



THE  
ULTIMATE  
HIPSTER

## EFFECT:

Pulling a rabbit out of a hat is, let's face it, a cliché. Likewise the appearance of fluttering doves from a silk foulard. Generations ago, when clothes were baggy and a vest with waistcoat and pochettes under the jacket were standard attire, a performer like the great Alexander Herrmann used to walk on stage with any number of rabbits concealed on his person, ducks too, and sometimes even a small deer.

Today's snugger fashions preclude such devices. The hip post-modern conjurer, though often sporting a Mephistophelean goatee, will perform while wearing little more than jeans, a T-shirt, and a few ironic tattoos.

How is it, then, that while casually strolling across stage, you clap your hands—and suddenly you are flanked by two hippopotamuses! The audience gasps. Where on earth did they come from? How marvelous!

And to be frank: how they envy you!



*For tips about hippopotamus hygiene and maintenance, see the “Glossary of the Amazing” at the end of this volume.*

## METHOD:

It is a little-known fact that the rear-end of a hippopotamus resembles the arm of an oversized Bauhaus-design couch. (If you're thinking Weimar circa 1923, you're absolutely right!) If two hippopotamuses are positioned on either side of a settee-bench and stand very still, they blend in perfectly with the zeitgeist.

Obtain and train two hippopotamuses to stand very still. When the curtain rises at the beginning of your performance, the audience will *think* that your stage décor is a making a tasteful and trendy statement about a crucial step in modernist design kraftwerk. You should do nothing to disabuse them of the illusion.

Proceed with your show as usual. At a certain point, usually about ten to fifteen minutes into the performance, at least one of the hippopotamuses will get restless and begin to snort and snuffle.

This is your cue to stroll across stage. Don't stop what you're saying or doing but don't dawdle, either, because you don't want to make a hippopotamus wait too long. (It gets cranky.) Just be natural.

When you are in front of the "couch," clap your hands. The beasts, if properly trained, will hear this as their cue to turn around.

From there, the effect takes care of itself, and is often enhanced if, as frequently happens, the hippopotamuses are so bored that they yawn. This is delightfully theatrical. People love to see a hippopotamus yawn.

It's cool, the last word in aloof attitudinizing.

Try it!