

# *Applied Arts:*

**Theatre of the Oppressed Training  
for Artists, Activists & Community Workers**



**STAGE LEFT PRODUCTIONS**  
*Using the arts to affect personal  
and social transformation, and  
to foster social justice*

**APPLIED ARTS WORKSHOP**  
august 10 to 14, 2009  
calgary, alberta, canada  
[www.stage-left.org/training.htm](http://www.stage-left.org/training.htm)

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## About Applied Arts

**S**tage Left Productions offers this annual, week-long immersion in Theatre of the Oppressed practices as a means of learning to use the arts as an effective community engagement and social justice tool. To this end, Applied Arts offers both theoretical exploration and practical immersion in Theatre of the Oppressed, with a particular focus on Image and Forum Theatre and in the context of community organizing.

Applied Arts is uniquely designed for all levels of experience.

Really.

Our goal is to ensure that all participants are meaningfully engaged, no matter if completely new to the work or coming at it after decades of practice. We have an extensive history of training for all “levels” of experience and in the use of Theatre of the Oppressed for many different community and social justice purposes.



More importantly, we see no reason why people who are seeking opportunities for further professional development should have to pay for an extra week of training (especially in this economic climate). As a Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed we embrace our responsibility to make Boal’s methods accessible and serviceable to as many as possible. We also fully understand that financial barriers prevent too many of us from accessing opportunities to advance our skills.

We also believe that rich learning can happen within a community of mixed abilities and experiences. And we strive to make that possible for all. Our two facilitators bring divergent perspectives and experiences into the room, and they provide much opportunity for small group exploration based on both interest and experience. While we will engage in many aspects of the work as a whole community, we will also break into small groups as appropriate and necessary to more meaningful exploration. Overall, though, Applied Arts guides all participants through a step-by-step process of how to support communities to use Theatre of the Oppressed techniques to foster social justice.

While the focus of Applied Arts is on Image and Forum Theatre, as these are the most commonly practiced, the workshop also makes room for the introduction and/or exploration of Cops-in-the-Head, Rainbow of Desire, Legislative Theatre, Newspaper Theatre, and The Aesthetics of The Oppressed.

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## How We Approach Applied Arts

**S**tage Left operates in a grassroots, social justice context, from a Popular Education foundation. Applied Arts is presented within this framework. Although not a prerequisite to participation in the training, we believe that an understanding of social justice is a critical aspect of engaging in change processes.

Our facilitation style is both didactic and experiential, to provide for both pedagogical and pragmatic exploration of the concepts and methods. The venue will always be open and available for the 30 minutes before we begin each day. The first hour is for debriefing the previous day's work. We always start with a check-in and physical warm-up. Next we present a theoretical introduction of the day's concepts. Then we move into a practical exploration of them. The last 30 minutes of each day is reserved for "burning" questions and check-out. In cases where burning issues have not been resolved, a commitment is made to processing them in the best way for all. Our facilitation is meant to be co-operative and collaborative, responsive to the needs and desires of participants, and respectful of the experiences and perspectives that all bring into the room.



We have found that the best way to learn Theatre of the Oppressed is to experience it directly. Participants are therefore expected to fully engage in learning processes by sharing their own experiences, concerns, and perspectives. Please note that this is a highly participatory workshop and much physical activity is involved. This does NOT mean that to participate you have to be an athlete. The work is not competitively based, and people are supported and encouraged to work within their

own limits, while stretching outside of comfort zones where appropriate. We endeavor to make the workshop safe and welcoming for those from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to the disabled, culturally diverse individuals, First Nations, Metis, or Inuit persons, members of the LGBTQ community, seniors, and youth.

Please note, also, that the content of exploration often comes from participants' lives, making it both personal and political - and that we are exploring oppression and its consequence to individuals, communities, and society. As a result, much (safe) space is made for emotional exploration. In this regard, participants are expected to know the limits of their ability to manage both physical and emotional/psychological stressors, to set firm boundaries around those limits, and to support others in knowing how best to respect them.

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## Some Important Details

**A**ppplied Arts runs from Monday, August 10 to Friday, August 14. We'll work from 10:00am to around 6:00pm each day, but the room will be open at 9:30am for those who want early access. It's expected that participants will commit to attending the whole workshop, except for emergencies.

Please wear clothes that allow you and those you are sharing space with to feel comfortable, that you can move in, and that can get dirty (we spent time on the floor!).

Feel free to bring personal items, like yoga mats, water bottles, knee pads, etc.... Cell phone are okay too. We understand that personal realities cannot be put on hold for professional opportunities - but please don't take advantage.

The location will be disclosed when you register. It is accessible, along a public transit line, and as comfortable as possible for all.



The cost of the workshop is \$350 (CDN) if you register before July 1 and \$425 if you register after that. Please note that a minimum of ten (10) people must register for the session to run. The maximum number is forty (40). The registration cut-off isn't until Friday, July 31; but our workshops fill-up quickly. So early registration is recommended to guarantee a spot and to save costs. Payment is by Visa, MasterCard, cheque(s), or money order. A \$100 deposit is required to hold your place.

A limited amount of coffee, tea, sugar-free juice, water, and healthy snacks are provided each day. Meals are not. Potlucks are encouraged but not coordinated.

We also provide a limited amount of support in helping participants find affordable accommodation or billets (homestays). Billets are not guaranteed and are only an introduction to a welcoming host. We do not assume responsibility for any homestays. Detailed information on accommodation, transport, and regional information will be provided upon registration.

We also offer support in securing entry visas for international participants.

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## About Theatre of the Oppressed

**T**heatre of the Oppressed (TO) was established in the early 1970s by Brazilian activist Augusto Boal. TO is a form of Popular Theater of, by, and for people engaged in the struggle for liberation from external and internalized oppression: systemic discrimination; disenfranchisement; racism; homophobia and heterosexism; ableism; imperialism; globalization; poverty and economic exploitation; bullying and other forms of violence; sexual, physical, psychological, and emotional abuse; and so forth. More specifically, TO is a rehearsal theater for people who want to practice creative, non-violent ways of challenging forms of oppression in their lives and communities.

In TO, oppression is defined as a power dynamic based on monologue rather than dialogue; a pattern of domination that prohibits people from being who they are and from exercising their basic human rights. Accordingly, TO is a participatory theater practice that fosters cooperative forms of interaction among participants. Theatre is emphasized not as a spectacle, but rather as a language designed to analyze and discuss personal and social barriers and to explore community-based solutions to those challenges.



The principle goal of Theatre of the Oppressed is to, therefore, provide a fully accessible and pragmatic model through which to explore and transform the power relations that give rise to oppression.

Within this process: (1) all participants are learners; (2) all participate in and contribute equally to the production of knowledge and continuous dialogue; (3) the learners are the subject and not the object of the process; and (4) the goal is to liberate participants from internal and external oppression so as to make them capable of changing their reality, their lives, and the society they live in.

Stage Left takes an active role in the International Theatre of the Oppressed (ITO) network and also ascribes to their Declaration of Principles, which outlines the ideology and ethics of Theatre of the Oppressed practices throughout the world.

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## About Stage Left Productions

**S**tage Left is a Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed (TO), having been endorsed by Augusto Boal as such in 2005. We run a full-time TO practice, making use of all techniques in Boal's repertoire, and adapting them to satisfy specific community objectives. We're proud to be a hub for TO activity and training for all levels of experience, for a range of diverse communities, and for creative cultural competency.

We are the only company in Calgary that uses the arts exclusively to foster social justice. Our main community purpose is to support marginalized people to use the arts as a vehicle of radical social change. We use the arts to integrate, not assimilate, marginalized people into the creative, artistic, and social life of our community by providing safe and accessible space in which we can explore, define, and celebrate our culture; develop confidence, imagination, and artistic expression; contribute to the culture of our community in meaningful ways; and express both individual and collective identity. We also use the arts to support marginalized people to establish a visible presence in the



larger community, increasing awareness of specific issues and fostering an appreciation of diverse cultures through the presentation of authentic, dynamic, and non-sentimental images of personal experiences.

We engage in arts-based change processes that explore personal and social concerns and that enable us to imagine, actualize, and rehearse radical changes within the individuals and social structures that are part of those concerns. We work primarily with those whose lived experience includes social injustice. Together, we try to move beyond token change so as

to genuinely affect personal and social transformation, and to foster social justice. We have an extensively history of making art (and using it to change the world for the better) with people with physical, sensory, learning, and/or developmental disability, brain injury, chronic illness, and/or mental illness; queer youth; street-involved youth; politically motivated youth; culturally diverse youth; Ethno-cultural communities; First Nations; and other marginalized communities and our true allies.

We are proud to be a grass-roots arts-based community development and social action performance company, who takes seriously our service to the communities who work with us to overcome social injustice.

Welcome!

Michele Decottignies, Artistic Director and  
Nicole Dunbar, Associate Artistic Director

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## The Workshop Team

**M**ichele Decottignies is a Calgary-based community worker, producer, presenter, director, and playwright who is exclusively engaged in interdisciplinary artist-community collaboration through the intersection of Popular Theatre, Theatre of the Oppressed, Performance Creation, Popular Education, and Community Engagement. Michele is one of Canada's most accomplished Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) facilitators, having used TO in her arts-based community development and social justice practice for over a 15 years now. She is also one of the leading contributors to Canada's disability arts and culture movement; she has produced the longest-running disability arts festival in Canada; founded Canada's Disability Arts & Culture Network; was the associate producer of the inaugural meeting of Performance Creation Canada and sat on its Steering Committee; co-produced Calgary's first Aboriginal Playwrights' Festival, with Crazy Horse Theatre; and has also worked with One Yellow Rabbit, Alberta Theatre Projects, Theatre Calgary, the Arts Touring Alliance of Alberta, and Lunchbox Theatre. Michele is also the recipient of many awards, including a Moondance Columbine

Playwrighting Award, the Alliance Atlantis Award of Distinction for outstanding contribution to disability art in Canada, a Calgary Professional Arts Alliance Artist Award, a Calgary Award for outstanding contribution to the arts, and a few others!



Nicole Dunbar is an accomplished producer, presenter, performance creation facilitator, joker, director, dramaturge, play-wright, and performer who works across numerous disciplines, including disability art, Theatre of the Oppressed, performance creation, arts-based community development and theatre for young audiences. Nicole has co-produced two

disability arts festivals and twenty-one original one-act plays; she's performed in three inter-national children's festivals, facilitated many arts-based community development programs, and co-founded Kids Play Klassics - a performing arts ensemble specializing in theatre for young audiences. As Associate Producer of Canada's Disability Arts & Culture Network, and Co-Chair of its national Steering Committee, Nicole has organized national and regional meetings across Canada. She has also developed and facilitated numerous creative expression and drama education programs, exploring movement, story-telling, mask, physical theatre, and improvisation for youth and adults within the disability community. She endeavors to bridge the gap between the professional arts community and marginalized populations.

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## Registration Form

**P**lease mail this completed form, and the attached waiver, with the required \$100.00 deposit. Payment is by cheque or money order (made out to Stage Left), VISA, or MasterCard. The balance of payment is due August 1. A confirmation of your registration will be sent via email - unless otherwise requested. The registration deadline is July 31; but, as space is limited, we encourage you to register early.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City & Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal/Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (with area code): \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of credit card being used for payment, if any: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number & Expiry Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any personal concerns that we should be aware of, if any:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact's Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: If you are from outside of Canada, medical insurance is strongly recommended.**

Please attach a brief, legible statement about your interest in Applied Arts, touching on your artistic or community experience (if any - none is required) and/or on how you expect the training to enhance your future practice (no more than a one page statement, please).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## Waiver Form



Please note that all information is collected in compliance with Alberta's Personal Information Protection Act.

### **Certificate of Consent and Authority Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risk and Indemnity Agreement:**

I acknowledge that I am aware that Stage Left Productions' Applied Arts program involves physical activity and the possibility of injury resulting from that activity. As a participant, I freely consent to take part in all activities within the program and fully assume all responsibility for the possibility of personal injury, death, disability, property damage, or loss resulting thereof, howsoever caused. I further waive and release any and all claims that I, my relative(s), or my guardian(s) may have in the future as a result of participating in the program. I have read and understood this consent and I am aware that by signing it I am waiving certain legal rights, which I, and my relative(s), guardian(s), heirs, next of kin, executors, or administrators may have.

### **Promotional Release:**

I give Stage Left Productions permission to photograph me, videotape me, and/or record my voice. I understand that this will only be done as part of the program(s) I take with them. I also understand that these photographs, videotapes, or voice recordings may be used by Stage Left only for marketing the company, performances, workshops, programs, and/or for resource development/ fundraising purposes. I agree that I will not get paid for Stage Left's use of the photographs, videotapes, or voice recordings taken of me and used as noted above.

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Mailing Address:**

Applied Arts  
Stage Left Productions  
PO Box 35022, Sarcee Post Office  
Calgary, Alberta, Canada  
T3E 7C7

# Applied Arts Summer '09 Training

---

## Financial Policy

**R**egarding registration fee adjustments for Stage Left Productions' public workshops and trainings, here is what we tell everyone who asks:

Financial assistance is available for people with genuine need. To us, this is essentially a "class" issue. We are wholeheartedly excited to provide support for genuinely poor and working class people. We are less excited to do so for what is sometimes known as "poor by choice" people who perhaps have access to resources elsewhere (assets, friends, family, etc.) and/or who attend lots of workshops and are hoping to save some money with this. Our invitation to lower fees is really for people who can not otherwise attend this workshop. The long and short of it is that we want everyone to be able to take our workshops if they really want to, regardless of economics and without it being a hardship. We believe that Theatre of the Oppressed, and education in general, should be accessible to all. No one, therefore, will be turned away for lack of funds.



Financial aid for Applied Arts fees can take a variety of forms, depending on your need and that are up to you to determine. We handle this on an honor system. We do not ask for proof of income or justification. As we have no formal scholarship funding, we rely on people to look into their hearts and to be fully honest about what they are capable of contributing.

If you are not able to pay in full by the time of the workshop, your options are:

- (1) **Payment plan over time:** specify to us your intended installment dates and the amount you can pay each time;
- (2) **Partial payment, partial trade:** work-out a mutually acceptable exchange of services; or
- (3) **Partial payment, partial scholarship:** negotiate the amounts.

Please feel free to come to this workshop. Again, we turn no one away, no questions asked. That said, please communicate clearly your specific needs for this event, and do not take advantage of our generosity and commitment to inclusiveness.

*(Thanks to Marc Weinblatt, the Mandala Centre for Awareness and Transformation, for this policy.)*