



THEATER OF WAR PRODUCTIONS TO STAGE OVER 65 EVENTS IN THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONALLY THROUGHOUT 2017

*Events combine performance and public conversation to
raise awareness of urgent social issues and promote healthy communities*

*Dramatic readings featuring notable actors spark community conversations about issues
including gun violence, police and community relations, sexual assault, racial injustice, and the
enduring impact of war*

New York, April 20, 2017 – In an unprecedented effort to bring arts-based public health projects to communities around the U.S. and globally, Theater of War Productions is partnering with government, community, and educational organizations to stage over 65 events in 2017, in more than 20 cities worldwide. Since its founding in 2009, the social-impact theater company has worked with 200 leading film, theater, and television actors to present dramatic readings of seminal plays—from classical Greek tragedies to modern and contemporary works—followed by public conversations in an interactive program designed to address urgent community-based social issues.

The events, which are presented free to the public, use theater as a catalyst for candid conversations, helping to build a common vocabulary for discussing the impact of a wide range of issues ranging from combat-related psychological injury, police/community relations, and domestic and gun violence to mental health, substance abuse, and end-of-life care.

Notable artists who have led readings 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. The readings form the basis of town-hall discussions that draw out raw and personal reactions to themes highlighted in the plays, 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 a deeper understanding of deeply complex issues. The events also raise awareness of the resources available to help those impacted by these issues, in hope of enabling positive change.

In 2017, Bryan Doerries, artistic director and co-founder of Theater of War Productions, 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. For the first time, with the support of the Stavros Niarchos Foundation, this residency brings Theater of War Productions to scale in one city.

“To date, we have staged more than 500 events, and at every performance, the audience teaches us something new,” said Doerries. “It has been a great honor to learn from communities in which the lives of mythological heroes are eclipsed by the stories shared by the very real women and men who come to our events. It is our hope that the dialogue that begins in auditoriums, libraries, and community halls continues beyond those walls, helping to engender compassion and understanding, activate support systems, and bring about positive change.”

Theater of War Productions has brought events to over 100,000 audience members, presenting diverse projects targeted at different communities dealing with specific issues. Given the needs of each group, each project uses a different theatrical work as the basis for conversation.

Selected projects and issues include:

Impact of War and Violence

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

Rooted in discussions about the invisible and visible wounds 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.

- Scheduled 2017 events: April 6 and 17; May 3, 6, and 28; August 29; November 9 (New York City); April 30 – May 13 (at military bases in South Korea); May 11 (Colchester Garrison, U.K.); May 19 (Washington State Medical Association Leadership Development Conference, Lake Chelan, WA); September 7 (University of Cincinnati)

Community and Police Relations

Antigone in Ferguson (Sophocles' *Antigone*)

Designed to bridge the growing divide between law enforcement and local communities throughout the United States, *Antigone in Ferguson* is set to gospel music, performed by a diverse ensemble, including police officers, local educators, and community members. 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.

- Scheduled 2017 events: June 22 (Athens, Greece); July 15 (New York City); September 15 and 16 (Dartmouth University, Hanover, NH); September 29 (Williams College, Williamstown, MA); September 30 (College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, MA)

Racism/Racial Injustice

The Drum Major Instinct

Commissioned by BRIC, *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.

- Scheduled 2017 event: April 30, 2017 (BRIC OPEN Festival, Brooklyn, NY)

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.

- Scheduled 2017 event: April 27 (Bayview-Hunters Point, San Francisco)

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 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.

- Scheduled 2017 events: Premiering at a law firm June 28; second presentation on October 28 (New York City)

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 as a chronic disease, the project is intended to promote dialogue about the ethical and professional challenges posed by treating (and screening) patients and loved ones who are struggling with addiction.

Rum and Vodka (Conor McPherson's one-man play of the same name)

This project provokes discussions about alcoholism and addiction within diverse communities.

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.

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* premiered in Maine in April 2013 and will be touring all five boroughs of New York City under the current PAIR residency over the next two years, through a partnership with the Mayor's Office to Combat Domestic Violence.

Prison Reform

Prometheus in Prison (Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*)

Addressing the challenges of supervising and 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 June 2011.

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

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, 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.

Women's 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.

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).

For a complete calendar of events, please see next page.

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**Theater of War Productions
Calendar of Events
(April – December 2017)**

April

April 6: *Theater of War*
Brooklyn Public Library,
Crown Heights Branch; Brooklyn, NY

April 17: *Theater of War*
The Post Theatre, Fort Tilden;
Rockaway Point, NY

April 27: *Hercules in the Bayview*
Bayview Opera House; San Francisco, CA

April 30: *The Drum Major Instinct* (World
Premiere)
BRIC OPEN Festival; Brooklyn, NY

April 30 – May 13: *Theater of War: South
Korea Tour*
18 performances at nine U.S. military bases,
including the DMZ

May

Date TBD: *Theater of War*
The Black Box Theater at
Susan E. Wagner High School;
Staten Island, NY

May 3: *Theater of War*
Milbank Chapel, Columbia University;
New York, NY

May 6: *Theater of War*
Pregones Theater + Puerto Rican Traveling
Theater; Bronx, New York

May 11: *Theater of War*
Colchester Garrison; Essex, UK

May 19: *Theater of War*
Washington State Medical Association
Leadership Development Conference;
Lake Chelan, WA

May 28: *Theater of War: Fleet Week
Performance*
Intrepid Sea, Air & Space Museum;
New York, NY

June

June 22: *Antigone in Ferguson*
Summer Nostos Festival, Stavros Niarchos
Foundation Cultural Center; Athens, Greece

June 28: *Theater of Law* (World Premiere)
New York University Law School;
New York, NY

July

July 15: *Antigone in Ferguson*
Brooklyn Public Library, Brownsville Branch;
Brooklyn, NY

August

August 29: *Theater of War*
American Probation and Parole Conference;
New York, NY

September

September 7: *Theater of War*
University of Cincinnati; Cincinnati, OH

September 15-16: *Antigone in Ferguson*
Dartmouth University; Hanover, NH

September 22: *Theater of War*
Rochester, NY

September 29: *Antigone in Ferguson*
Williams College; Williamstown, MA

September 30: *Antigone in Ferguson*
College of the Holy Cross; Worcester, MA

October

October 28: *Theater of Law*
Forum on Law, Culture, & Society; New York,
NY

November

November 9: *Theater of War - Veterans
Week Program*
Lincoln Center; New York, NY

ABOUT THEATER OF WAR PRODUCTIONS

Theater of War Productions is a social-impact company that uses a combination of theater and guided public dialogue to help communities address 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. Theater of War Productions was co-founded in 2009 by Bryan Doerries and Phyllis Kaufman, who served as producing director from 2009 to 2016. Doerries currently serves as the company's artistic director. For more information, please visit: www.theaterofwar.com

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