



THE STAGE

This tool uses the theater stage as a miniature of the public space. The structures and functions of the former can explain in a tangibly manner the symbolic functions and the power of the latter. As we all know, all elements on a stage are carefully chosen from the set designer to support and promote the director's narrative. To the same end, actors' attires and reciting style convey the essence of the theatrical text with an aim to emotionally engage the audience. In exactly the same way, public spaces exist in a constant interactive mode with their inhabitants, communicating values, structures, dynamics and 'realities'.

The tool **aims** to:

- Explain how public spaces, like theater stages, are carefully designed and organized to highlight heritage values and accommodate current dominant narratives.
- Make tangible the symbolic role and narrative power of the public sphere.
- Bring awareness to the fact that individuals in public spaces subconsciously adjust with the collective just as actors on a stage assume different roles and serve their script.
- Draw attention to the fact that citizens are at the same time the transmitters and the receivers of narratives in their daily lives.
- Deepen the understanding on how public spaces serve as platforms for citizens to engage with collective rituals, cultural values, and collective memories, shaping their experiences and identities.

How to apply it

While examining a topic the facilitator asks the learners to stage their narrative in as many details as possible, i.e. location (urban space, nature, a private internal space, a specific location etc.), colors, lights, actors, audios, etc. This requires a detailed observation and vigorous imagination on part of the learners who are invited to design their thoughts on a piece of paper. If colored pencils are available, so much the better: the chosen colors, the stage arrangements and, in general, all the pictorial elements will be telling of how learners mean and feel the topic under discussion.

The whole activity should not require more than 15 minutes.

Once all learners are done, they take turns to present their staged narrative. Peers note their thoughts and questions while listening.

Facilitators notice key points that repeat, prevailing assumptions, dominant narratives etc. (depending on the intentions and focus of the topic discussion) and use this new material to delve deeper into the topic under discussion. One good option is to use the learners' input for the visible part of the "Iceberg" tool.

Suggested combination with other Visual Literacy tools

"The Stage" combines effectively with the "Visuality Iceberg", the "Sensing instead of Making Sense", the "Role-playing", the "Five Mirrors", the "Alternative Futures", and the "Reframing Concepts" tools.

