

## Project Proposal: Social Justice Theater

How does performance art relate to the social and political climate in which it is created? Can it be used as a tool to promote social justice? How does a theater artist engage with the spectator on a deeper emotional level, encouraging them to react to their social situation? These are the questions I hope to answer through studying Augusto Boal's methodology of Theater of the Oppressed. I have long believed that art has an obligation to reflect the cultural climate during the time in which it is created. I also believe that because of this, it has an enormous capacity to enact social change. The current contentious political climate has made the importance of studying the ways in which theater can interact with politics all the more apparent to me. I particularly want to focus on the potential for impact within the UVA community. During my first two years at the University I have experienced minority communities utilizing artistic means to express their discontent with the circumstances occurring in the community. I would like to continue this trend and expand upon it by implementing Boal's technique to create a dialogue between actor and spectator thus encouraging action.

I hope to accomplish these goals through attending a Joker Training Workshop through Theater of the Oppressed NYC. I then intend to conduct more research on the methodology, keeping in mind the goal to present a mini workshop at UVA in order to explore the connection between the social issues that the university faces and theater. I hope to apply the knowledge acquired through attending this workshop and conducting research into Theater of the Oppressed by eventually creating a devised piece at UVA which responds to the social and political issues that the university faces. This grant money would assist me in the first steps of that process. Through attending this workshop, I will acquire a beginner's knowledge of the methodology that, upon further research and exploration, would enable me to share it with others.

There are very few organizations within the United States that offer training in Theater of the Oppressed and I have struggled to find classes at the University of Virginia that explicitly study the connection between art and politics or a wider social climate. Most courses within the drama department are based on the techniques of Stanislavsky. While there are some theater history courses, these provide an overview of a wide array of movements within theater and would not provide me with as specified instruction as this workshop. This grant money would allow me to receive training focused solely on a specific theater technique not available at UVA. I then would be able to bring the skills I learn back to the University in order to engage with students with similar interests.

## Anticipated Project Timeline

### Spring 2017

- Meet with Theresa Davis to discuss the process of creating a devised theater piece
- Research previous devised theater pieces created here at UVA
- Conduct surveys amongst UVA students concerning what they view to be the most pressing social issues that the university community faces
- Conduct ethnographic research concerning the cultural climate at UVA

### Summer 2017

- Read Theater of the Oppressed by Augusto Boal
- Attend Level One Joker Training Workshop with Theater of the Oppressed NYC
- Read Legislative Theater by Augusto Boal

### Fall 2017

- Read Games for Actors and Non Actors
- Begin planning process for facilitating a workshop at UVA – what methods will be included? What games will be played? How long will it be?
- Read InExActArt
- Meet with Theresa Davis to plan a date, time, and place for the UVA workshop
- Using information discovered through attending the NYC workshop and conducting the survey at the beginning of the school year, begin the planning process for creating a devised theater piece to present the following school year – What issue will be addressed? Who will be involved?

### Spring 2018

- Conduct workshop at UVA
- Present research at the outcome presentation
- Apply for funding to create a devised theater piece addressing social issues at UVA following the structure of theater of the oppressed, to be presented the following school year

## Budget

### **Workshop Fees**

Student rate for workshop attendance Level 1 Joker Training	\$325.00
	Total: \$325.00

### **Supplementary Reading Material**

Theater of the Oppressed Augusto Boal	\$12.31
Legislative Theater by Augusto Boal	\$47.95
Games for Actors and NonActors by Augusto Boal	\$55.94
InExActArt	\$66.69
	Total: \$182.89

### **Travel Fees**

Round Trip Bus Fare from Washington, DC to New York City (depart Fri, Return Mon)	\$80.00
Metro Fair (to be used for transportation from accommodations to workshop site)	\$31.00
Buffer (to be used for gas, Uber, taxi, metro, etc. to travel to and from bus stations)	\$50.00
	Total: \$161.00

### **Accommodations**

Holiday Inn Long Island City 143/night, 3 nights total	\$429.00
	Total: \$429.00

### **Food**

Friday; lunch, dinner	\$55.00
Saturday; breakfast, lunch, dinner	\$75.00
Sunday; breakfast, lunch, dinner	\$75.00
	Total: \$250.00

Grand Total: \$1,347.89