

Mutual Struggle as Reconciliation in Israel-palestine:Extending Augusto Boal's model of 'Theatre of the Oppressed'

At the workshop Chen Alon will share his experience of the past few years as an activist and a theatre practitioner in which he examine the extension of Augusto Boal's model into a model in which the stage, both in process and in performance, creates a platform for both-oppressed and oppressor- to experience the transformative nature of oppression.

The Israeli/Palestinian conflict is as complex a situation as can be found in the world today. Both people are locked into a prolonged, polarized cycle of fear, anger and in many ways despair. We will explore what personal identity is "made of"? How does an individual perceive his/her own identity? What is the political impact and implication of self identification? How each of our identity is socially constructed and how is it being represented? In the workshop we will try to trace the hierarchical system which imposes on an individual or a group and how it represents a set of identities. In the context of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict we will draw on Augusto Boal's methods in *Rainbow of Desire*, *Image Theatre* and *Forum Theatre* to look at how our identity forms in such extreme situations and how this affects our actions.

The workshop will demonstrate how it is possible to create a platform for non-violent negotiation, and a reconciliation process, in situations of extreme conflict through the simple transformation of identities through a process of personal/political/power action. The aim is to offer a space where participants can examine their personal starting points and response to the conflict and how, through participating in the workshop they might come closer to understanding and able to empathize with 'the others' response to it.

About the Author

Chen Alon is a Ph.D. candidate in the Theatre Department at Tel-Aviv University, where he also serves as a facilitator and a lecturer of "Activist-Therapeutic Theatre".

Alon is a practitioner and scholar of Augusto Boal's 'Theatre of the Oppressed'. The activism in the complicated reality in Israel-Palestine led him from the formal theatre, as a professional actor and director, to search and create new forms of political activism in the Israeli-Palestinian theatre against the occupation.

As a Major (res.) was a co-founder of the movement "Courage to Refuse" a movement of officers and combatant soldiers who refuse to serve in the occupied Palestinian territories, an action for which he sentenced to a military prison. Alon co-founded the Activist Theatre

group of Tull-Karm/Tel-Aviv, within the movement 'Combatants for Peace'. The theatre group comprised of ex-combatants from both sides, Palestinians and Israelis, who abandoned the way of violence and are now struggling, exploring and creating a new form of non-violent struggle and a reconciliation process.