



**BRYAN DOERRIES, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR OF THEATER OF WAR PRODUCTIONS, NAMED PUBLIC ARTIST IN RESIDENCE (PAIR) WITH NYC DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' SERVICES & DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

*The two-year residency, co-produced by Brooklyn Public Library, will bring theater projects designed to address public health and social issues to veterans and civilian communities across all five boroughs*

*The inaugural performance will take place March 20 at The Greene Space at WNYC. Subsequent performances have been scheduled in the Bronx, Queens, Brooklyn, and Staten Island; the full run of 60+ performances will run through December 2018*

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New York – The NYC Department of Veterans' Services and Department of Cultural Affairs today named Bryan Doerries, Artistic Director of Theater of War Productions, as the City's newest Public Artist in Residence (PAIR). The two-year residency, which will bring theater-based projects to all five boroughs, marks the second collaboration between the two agencies as part of the expanded PAIR program, created to enhance the City's services through creative practice. The project, made possible through a \$1,365,000 grant from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, will be the first city-wide public health program implemented by the Department of Veterans' Services.

Bryan Doerries was selected to be the City's latest PAIR based on the broad impact of his work as co-founder of Theater of War Productions, which presents programs that address the enduring impact of war as well as broader community issues such as gun violence, mental health, addiction, prison reform, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Brooklyn Public Library (BPL) is a co-producer of the residency as part of its commitment to being a resource and advocate for civic engagement, education, artistic expression, and a safe haven for public discourse. The project will combine theater and public forums that engage both veterans and civilians in community-specific performances that foster health and healing through open discussion and exchange. Over the next two years, the free events will take place in more than 60 venues across New York, including public libraries, with each of the projects tailored to the needs of different communities.

"Our deep connection with the arts is a distinct marker of our great city and a source of pride for all New Yorkers," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "This pioneering public artist residency is poised to have a tremendous impact on New York over the next two years by helping to better integrate our veterans into the social fabric of our city and to better educate communities of the impact of war on our city's veterans. Theater of War's singular approach to addressing social issues through performance will bring classical Greek plays to life for a modern, diverse audience of

communities across New York City. Thanks to the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, this unique partnership between city agencies, the library system, and Bryan Doerries' extraordinary theater company will demonstrate the powerful ability of art to address issues that face our society at a time when protecting and promoting our shared values is more important than ever."

"As the former State Senate chair of the Committee on Veterans, Homeland Security, and Military Affairs, I have been honored to work alongside the heroes and sheroes who put their lives on the line for our shared liberty," said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. "It will be truly wonderful to see the cross-pollination of ideas and experiences between artists and veterans in our city as a result of Theater of War's work with our communities. Now is the time to spark dialogue and wrestle with the challenges in our society, and the arts are as important as ever in creating that space for sharing, learning, and inspiring. I applaud DCLA Commissioner Finkelpearl and DVS Commissioner Sutton on this meaningful collaboration."

"In recognition of the power of the arts to foster a sense of belonging and the creation of a broader community, the Department of Veterans' Services is pleased to build upon our ongoing partnership with the Department of Cultural Affairs and welcome Bryan Doerries as our Public Artist in Residence," said **Brigadier General (Ret.) Loree Sutton, MD, Commissioner of the Department of Veterans' Services**. "A key goal of this residency is to help veterans successfully transition to and thrive in civilian life by offering programs designed to address the impact of wartime experiences that endure long after a soldier leaves the battlefield. Harnessing the timeless power of storytelling, the *Theater of War* project will provide veterans and their families with programs tailored to their experiences and in doing so create connections with their communities and peers—vital elements in the path to restoring wholeness."

"The ancient Greek principle of *catharsis* is alive and well in *Theater of War*. The arts have the unique ability to evoke and diminish fear and trauma, to break down barriers, to build and strengthen social bonds, and to address some of the most challenging issues we face as a city and a community," said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. "In our second PAIR with DVS, we're excited to be partnering with Brooklyn Public Library and working with a host of community organizations to bring the groundbreaking work of Theater of War Productions to communities in all five boroughs."

"It is our great honor to support this powerful initiative that aims to help improve the lives of thousands of veterans, their families and their communities across New York City. It is only through these broad collaborations by means of public and private partnerships that such work and efforts to impact thousands of people can be maximized," said **Andreas Dracopoulos, Co-President of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation**. "In our work in New York, Greece and around the world, the Foundation is committed to actions that help transform the lives of people and communities most in need. With this project, we are especially proud to continue our collaboration with Bryan Doerries, and help his efforts to address the devastating consequences of PTSD for thousands of veterans and their communities, through the staged reading of classical Greek tragedies and the process of ritualized catharsis they induce."

Led by Brooklyn-based writer and director Bryan Doerries, Theater of War Productions presents readings of classical Greek and contemporary plays as a foundation for building a framework for public dialogue on urgent social issues. *Theater of War*, the company's hallmark project, presents these events to service members and their communities to help initiate conversations about the visible and invisible wounds of war. The readings, which have featured leading film, theater, and television performers such as Jesse Eisenberg, Paul Giamatti, Jake Gyllenhaal,

Brian F. O’Byrne, Martin Sheen, John Turturro, Diane Wiest, Samira Wiley, and Jeffrey Wright, are followed by guided town-hall style audience discussions. To date, over 80,000 service members, veterans, and their families have attended and participated in *Theater of War* events and have spoken openly about their experiences on deployments and at home.

The first *Theater of War* PAIR event will be held at The Greene Space at WNYC in Manhattan on March 20, 2017. The cast will include Paul Giamatti, Frances McDormand, David Strathairn, and Reg E. Cathey reading from Sophocles’ *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*. The event will be live-streamed in full on the Stavros Niarchos Foundation website, and an excerpt of the program will be recorded for *The New Yorker Radio Hour*. The first community-based events have also been scheduled including *Theater of War* at Brooklyn Public Library’s Crown Heights branch (April 6); the Main Auditorium at Susan Wagner High School, Staten Island (April 14); Rockaway Theatre Company in Rockaway, Queens (April 17); and the Pregones + Puerto Rican Traveling Theater in the Bronx (May 6). All events will be free and open to the public.

“It has been profoundly humbling to work with women and men who have lived lives of mythological proportions, who have loved and lost, and who know the meaning of sacrifice,” said **Bryan Doerries, Artistic Director of Theater of War Productions**. “We are deeply honored and grateful for this opportunity to bring our work to veterans and other populations all over the City, using timeless stories to help communities build a shared vocabulary for discussing trauma and isolation, but also resilience and paths toward healing.”

“Brooklyn Public Library contributes to the vibrancy of our community, serving as a forum for education, new ideas, artistic expression, and sharing different perspectives and experiences,” said **Linda E. Johnson, President and CEO of Brooklyn Public Library**. “Theater of War Productions has established an innovative model that uses theater to address critical issues that we face in our borough, city, and nation, and we are very excited to work with them on this city-wide initiative. Exploring and easing the toll that combat takes on our servicemen and -women is vitally important, and relevant not only for those who have experienced battle, but everyone whose life has been touched by violence or trauma.”

In 2016, Brooklyn Public Library and Theater of War Productions worked together to present a dramatic reading from Euripides’ *Madness of Hercules* to facilitate a community conversation on the social impact of gun violence. BPL’s involvement in the current residency—which includes engaging new audiences, developing related public programs, and helping to identify communities where the events will take place—embodies one of the ways Brooklyn Public Library is defining a new model for the role libraries can play in people’s lives and address vital issues.

Further details on the residency and upcoming events will be announced at a later date on [www.theaterofwar.nyc](http://www.theaterofwar.nyc).

**Generous support for this project is provided by:**



## **ABOUT PUBLIC ARTIST IN RESIDENCE (PAIR)**

Public Artists in Residence (PAIR) is a municipal residency program that embeds artists in city government to propose and implement creative solutions to pressing civic challenges. Launched by the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs in 2015, PAIR takes its inspiration and name from the pioneering work of artist Mierle Laderman Ukeles, the first official artist-in-residence with the New York City Department of Sanitation (DSNY), 1977–present.

PAIR is based on the premise that artists are creative problem-solvers. Moving beyond politics and public relations, artists are able to create long-term and lasting impact by working collaboratively in open-ended processes to build community bonds, open new channels for dialogue, and reimagine realities for those who experience and participate in the work. PAIR artists engage both agency staff and the constituency the agency seeks to serve.

This is the second PAIR collaboration between the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and the Department of Veterans' Services. Other current PAIR partnerships include Tania Bruguera at the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, Mary Miss at the Department of Design and Construction, and The Lost NYC at the Administration for Children's Services.

## **ABOUT THE STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION**

The Stavros Niarchos Foundation is one of the world's leading private international philanthropic organizations, making grants in the areas of arts and culture, education, health and sports, and social welfare. The Foundation funds organizations and projects that are expected to achieve a broad, lasting, and positive impact for society at large, focusing on vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly, and also exhibit strong leadership and sound management. The Foundation also seeks actively to support projects that facilitate the formation of public-private partnerships as an effective means for serving public welfare. In 2012, the Foundation, in addition to its standard grant-making activities, embarked on three major grant initiatives totaling \$378 million (€300 mil) aiming to provide relief support against the severe effects of the deepening socioeconomic crisis in Greece, and to help address the critical issue of youth unemployment. Since 1996, the SNF has made grant commitments of [\\$1.9 billion](#) / €1.6 billion, through 3,706 grants to non-profit organizations in [111 nations around the world](#). 2016 marked the 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation's global philanthropic activity.

The Foundation's largest single gift is the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center ([SNFCC](#)), in Athens. The project's total budget of \$867 million (€630mil) includes two grants of \$6 million (€5mil) each to the National Library of Greece and the Greek National Opera respectively, aiming to support the organizations' transition to their new facilities. The project, designed by the architectural firm Renzo Piano Building Workshop (RPBW), includes the new facilities of the National Library of Greece, and of the Greek National Opera, as well as the Stavros Niarchos Park. The SNFCC is a testament and a commitment to the country's future. It is also an engine of short- to mid-term economic stimulus.