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As an educator, I align myself with the pedagogical theories of Paolo Freire. I view my classrooms as spaces for a dialogic exchange of ideas. This dialogic exchange creates an atmosphere of collaboration within my classrooms, which is fundamental to the art of theatre. I actively work to create environments within my classrooms, workshops, and rehearsals that are open and supportive — acknowledging privilege, respecting personal agency, providing opportunities for coalition-building and challenging oppression, working toward genuine inclusion, and recognising that this is an ongoing process in which mistakes will be made. I am committed to responding to those mistakes with openness and a willingness to learn and grow. I intentionally model constructive criticism/feedback for my students, providing an example of specific feedback that is offered with good intentions to allow for improvement — and this type of constructive feedback is required of my students during our discussions. While my students learn to take in and listen to the ideas of others, they are constantly challenged to critically assess their own views and further define their personal artistic voice.

Being that my art is so steeped in the concept of play; play is at the very core of my practice as an artist and an educator. Informed by the concepts inherent in play,<sup>1</sup> I

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<sup>1</sup> “...the sense of discovery and liveliness..” See Stuart Brown, M.D. *Play: How it Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination, and Invigorates the Soul*, Avery, 2010, p. 126.

create a stimulating learning environment that hones these innate skills, allowing students to critically think, actively question, continuously seek answers, and creatively solve problems through a variety of teaching methods that touch upon all the different learning styles. I also select course material that exposes students to diverse cultural points of view, challenging myself to move beyond the western canon of literature used when I was a student. Embracing the idea that each student and classroom context is unique, I actively incorporate my skills as a socially-engaged arts practitioner while teaching in order to respond reflexively to the needs of the individuals within the class and the group as a whole.

Through my work as a socially-engaged practitioner I have had the opportunity to facilitate for and collaborate with a wide range of marginalised and under-served groups in both the US and Ireland. In my time at the University of Central Florida (UCF) I worked with children designated as “at-risk” at the Edgewood Children’s Ranch,<sup>2</sup> as well as BIPOC marginalised youth in collaboration with the New Image Youth Center in the Parramore community in Orlando, FL. Additionally, I worked with victims of domestic violence and abuse through programs with UCF Victims Services. I continued work with marginalised youth communities through my work with the Saint Augustine Youth Services in Florida (2014-2015) and the Marin County Juvenile Detention Center in California (2016-2017). Further, I have experience working with the neurodiverse

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<sup>2</sup> The young people were designated as “at-risk” if they opted in to go to Edgewood in place of a juvenile detention center and/or were exhibiting behavior adversely affecting their education and mental wellbeing.

community through my work with AbleVision Ireland in Drogheda in 2012 and with the ARC of St. Johns County in 2015.

I have long been committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion — though my journey became much more active and intentional in 2014 when I began to more earnestly read literature on the topic and attend training specifically for it. I have attended antiracist and DEI trainings hosted by artEquity (based in Pasadena, CA) and Art/Work Practice (based in Oakland, CA). Additionally, I was a core participant for Marin Theatre Company for Theatre Communication Group's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Institute from 2016-2017. As a woman, I have experienced first-hand discrimination within my educational settings as a student, as well as within employment settings and I have sought to channel my energy into seeking and generating institutional cultures that are committed to inclusion, intersectionality, and dismantling white supremacist culture.<sup>3</sup> My endeavour to be actively antiracist is an ongoing one that requires attention to my words and actions, as well as constant reflection on them. It is my desire to be part of an organisation committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion, as well as contribute to the development and maintenance of such an institution.

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<sup>3</sup> White supremacist culture as outlined in *Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups* by Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun, ChangeWork, 2001.

I incorporate both formative and summative assessments into my classrooms. Formative assessments are taken through a variety of means and typically account for 20-25% of the total grade, they include: (1) observations and feedback of student contributions to classroom discussion; (2) requiring students to submit research proposals for early feedback on a project idea; and (3) regular, low-stakes check-ins with students in which they must submit a few sentences about their thoughts on the reading and/or class discussion. Summative assessments, which account for 75-80% of the final grade take the shape of exams, research papers, reflection papers, projects, presentations, and performances. The nature of the summative assessment is informed by the class being taught. Lab/performance classes lean more heavily toward reflection papers, projects, and performances. Classes focused on history, theory, and analysis include more research papers, exams, and presentations.

Reflection is a vital indicator of the success of my teaching methods. I encourage reflection with my students and stress to them that it can take any form. By keeping a record of these reflections, I am able to evaluate students' growth over the course of the class, as well as learn more about what is effective/ineffective in my teaching methods. I seek student and peer feedback on my methods through written evaluations and one-on-one conversations. As my students are constantly growing and evolving, in order to continue to be effective, I must as well. In addition to encouraging student reflection, I also constantly reflect on my practice and process, which allows for continuous development in my approach to teaching.

Seeing passion in another person's eyes is what inspires me to teach. When people are passionate about something they consciously look for ways to learn and grow in that area, and I am compelled to actively take part in fostering this curiosity. Teaching allows me to nurture that fire in another human being.