

International Theatre Institute ITI

World Organization for the Performing Arts



Message for World Theatre Day 2025 – 27 March

Author of the Message: Theodoros TERZOPOULOS, Greece

Theatre Director, Educator, Author, Founder and Artistic Director of the Attis Theatre Company, Inspirator of Theatre Olympics and Chairman of the International Committee of Theatre Olympics

English (Translation)

World Theatre Day Message 2025 by Theodoros TERZOPOULOS

Can theatre hear the SOS call that our times are sending out, in a world of impoverished citizens, locked in cells of virtual reality, entrenched in their suffocating privacy? In a world of robotized existences within a totalitarian system of control and repression across the spectrum of life?

Is theatre concerned about ecological destruction, global warming, massive biodiversity loss, ocean pollution, melting ice caps, increasing forest fires and extreme weather events? Can theatre become an active part of the ecosystem? Theatre has been watching human impact on the planet for many years, but it is finding it difficult to deal with this problem.

Is theatre worried about the human condition as it is being shaped in the 21st century, where the citizen is manipulated by political and economic interests, media networks and opinion-forming companies? Where social media, as much as they facilitate it, are the great alibi for communication, because they provide the necessary safe distance from the Other? A pervasive sense of fear of the Other, the different, the Stranger, dominates our thoughts and actions.

Can theatre function as a workshop for the coexistence of differences without taking into account the bleeding trauma?

The bleeding trauma invites us to reconstruct the Myth. And in the words of Heiner Müller “Myth is an aggregate, a machine to which always new and different machines can be connected. It transports the energy until the growing velocity will explode the cultural field” and I would add the field of barbarity.

Can theatre spotlights shed light on social trauma and stop misleadingly shedding light on itself?

Questions that do not allow definitive answers, because theatre exists and endures thanks to unanswered questions.

Questions triggered by Dionysus, passing through his birthplace, the orchestra of the ancient theatre, and continuing his silent refugee journey through landscapes of war, today, on World Theatre Day.

Let us look into the eyes of Dionysus, the ecstatic god of theatre and Myth who unites the past, the present and the future, the child of two births, by Zeus and Semele, expresser of fluid identities, female and male, angry and kind, divine and animal, on the verge between madness and reason, order and chaos, an acrobat on the borderline between life and death. Dionysus poses a fundamental ontological question “what is it all about?” a question that drives the creator towards an ever-deeper investigation into the root of myth and the multiple dimensions of the human enigma.

We need new narrative ways aimed at cultivating memory and shaping a new moral and political responsibility to emerge from the multiform dictatorship of the present-day Middle Ages.

Theodoros Terzopoulos

Translated from the original Greek: Yiola Klitou / Cyprus Centre of I.T.I.