

# Rebecca Bailey

Educator / Director / Advocate

## Teaching Philosophy

### *At the Heart*

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My teaching and production of theatre are based on the belief that we bring who we are with us into the space. I strive to be an example to my students and to set a culture inside the rehearsal space where we can all be safe, authentic, and challenged. Without this culture, we cannot immerse ourselves in storytelling's vulnerable, hands-on work. I teach there is a difference between unsafe and uncomfortable. My style asks that we lean into the questions of what makes us uncomfortable in art, in ourselves, and in life. That is where we learn and make the discoveries that create great theatre, people, and artists. This work requires we all have a voice, boundaries, and trust. It is our responsibility to reflect diversity in productions, curriculum, texts, and environments, providing students with perspectives that open new doors. The theatre classroom and rehearsal space provide a safe space for all to contemplate the difficult questions, make new connections, and explore the nuances that make us human. I work to use my privilege to amplify the diverse voices of my students, to bring to life their stories, and to engage them in narratives that stretch their understanding of the world around them.

### *In the Classroom*

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Theatre teaches us to grapple with the human condition. It demands empathy, critical analysis, problem-solving, collaboration, openness, and independence. 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 it is to be nurtured while in the university setting. This is the time and place to inspire, challenge, and unearth the new. This perspective emphasizes bringing together a diverse ensemble by uniting us in our humanness while celebrating the beauty of what makes us unique.

My classroom is a process-based living laboratory where, through on-our-feet exercises and thoughtful reflection, students and teachers mature as artists, individuals, and communities. My role as a teacher and mentor is to trust in the power of this non-traditional classroom. As a teacher, the atmosphere is my responsibility. I prioritize the right dynamic for each class ensemble. Classes should develop students' ability to articulate their work in written and verbal forms and their practical experiences, engaging them physically and intellectually. Collaboration is at the heart of theatre and this should be shown by example and by implementing shared multi-cultural and interdisciplinary opportunities. I am dedicated to shaping a curriculum representing traditional teachings and non-Eurocentric texts. As a teacher, I am on my feet investigating my research alongside the students and open to recognizing when my perspective needs to be examined. Student confidence and nuance grow as they reflect and articulate constructive feedback and support to their fellow students and about their own work. Maturing this skill allows students to begin to analyze, leading to more self-aware artists. I serve to highlight the individual voices of my students so that their work reflects and articulates their culture, ideas, and aspirations.

### *In Production*

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The opportunity to direct strengthens my work in the classroom. It provides a laboratory for the lessons learned in class. I believe it is impossible to separate the performative aspects of theatre from the intellectual. Leading by example, I ask that every ensemble examine what their story is trying to say. The rehearsal process is an extension of my classroom where I seek to engage all actors in an intellectual journey alongside the physical engagement. I often use Viewpoint compositions and research assignments to deepen the ensemble's understanding of the text. While I hold students to professional expectations, I also recognize that they are developing and strive to meet young artists where they are. Through production, students develop the tools they cultivate in class, foster a sense of self-discipline, tell stories that reflect who they are, and journey into stories that take them across cultural, socio-economical, and social boundaries to discover the joys and successes of sharing meaning through theatre.

### *In Advocacy*

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As social tensions mount and division grows, I want to help students use their artistic voices in response to the world around them. Theatre and movement provide the access to overcome our own traumas, the techniques to hold space as others navigate their healing, and the process to own and elevate the narrative after trauma. Building from a foundation in the neurobiology of trauma and advocacy, I join the ranks of those using theatre to heal. There is no greater honor than to bear witness to the change when access to these practices, and the ensemble created by engaging the process, is shared with survivors.

**“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**