

Reflective Response

Source: Willis, Ronald A. *Fragile Magic: A Guidebook for Theatre Respondents*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing R. Pullins Co., 2012. Please read the entire book. What follows is a very brief outline of Willis's approach.

In a response, the KCACTF introduction and a brief discussion of Festival is helpful, especially to those who may not have attended a Festival. The structure of the response as Willis envisions it is flexible.

Willis suggests that live theatre when it works exudes a kind of magic. It's satisfying on a deep personal level. That magic is also "surprisingly fragile." Theatre happens in the moment. Elements change from one night to the next, sometimes leaving only a trace of the magic. Our objective as theatre respondents is "to increase the power and frequency of theatre's fragile magic." Respondents should focus their attention on "**helping developing theatre artists understand what they have already accomplished and provide them with the wherewithal to improve their future work.**"

Willis believes when respondents use a reflective approach to describe the theatre experience, that the performance team is free to **discover** whether they have been successful in what they were trying to do with their creative work. It invites self-awareness and self-discovery in the artists.

He says respondents should experience the production, think about what we experience, and describe and discuss it with the performance team in terms of the

1. fictive world,
2. theatrical means used to create the fictive world, and
3. respondents' reaction to the fictive world.

Respondents should **describe** what they believe they witnessed.

The last part of the response deals with young artists' future work. Respondents offer possibilities for application to new work in a descriptive rather than prescriptive manner. It can help to couch the possibilities in questions in the framework of what the developing artists have already done. This invites them to re-engage in the creative process.

This book is filled with detailed descriptions of techniques to help respondents provide a meaningful response. It contains definitions of terms and frequently asked questions. It is a must-read for every respondent.