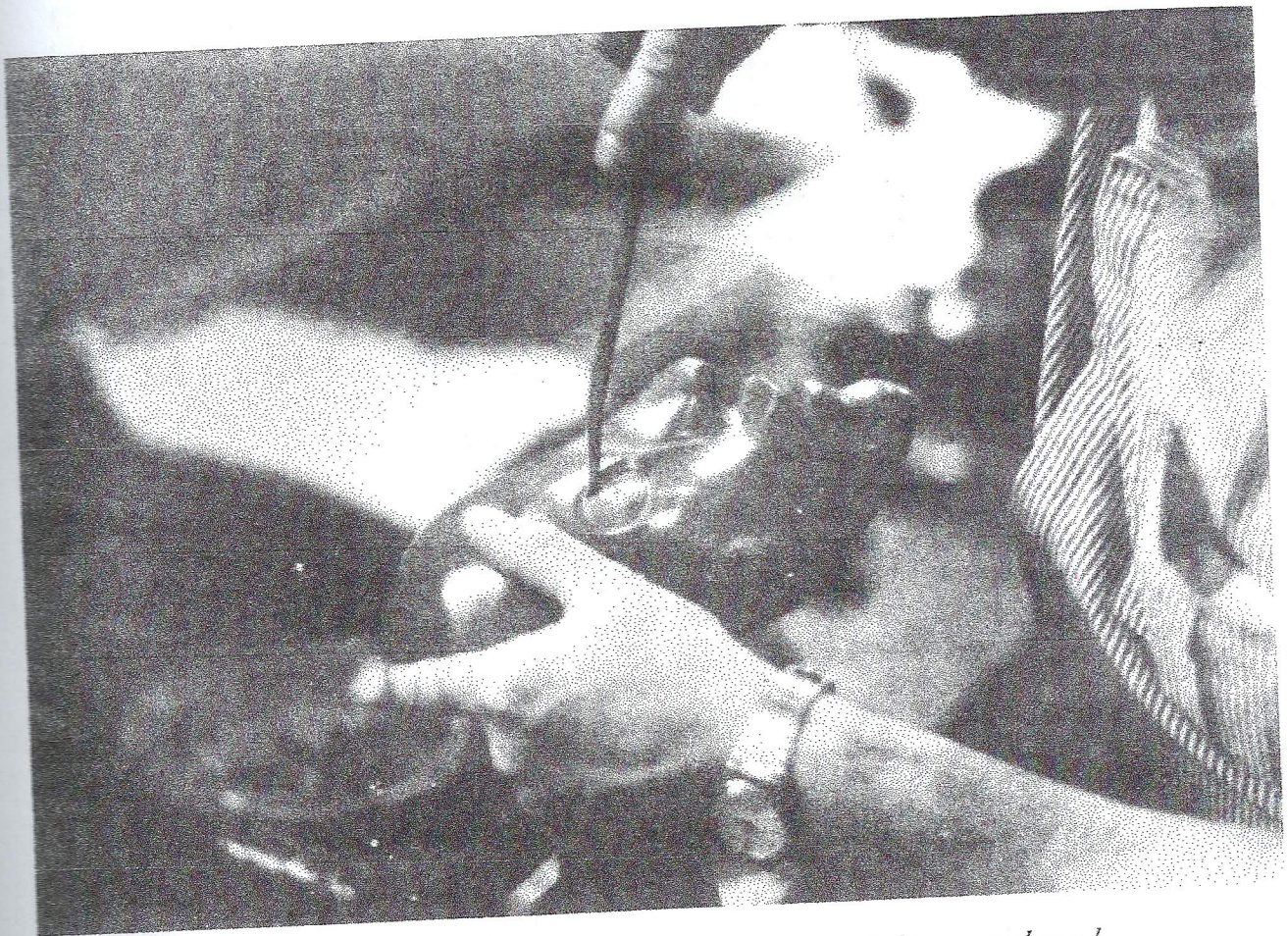
problem for our purposes, but a dentist is cautioned to make his casting within the hour, or it will not fit his patient's mouth.



A plaster life mask such as this one can be used as the basis for making masks with the unique face shape of the model from whom it was taken.

It is a simple matter to separate the plaster casting from the alginate mold. The mold is still flexible and non-sticking. Just press the two apart, and take a look at your finished life mask.

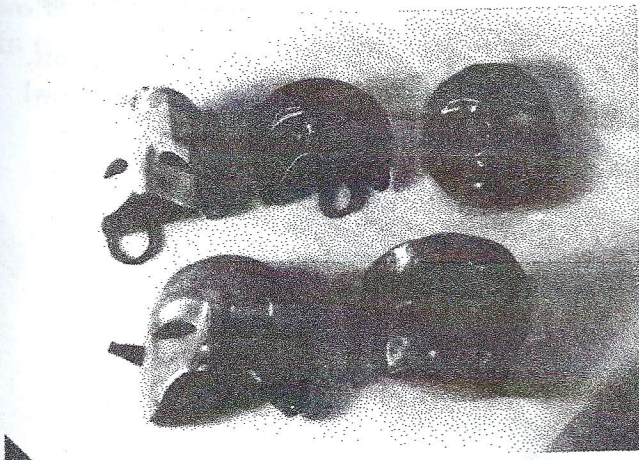
THE NEUTRAL MASK



One of Sartori's craftsmen cutting open the eyes of this neutral mask.

The citizens of this world (you and I) are aware in a very practical way of the advantages of working with masks. Sunglasses, hair styles, beards, face jewelry, hats, and smoking accoutrements (pipe, cigar, cigarette) are types of veils we find useful to hide our shyness and insecurity. It is peculiar that when one's face is screened, there is a presumption that the whole person is somehow protected.

We feel safe behind our carefully chosen disguises, and are encouraged to assume the role the mask may suggest. We can now act "cool," "tough," "carefree," "fearless," "worldly," "mature," "sophisticated," etc. Like the ostrich with his head in the sand, we operate on the prin-



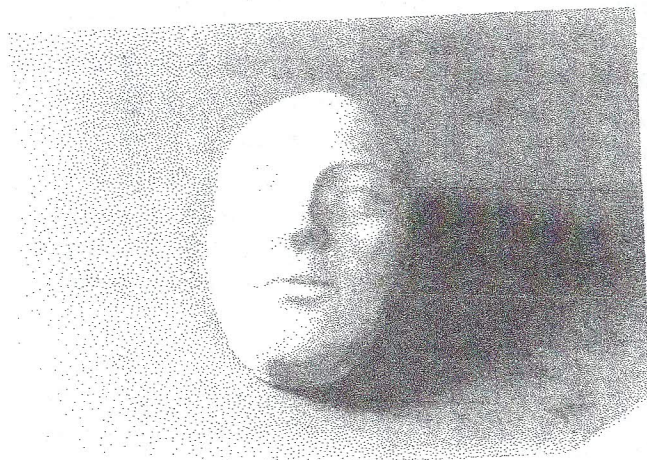
During these exercises, the performer sometimes learns to find and isolate the role that "self" plays in the process of character development. He is encouraged to use this awareness to enrich the character or, as is just as likely, once identified he may choose to reduce the effects of his obtruding ego.

ciple that if our face is hidden (or even partly so) our entire personality is secure. The ploy works for the ostrich, and it seems to work rather well for us.

The beginning actor experiences this same phenomenon as he makes his first explorations with a neutral mask. In these initial classroom exercises, the mask becomes a tool for depersonalization, reducing his inhibitions. Upon donning the neutral mask, it is common for an actor to experience his environment as though he had never seen it before. He assumes a baby-like perspective, seemingly discovering his surroundings anew, without feeling obliged to make judgments.

When an actor wears a half mask like the ones pictured here, his body is freed. He is encouraged to experiment. If his self-consciousness is overcome, in nearly every case the actor is able to go beyond his usual limits.

In later exercises the neutral mask separates facial expression from body expression, forcing the body to carry a share of the load in conveying emotion. The full face mask silences the actor's two most powerful means of communication, his voice and his facial expression.



Karen Torell designed these neutral mask forms, male and female, sculpting them in modeling clay over plaster life masks. If a performer wants to relay an emotion while wearing this mask, he



must use his body as the means of expression. It is absolutely futile to frown, smile, or scowl behind the mask — nothing is communicated.

DESIGNING A NEUTRAL MASK

Amleto Sartori, who made the masks for Jacques Lecoq's experiments with mime, strove to make the mask absolutely neutral—totally without expression. He began by making a casting of the actor's relaxed face and then, modifying it, he eliminated residual traces of expression. He concentrated on removing all of the details, no matter how small, that he felt would deprive the mask of its neutrality.

As Lecoq's experiments with mime progressed, he and Sartori decided that no single mask would work satisfactorily for both genders and that the neutral mask should be formatted in two styles, male and female.

In the book, *Behind the Mask*, Bari Rolfe re-

fers to an expressionless mask as being a universal mask. The universal mask is not neutral but contains those traits that we all have in common. The design does contain the essential features of expression, but in the most economical way. The mask is not, therefore, devoid of emotion, but rather is capable of portraying many emotions.

Mime classes have been designed around the use of four basic age masks. Still retaining their neutrality of expression, these masks represent the four ages of man: adolescence, adulthood, mature age, and old age. Some examples of age masks will be found in the next section on Character Masks (page 53).



The class pictured here is investigating the art of acting with the use of a full face neutral mask made of leather. They are experimenting with methods of communicating through the use of posture and body movements.



The Japanese Nō theater uses full face masks in the performance of their dramas. Many of the masks designed for the young women, Ko-Omote, Waka-Onna, Zo-Onna, and others, appear to be neutral—lacking in expression. Although no obvious emotion is immediately projected, Ko-Omote can express a variety of feelings during a single performance with her physical manner. To cite one obvious example of this technique, the performer may depict sorrow by bowing her head, and project joy as the head is lifted. Remarkably, the mask seems to change its expression as the performer's pose is altered.

Sculpting a Mask with "Life"

Expert mask makers agree that a mask must have a life of its own. It is possible (and the occurrence rate is not low) to sculpt a mask that is *dead*! A dead mask will prove to be unsatisfactory in performance. A finished mask must contain a vitality that is contagious to the actor. The features carved into the mask should contain an energy not yet released but unmistakably there; a latent power that can draw from the actor an energy level slightly higher than that of ordinary

life. This quality is difficult to define, but easy enough to detect in performance.

If you are looking for it, a dead mask can usually be detected and corrected in the clay stage as you are sculpting it. When you suspect that a mask is lacking the necessary vitality, you can prove it by making a quick copy of it in papier-mâché. Perform with it (or have someone else perform with it) to see if it can communicate.