

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 16 to 20, 2010
canmore, alberta, canada
www.stage-left.org

Applied Arts10 Summer Training

About Applied Arts

Stage 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.

Seriously.

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 for all. 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.

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How We Approach Applied Arts

Stage 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 supportive and welcoming for those from diverse backgrounds, including but not limited to the disabled, culturally diverse individuals, First Nations, Metis, or Inuit people, members of the LGBTTIQ community, seniors, youth, and so on.

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 supportive 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.

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Some Important Details

Appplied Arts runs from Monday, August 16 to Friday, August 20. 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 spend 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 as accessible 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 workshop 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.

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About Theatre of the Oppressed

Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) was established in the early 1970s by Brazilian activist Augusto Boal. TO is a form of Popular Theatre 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 theatre 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 theatre 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 strategies for engaging in 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.

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About Stage Left Productions

Stage 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 competencies.

We are the only company in Canada that uses the arts exclusively to foster social justice through a balance of both community and professional arts practices. Our main purpose is to support marginalized people to use the arts as a vehicle of radical social change. In this, 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 marginal-



ized 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 with oppression.

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 Charlene Hellson, Associate Artist

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The Workshop Team

Michele Decottignies is a Canmore-based artist/activist 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 engagement and social justice practice for over a 15 years now - for a total of more than 200 TO projects to date. Before Stage Left, Michele developed support services for diverse learners for the Students' Association of Mount Royal University, was a sexuality educator, helped start the Disability Action Hall, introduced self-advocacy programming to a number of disability service providers, and was very active in many social justice initiatives, including LGBTTIQ rights, the women's movement, co-operative housing, decolonization, animal rights, environmentalism, and others. Michele is the recipient of many arts/activist 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 as well!



Charlene Hellson is a proud member of the Blackfoot Confederacy and a proud mother of two artistic daughters. She leads a double life as a community Artist and Manager of Aboriginal Mental Health at Elbow River Healing Lodge in Calgary. She is involved with her community personally, professionally, and artistically promoting awareness, understanding and healing. Charlene

discovered the healing potency of the Arts as a student of Psychology at the University of Calgary when she became an accidental actor... Since then she has been on a creative journey with amazing people, and meaningful moments.

Michele and Charlene have worked together for over fifteen years now, in both activism and the arts - and have collaborated on many Theatre of the Oppressed projects in recent years: They were both key team members of Dr. Lindsay Crowshoe's use of Theatre of the Oppressed to improve medical care for Aboriginal patients; they worked together on a Forum for Alberta Education's Aboriginal Services Division; they co-developed an Aboriginal cultural competency Forum for the Alberta Health Region; and now they are working together on Aboriginal cultural competency Forums and instructive films for the Adult Aboriginal Mental Health team's educational purposes.

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Registration Form

Please 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 16. 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 personal concerns that you want us to 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: _____

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Waiver Form



lease 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 and/or its 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

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Financial Policy for Individuals

Regarding 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, 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 for financial reasons, no questions asked. That said, please communicate clearly your specific needs for this event, do not take advantage of our generosity and commitment to inclusiveness, and know that Stage Left is not rich either; we offer all our training programs on a cost-recovery basis - to trade skills, not to make money.

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