



THE ACTORS THEATRE WORKSHOP, INC.

Thurman E. Scott, Artistic Director, Executive Producer and Founder
www.actorstheatreworkshop.com

Using the dramatic, creative process to change the world:

Israel and West Bank Drama and Conflict Resolution Project

Training the Imagination. Solving the issues.

Summary: The Actors Theatre Workshop, led by Artistic Director and Founder Thurman E. Scott, is developing an inspiring two-year conflict resolution, drama and documentary project in Israel and the West Bank. Launched in 2010, ATW's program includes classes for artists, young people and civic and community leaders in Jaffa, Jenin and Ramallah, a new play we will develop in the workshop about the everyday struggle of these two communities, and a film documentary of the entire process.

This new global outreach initiative provides the tools to create real, positive change by changing Israelis' and Palestinians' perceptions of themselves, each other, and the conflict - - thus supporting peace and justice for both sides.

Program Description: ATW's highly effective *creative and conflict resolution technique* lifts individuals out of the pain and limitation of the past, and gives them tools to envision and create a positive future. They learn original drama techniques to develop and strengthen their imaginations. This allows us to overcome outdated beliefs that stop us from moving into the future, and feel empathy for ourselves and others. We become curious and develop new insights. We gain trust and faith that propels us to move beyond the conflict and make positive decisions.

- ***Workshops and classes:*** Widely diverse groups of Israeli and Palestinian people study ATW's *original creative and conflict resolution techniques* with Thurman E. Scott, learning to express themselves through writing and drama in positive, creative, non-violent ways. The world will open as we develop the hope, faith and courage to envision new solutions to the problems we face. We become comfortable with difference, regale in our sameness and deal honestly with alienation as hatred melts. We see the world as an opportunity!
- ***A breakthrough new Play:*** A play will emerge in the workshop as we confront and examine the difference and conflict that separates these two peoples. Audiences will see Israeli and Palestinian people undertake a powerful, complex journey to achieve mutual understanding through the creative process, and overcome old ways of thinking to build powerful new relationships that will serve as a foundation for the future. Performed throughout Israel, the West Bank, and the United States, the play will inspire dialog, and create hope and understanding. We will hear the voice of the people.
- ***Documentary:*** ATW will film the classes, the play development process, and the performances. We will produce a documentary that will shed light on our students' unique journey and extend this powerful message of positive change to a world-wide audience. ATW currently has over 20 hours of illuminating and inspirational documentary footage filmed in different cities and towns in Israel and the West Bank, from Jaffa to Jenin to Ramallah.
- ***Jaffa:*** Israeli artists confront the hopelessness all humans feel when facing seemingly intractable situations. Learning to open their imaginations they are inspired to look beyond the cycle that holds them and envision what the future might be. They find new optimism to achieve their goals as artists to bring forth new insights that will create hope for the community and maintain Israel's security.

- **Jenin:** Young Palestinian men and women learn Shakespeare's Marc Antony monologue from *Julius Caesar* and commit to stop the flow of blood - - because the cycle of violence locks generations to come into a continuous dance of revenge that seems inescapable. Looking to an example from our recent history, they are inspired by Nelson Mandela's courage and ability to lead his people to reject hatred and violence.
- **Ramallah:** Palestinian actors learn ATW's original creative technique and an avalanche of curiosity and new ideas began to infuse into their minds and behavior. Learning that the sword is a limitation, they begin to see there are many paths they can take to develop their potential and create positive, far-reaching ways to confront their every day struggles.

Project Leadership: Thurman E. Scott is a master teacher of creative process and conflict resolution, and a highly credentialed actor, writer, director and film producer. He has taught his original drama and conflict resolution technique and brought change in widely diverse settings, including Rikers Island, Attica and Bellvue's ward for the criminally insane. Mr. Scott's mentor the legendary Stella Adler was a founder of the Group Theatre and deeply involved in efforts to establish the state of Israel. She called Mr. Scott "... a creative revolutionary whose work is at the center of the conflict in the universe; he is the inheritor of the Stanislavski legacy and of my legacy. His work advances acting technique to the next generation". She charged him to fulfill his powerful legacy and use drama to confront the serious issues of the community.

The Actors Theatre Workshop: Under Mr. Scott's leadership The Actors Theatre Workshop has an impressive twenty-year history as a leading New York City non-profit theatre and educational institution. ATW produces powerful educational programs and productions that develop individual potential, create measurable change and liberate talents and abilities in people from all walks of life - - in award-winning programs for homeless children to incarcerated individuals, to the highly educationally and economically privileged. ATW is now bringing this highly effective technique to Israel and the West Bank where it will examine the issues the community is confronting and use the creative process to bring forth new ways to see the conflict and create hope for a more peaceful future.

Thurman E. Scott on the Israel and West Bank Drama and Conflict Resolution Project:

"We are helping people to transcend violence and their sense of humiliation, revenge, hatreds and bloodletting. This allows people to go beyond enemy images, which is absolutely crucial if we want to have peace. We have a do-able technique to accomplish that.

This is because the imagination is not influenced by your emotions. It has its own unique logic. It allows you to escape from the confines of your conditions and painful memories. Then you're able to see the miracle of nature and the unique beauty that exists in all things. This pulls you forward, and you can envision harmonious and productive relationships with situations and people that you've been in conflict with."

Program Members on the Israel and West Bank Drama and Conflict Resolution Project:

The Israeli and Palestinian people that Mr. Scott taught in 2010 said the process they went through in the classes gave them courage to look critically at themselves and confront the walls and skepticism that stood between them and the possibility of a new vision. Their reward was the happiness, gleeful surprise and awe at the difference they felt. They said "we will fight to hold onto this change."

"With a developed imagination, the mind can courageously lead the way into uncharted territory."



Thurman E. Scott is the Artistic Director, Executive Producer, and Founder of the Actors Theatre Workshop.

Thurman E. Scott was born on a farm in North Carolina, where experiencing the organic nature of farm life created a deep and profound curiosity about the world and inspired in him dreams about far-away places. As a young man he moved to Philadelphia, went to school and worked part-time on the waterfront where he learned about the many home ports of the ships he worked on and began to fulfill his curiosity about the world. He and his fellow workers held lunchtime boxing matches on the docks and he became an outstanding boxer. He joined the US Air Force Strategic Air Command where he flew over 300 missions as a bomb navigator on B-52's and served with distinction. Because of his teenage boxing background he was recruited to Special Services and attained the title of All Forces Middle Weight Boxing Champion for four years.

After his military service Mr. Scott began his creative training and studied in Europe and America for many years before embarking upon his professional career with the greatest drama teachers of the twentieth century, including Peggy Furey, Lee Strasberg, Sanford Meisner, Jerzey Grotowski, and at the Moscow Art Theatre and the London Academy of Dramatic Art. His primary creative influence was his mentor Stella Adler, with whom he shared a creative relationship spanning over twenty-five years.

Mr. Scott is a master teacher of creative process and conflict resolution, and an award-winning actor, writer, director and producer. His work on the stage includes a wide range of roles in over 60 classical and contemporary plays, including six seasons with the New York Shakespeare Festival; an Obie Award-winning performance in *Open 24 Hours*; and several leading, award-winning roles in national touring productions. Mr. Scott's many film and television acting credits include the original cast of *One Life to Live*. As a stage director, he received a Best Director Award from the League of Off-Broadway Theatres and Producers for *Soldiers of Freedom*. He has served as the Artistic Director of the National Black Theater, is a founding member of the Ensemble Studio Theatre, and a member of the American Renaissance Theater. Early in his career he was a creative and producing prodigy of Ralph Serpe, the head of production for Dino De Laurentiis Studios in Italy and America. Mr. Scott played a leading role developing, casting and producing over twenty feature films, and had a strong influence in developing the studio's strategy to produce medium-budget films.

Building on his professional success, Mr. Scott then turned his focus to developing new creative forms. Developing training programs for the incarcerated population, he discovered that the imagination flourishes in isolation and created new techniques to train the imagination, adding a whole new dimension to the American and European theatrical disciplines. By the time he incorporated ATW as a non-profit organization in 1990, Mr. Scott was an established leader in the American theatre, carrying on the artistic traditions of his mentors with a wide reputation of respect for his cutting-edge directorial work, award-winning acting and innovative, successful community based training programs.

Since 1990 Mr. Scott has led The Actors Theatre Workshop's development as a vital and flourishing New York City cultural institution that provides individuals with the tools to change through studying his original theatre and education technique, and has created new techniques to develop and produce plays, documentary films and training programs. Among his many accomplishments at ATW, he created and for 15 years has taught *The Builders of the New World*, a program that trains and develops homeless children's imaginations, leading to measurable personal, academic and professional success. He directed and produced the documentary film *Burned Churches* that tells the story of pastors whose churches were burned in the American south and raises the issue into a dialog on our national struggle with racism. He has won numerous awards and recognitions for his highly effective work as a teacher and theatre artist, including *The Teaching Peace Award*. Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger may have best stated the value of such work by saying, "*Thurman E. Scott is a true visionary. That an artist of his magnitude has chosen to do work of this kind in our time is hope for the future.*" For Mr. Scott has done something unique at his theater and educational institution. He has proven over and over that creativity is the great equalizer and unifier among human beings, and given individuals the tools to overcome adversity. He has created plays and films of truth and power. He has changed lives of countless individuals with work that inspires hope.