



# Press Release

MESSAGE FROM PLAYWRIGHT LYNN NOTTAGE,  
2009 Pulitzer Prize Winner for *Ruined*  
For International Theatre Institute's World Theatre Day  
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It's been said that *the role of an artist is to keep their eyes open, when everyone else's are shut*. It's a beautiful and simple sentiment. We are cultural watchdogs. We stand at attention, observing and reacting. We excavate, uncover, interpret and unravel. We protect tradition and shape new ones. We look inward...and then outward to find ways to better understand our selves.

We live in a world that has become increasingly interconnected through the ascendancy of new media, yet paradoxically more fractured by racism, religion, politics and economics. Our venerated financial institutions are crumbling and petty partisan fights paralyze our governments. Our insatiable need for oil and precious minerals fuel deadly armed conflicts in places like Iraq and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Poverty and suffering have become givens in a world of abundance, and women continue to fight for basic human rights and dignity in most countries. Hate, not love, fuel religious revolutions, poisoning generations of young men and women merely searching for meaning. We look for solutions in the recycling bins, and turn on the television to drown out our woes. This is our world, shaped by our own design, chaotic and unruly, yet beautiful and infinitely fascinating.

As artists and global citizens, the world continues to demand our attention, and as such we must be intrepid explorers, daring to venture into uncomfortable zones to unearth difficult truths. We must be unafraid to look honestly at the human condition and try to come to terms with its contradictions and flaws. That means approaching our work not as journalists, but as fabulators, storytellers, breaking rules to help reimagine the world. We must be truthful, while spinning yarns. It is the paradox of our creative process that gives us access to places we dare not go in our everyday lives. It emboldens us to ask difficult questions about war, race, religion, poverty, love and hatred.

Theatre is a place where we can collectively share our laughter, shed our tears and loudly demonstrate our joy or frustration. Theatre has the incredible capacity to be soul healing; it allows both the audience and artist to purge toxins and exorcise collective demons.

I challenge all of us to sustain the complexity of our world; to invite a multitude of diverse voices onto the stage. We must open the doors and windows of our theatres to let the world in. It is our responsibility; it is our burden and our gift.

We are fabulators....we are cultural watchdogs.