

RESEARCH STATEMENT | TOGETHERNESS

Research for me has to have a practical end. My work as a teacher and creative artist drives my investigations. How can I be a better teacher? How can I train actors better? How can I be a better director? How can I understand humans better? How can I be a better human? And primarily, ultimately, most importantly, how can I help others be better? The answers thus far seem to begin and end with focusing attention outwards, to others.

My research then is a corollary of the classroom and the rehearsal room, both of which I consider a laboratory, as well as my investigations into behavioral psychology. This leads me to research a diverse and ever-changing ensemble of influencers. From investigating what makes people buy cars (Daniel Pink's *To Sell is Human*) to how we deal with change (the teachings of Pema Chödrön) to how to be a Rock 'n' Roll star (Bruce Springsteen's autobiography: "study of craft, development of and devotion to an aesthetic philosophy and a furious fire in the hole that just...don't...quit...burning") to John Berger's essays on Seeing.

My research as a director and trainer of directors is primarily focused on studies in leadership and ensemble. I've studied and learned from the US Army Field Manual on leadership, Simon Sinek's proposal that we begin with Why, John Cage's suggestion that everything is an experiment. I apply research immediately and concurrently with my work as a director, whether directing in academic settings, or developing new plays in professional settings with theaters like Ensemble Studio Theater in New York City, or my own projects like the recent international tour of my 2-man production of *Antony & Cleopatra* with my theater company Duomuži to the UK and Greece. In Greece we were greatly inspired by the generosity of a country and their theater artists, whose financial situation seems dire, but their commitment to change, to the power of theater to lead the way to change was transcendent. It makes our struggles in this country to make theater entirely able to be overcome.

Because I wholeheartedly believe that a Director, above all else, must understand, appreciate, and respect actors, I teach and train actors and research historical and contemporary approaches to actor training. From training and studying and researching with companies like SITI, Frantic Assembly, Elevator Repair Service to Patsy Rodenberg. My research as an actor trainer deeply affects my teaching, my directing, and how I train directors.

What I've recently discovered, and am finding revolutionary, is that we become better theater artists when we learn how to be better humans. The intersection of my research, teaching, directing, and theater-making are all feeding off this principle of togetherness. That's where I begin, in all of my classes and rehearsals. We learn how to work together as an ensemble. How to take care of each other. How to look people in the eye and tell the truth. How to listen. We are, foremost, in this together. In our classroom, in our rehearsal room, in our universities, our theaters, in this country and all over the world. A united front of being better humans. An idealistic dream, but one I've committed my research and understanding to.