

Sarah M. Chichester

Theatre Director - Artistic Statement

The human mind is an unbelievably fascinating place. Dreams, imagination, memories and more—all the things to make us wonder “did this really happen or is it all in my head?” is a large part of what I’m interested in bringing to the stage. That familiar feeling that we’ve all experienced, yet mirroring it in a new way that engages our minds. I feel that seeing this on stage allows both those involved in a production and those participating as audience members to view theatre in that grey area of beautiful subjectivity to decide for one’s self what’s happening in the world of the play, and what’s happening inside a character’s mind in the world of the play.

In my years creating theatrical pieces and experiences for an audience, I’ve come to learn that I’m most excited about psychological works while still utilizing the theatre to expose problems that are currently an issue in our society to help promote social change. I feel strongly as an artist that theatre is a political and powerful art form. The opportunity to help inspire people to think and develop their own perspectives on various ideas through the aesthetics of theatre is my goal to do throughout my life.

As a director, I aim to work with artists in a collaborative process that will allow to create and to grow as artists in a safe environment. Growth is a very important element to me as both an artist and human being. I like to give artists (actors particularly) something to do that will require them to go out from their comfort zone and learn something about themselves and their artistry. A common trap I feel we get into as artists is knowing what our “type” is. I feel there’s more to all of us than meets the eye, so for every production I really try to look at the people I’m considering to be apart the experience and think “what do I see in this person that they might not see in themselves? How would this role further develop their artistry?”

From pre-production to the closing performance, I’m 100% emotionally invested with the lives of the characters and the story being unfolded. When one instinctively feels the feelings in the subtext of any given moment, they know how they need to tell their part of the story. This is why when I’m in rehearsals; especially the beginning of the rehearsal process, I strive to unify my actors to create an ensemble. Developing strong and intrapersonal relationships is a vital part of the process. Going an outward in approach- focusing on what others are doing and your physical body will lead to what is going on inside the psychology of the character while diminishing two of the most common actor problems. Throughout rehearsals I give guidance and direction solely based on what the actors do and don’t do. Constantly checking in with their thoughts and feelings on their progress every step of the way, hearing things from their perspective helps me provide the guidance that is best suited for each individual to become a well-rounded, organic character in the way that works best for them.

Being the creative leader is my top priority for collaboration and guidance. I strive for each and every production to be **our** vision of the world of the play. Not just my own.

For these reasons, I’m most excited about contemporary works. Whether it’s developing a new original play or reviving a known published work, I’m interested in what’s going on in our world, our society, and our minds right *now*. When I direct a play I want my audience to think and feel the connection of what this work has in our modern day world, no matter what that connection may be.