

Lisa Portes

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www.lisaportes.com

Artistic Leader, Producer and Director: Entrepreneurial leader with twenty years of experience in both professional and academic theatre environments. Professional director with three decades of experience directing new and contemporary plays and musicals for the American theatre.

LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Associate Producer, People's Light Theatre. 2022 - Present

- Member of Senior Artistic Staff, involved in season planning, identifying, developing relationships with, and producing artists, board relations, and mission evolution.
- Conceived of and in process of producing [The Kiln, A New Works Lab at People's Light](#), a unique new works lab that provides developmental opportunities for multi-hyphenate artist, directors and performers as well as playwrights. 2023 Kiln artists include Daphne Rubin-Vega, Carey Perloff, Seema Sueko, Steve H. Broadnax, III, Lisa Ramirez and Estefanía Fadul. Actors include David Strathairn, Ellen McLaughlin and 2023 Obie Award-winner Arturo Luís Soria.
- Oversee New Play Frontiers, a pioneering commissioning program that pairs playwrights with local community partners to create work that tells the story of the many hidden populations in the Main Line of Chester County, PA, NPS sits directly at the intersection of artmaking and community engagement. Through NPF, People's Light has developed new work with such writers as Dominique Morrisseau, Karen Hartmen, Eisa Davis in partnership with such organizations as Alianzas de Phoenixville, Casa Guanajuato de Kennett Square, La Comunidad Hispana, The Melton Center, and Project Dawn Court – Philadelphia Reentry.
- Partner with Director of Community Engagement to develop reciprocal, long-lasting and meaningful relationships with community partners across Chester County
- Cultivate anti-racism across all areas of artistic planning with a deep commitment to equity and access

Head of MFA Directing, The Theatre School at DePaul University, 2005 - Present

- Envisioned and updated the MFA Directing program at The Theatre School at DePaul University to provide state of the art training to MFA directors.
- Reconceived the curriculum & production program to launch directors who know who they are and have the skills they need to make an impact on the field.
- Reshaped a middling program with a 20% rate of continuation in the field to a highly competitive training ground that boasts a 95% of post-graduation employment in the profession.
- Evolved a program that was 80% white, male and abled to a program whose current and last seven graduating classes average 50% female, 52% of color and 10% disabled.

Artistic Producer, Latinx Theatre Commons Carnival of New Plays, 2015 & 2018

- Conceived of, in collaboration with the Carnival team, all aspects of a new play festival, bringing together 250 national theatre-decisionmakers and dozens of Latinx artists to uplift and celebrate Latinx stories.
- Raised \$180,000 *out of cycle* in 2015, and \$250,000 in cycle in 2018
- Created a new model for producing a national new play festival by rallying a producing coalition that included the LTC, Goodman Theatre, Steppenwolf Theatre, Victory Gardens, the Theatre School at DePaul University and local Chicago Latinx theatres. The model is fleet and circumvents the mission-needs, red-tape, and infrastructural obligations of any one institution.
- Co-conceived and raised funds for the LTC El Fuego Initiative, an initiative which insured production of each of the twelve Carnival 2015 playwrights at theatres nationwide by 2020. El Fuego seeded ten world and regional premieres by Carnival playwrights during the 2016-17 thru 2018-19 seasons.

Artistic Director, Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences, 2002- 2015

- Re-visioned the mission for Chicago Playworks for Families and Young Audiences to reflect Chicago schoolchildren’s specifically urban, contemporary and multi-ethnic experience.
- Identified and hired top-tier professional directors to create astonishing work for young audiences for whom a Chicago Playworks production may be their first experience of theatre
- Introduced a commissioning program and launched world premiere productions by top shelf playwrights to seed the TYA field.

Associate Artistic Director, Soho Rep, New York NY, 1997 -1999

- Member of Senior Artistic Staff, involved in season planning, identifying, developing relationships with, and producing artists, board relations, and mission evolution.
- Producer, More Stuff Series – a new play development series with a specific focus on women writers. Developed work by such writers as Neena Beber, Migdalia Cruz, Erin Cressida Wilson, Annie Weissman
- Chief Grant Writer

Founding Artistic Director, Theater E, San Diego, CA 1992 – 1995

- Founded Theater E to produce new work by such adventurous writers as Naomi Iizuka, Carlos Murillo, Karl Gjardusek and Erin Cressida Wilson
- Created a production model that leverage abandoned spaces in San Diego, earning Theater E a reputation of producing alternative work in alternative spaces
- Theater E’s productions were featured in the San Diego Union Tribune’s Top Ten Production for each year of our short tenure

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Secretary of the Board, Theatre Communications Group, the national service organization for the American non-profit theatre, 2017 - Present

- Chair of Nominating and Governance: work with TCG leadership to operationalize new strategic plan as it pertains to governance, recruit new board members, and cultivate leadership
- Maintain fiduciary responsibility and work with TCG leadership and board to support all aspects of TCG
- Previous Committees: EDI, Regional Ambassadors

Executive Board Member, the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, the national union for directors and choreographers, 2019 - Present

- Chair, Chicago-area Theatres Negotiating Committee
- SDC liaison to the DPE/AEMI wing of the AFL-CIO, and the SDC/LORT Management Labor Committee.
- Former co-Chair of the SDC Political Engagement Committee which oversaw SDC’s historic endorsement of Joe Biden and the 2020 campaign to mobilize membership to canvass for the Biden campaign and the Georgia election.

Co-founder & Steering Committee Member of the LatinxTheatre Commons (LTC), 2012 - Current

- Co-conceived of and created a national Latinx advocacy network and thinktank dedicated to uplifting Latinx stories and championing a new American narrative
- Collaborate with a steering committee of thirty-five likeminded theatremakers to program and produce the events of the LTC including convenings, festivals, retreats, and our online platform, Café Onda

CONFERENCES, PANELS & JURYS

- TCG/Alan Schneider Award for Directors Jury Chair, 2021
- SDC/Zelda Fichandler Award for Directors, Jury Chair, 2021
- Session Leader, Help or Hinder: Boards and the American Theatre, TCG National Conference, 2020
- Session Leader: Next Year’s Model: Non-Profit Economics and Innovation, TCG National Conference, 2019
- TCG Young Leaders of Color Panelist, 2019
- Session Leader: Women in Leadership, TCG National Conference 2018
- Session Leader: Exploring Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, TCG National Conference, 2015
- Panelist :“El Movimiento Will Be Digitized,” TCG National Conference, 2014
- Pulitzer Prize in Drama Jury Member, 2007

EDIAB TRAINING

Nicole Brewer Anti-Racist Theatre, 2020
Radio Caña Negra, Anti-Blackness in the Latine Community, 2020
TCG Diversity & Inclusion Institute, 2014 – 2016

GRANTS & AWARDS

SDC Zelda Fichandler Award for Directors, 2016
TCG SPARK Fellowship for Executive Leaders of Color, 2014
Illinois Theatre Association Outstanding Contribution Award, 2003
NEA/TCG Directors Fellowship, 1997-99
Drama League Directors Fellowship, 1992
Fulbright/Hays Fellowship, 1989

RELATED EXPERIENCE¹

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| Professor of Directing & Acting, Associate Director, | The Theatre School at DePaul University, 2000-Present <i>The Who's Tommy</i> : New York, London, Frankfurt, Toronto, US, UK, Canadian National Tours, 1993-97 |
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EDUCATION

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| University of Southern California, San Diego Oberlin College | MFA in Directing BA in Theatre with Honors |
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¹ Directing Resume & References available upon request