

# Directing Portfolio

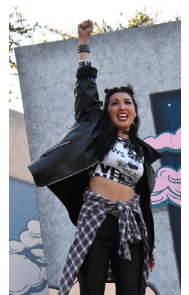
Shannon R. Davis  
from concepts to performances



# Director

## Educator

## Community Connector



# Storyteller

[www.ShannonRDavis.com](http://www.ShannonRDavis.com)

# Mission

I specialize in directing and teaching theatre for cultural and social awareness and exploring how artists can use theatre as a tool to start meaningful dialogue and inspire positive change. While directing and teaching, I draw on psycho-physical performance and mindful practice. My mixed-Indigenous heritages influence my blend of classic and modern storytelling. I create experiential performances for the stage that stimulate thought-provoking conversations. I am interested in hearing stories and creating space for voices that haven't been amplified. Mythology and traditional storytelling become scaffolding to challenging contemporary narratives. I explore dynamic movement, stark contrasts, and dense textual study to construct impactful theatre.

## IDEATE

As director, I sculpt the vision and message of the pieces I work on based on interpretation of the playwright's text, or the artists' visions. I create holistic design concepts through script analysis, research & dramaturgy, and familiarity with relevant socio-political happenings. I lead the production and artistic teams towards a unified show through copious research and inspirational imagery.

## Positive change through transformative experiential theatre

### Manahatta The Play



MK started *Manahatta* while in residency at Joe's Pub at The Public in NYC 2013. In response to her numerous conversations during occupy wall street in 2011.

- 2014 full reading at Joe's Pub
  - Rewrites for a few years
- 2018 The Oregon Shakespeare festival produced the first full premiere
  - Many rewrites and reorderings during this production
- 2019 Yale Rep.
  - 2020 rewrites
- 2023 It went back to The Public-closed December
  - Rewrites and reorderings during this production.
- 2024 Aurora Theatre Co production!

### Ideas for performance

Stylized movement

Suspension of time/space

Helped by projection/lighting/sound

Inspired by Butoh/Noh in some sections

[Noh techniques](#) [Noh history](#)





Slow, sliding feet

Symbolic action of hands (similar to Native signing as well)

Activation of core (when not singing) to create shapes

How can we use the physical space to move transitions in a stylized way?

Are there moving set pieces that are foundational beyond scene changes. Like a living/breathing space?





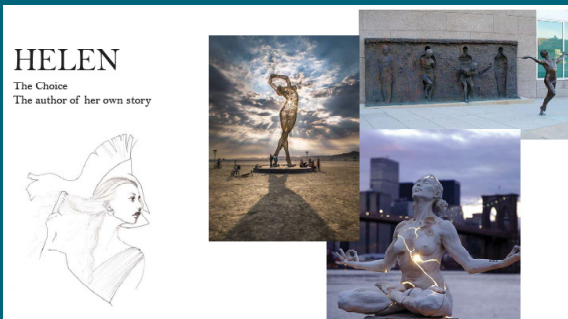
# Process

## COLLABORATE

Our collaboration begins with shared imagery. We craft the feeling and flow of the piece in visual media. Images in hand, we discuss, analyze, and expand upon the show. The early vision echoes into the designs and reverberates through the production.

## REHEARSE

The actors' journey starts with more imagery. They see the current vision, contribute their ideas, and breathe life into the performance. We explore new ideas. The rehearsal room becomes a shared space in which the actors add their artistry and connect with the material. The work is energetic and comprehensive. Ideas get up on their feet quickly: we move, we experiment. I work with each performer at their speed and challenge them to expand.





# *Helen*

By Ellen McLaughlin

"I have looked at your delightful 'Helen Box' and find it all spot on. Those images of beautiful imprisonment are just the ticket. The Diamante one of the woman in the cage is one I've never seen and captures something about the play particularly well, though they all do. Fascinating. I think all the design ideas look very much on track. I urge you all to follow your instincts."

-Ellen McLaughlin

In her email to me about my vision of her show





"Beautiful Mythbusting in UT's 'Helen': Director Shannon Davis does a great job of keeping the focus on the character's emotions and interplay. The play ends on a hopeful note, holding out the possibility that Helen might yet reclaim some humanity and ownership of her life. "Beauty is a hell of a thing," Helen says at one point. As UT's production shows, she's not kidding."

-A. Conklin  
Madison Magazine



"*Helen*. Redefining Beauty: Artfully directed by Shannon Davis, *Helen* marries ancient poetry with absurdism, and a treatise on gender studies with references to pop culture, all while underlining the emptiness of superficial love, fame and power. Although the text is dense with philosophy, literary analysis and mythological backstory, the production is compelling on more than just an intellectual level. But in the play's final moment, when she considers making a stronger choice, Helen is truly beauty personified."

-G. Rice  
Isthmus







"Shannon is an inspiring and ever-evolving young director; her work defines collaboration. She invites her compatriots, designers, and actors to give input, and utilizes all available ideas to create a unique performance. 'Helen' was a thought-provoking re-envisioning that asked audiences to grapple with preconceived notions of womanhood, beauty, & storytelling."

-Traci Gaydos

UW-Madison, Division of Diversity

[www.ShannonRDavis.com](http://www.ShannonRDavis.com)







## Concept to Stage

Incorporating imagery early in the design process guides our final production. Imagery is especially helpful in communicating my vision for the 'framed moments' to my team. In rehearsal, the actors are shown these images as inspiration for moments.



# Rez Sisters

2019

New Native Theatre



Working in Native community, this piece centered on women, nonbinary folks, and Native experience on the reserve in the script AND in the process.







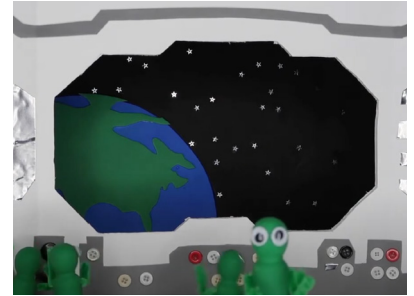






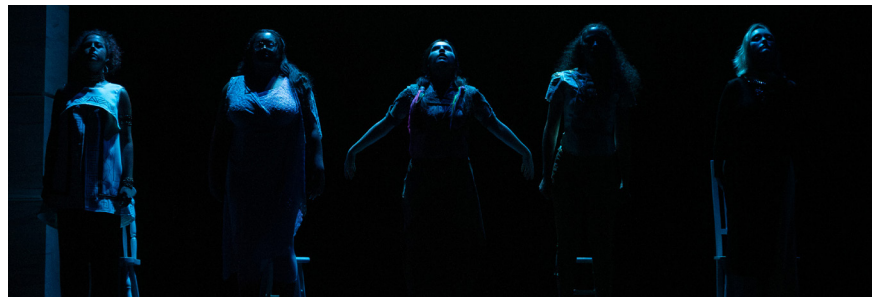
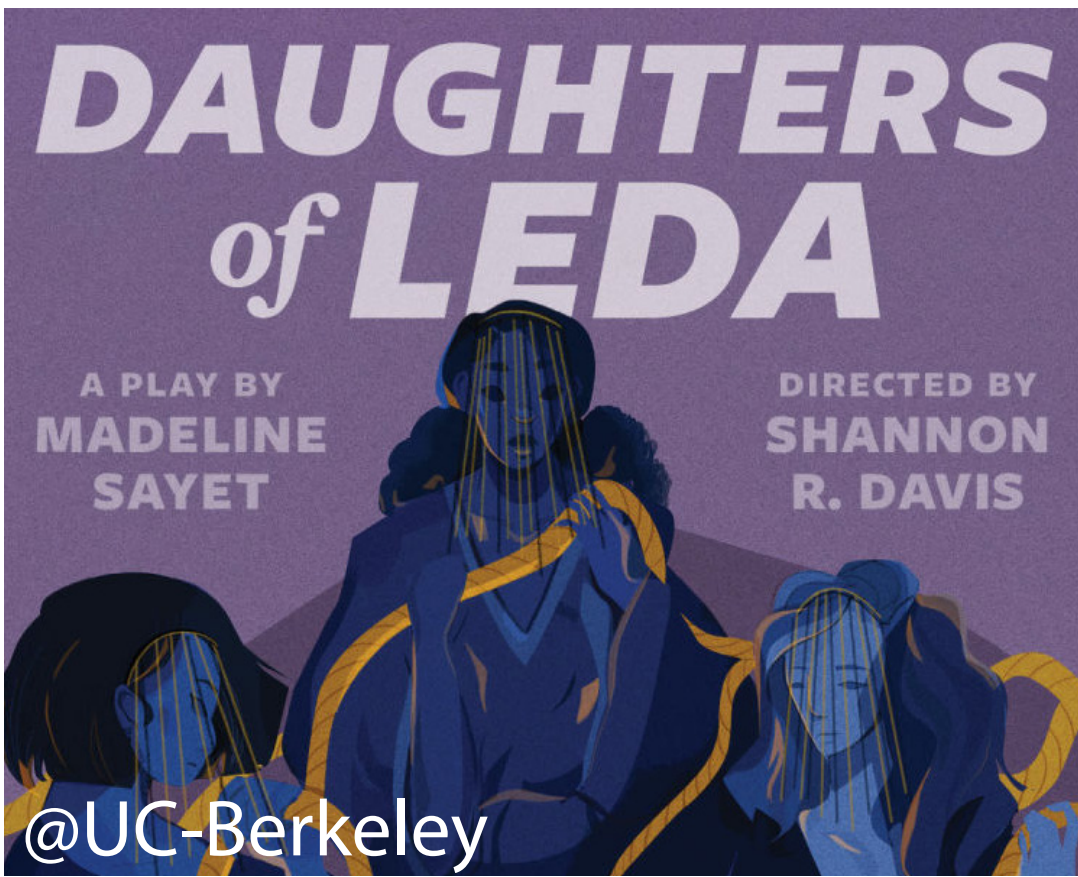
# Together We Rise<sup>2020</sup>

A pandemic fundraiser to keep artists fed and housed



I produced and directed the San Francisco Bay Area's (and one of the country's) first LIVE online theatre fundraisers on Zoom. It was cutting-edge utilization of technology at the time, with huge stars and wonderfully thoughtful and thought-provoking performances. We did not shy away from the moment we were at in time. We leaned into joy and strife. We banded together to far exceed our fundraising goal. This fund raised over 1.5 million dollars for out-of-work artists in the Bay Area.







# Manahatta

2024

Director at Aurora Theatre Company



"Manahatta powerfully depicts brutalities of colonization, capitalism."

-SF GATE

"Manahatta is an exciting and thought-provoking drama."

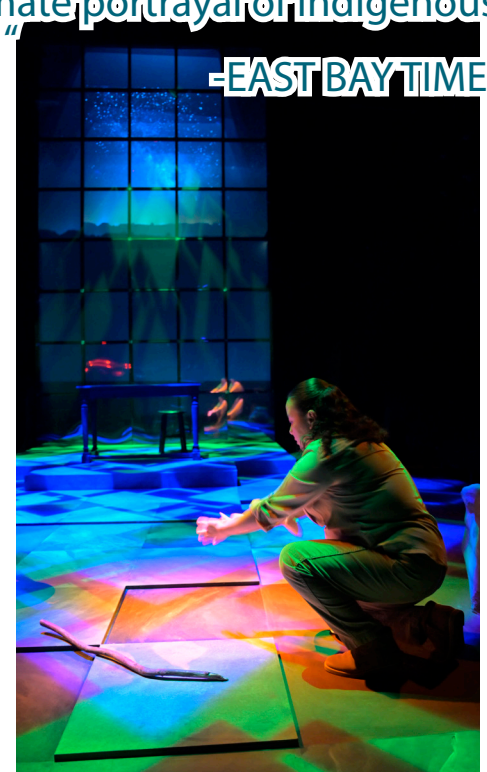
-THEATRIUS





"Manahatta is like a storm that washes away all pretense and excuses leaving only the truth... the result is at once mesmerizing and heart-breaking. Director Shannon R. Davis brings the story to life and blends the two narratives into a whole. The way that scenes bleed into each other creates a sense of foreboding and highlights the similarities of the stories. The pacing is brisk and the lack of intermission is a nonfactor as you do not want to move."

-BROADWAYWORLD



"An intimate portrayal of Indigenous families."

-EAST BAY TIMES

"...significant subject matter, some excellent performances and Shannon R. Davis's able direction."

-BERKELEYSIDE

"Director Shannon R. Davis pieces their stories seamlessly in a continuous flow between geographies and eras as a cast of seven themselves switch from the seventeenth to the twenty-first centuries and back again, seemingly without a breath in between."

-THEATRE EDDY'S

"Manahatta: brutal American origin story pulls no punches in Berkeley. The whole play serves as a land acknowledgement... The connection becomes more and more concrete as director Shannon R. Davis' gripping staging goes on..."

-THE MERCURY NEWS



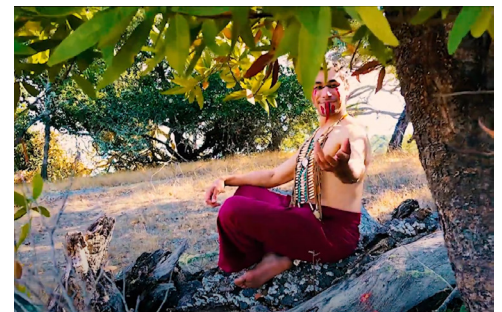
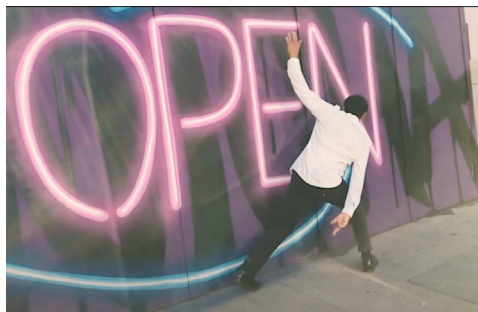
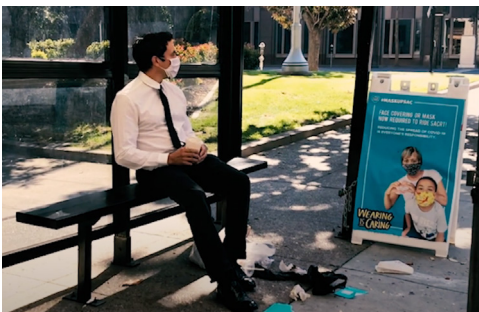
# INDIGENOUS EXCELLENCE

2021



[YouTube link](#)

A Music Video by Theatre Artists







2022

@Theatre of Yugen  
@TheatreWorks  
@Cal Shakes



An original Bay Area piece about Native and Japanese ancestors, common communal threads, and the ties that bind us all to this earth and beyond. This piece was put on pause by the pandemic, but we managed to have three amazing staged readings with a foley and beatboxing artist, and funding from:

NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT  
for the **ARTS**  
arts.gov

Kenneth  
Rainin  
FOUNDATION

[www.ShannonRDavis.com](http://www.ShannonRDavis.com)











# *Othello*

Phil Killian Directing Fellow & Associate Director to Bill Rauch's production at The Oregon Shakespeare Festival in 2018 and at Artist's Repertory Theatre in 2019.







"This production, with its cinematic use of projections, movement, set design, represented the regional theater machine operating at smoothest purr. Full of actors in full possession of their characters, reaching out to us in ways more deeply considered than we can imagine, and STILL, the indivisible core of *Othello* proved inescapable—its sheer ugliness, a description of humanity that should give us a fearful shudder every time we see it."

-Barry Johnson  
Oregon Artswatch



"Vibrancy and haunting relevance. It's a scene, made all the more chilling because the old words echo with such immediacy."

-Bill Choy  
The Siskiyou Daily News

# **Oregon Shakespeare Festival®**

"*Othello's* female leads are powerfully played as honest and true, giving weight to honor and loyalty as dominant themes in this production."

-Maureen Flanagan Battistella  
The Mail Tribune









# The Thanksgiving Play

2020

BY LARISSA FASTHORSE  
DIRECTED BY SHANNON R. DAVIS

SEP 25 – OCT 3, 2020  
THE GEARY

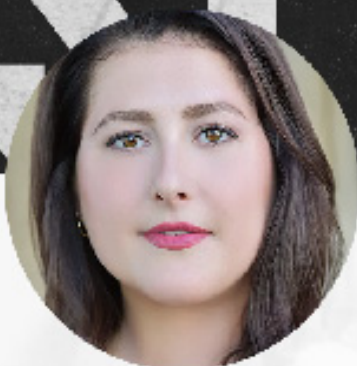
@ A.C.T.

& Broadway on Demand

# CAST



Allen Darby  
Caden



Mākena Miller  
Allie



Rachel Morrison  
Logan



Johnny Rice  
Jaxton



Four white actors devise a show about Thanksgiving



[www.ShannonRDavis.com](http://www.ShannonRDavis.com)



2022



Promo 1

Promo 2





# *Adulthood for Beginners*

A new, stylized musical comedy about two millennials with one big quarter-life crisis and zero instruction manuals.



"Shannon is a joy to work with. She is a great collaborator and is deeply creative. She runs an efficient rehearsal process, smoothing any wrinkles with ease."

-Jennifer Hinkel, Playwright & Composer



# *Am I Blue?*

2013

A Southern Gothic tale set in the turbulent summer of love, 1968. Two young adults search for identity and meaning. They find eccentricities. They find each other.





# Helen

2019

At Theatre of Yugen



"TOUCHING... HOPEFUL... DEEPLY FELT...  
CAREFULLY CALIBRATED DIRECTION."

-Jean Schiffman  
San Francisco Examiner



[www.ShannonRDavis.com](http://www.ShannonRDavis.com)



2018

# Manahatta

Phil Killian Directing Fellow (AD) to the World Premiere at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. A Native play by Mary Kathryn Nagle.



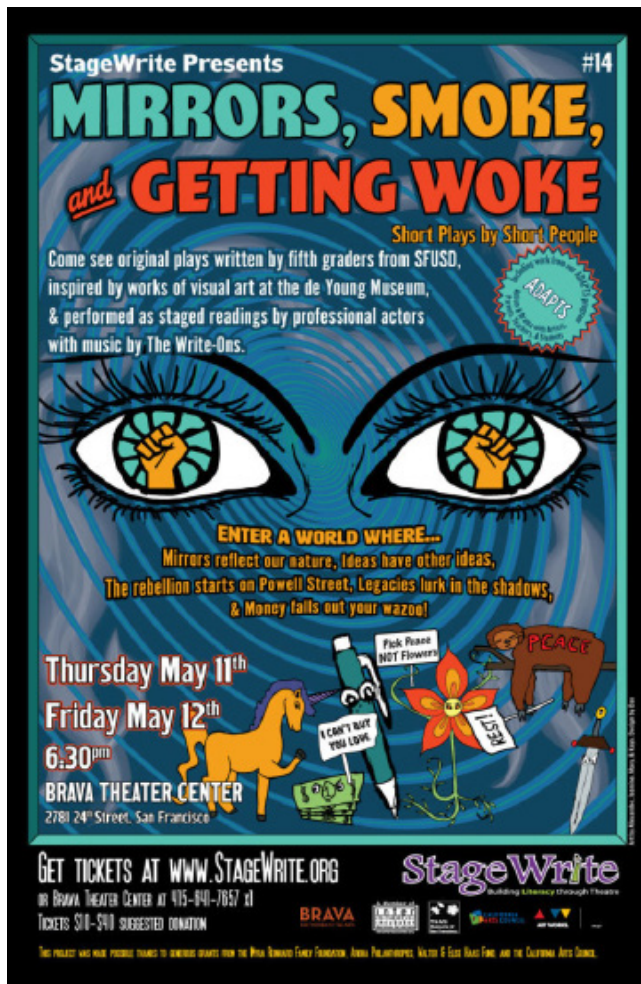
"This is not entertainment as usual. It is a bare-knuckled and bloody reckoning, a serious work of art"

-Jeffrey Gillespie  
Ashland Daily Tidings



# StageWrite

Plays written by San Francisco youth, performed by AEA actors, run by a professional production team, accompanied by a live band, and performed at the illustrious Brava Theater.



Mirrors, Smoke, & Getting Woke  
2016



Monsters, Schemes, & Wild Dreams  
2017

"She is equally adept at blocking, actor script work, choreographing dances, assigning harmonies, and developing looks and feelings with designers."

-Elana Lagerquist, Executive Director





"Shannon has directed our mainstage Brava Theater production in San Francisco for two years. This show features equity actors, professional designers, a live band, musical numbers, dance, and short plays written by San Francisco youth from our StageWrite playwriting program. Shannon lent her clear, concise vision and style to each piece, staying true to the playwright's intent. In production meetings, Shannon is organized, open to collaboration, and well-versed in all material pertaining to the show and program. In rehearsal, Shannon is a dynamic and collaborative leader, always asking actors and onlookers for their creative ideas. She makes everyone feel heard and a part of the process. Shannon is not afraid to lean into any conversation or awkward moment to explore and better the experience for audience and artist."

-Elana Lagerquist, Executive Director



# Puppets & Poe

2019

## DEVISED DEFIANCE!

This is what happens when  
six artists get together,  
read Poe, and the produc-  
ers never say no...

"Start with Edgar Allan Poe - the renowned master of poetry, short stories, and tales of mystery and the macabre. Dissect and remix. Mix with Theatre of Yugen's signature physicality, voices, words, ideas, bodies, a dash of Noh and Kyogen and PUPPETS. Stir in a splash of contemporary relevance, with good old-fashioned irreverence. Bake at a macabre 666 degree heat for an hour and a half. Devised Defiance is a dish best served cold."

-BroadwayWorld

At Theatre of Yugen



World Premiere!

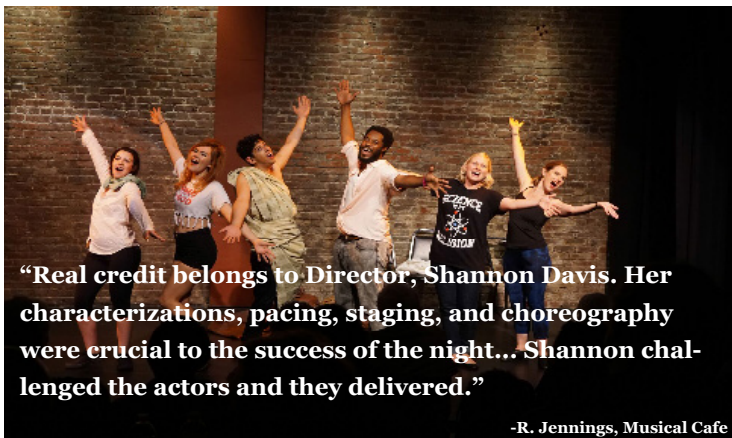


# Religomania

A musical comedy roasting religion and the dogma that divides us. Debuted at San Francisco Fringe Festival.



World Premiere!



"Real credit belongs to Director, Shannon Davis. Her characterizations, pacing, staging, and choreography were crucial to the success of the night... Shannon challenged the actors and they delivered."

-R. Jennings, Musical Cafe



2016

30

[www.ShannonRDavis.com](http://www.ShannonRDavis.com)

2012



## An Evening of Poe

A devised production based on the works of Edgar Allan Poe



"The production starts out on an exciting and inventive note: As the audience files into the theater, they are greeted by cast members wearing lab coats and given a mini-examination before taking their seats. This is an engaging way to introduce the first piece of the evening."

-G. Rice, Isthmus



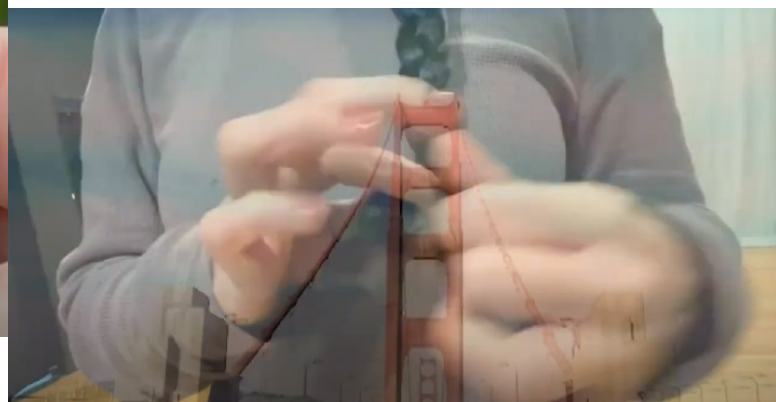


2023

# When We Connect

[YouTube link](#)

A collaborative meditation on ancestry, connecting to earth, body, and spirit. A micro-commission funded by American Conservatory Theater.







Theatre Program

# THE EXCAVATION OF MARY ANNING

LEFEVRE THEATRE  
NOV. 1-3 & 8-10

Saint Mary's College

2024





