

ELLIOT LEFFLER

Curriculum Vitae

CONTACT

Assistant Professor of Theatre and Performance Studies
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EDUCATION

PhD in Theatre, University of Minnesota (2014)

Advisor: Dr Sonja Kuflinec

Dissertation:

“The Harmonics of Intercultural Play: Participatory Theatre Within Interfaith and Interracial Initiatives”

This dissertation examines the interaction between a Reform synagogue and a black Baptist church, which jointly instituted a theatre project as one of several initiatives to nurture dialogue between their congregants. My research includes ethnographic investigation of the theatre project (which I co-facilitated) and of the communities’ other initiatives, as I interrogate how dramatic play affects intercultural encounter.

MA in Applied Theatre, University of Cape Town (2008)

Advisor: Gay Morris

Thesis:

“Devising Dialogue: Structuring Intercultural Encounters through the Process of Workshop Theatre”

This thesis interrogates the ethics and efficacy of fostering intercultural dialogue with heterogeneous groups by devising original theatre projects with them. It is based on field research that I conducted with juvenile inmates at Pollsmoor Prison, in Cape Town, South Africa.

B.S. in Theatre, Summa Cum Laude, Northwestern University (2002)

PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor, Theatre and Performance Studies, University of Toronto (2018 – present)

This position is based at the Scarborough campus, where I teach undergraduate students within a broad department of Arts, Culture and Media. I also teach and advise graduate students at the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at the university’s downtown campus.

Visiting Assistant Professor, Theatre Department, Reed College (2014-2018)

This full-time position in a small liberal arts college included a teaching load of five courses per year, in addition to academic advising and thesis advising. I taught a range of courses that included history/literature and practical classes, and I directed productions in the department’s theatrical season.

PUBLICATIONS

Journal Articles:

- “How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes: Maximizing Participation and Managing Risk in the Work of Sojourn Theatre.” *Contemporary Theatre Review*. Forthcoming.
- “Toward a Dramaturgy of Divergence: Remembering 9/11, Fostering Dialogue, and Embracing Dissent” (co-authored with Michael Mellas). *Theatre Topics* 26, no. 3 (Fall 2016).
- “Beating the Daf and Darbuka: Testing the Boundaries of Ethnicity, Evoking a National Imaginary, and Dancing a Contemporary Iraqi Identity.” *The Drama Review* 60, no. 1 (Spring 2016).
- “Rechoreographing Intercultural Encounters: The Power and Limits of Dramatic Play in Segregated Communities.” *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 21, no. 2 (Spring 2016).
- “Replacing the Sofa with the Spotlight: Interrogating the Therapeutic Value of Personal Testimony within Community-Based Theatre.” *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance* 17, no. 3 (2012).

Book Chapters:

- “Bursting the Bubble of Play: Making Space for Intercultural Dialogue.” *Magnet Theatre: Three Decades of Making Space*, eds Megan Lewis and Anton Krueger. Intellect Books, 2016.

Book Reviews:

- Review of Shulamith Lev-Aladgem, *Theatre in Co-Communities: Articulating Power*, in *Theatre Topics* 24, no. 1 (March 2014).
- Review of Dani Snyder-Young, *Theatre of Good Intentions: Challenges and Hopes for Theatre and Social Change*, in *Research in Drama Education* 19, no. 2 (April 2014).

HONORS AND AWARDS

Stillman Drake Award for Faculty Development, received annually 2014-2017, Reed College
Summer Research Fund Award, 2015 and 2017, Reed College
University of Minnesota Graduate School Fellowship, 2009-2014
University of Minnesota Thesis Research Travel Grant, 2013
Frank M. Rarig Fellowship, 2012, Department of Theatre and Dance at the University of Minnesota
Global Spotlight Grant, 2010, Office of International Programs, University of Minnesota
PAGE (Publicly Active Graduate Education) Fellowship, 2009-2010, Imagining America
Dorot Fellowship in Israel, 2008-2009, The Dorot Foundation
Rotary Ambassadorial Scholarship, 2007, The Rotary Foundation
Agnes Nixon Playwriting Award, 2002, Northwestern University

INVITED TALKS

“Theatre-Making and Community Development.” A presentation for an advanced undergraduate class on community development at Portland State University (Portland, OR). March 2016.

“Devising Civic Theatre.” An interactive presentation for an advanced undergraduate class on contemporary theatre practices at Portland State University (Portland, OR). March 2015.

“Theatre and Intercultural Dialogue.” An interactive presentation as part of a Forum on Arts and Social Change with Portland Institute for Contemporary Art (Portland, OR). September 2014.

“Beyond the Platitudes: The Intricacies of Intercultural Dialogue in Evanston, IL.” An interactive presentation for an advanced undergraduate Social Psychology course at De Paul University (Chicago, IL). March 2013.

“Questioning the Ethics and Efficacy of Intercultural Dialogue.” An interactive presentation for a mid-level undergraduate Social Psychology course at De Paul University (Chicago, IL). November 2012.

“Facilitating Groups with Applied Theatre Methodologies.” An interactive presentation for an advanced undergraduate Theatre course at the University of Minnesota (Minneapolis, MN). March 2010.

CONFERENCE PARTICIPATION

Session Chair:

Co-chair, “Mobilizing Difference within Community-Engaged Performance” Working Group. *American Society for Theatre Research*. Atlanta, Georgia. November 2018.

Co-chair, “Economies of African Performance” Working Group. *American Society for Theatre Research*. Montreal, Canada. November 2011.

Conference Presentations:

“Puppetry and Metaphor in Forum Theatre.” A presentation and workshop presented with Tamara Lynne at *Objects with Objectives*, a symposium on puppetry and Applied Theatre at the ASSITEJ World Congress. Cape Town, South Africa. 2017.

“Performing Protest and Protesting Performance: The Place of Theatre in the Global Anti-Apartheid Movement.” A presentation at the *Scholar-Maker Conference for Future Theatre Faculty* hosted by Reed College’s Office of Institutional Diversity. Portland, OR. 2017.

“*Waiting for Godot* in South Africa.” A paper presented with the “Transactions: Performance In/From The Global South” Working Group at the annual *ASTR (American Society for Theatre Research)* conference. Minneapolis, MN. 2016.

“Race, Class, and the Politics of Devising Theatre.” A presentation within a panel entitled “Building Capacity: Diversity in Inclusive Theatre Education” at the annual *ATHE (Association for Theatre in Higher Education)* conference. Chicago, IL. 2016.

- “God, Humankind, and the Performance of Social Change.” A paper presented with the “Doing Something” Working Group at the annual *ASTR (American Society for Theatre Research)* conference. Baltimore, MD. 2014.
- “Asymmetrical Optimism.” A paper presented with the “Common Good” Working Group at the annual *ASTR (American Society for Theatre Research)* conference. Dallas, TX. 2013.
- “Playfully Interconnected.” A paper presented at the annual *ATHE (Association of Theatre in Higher Education)* conference. Orlando, FL. 2013.
- “Suspending Applause: The Dramaturgy of Community Dialogue.” A paper co-presented with Michael Mellas at the annual *ATHE (Association of Theatre in Higher Education)* conference. Washington, DC. 2012.
- “Economies of Storytelling and Healing in South African Community Theatre.” A paper presented with the “Economies of African Performance” Working Group at the annual *ASTR (American Society for Theatre Research)* conference. Montreal, Canada. 2011.
- “Replacing the Sofa with the Spotlight: Investigating the Ways in which Community-Based Theatre is Said to be Therapeutic.” A formal presentation at the *Applied Theatre Conference*. Exeter, UK. 2011.
- “New Contours of Old Relationships: The Intercultural Potential of Community-Based Theatre.” A formal presentation at the *Mid-America Theatre Conference*. 2011.
- “Theatrical Dialogue in a South African Prison.” A poster presentation at the *Imagining America Conference*. New Orleans, LA. 2010.
- “Intercultural Theatre in a South African Prison.” A formal presentation at the *Applied Theatre Conference*. Exeter, UK. 2008.

ACADEMIC TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Reed College:

Performance and Activism in South Africa, 1948-Present (Spring 2015 & Spring 2017)
Theatre History I: From Antiquity to Naturalism (Fall 2014)
Improvisation: The Power of Play (Spring 2015, Spring 2016, & Fall 2017)
Devising (Fall 2015 & Spring 2018)
Acting Laboratory (Fall 2016 & Spring 2018)
Directing (Fall 2014, Fall 2015, & Fall 2017)
Applied Collaboration Techniques (Fall 2014, Fall 2015, & Spring 2018)
Applied Performance Techniques (Spring 2016 & Fall 2016)

University of Minnesota:

Acting for Non-Majors (Fall 2010, Spring 2011)
Introduction to Theatre, Teaching Assistant (Fall 2011, Spring 2012)

University of Cape Town:

Introduction to Theatre and Performance, Teaching Assistant (Fall 2007)
Twentieth Century Theatre Innovators, Teaching Assistant (Spring 2007)

EXPERIENCE AS AN APPLIED THEATRE PRACTITIONER

With North American Non-Profit Organizations:

Workshop Facilitator, *Puppetry and Theatre of the Oppressed*: an interactive workshop with Living Stages (October 2017, Portland, OR).

Theatre of the Oppressed Facilitator/Joker, *Dinner with the Neighbors*: an interactive performance about homelessness with Living Stages and Right 2 Survive (November 2016, Portland, OR).

Theatre of the Oppressed Facilitator/Joker, *Neighbor vs. Neighbor*: an interactive performance about housing justice with Living Stages (November 2016, Portland, OR).

Workshop Facilitator, *Theatre Games and Community Building*: an interactive workshop with Living Stages and PSUFA, the union representing part-time faculty at Portland State University (September 2016, Portland, OR).

Theatre of the Oppressed Facilitator/Joker, *Chronicles of the Street*: an interactive performance about homelessness with Living Stages and Right 2 Survive (December 2015, Portland, OR).

Workshop Instructor, *Joking and Theatre of the Oppressed*: an interactive training for aspiring facilitators of Forum Theatre with Living Stages (Summer 2015, Portland, OR).

Drama Instructor, *Crossing Cultures Through the Arts*: an intensive theatre program at Global Youth Village, a transnational summer camp (Summer 2011 and 2012, Bedford, VA).

Drama Instructor for *Z Frank Apachi Day Camp*: a Chicago-area day camp for children age 4-11 (Summer 2003, Glenview, IL).

In North American Public Schools:

Assistant Drama Instructor for Central High School Drama Program: a high school drama program with an emphasis in devised theatre (2009, St. Paul, MN).

Drama Instructor for Urban Gateways: an arts education organization that conducts 6-12 week residencies in Chicago Public Schools (2004-2005, Chicago, IL).

Drama Instructor, *Jump into Literature*: a weekly after-school drama program at Washington School (2003-2004, Evanston, IL).

Actor/Educator/Facilitator with Imagination Theater: a touring theatre company presenting Forum Theatre workshops at K-12 schools (2002-2003, Chicago, IL).

At Religious Institutions:

Drama Facilitator, *Enacting Yitro*: a workshop with Tivnu: Building Justice (Jan 2016, Portland, OR).

Co-Facilitator, *Bibliodrama*: an interfaith, interracial initiative in Evanston, IL to study biblical texts through dramatization (2012-2013, Evanston, IL).

Trainer/Facilitator, *The Art of the Mturgeman*: a weeklong residency, combining elements of performance, storytelling, and ritual, to train congregants of Beth Emet Synagogue in a contemporary reimagining of an ancient art form (2011, Evanston, IL).

Drama Instructor, *Enacting David*: a week-long residency with Jewish American and Israeli teenagers at the Nesiya Institute to study the Biblical stories of David and devise a theatrical interpretation (2010, Falls Village, CT).

Drama Instructor, *Enacting Ruth*: a week-long residency with Jewish American and Israeli teenagers at the Nesiya Institute to study the Biblical story of Ruth and devise a theatrical interpretation (2009, Baltimore, MD).

Facilitator, *Jewish Perspectives on Jesus*: an image theatre workshop for Jewish participants of an interfaith encounter program (2006, Pascagoula, MS).

Facilitator, *Bibliodrama*: an interactive, drama-based exploration of Biblical texts with Anshe Emet Synagogue (2003-2004, Chicago, IL).

Workshop Instructor, *Touching the Text*: a six-week devising program based on Biblical narratives with the Chicagoland *Midrasha* Program (2003-2006, Skokie, IL).

Director/Drama Instructor, *The B'nai Mitzvah Theatre Project*: a theatre workshop with Bar and Bat Mitzvah students from across the Jewish religious spectrum (2001, Evanston, IL).

In South Africa:

Drama Instructor/Director, *The B5 Drama Project*: a three-month drama residency in Section B5 of Pollsmoor Prison (2007, Cape Town, South Africa).

Guest Facilitator, *Whose Culture?!*: a series of interactive workshops at NMC, a South African construction company (2007, Cape Town, South Africa).

Guest Facilitator of arts education programs with Project Phakama, an intercultural theatre collective for South African youth (2007-2008, Cape Town, South Africa).

In Israel:

Resident Drama Instructor at Hand in Hand: Center for Jewish-Arab Education in Israel (2008-2009, Jerusalem, Israel).

Workshop Instructor, *Performing Shared Narratives*: a series of Physical Theatre workshops with Jewish-Arab Youth Circus Program (2008-2009, Karmiel, Israel).

Workshop Instructor, *Interventions in Human Trafficking*: a series of Image Theatre workshops with Amnesty International (2008-2009, Tel Aviv, Israel).

DIRECTING EXPERIENCE

Directed the musical *Paris Commune* by Steven Cosson and Michael Friedman. Produced by Reed College Theatre Department (2016, Portland, OR).

Devised and directed *In/divisible*. Produced by Reed College Theatre Department (2016, Portland, OR).

Devised and directed *Tea Party: An Interactive Performance for the Election Year*. Produced by the Xperimental Theatre at the University of Minnesota (2012, Minneapolis, MN).

Co-devised and co-directed *Remembering 9/11: A Performance and Community dialogue* with Michael Mellas. Produced by the University of Minnesota Theatre and Dance Department (2011, Minneapolis, MN).

Assistant Directed *Soek 'Os 'It Soe? [Is This What We Were Searching For?]* with director Lavona DeBruyn. Produced by ComNet, an intercultural Community-Based Theatre affiliated with Magnet Theatre (2010, Clanwilliam, South Africa).

Assistant Directed *One Day* with director Michael Rohd. Produced by Sojourn Theatre (2006, Portland, OR).

Assistant Directed *Tremble* with director Michael Rohd. Produced by Northwestern University (2006, Evanston, IL).

PROFESSIONAL ACTING EXPERIENCE

Date	Play/Project	Role(s)	Director	Company
2015-2018	Playback Theatre	Ensemble/ Misc	Jackie Paris & Sara McWilliams	Portland Playback (Portland, OR)
2006	<i>Jungalbook</i> by Edward Mast	Mowgli	Adam Burke	Chicago Theatre for Young Audiences (Chicago, IL)
2005	<i>Sin: A Cardinal Deposed</i> by Michael Murphy	Patrick McSorely, et al	David Zak	Bailiwick Repertory Theatre (Chicago, IL)
2005	<i>The Golem</i> by H. Leivick	The Messiah	David Zak	Red Hen Productions (Chicago, IL)
2004	<i>Cricket in Times Square</i> by George Selden	Mario	Katie McLean	Lifeline Theatre (Chicago, IL)
2003	<i>The Way of the World</i> by William Congreve	Mirabell	Joe Feliciano	Mom and Dad Productions (Chicago, IL)
2003	<i>Seeking Aeneas</i>	Thomas	Alexis Williams	Stage Left Theatre (Chicago, IL)
2003	<i>Suffering City</i> by Collaboraction	Wanderer	Anthony Mosely	Collaboraction (Chicago, IL)
2003	<i>Pyramus and Thisbe</i> adapted from Shakespeare	Quince	Ann James	Chicspeare Productions (Chicago, IL)
2002/2003	<i>The Wizard of AIDS</i> Healthworks Theatre	Scarecrow	Diana Basmajian	Healthworks Theatre (Chicago, IL)
2002	<i>Of Mice and Men</i> by John Steinbeck	Whit	Kristen Spangler	Citadel Theatre (Lake Forest, IL)
2002/2003	<i>Turning Corners</i> by Megan Carney	Various Roles (understudy)	Amy Beck	About Face Theatre (Chicago, IL)

DRAMATURGY EXPERIENCE

Dramaturg for *We Are BRAVE*, a community-based devised theatre project about reproductive justice. Directed by Kate Duffly and Roberta Hunte. Produced by Western States Center (2016, Portland, OR).

EXPERIENCE IN OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIP-BUILDING

Director of Community Partnerships for *How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes*, an interactive performance and community dialogue. Created by Michael Rohd and directed by Liam Kaas-Lentz. Co-produced by Sojourn Theatre and Portland Playhouse (2015, Portland, OR).

EXTRA TRAINING

“Teaching in Three Dimensions.” A three-day workshop on embodied pedagogy with Ann Cooper Albright. Hosted by Reed College (2015, Portland, OR).

“Devising Civic Theatre: Performance, Social Practice, and Dialogue.” A two-day intensive workshop with Michael Rohd of Sojourn Theatre. Hosted by Reed College (2015, Portland, OR).

Introductory and intermediate classes in physical theatre, emphasizing Viewpoints and Suzuki methods. Hosted and taught by Portland Experimental Theatre Ensemble (2015, Portland, OR).

“Theatre of the Oppressed.” A two-day intensive workshop taught by Geo Britto of the Center for Theatre of the Oppressed. Hosted by the University of Cape Town (2008, Cape Town, South Africa).

Introductory and intermediate classes in Improv Comedy performance. Annoyance Theatre (2006, Chicago, IL).

“Applied Theatre: Devising Original Works.” An intensive week-long workshop with Michael Rohd of Sojourn Theatre. Hosted by Columbia College (2003, Chicago, IL).

“Dramaturgy of Community: Theatre for Dialogue.” An intensive week-long workshop with Michael Rohd of Sojourn Theatre (2002, Chicago, IL).

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Society for Theatre Research (ASTR)
Association for Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE)