

LISA DiFRANZA

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EDUCATION

Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, MA

M.A. in Arts and Theology, cum laude, focus on arts and community

Bates College, Lewiston, ME

B.A. in Theater, directing emphasis

Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Arts

TEACHING

Senior Lecturer, First Year Seminar, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL	2012 – 2015
Lecturer, First Year Seminar, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago, IL	2007 – 2012
Adjunct Instructor, Meadville Lombard Theological School, Chicago, IL	2014 – 2015
Teacher/ Summer Dance - Theater Projects, Portland, ME	2008 – 2015
Visiting Artist, International Writing Program, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA	2003 – 2009
Adjunct Instructor, Department of English, University of New England, Portland, ME	2004 – 2007
Adjunct Instructor, Bangor Theological Seminary, Portland, ME	2004 – 2005
Adjunct Instructor, Arts and Theology, Andover Newton Theological School, MA	2001 – 2005
Adjunct Instructor Andover Newton Theological School, MA	2002 – 2003

ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

Time Lapse: a daily painting project 365 days of Covid, Bradenton, FL	2020 – 2021
Founding Cultural Curator Art Ovation Hotel, Sarasota, FL	2017 – 2020
Director, The Living News Theater Project, Chicago, IL	2010 – 2017
Theater Director, Summer Dance-Theater Projects, Portland, ME	2008 – 2015
Guest Director, International Writing Program, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA	2002 – 2012
Guest Director, Portland Stage Company, Portland, ME	2002 – 2007
Artist-in-Residence, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, MA	2002 – 2003
Affiliate Artist, Portland Stage Company, Portland, ME	2002 – 2012
Producer and Director, new play festivals, Portland Stage Company, Portland, ME	1999 – 2002
Artistic and Executive Director, The Children's Theater of Maine, Portland, ME	1991 - 1998

ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Cultural Curator, Art Ovation Hotel, Sarasota, FL	2017 – 2020
Assistant Principal for Arts Education, Manatee School for Arts, Palmetto FL	2015 – 2017
Founder, The Living News Theater Project, Chicago, IL	2010 – 2017
Assistant Director, First Year Seminar, Columbia College Chicago, Chicago IL	2014 – 2015
Interim Director, The Children's Theater of Maine, Portland, ME	2007
Interim Director, The Center for Cultural Exchange, Portland, ME	2006
Consultant/Symposium Producer, Maine College of Art, Portland ME	2001 – 2002
Literary and Education Director, Portland Stage Company, Portland, ME	1999 – 2002
Artistic and Executive Director, The Children's Theater of Maine, Portland, ME	1991– 1998

WORK HISTORY

Art Ovation Hotel, Sarasota, FL (2017 – 2020)

Cultural Curator

Founding curator for innovative arts hotel. Curated exhibitions, guest artist program, and performing arts programming, established community partnerships, collaborated with local artists and galleries, Ringling College of Art + Design, and arts and cultural organizations; created and led educational programming, including tours, workshops and arts training.

Manatee School For the Arts, Palmetto, FL (2015 – 2017)

Assistant Principal for Arts Education

Managed arts curriculum; created interdisciplinary, integrated learning opportunities for middle and high school students; worked with colleges state-wide to bridge pathways for art students; collaborated with administration, faculty, students, parents and community members; created innovative professional development opportunities; curated arts festivals and town hall meetings.

Columbia College Chicago (2007 – 2017)

Lecturer /Senior Lecturer, First Year Seminar , New Millennium Studies

Developed and taught interdisciplinary humanities courses for visual and performing arts students; guest instructor in Theater Department; collaborated with campus galleries to integrate curriculum with exhibitions; curated student exhibitions. Leading member of Teaching Academy, a think tank for curriculum development and teaching strategies; created The Living News Project, a large-scale community collaboration; Faculty Senator, Academic Affairs; Task Force on Interdisciplinarity and Collaboration; Research Mentor; Emcee for first annual Faculty/Staff Convocation.

The Living News Project, Chicago, IL (2010 – 2017)

Founder and Director

Initiated and managed a multi-year collaboration between Columbia College Chicago students, artists, politicians, journalists, and staff and residents at a homeless shelter to create SHELTER CHICAGO, a theatrical living newspaper inspired by the Federal Theater Project of the 1930's. Produced this work at Cornerstone Shelter, Columbia College and Chicago Cultural Center through Illinois Humanities Council's Collaborative City initiative. Solicited support from Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, 3ARTS, Chicago Coalition for the Homeless, Cornerstone Community Outreach, Streetwise Magazine. Project aired on CAN-TV.

Chicago HOPES, Chicago Illinois (2010 – 2012)

Arts Collaborator

Tutored students at Cornerstone Community Outreach, a homeless shelter in Uptown, Chicago. Created and led arts enrichment activities for residents at the shelter.

The Children's Theater of Maine, Portland, ME (2007)

Interim Director (short term contract - hired for transition period)

Led the organization through an artistic/business merger, working closely with board of directors and community volunteers to reshape the institution and hire a fresh leadership team.

The Center for Cultural Exchange, Portland, ME (2006)

Interim Director (short term contract – hired for transition period)

Led the institution through a leadership transition, facilitated a restructuring of the organization which included the establishment of a foundation and the sale of a large property.

Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, MA

Artist in Residence

Developed and taught innovative arts courses, curated community art exhibitions, produced community coffee houses, mentored students.

Maine College of Art, Portland ME (2001-2002)

Consultant/Producer of "Artists Now," a national symposium

Coordinated/produced a national symposium about the artist's role in changing times.

Portland Stage Company, Portland, ME (1999 – 2002)

Literary and Education Director

Curated and directed annual festivals of new work. Supervised review of local and national play script submissions; mentored college interns; taught classes and workshops; led post-play discussions; edited "Little Festival of the Unexpected," book published by Stage and Screen, NY.

The Arts Academy at Portland Arts and Technology High School (1998 – 1999)

Portland Public Schools, Portland, ME / Maine Arts Commission

Founding Director (position funded by the Maine Arts Commission)

Designed and launched an innovative, high caliber public school arts program for high school students, created as a pilot program for the State of Maine. Worked with board of directors to establish the vision and mission; developed curriculum; hired artist faculty; promoted the program.

SELECTED AWARDS AND PRESENTATIONS

2021 HaLO Arts Project Fellowship Grant for "Time Lapse" painting project, 365 days of Covid

2019 Speaker, Art Ovation Hotel corporate team meeting, "Why Does Art Matter?"

2017 Imagining America National Conference, Presenter, "The Living News Project"

2017. Farm Theater, New York, Bullpen Session, Presenter, "The Living News Collaboration"

2015 Faculty Development Grant, Columbia College Chicago, Painting it Out, book project

2014 3ARTS grant award for community-based Living News Project, SHELTER/CHICAGO

2014 Illinois Humanities Council Collaborative City Award for SHELTER/CHICAGO

2014 The Columbia College Chicago Dean's Award for Outstanding Creative Work

2013 City of Chicago Grant from Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events

2012 Society for the Arts in Religious and Theological Studies, Luce Fellowship

2011 Faculty Development Grant, Columbia College, essay project

2010 Faculty Development Grant, Columbia College Chicago, theater collaboration grant

2010 Keynote Speaker, Columbia College Chicago, New Student Scholarship Gala

2010 Faculty Award, First Year Experience, Columbia College Chicago

2008 Faculty Development Grant, Columbia College Chicago, for "Home," a theater project