



THEATER OF WAR PRODUCTIONS

Theater of War Productions provides a framework to engage communities in challenging dialogues about human suffering. Using theater as a catalyst to spark conversations, Theater of War Productions addresses pressing public health and social issues such as combat-related psychological injury, suicide, end-of-life care, police/community relations, prison reform, gun violence, political violence, natural and manmade disaster, domestic violence, substance abuse, and addiction.

Since its founding in 2009, Theater of War Productions has facilitated events for over 100,000 people, presenting 22 different tailored programs targeted to diverse communities across the globe. The company works with leading film, theater, and television actors to present dramatic readings of seminal plays—from classical Greek tragedies to modern and contemporary works—followed by town-hall discussions designed to confront social issues by drawing out raw and personal reactions to themes highlighted in the plays and underscoring how they resonate with contemporary audiences. The guided discussions break down stigmas and invite audience members to share their perspectives and experiences, helping to foster empathy, compassion, and an understanding of deeply complex issues.

Notable artists who have performed with Theater of War Productions include Blythe Danner, Adam Driver, Reg E. Cathey, Jesse Eisenberg, Paul Giamatti, Jake Gyllenhaal, Alfred Molina, Frances McDormand, Samira Wiley, Jeffrey Wright, and many others.

Theater of War Productions was co-founded by Bryan Doerries and Phyllis Kaufman, and Doerries currently serves as the company's artistic director.

In 2017, Doerries, was named NYC Public Artist in Residence (PAIR), a joint appointment with the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs and Department of Veterans' Services. Over the course of his two-year residency, Doerries will bring more than 60 events to veterans and civilian communities across all five boroughs in collaboration with Brooklyn Public Library, a co-producer of the PAIR events, and support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation.

In an unprecedented effort to bring arts-based public health projects to communities around the U.S. and globally, Theater of War Productions partnered with government, community, and educational organizations to stage more than 70 events in over 20 cities worldwide during 2017.

www.theaterofwar.com

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Selected Projects by Issue

Impact of War and Violence

Theater of War (Sophocles' *Ajax* and *Philoctetes*)

Rooted in discussions about the enduring impact of war, the company's hallmark project is designed to increase awareness of post-deployment psychological health issues, disseminate information on available resources, and foster greater community cohesion.

The Tecmessa Project (Sophocles' *Ajax*)

This presentation of Sophocles' *Ajax* focuses on the role of Tecmessa, wife of the warrior Ajax. The dramatic reading serves to inspire a conversation about the unique challenges faced by military families.

Community and Police Relations

Antigone in Ferguson (Sophocles' *Antigone*)

First developed in response to Michael Brown's 2014 murder, this project is designed to bridge the growing divide between law enforcement and local communities throughout the United States. Artistic Director Bryan Doerries' contemporary translation brings Sophocles' ancient play to life, recounting the fate of Antigone, who in defiance of the King's orders, decides to honor her brother's death by moving his slain body from the streets. *Antigone in Ferguson* is set to gospel music, performed by an ensemble made up of community leaders including police officers and educators. With support from the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, *Antigone in Ferguson* is being developed as a full-scale theatrical production to be staged in New York City in the fall of 2018.

Ethics and the Justice System

Theater of Law (Aeschylus' *Eumenides*)

Commissioned by New York University's Forum on Law, Culture, & Society, and designed as a professional development program for legal professionals, as well as a project for the general public, *Theater of Law* drives conversations about moral justice in the court system. The project is aimed at engaging audiences who have in some way been disenfranchised by the law in constructive, powerful dialogue.

Domestic Violence

Domestic Violence Project (Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*)

Addressing the impact of domestic violence on individuals, families, and communities, the *Domestic Violence Project* is touring all five boroughs of New York City under the current Public Artist in Residence program, through a partnership with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence.

End-of-life Care/Chronic Suffering/Death/Dying

King Lear Project (Shakespeare's *King Lear*)

This project presents readings of scenes from Shakespeare's *King Lear* to engage diverse audiences, including the elderly and their families and caregivers, in open discussions about the challenges of aging and of caring for senior citizens.

End of Life (Sophocles' *Women of Trachis* and *Philoctetes*)

In addition to public performances, this project is used as a teaching tool by medical institutions, such as Harvard Medical School, NYU School of Medicine, the University of Virginia School of Medicine, the Mayo Clinic, and others to prepare medical professionals in the fields of palliative care, hospice, geriatrics, and nursing.

Gun Violence

Hercules (Euripides' *Madness of Hercules*)

Drawing from an ancient Greek tragedy about a vicious act of violence committed by an angry man with an invincible weapon, this project aims to generate powerful dialogue between concerned citizens, members of the law enforcement community, victims and perpetrators of gun violence, and the general public.

Addiction and Substance Abuse

Addiction Performance Project (Eugene O'Neill's *A Long Day's Journey into Night*) and ***The Dionysus Project*** (Euripides' *The Bacchae*)

Designed to raise awareness of addiction, the projects promote dialogue about the ethical and professional challenges posed by treating and supporting patients and loved ones who are struggling with addiction.

Rum and Vodka (Conor McPherson's one-man play, *Rum and Vodka*)

This project provokes discussions about the impact of alcoholism and addiction.

Prison Reform

Prometheus in Prison (Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*)

Addressing the challenges of rehabilitating prisoners in both correctional facilities and in communities, *Prometheus in Prison* premiered at the Missouri Department of Corrections in 2009 and has since been presented at various forums and correctional facilities worldwide, including the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base in 2011.

Racism/Racial Injustice

The Drum Major Instinct

The Drum Major Instinct engages audiences in dialogue about racism, inequality, and social justice. The performance features a dramatization of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s final sermon, embodied by prominent actors and supported by a large gospel choir, composed of singers, activists, police officers, and musicians from St. Louis, MO, and Brooklyn, NY.

Frederick Douglass in Staten Island

Frederick Douglass in Staten Island uses an 1883 speech that Douglass delivered to the National Convention of Colored Men as a forum for a powerful dialogue about racism, inequality, civil rights, education and the legal system, with the goal of fostering compassion, understanding, and positive action. The reading is accompanied by chain-gang music, spirituals, and additional original music composed by St. Louis native Phil Woodmore.

Sexual Violence

Tape (Stephen Belber's *Tape*)

Tape has been developed as a sexual assault awareness and prevention training program that uses dramatic readings of Stephen Belber's 1999 play to ignite discussions designed to confront community tolerance for sexually inappropriate behavior, particularly in military and university settings.

Mental Health

Medea (Euripides' *Medea*)

Medea timelessly depicts how scorned passion can lead to revenge and, sometimes, unthinkable violence. This project, which premiered at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in June 2016, delves into under-discussed mental health issues that affect women and their families.

Political Violence

Acts of Violence (Seneca's *Thyestes*)

This project presents scenes from Seneca's *Thyestes*, a Roman tragedy that was written during the gruesome reign of Nero, as a catalyst for town-hall discussions about the impact of political violence upon individuals, families, caregivers, health and human rights advocates, communities, and nations.

Natural Disaster

Book of Job (Stephen Mitchell's translation of *The Book of Job*)

Developed in collaboration with PopTech, *The Book of Job* was created to promote healing dialogue within the community of Joplin, which was devastated by a tornado in May 2011. The project has since been presented all over the country and the world, from New York City (Hurricane Sandy), to Pascagoula, MS (10-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina), to Tokyo (Fukushima).

Other projects in development address

- Immigration/Assimilation/Refugee Issues
- Sex Trafficking
- Gang Violence