

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND DEI STATEMENT

Being a woman of color teaching within an art form that commercially still allows racism, sexism and depictions of stereotypes is a challenge. Diversity, equity and inclusion is the philosophy I have lived by in my twenty year professional career as an actor, producer and director. I have created content to open boundaries for underrepresented ethnic minority groups and wrote non-binary characters within it. I see the classroom as a continuation of that career.

I believe that every student is an individual first. Their experiences and perspectives are what shapes them as artists. The individual's racial, religious, family structure, sexual orientation, sexual identity and socio-economic status is where a person's creative palette can begin. In that thinking, diversity is not separated from my teaching philosophy, it is the foundation in which my classroom begins.

I know acting is both *an art* and *a craft*. I work hard to offer a safe space where students can express their ideas, opinions and perspectives through the art they create and the craft I teach. As a teacher, I give students guided space to allow the artist to find their voice and I teach them the craft of acting as a vehicle to speak through.

Celebrating the individual and the differences is what I demand from my students and honesty is what I give them in return.

I encourage my students to speak their truth and see their individuality as an asset and a strength in both life and in their art. I hope that my students leave knowing themselves better, feeling empowered and prepared to join an industry and world that is not always diverse, equitable or inclusive.