

The Housing Project



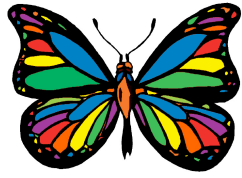
Focus Group

Community Forum Play that Makes Law

Theatre researcher Heather Majaury, from the School of English and Theatre Studies, at the University of Guelph is working with community collaborators to help her create a Forum Theatre Play about Housing in Waterloo Region. The play is only the beginning of a much larger initiative that she plans to continue to develop. This Forum will be part of a focus group about housing helping regular people help each others make law and contribute to positive social change. The Forum Play is being created by people who share common concerns about accessible and affordable housing. You are invited to participate in a focus group where this play will be presented. From your participation in the audience during this event we will be able to understand more about what kinds of community initiatives need the creation or enactment of policy to support them. Your experiences are meaningful, important, and significant. Policy making and the process of law making, can seem daunting and overly complex; completely inaccessible to the regular person. Don't let this perception stand in the way of your interest or participation. This initiative is also working in tandem with a legal advisor to help us make "law-making" less intimidating. Maybe even fun!

**Are you a concerned citizen who struggles to keep a roof over your head that you can call home and afford?
Are you interested in participating in this upcoming focus group
please contact**

Heather Majaury at H: 519 747 4923 Cell: 519 404 2019.



Kaleidoscope Collective

The Monarch Butterfly travels great distances to realize her purpose. She embodies transformation. Wings outstretched she is a multi-coloured kaleidoscopic vision revealing the primary building blocks of artistic creating. While each colour is beautiful on its own, when brought together they generate a whole greater than the consummate parts.

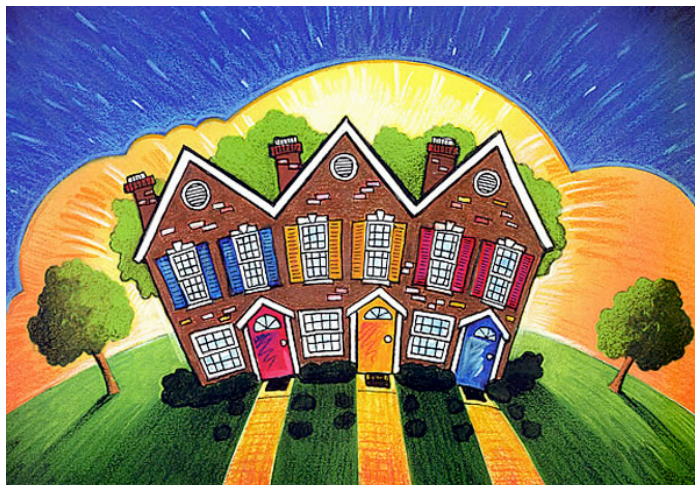


“ If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us work together.”

~ Lila Watson ~

This is the Kaleidoscope Collective. We are a new community based theatre company in Kitchener Waterloo. We collaborate to present provocative yet reflective contemporary theatrical experiences in our region. Kaleidoscope Collective produces plays by women of diverse backgrounds and experiences. We are a professional not-for-profit collective with a community-centred vision focusing on female empowerment in the performing arts that share stories reflecting diversity. The collective is composed of women from a variety of artistic disciplines focused on creating and communicating profound connections with our audiences. We aspire to excellence in craft and innovation in our approach. We prioritize female stories from a multitude of cultural, economic, and racialized backgrounds including Aboriginal women, Immigrant women, women who are differently abled, and women of various sexual orientations. This does not mean we exclude men. We welcome male allies, partners, and artists to share in our vision of a more equitable world in all ways including the performing arts.

The founding members of Kaleidoscope Collective are Heather Majaury, Lisa O’Connell, Pam Patel, Nada Homsji, Miroki Tong, Tanya Williams, and Hope Engel. Our first production is entitled “**This is my Drum**” created and performed by Heather Majaury and directed/dramaturged by Lisa O’Connell.



*The future
of this
project is bright!*

*"She delivers nothing less than a virtuosic tour de force,
engaging in every way."*

~Robert Reid, The Record~

The Housing Project is one of our inaugural projects in development. It is currently contributing to Heather Majaury's scholarly work contributing to her Masters Thesis in Theatre Studies at the University of Guelph. The initial forum, created in collaboration with current community participants is a gateway event allowing us to explore the creative and social political potential of **"Plays that Make Policy."** Heather is a local actor who is currently developing a one woman show for touring that **Kaleidoscope Collective** is producing as its inaugural main-stage production. It has received financial support for its development from the three levels of government and we are very positive about its potential to raise awareness about aboriginal issues, land claims, concerns specific to women but related to men. **"This is my Drum"** received rave reviews at **IMPACT International Theatre Festival** in 2011.

Heather is no stranger to the creation of **Forum Theatre** which is part of The Housing Project process. She is a trained theatre **"Joker"** (**Facilitator/Dramaturge/Director**) within the **Theatre of the Oppressed** tradition with a long history in popular theatre. She had the privilege of learning directly from **Augusto Boal** on two different occasions and has been responsible for several projects using his techniques to empower regular people to do, and be, theatre in a way that effects social change.

Augusto Boal was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2008.

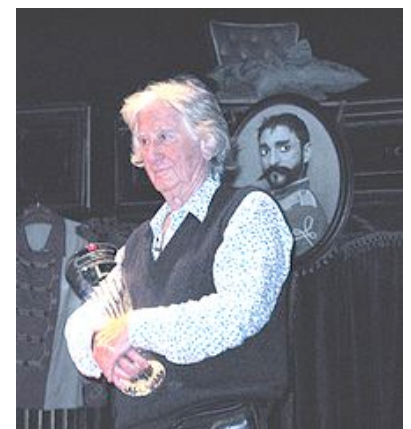
Her first **Forum**, that she participated in, was part of a larger play called the **"Cassandra Project"** and it explored the reasons why women don't speak. She worked with Lib Spry who is a Canadian theatre maker who also studied with Augusto Boal in France. That project is featured in the book **"Playing Boal: Theatre Therapy and Activism."**

Once Heather was bitten by the Forum bug, and she took on the responsibilities of Artistic Director of Windsor Feminist Theatre, she went on to work with over 30 women in the Windsor area, over two years, to create a show about eating disorders. This play, that was subsequently published by international readers theatre, included two interactive scenes that were forums. The scenes incorporated other liberation techniques based in Boal's system of play creation known as **Cops in the Head** and **Rainbow of Desires**.

These techniques helped audiences explore the reasons behind the development of eating disorders. They were able to bring forth the desires and fears that drive extreme behaviour onto the actual stage. The play explored family systems as well as interactions with wider social forces which can be impacted by, or help to create, the symptoms that one person is expressing but others may be feeling.



Heather Majaury • This is My Drum



Augusto Boal receiving the *Crossborder Award for Peace and Democracy*.

Heather then became a single mother experiencing the struggles associated with being on a fixed income and securing safe yet affordable housing. A struggle that continues to this day. She is however lucky enough to have discovered cooperative housing. She sees definite parallels between the values and goals of cooperative housing and the theatrical/pedagogy movement started by Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal.

As a single parent living in deeply ghettoized circumstances, literally and figuratively, Heather chose to turn her artistic lens onto herself and her own community of other single moms living in poverty. This was attempted in the hopes of using the power and wisdom of the collective mind to support their shared struggle for liberation. They created a show called “**Going It Alone**”. Holding yard sales to fund their tour to Toronto they performed at the **Ripple Effect: International Festival of Theatre of the Oppressed** in 1997. From that time on Heather has used these techniques to facilitate many workshops.

She is now ready to again create full forum theater. She is inspired by Augusto Boal’s work as a **Vereador (City Councillor) in Rio De Janeiro** where the legislature promulgated thirteen laws using forum theatre as the primary consulting tool. After leaving office Boal was convinced that there was much room to discover, explore, and apply this way of creating law to our circumstance with or without the legislature.

Most recently she created a Forum play about “**Sexting and Bullying**” with youth collaborators. This project was commissioned by the Office of Open Learning at the University of Guelph. The Forum was so well received that the play was invited to a local highschool and “**Hey Where’s Carley**”– the highschool tour was born.

The Kaleidoscope Collective is nurturing this on-going project because we see that it has potential to make a difference in the lives of teens who experience bullying and who are also negotiating through the mine-field of sexuality, self-esteem, to establish healthy boundaries while exploring intimacy. This journey can become quite complicated, or impacted by social media, the internet, and cell phones.

We see similar potential for **The Housing Project** to ultimately make a difference in the way, we as communities engage civic participation in consultation, civic planning, and law making.

Experiment with us and find the joy in creating the future now!

When Boal ran for office he did not think he would win. His campaign slogan was

“Have the courage to be happy!”

Our Housing Project intends to draw from that same well of hope and belief that people coming together in community about community, who use the arts to explore their own issues, can do precisely that!

Be Happy.