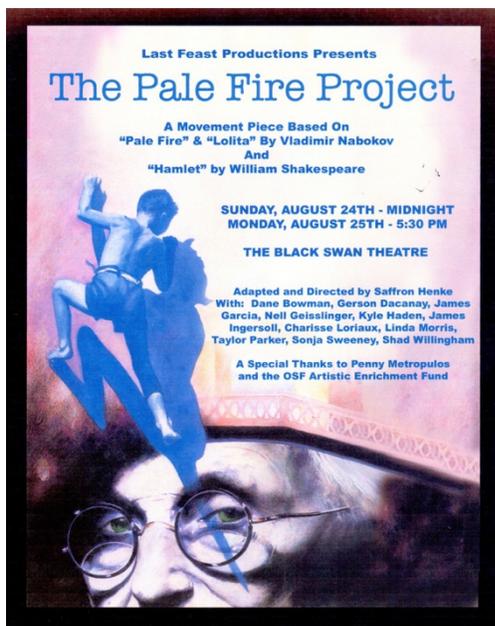


STATEMENT OF PROFESSIONAL PHILOSOPHY

I am a feminist actor and director who specializes in new work and classical material. On the surface, those two areas may seem diametrically opposed, but I have found they speak to one another in exciting ways, informing and enriching my work as a whole. My approach to the work, whether it be a 16th century Shakespearean drama or a 21st century comedy, is remarkably consistent. It boils down to four simple questions that represent a cycle of curiosity, creative risk-taking, connection and analysis. It all starts with, "What if?" (curiosity) then, "Why not?" (risk) followed by, "What happens?" (connection) and finally, "What did I learn?" (analysis). Because of the cyclical nature of theatre – where the show opens and closes, seasons begin and end - I get to practice that cycle of questions in both the micro, in each individual production, and in the macro, via my larger career trajectory. By putting my focus on curiosity, risk-taking and connection, I cultivate a holistic attitude of growth and creative problem solving. This is the heart of my work as a theatre artist and forms the backbone of my professional philosophy.

This philosophy of curiosity, risk-taking, and assessment is evident from my earliest work. My 20-year professional career truly began at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival after graduating in 2001 from the Professional Actor Training Program at the University of Washington. As an actor fresh out of graduate



school, it was an amazing experience to work with some of the best classical actors in the country, in a such highly produced, well-funded and well-loved place as OSF. There, I learned how to approach the process of acting as a professional. It heartened me to learn that I had a place in this competitive profession, and that daring was encouraged. In addition to acting in multiple shows in my two years at OSF, I also adapted and produced a devised piece called *The Pale Fire Project*, based on Hamlet and stories by Nabokov, thus beginning my journey in devising new work from classical sources.

After leaving OSF, I got my first union acting job and gained my Equity card at the Sacramento Theatre Company. I was invited to join the company as an Associate Artist and

resident acting company member, where I piloted the newly founded conservatory training program for young professionals, STC-2 from 2004-2007. With STC-2, I began to hone my teaching and administrative skills, as well as continue to experiment as a director. I commissioned and developed several new plays during that time with other emerging artists. The most successful example of these projects was *The Tale*, by Tommy Smith. We eventually collaborated with composer Michael McQuilken

and developed the original play into a rock musical about Greek mythology that toured Greece and headlined the Mioulia Festival. *The Tale* was formative in many ways: it advanced my vocabulary in adapting classical work with a fresh perspective, and it allowed me to act on my desire to create opportunities for other artists, collaborating behind the scenes as well as on stage. I flourished as an actor as well, getting to have input on the season and choosing roles that excited me creatively. Notably, I performed the solo show, *The Syringa Tree* by Pamela Gien, which received rave reviews and an extended run. *The Syringa Tree* was particularly challenging, as I played 24 different characters, making each distinct for my audience through specific movement and vocal choices. It required me to trust my process of creative risk-taking; ultimately, the hard work paid off and garnered me the Princess Grace Emerging Artist Honorarium.



The Syringa Tree

After teaching and acting in the Los Angeles area, working with the Center Theatre Group, A Noise Within Theatre, and the Furious Theatre Company, my home state of Iowa called me back to serve as the director of the Grant Wood Art Colony in 2010. The GWAC is a ten-month teaching residency under the auspices of the University of Iowa, funding three artists with housing, an exhibition of their work and a teaching stipend. I ran all aspects of the new program. I am most proud my work in advocating for a performing artist fellowship for the Colony, which originally only included visual artists. This fellowship rotates between, music, theatre and dance, and allows those departments to collaborate in a unique way, finding interdisciplinary opportunities that they may not seek otherwise.

In addition to working as an administrator, I continued to act and direct professionally in a variety of venues in the state. Iowa gave me excellent opportunities to grow and experiment as a director – helming



Metamorphoses

new classics like Mary Zimmerman's *Metamorphoses* (a play that infamously requires actors to perform their roles in a heated swimming pool), *Les Liaisons Dangereuses* (introducing undergrads to that very sophisticated language), and continuing to create new, devised pieces with *Frauen Im Schatten: Women in the Shadow* (a piece about the women of the Third Reich).

My growth as a director paralleled my growth as an actor, taking on some of the riskiest roles of my career, including baring body and soul in David Ives' play *Venus in Fur*, and portraying the descent of a woman with Alzheimer's in The Working Group's production of *The Broken Chord*.



Venus in Fur

When I accepted a tenure-track professorship at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio in 2015, academic life allowed me to change pace from the nomadic existence of a working actor. Academia gave me space to focus, so that I could distill my experiences into my teaching values and vocabulary. I understood that the micro experience of the theatrical production functioned as a testing ground for the macro experience of the creative life as a whole. A sense of grounded self, curiosity, experimentation and risk-taking became a central part of my teaching and creative practice. From this growing awareness, I developed a research study into Millennial/Gen Z's relationship to risk in their personal and creative lives which evolved into the Creative Risk Project, a five-module approach to expanding the creative vocabulary. The project encourages autonomy and personal awareness in one's creative and personal practices, bringing longevity and health in to a developing artist's life. The project teaches risk-taking with boundaries, awareness and consent as integral parts of the process.

I created The BRINK Theatre Company while at Miami, allowing me to continue to connect and collaborate with artists and helping my students bridge the academia/professional divide. The BRINK explores themes of contemporary perspectives and voices of "otherness," mounting readings in site-specific environments for small audiences. These efforts included undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, alumni and professionals in the field, with the BRINK producing a Solo Series at the local arts center, bringing nationally recognized solo performers to an audience who would not otherwise see this kind of new work. This model provided unusual opportunities in an academic environment, uniting academic and creative work, and has transferred to Colorado State University.

My vision as a director grew throughout that time as well, where I directed *Avenue Q* by Lopez and Marx,



Echoes of Miami

*Stupid F**king Bird* by Aaron Posner, and *The Flick* by Annie Baker. I'm especially proud of the project *Echoes of Miami*, which served as a culmination of my work as a director. *Echoes* was a walking, site-specific tour of nine short plays, written and directed by students, based on the ghost stories and reported hauntings on the Miami campus. It was a project three years in the making, and was an enormous success for the department.

Coinciding with these projects, my professional career expanded in my time at Miami. I was cast in my first lead in a feature film, again an innovative take on a classic with an adaptation of Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull*. It was released in 2020, was nominated for and received a number of awards. I also achieved a lifetime goal of taking a show to the internationally renowned Edinburgh Fringe Festival. I directed *Lady Macbeth and Her Pal, Megan*, a solo show written and performed by my longtime collaborator, Megan Gogerty. After sold-out performances in a run at Riverside Theatre in Iowa City, it won the Audience Pick at the Cincinnati Fringe Festival and Outstanding Achievement at the Cloris Leachman Awards in Des Moines before a month-long run in Edinburgh.

Finally, I after choosing to pursue the greater creative opportunities at Colorado State University in 2019, where my experiences have culminated in all areas of my creative, teaching and service work. In addition to multiple invited presentations and workshops, The Creative Risk Project is incorporated into my classes, giving the students a way in to their creative processes, and helping them create their own devised work through expressing their individual perspectives and unique voices. The model for the BRINK Theatre Company is alive and well at CSU in the ON THE BRINK Reading Series, exploring crucial themes and underrepresented voices. With excellent support from the department, I have been able to weave together my own creative interests, student development and opportunities with service to the community, the craft, and our current moment. I have acted in, or produced, six readings in Spring of 2021. The goal is that the readings continue and expand into local, national, and international outreach, bringing awareness of different cultures and voices, as well as recent plays and theatrical practice to the CSU community. Amplifying artists' voices and creating connection is also central in my commitment to justice, equity, diversity and inclusion by my service in both the JEDI committee for the School of Music, Theatre and Dance and as the faculty head of the student-driven Theatre Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

While the pandemic ground much of the theatre industry to a halt, I continued to work. I directed my first



Concord Floral

feature film, Jordan Tannahill's *Concord Floral*, moving the department toward more digital theatre and film work in the future as well as favorable reviews and award nominations. I acted and directed many online readings, including the Hollins New Play Festival, where I have served as a core faculty member since 2016. I once again took the opportunity to give old material a new spin, directing a new adaptation of *Little Women* for the outdoor

summer season at Theatre Cedar Rapids, and I am set to direct an adaptation of Sophocles plays with Sean Graney's *These Seven Sicknesses*. I'm also scheduled to perform in an audio version of Tolstoy's *The Kreutzer Sonata*.

The creative cycle – curiosity, assessment, risk-taking, analysis – is a vehicle that has taken me around the world, has given me the tools to dive into what felt like impossible projects, and it continues to push me into new territory as an artist. Through my professional practice, I have had the joy of creating opportunities for other artists and connections to the professional world for students, imagining work with a huge vision out of a modest budget, and reframing our history to discover something new. Post tenure, in addition to my ongoing professional projects in acting and directing, I look forward to continuing my professional experiences and bringing those relationships into the work at CSU. I will continue to leverage my professional connections to bring in guest artists to increase opportunities for our students by fostering connections to, and offering unique insight from, the professional world through the BRINK Theatre Company and the On The BRINK reading series. I look forward to exploring risk through the lens of boundaries and consent from the vocabulary I'm learning through Theatrical Intimacy Education (TIE), and sharing those practices not only in classrooms and the rehearsal hall, but throughout the Theatre Department as well as the School of Music, Theatre and Dance. I am excited to continue my experiments through the development of solo and devised new work, both as a performer and director. I look forward to expanding current definition of the theatre art form by re-imagining classical material through a contemporary lens with *These Seven Sicknesses* this fall. I plan to continue pairing acting training in my teaching work with solid professional experience in the everchanging landscape of the field with the Creative Risk Project. Colorado State University serves as a fertile home base for my work, and I am proud to be a member of this strong community of scholars and artists as we invent and reinvent the future.