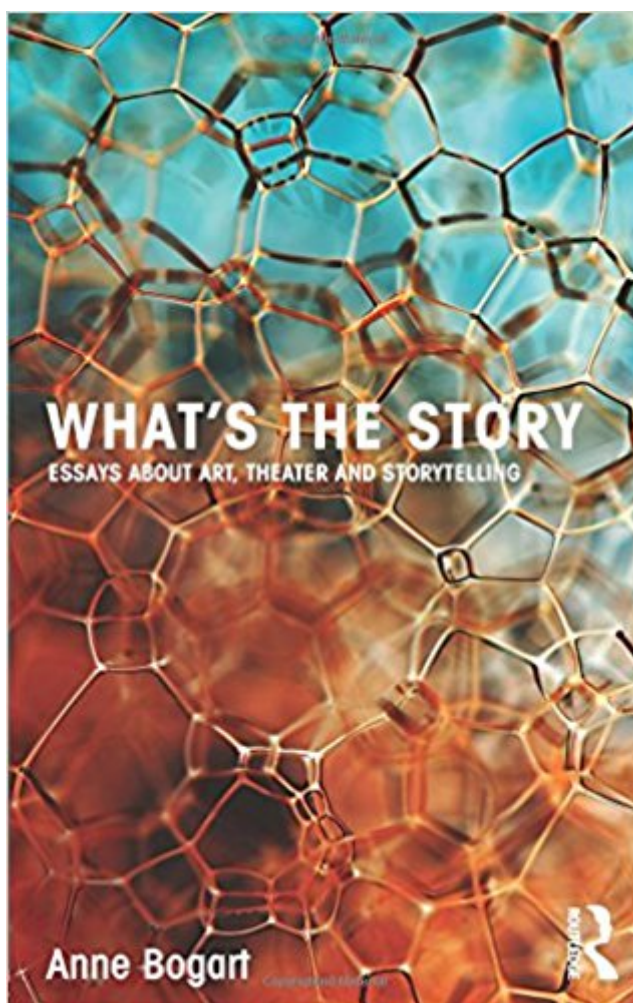


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# What's The Story: Essays About Art, Theater And Storytelling



## Synopsis

Anne Bogart is an award-winning theatre maker, and a best-selling writer of books about theatre, art, and cultural politics. In this her latest collection of essays she explores the story-telling impulse, and asks how she, as a product of postmodernism, can reconnect to the primal act of making meaning and telling stories. She also asks how theatre practitioners can think of themselves not as stagers of plays but as orchestrators of social interactions and participants in an on-going dialogue about the future. We dream. And then occasionally we attempt to share our dreams with others. In recounting our dreams we try to construct a narrative... We also make stories out of our daytime existence. The human brain is a narrative creating machine that takes whatever happens and imposes chronology, meaning, cause and effect... We choose. We can choose to relate to our circumstances with bitterness or with openness. The stories that we tell determine nothing less than personal destiny. (From the introduction) This compelling new book is characteristically made up of chapters with one-word titles: Spaciousness, Narrative, Heat, Limits, Error, Politics, Arrest, Empathy, Opposition, Collaboration and Sustenance. In addition to dipping into neuroscience, performance theory and sociology, Bogart also recounts vivid stories from her own life. But as neuroscience indicates, the event of remembering what happened is in fact the creation of something new.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Anne Bogart is currently one of the Artistic Directors of SITI Company, which she founded with Japanese director Tadashi Suzuki in 1992. She is a Professor at Columbia University where she

runs the Graduate Directing Concentration and is the author of three books: *A Director Prepares*, *The Viewpoints Book* and *And Then, You Act*.

"What's the Story" is a wonderful book about being an artist, through the medium of storytelling in the performing arts. Anne Bogart is a theatre maker. But as one reads the book, which is divided into many sections and subsections (good) on theory, practicum, aesthetics, audience reception, Bogart chronicles her process as an artist, by telling stories about her experiences. She is brutally honest about her own thinking, expectations, and the lessons she learned, as much through her careful preparation for projects, as well as what she learned in adapting to things she could not control. She especially discusses capitalizing on the unexpected. The book is educational, inspirational, and motivational. Her detailed focus on her mental process in different productions is one aspect of the book which makes it different from many other books on creating, writing, etc.: It is written for the thinking artist; for the artist who confronts challenges outside of their comfort zone. "What's the Story" chronicles a personal journey of practice, reflection, and, when discussing the long history of projects she has performed with her SITI theatre group, she mentions the names of many other performers and practitioners who the reader may want to research. I am a writer of fiction and dramatic material, and I gained invaluable insights into how to think about my craft. The ideas Bogart discusses are interdisciplinary, as her work is. I will read this book again. It is invaluable.

Anne Bogart brings revelations of space, time, intention, and direction through reflection of her own history. Reminding us of the struggle of a young artist with huge dreams and leading us through her mind as she attains goals, Bogart writes with passion and a sense of honesty that we can all relate to. Inspiring reflection on one's own practice, "What's the Story" offers a way to clearly "listen and respond" to ourselves and the art we make. This informs our "psychology, motivation, spatial, and temporal choices, gesture, physical action and dramaturgy" as she addresses the how and why of the creative choices we make as artists through the lens of a director. This series of essays creates relationalities between the performing arts, bridging the gap between directors, choreographers, actors, and dancers.

She did it again guys. Her new book is a continuation of her thoughts found in her earlier books, but with a twist. Here, she focuses on the art of storytelling. What compels us to tell stories? How do we

continue to thrive as artists? Who really needs theater? Here, she even goes further into the scientific and sociological aspects of why we enjoy a good story. Do yourself a favor and buy this book. I assure you, you will not be disappointed.

A tour de force in understanding theater, and ourselves. One of my top-10 books of all time, worthy of re-reading and re-reading.

An excellent book. The style is in the "new" academic style, with plenty of confessional reflections, but overall, it is sharp, penetrating and intelligently written.

Phenomenal book by Anne. Better than *A Director Prepares* or *And Then You Act*. I think it's her best yet.

Another great book from an outstanding educator and a leading professional in her craft

Anne Bogart's book is insightful and beautiful.

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