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Teaching Philosophy

At the Heart

I believe at the heart of teaching and producing theatre, is a practical and hands-on curriculum that can only be discovered by active physical encounters. Theatre should be inclusive and open to all while still challenging ideas and the status quo. The theatre classroom and rehearsal space provide a safe space to ask the difficult questions and make new connections.

In the Classroom

Theatre teaches artists and students to grapple with the human condition. It demands empathy, critical analysis, problem solving, collaboration, and independence. It is truly the art of collective creation. Theatre provides an exploration of identity – it explores culture, creates culture, and then interrogates it. The role of the student artist is as important now as ever, and I believe should be nurtured in the university setting. This is the time and place to inspire, challenge, and unearth the new and stimulating artist of tomorrow. I believe that the classroom is a process-based living laboratory, where through on-your-feet exercises and thoughtful reflection students and teachers alike mature as artists, individuals, and communities. My role as a teacher should be dynamic and engaging, trusting in the power of this non-traditional classroom. The atmosphere established by the teacher is safe, embracing risk-taking and challenges. The classes should develop student's ability to articulate their work in both written and verbal forms, in addition to their practical experiences engaging them physically and intellectually. Collaboration is at the heart of theatre and this should be shown by example as well as implementing shared and interdisciplinary opportunities. As a teacher, I am on my feet investigating my own research alongside the students. I teach in order to learn. Students also benefit from providing constructive criticism and support to their fellow students. Maturing this skill allows students to begin to critique their own work, so that they will become self-analyzing artists.

In Production

The opportunity to direct strengthens my work in the classroom because it involves the actual laboratory for the lessons learned in class. I believe that it is impossible to separate the performative aspects of theatre from the intellectual. Therefore, my rehearsal process is an extension of my classroom where I seek to engage actors in an intellectual journey, as well as physical engagement. I often use exercises and research assignments as ways to deepen the actors understanding of the text. While I believe that we should hold our students to professional expectations, I also recognize that they are developing their skills and need different mentoring. At the end of a production, I hope students have discovered ways to use the tools they are cultivating in class, foster a sense of self-discipline, and discover the fun of putting in hard work on a production.

“I believe that theatre’s function is to remind us of the big human issues, to remind us of our terror and humanity. In our quotidian lives, we live in constant repetition of habitual patterns. Many of us sleep through our lives. Art should offer experiences that alter these patterns, awaken what is sleep, and remind us of our original terror. Human beings first created theatre in response to the everyday terror of life.” – Anne Bogart