

VANESSA PORTEOUS

Theatre, opera, and film director, educator, arts leader,
writer/creator, dramaturg

Member of the Literary Managers and Dramaturgs of the Americas
Canadian Actors' Equity Association
Professional Association of Canadian Theatres (Individual member)
Canadian Guild of Directors and Choreographers
Theatre Alberta
Arts Consultants Canada

Arts educator

2018 – 2025 DRAM 413: Directing I University of Calgary

2024 DRAM 511/611: Advanced Directing/Special Problems in Directing I

2024 DRAM 613: Special Problems in Directing II, University of Calgary

2024 Creator and instructor, *Design and the director*, Theatre Alberta

2023 – 2024, Co-supervisor, Laurel Lepine, MFA in Directing, University of Calgary

2023 Creator and instructor, *The white spaces between the black marks: a directing workshop*
Theatre Alberta

2021 *You Are the Music While the Music Lasts: An Acting Intensive for Opera Singers*, Calgary Opera
Devised and delivered inaugural eight week acting intensive for Calgary Opera's McPhee Artists

2020 *You Gonna Do it Like That/You Want Me to Do What? The Director/Actor Relationship*, ghostlight.ca
Co-created and taught with Jordan Pettie

Online Intensive Seminar for professional actors & directors

2018 – 2022 DRAM 411: Introduction to Directing, Guest instructor DRAM 500, various University of Calgary

Selected other teaching and mentorship

Theatre Alberta; Playwrights Guild of Canada Mentor; Canadian Guild of Directors and Choreographers
Mentor; Ignite Festival Mentor; PlayWorks Ink, Heroines Project, Urban Curvz, Mentor, Ignite Festival, Sage
Theatre, SummerAct, Alberta Playwrights Network Dramaworks Calgary, Artstrek, The Banff Centre, Theatre
Arts; The Banff Centre, Opera; Interplay International Young Playwrights' Festival.

Ongoing teaching and workshops, in French and English, various subjects, many ages

Stage director, selected

2024 *The Book of Joan** by Grant Tilly, SCPA (public work in progress presentation)

2024 *Venus & Adonis... and the Rest of Us*, SCPA

2023 *The Replacement*, Senior Actors' Lab

2023 *Richard the Third*, Handsome Alice Theatre The Shakespeare Company

2020 *Between Us** by Meg Farhall & Michael Rolfe, Handsome Alice Theatre

2018, 2019

Amahl and the Night Visitors, Calgary Opera

* World premiere production. All Canadian authors listed.

2018 *Bronte: The World Without** by Jordi Mand, Stratford Festival
 2018 *The Humans*, Theatre Calgary
 Betty Mitchell Nomination for Outstanding Director
 2017 *To The Light** by Evelyn de la Chenlière, trans John Murrell, Alberta Theatre Projects
 2017 *Gracie** by Joan Macleod, ATP/Belfry Theatre
 2016 *Cockroach** by Jonathan Garfinkel, based on the novel by Rawi Hage*, ATP
 2014 *Charlotte's Web*, ATP
 2014 *Christina: The Girl King** by Michel Marc Bouchard, trans Linda Gaboriau, Stratford Festival
 2014 *The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)* by Mieko Ouchi, ATP
 2014 *You Will Remember Me** by François Archambault, translated by Bobby Theodore, ATP
 2013 *Red*, ATP
 Betty Mitchell Awards: Outstanding Direction, Outstanding Production
 2012 *When That I Was* (remount), The Shakespeare Company
 2011 *The Penelopiad*, Arts Club Theatre
 Nominated for Jessie Richardson Awards in every category for which it was eligible
 2011 *Heartbreaker** by Morwyn Brebner, ATP
 2010 *The Penelopiad* by Margaret Atwood, ATP
 Nominated for 9 Betty Mitchell Awards incl Outstanding Production of a Play
 2010 *Tyland** by Greg MacArthur, ATP
 2009 *Queen Lear** by Eugene Stickland, Urban Curvz Theatre
 2008 *The Enchanted Child*, Calgary Opera
 2008 *Suddenly Last Summer*, Mount Royal College
 2008 *When That I Was*, by John Mortimer & Edward Atienza The Shakespeare Company
 Betty Mitchell Award, Outstanding Direction
 2008 *Don Coyote** by Matt Masters, Sled Island Festival
 2008 *Helen's Necklace* by Carole Fréchette, trans John Murrell, Urban Curvz Theatre
 2008 *The Syringa Tree* (remount), ATP
 2008 *Snake In the Grass*, Vertigo Theatre
 2007 *La Divina & Le Portrait de Manon*, Calgary Opera
 2007 *Shake It Up** by Susanne Gillies-Smith, Mount Royal College
 2006 *Mad Boy Chronicle* by Michael O'Brien, University of Lethbridge
 2006 *The Syringa Tree*, Thousand Islands Playhouse
 2006 *Dig** by Glenda Stirling, Ghost River Theatre
 2005 *The Syringa Tree*, ATP
 3 Betty Mitchell Award nominations including Outstanding Production.
 Received the Fast Forward Reader's Choice Award for Outstanding Production
 2005 *Anomaly** by Neil Fleming, Lunchbox Theatre
 2003 *Plan B* by Michael Healey, ATP
 2003 *Love's Labour's Lost*, Shakespeare in the Park, Calgary
 2002 *Proof*, ATP
 3 Betty Mitchell Award nominations, including Outstanding Production
 2001 *The Hobbit* by Kim Selody, ATP
 2001 *Respectable** by Ron Chambers, ATP
 1999 *The Gifts of the Magi*, ATP
 1997 *WASP*, Victoria High School for the Arts
 1996 *Tenderfeet** by Trevor Schmidt, Unconscious Collective
 1995 *The Narrows** by Chauncey Featherstone Edmonton Fringe Festival

* World premiere production. All Canadian authors listed.

Writing

Current: Candidate, MFA, Creative Writing, UBC

2024 SSHRC Graduate Scholarship

2024 Canada Council research grant for a novel called *Hole in the Torso*

2024 Writer, director, producer *My Witch*

Independent film in development

Selected for public reading at The Cold Reading Series, Vancouver

2023 Translator *Because of the Sun* by Evelyne de la Chenelière, Banff Playwrights Lab

2023 Writer, director, producer *Things I Know to be True*

Independent short film, AFA and CADA grants

Based on texts by Michaela Jeffery, Caleigh Crow, and John Murrell

Shown at UBC Alumni Film Festival

2022 Writer, director, producer *Still Life*

Based on a poem by Allison Lynch Independent short film, CADA grant

<https://vimeo.com/648187656/2fa5424a00>

Shown by Handsome Alice Theatre

Shown at UBC Alumni Film Festival

2021 Translator, *September* by Evelyne de la Chenelière, Canadian Stage

2009 Co-creator, co-writer, director, dramaturg *The Erotic Anguish of Don Juan**

ATP/ Old Trout Puppet Workshop

A devised work of object theatre for adults Through-scored by composer George Fenwick

7 Betty Mitchell Award nominations

Festival TransAmeriques Off, BC tour, remount ATP in 2011

2007 Co-writer (libretto), director, dramaturg *Why Freud Fainted**

by David Rhymer with Vanessa Porteous, ATP

3 Betty Mitchell Award nominations including Outstanding Production of a Musical

2004 Co-creator, co-writer, director, dramaturg *Pinocchio** ATP/ Old Trout Puppet Workshop

A devised work of object theatre for families

Live through-score by David Rhymer and Jonathan Lewis

5 Betty Mitchell Award nominations, received 3, including Outstanding Production

Remount, Magnetic North Theatre Festival 2005

Dramaturg, world premiere productions, selected

Productions At Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP)

*Thinking of Yu** by Carole Fréchette, translated by John Murrell, *Playing With Fire: The Theo Fleury Story** by Kirstie McClellan Day, *Picking Up Chekhov** by Mansel Robinson, *The Blue Light** by Mieko Ouchi, *Mick Unplugged** by Greg Nelson, *Get Away** by Greg MacArthur, *The Leisure Society** by François Archambault translated by Bobby Theodore, *My One And Only** by Ken Cameron, *Down The Main Drag** by Steve Laplante translated by Crystal Beliveau, *The Red Priest (Eight Ways to Say Goodbye)** by Mieko Ouchi, *Mary's Wedding** by Stephen Massicotte, *Two Words for Snow** by Richard Sanger, *Weather** by Frank Moher.

Other productions, selected

Production Dramaturg, *The Wars**, new adaptation by Dennis Garnhum, 2007

* World premiere production. All Canadian authors listed.

Dramaturg, *Flop!** by Glenda Stirling, Quest Theatre 2007
Dramaturg, *The Longest One Night Stand in History**, Glenda Sterling, independent production 2002

Assistant directing, selected

2007 *Rigoletto*, Calgary Opera, director: Glynis Leyshon
2000 *Wit*, ATP, director: Bob White
1998 *Paris 1916: Erik Satie, The Velvet Gentleman** by Graham Cozzubo, Banff Centre, director: Graham Cozzubo
1998 *Spurt of Blood*, Banff Centre, director: Graham Cozzubo
1997 *House of Sacred Cows** by Padma Viswanathan, Northern Light Theatre, director: DD Kugler
1997 *The Saint Nicholas Hotel* by James Reaney, The Banff Centre, director: Keith Turnbull

Arts training and education, selected

Current: MFA candidate, Creative Writing, Distance Education, University of British Columbia

2023 Participant, Peer-to-peer Mentorship, ACCA
2021 No Love Lost: An Investigation into *Antony & Cleopatra*, Ghostlight.ca
2021 T.R.A.I.N. (Training Respectful, Adaptive, Inclusive, Networks in the Arts), Mass Culture
2020 Anti-racist Theatre, A Foundational Course, Nicole Brewer
2019 Devising Intensive, Ghost River Theatre
2009 Viewpoints & Suzuki Intensive, SIT Company Theatre

Various dates

Participant artist, Banff Centre for the Arts Opera Integration, Opera and Song Program, Theatre Progra

1996 Bachelor of Fine Arts in Acting, University of Alberta, with Distinction
1993 Bachelor of Arts in Drama, University of Toronto 93, with High Distinction

Arts awards, selected

Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding Direction, Red
Fast Forward Reader's Choice Award for Outstanding Production, 2005, The Syringa Tree
Betty Mitchell Award for Outstanding Direction, When That I Was
Nominated for Outstanding Direction 6 times
VP's productions nominated for Outstanding Production 6 times
Susan Agar Memorial Scholarship, Banff Centre 97
Nominee, IPL award for Emerging Artist 97 Universiade 83 Scholarship in 95 (University of Alberta)

Arts leadership, selected

2021 – 2022

Lead researcher, Siminovitch Foundation
Designed, led, and delivered a strategic research project into sector and organizational capacity for adding a Career prize to the Siminovitch Foundation portfolio, which administers the largest annually awarded arts prize in Canada.

* World premiere production. All Canadian authors listed.

2018 – 2021

Jury Chair, Siminovitch Prize for Excellence in Canadian Theatre

Assembled national jury of theatre practitioners; oversaw jury selection process; led access and inclusion strategy; consulted on strategic priorities, mission, vision, and values with Board and Executive Director.

2009 – 2017

Artistic Director, Co-CEO, Alberta Theatre Projects (ATP)

Charged with setting, articulating, and driving an ever-emergent artistic vision for the company that served ATP's mission, vision, and values. With Co-CEO Executive Director, shared accountability for organizational vision and strategy; led the staff; and reported to the Board of Directors. Annually programmed a season of between 6 and 10 contemporary plays with an emphasis on new Canadian work; selected the company of artists; benchmarked and oversaw artistic quality of finished products; and led the realization of these plays for an audience. Spokesperson and advocate for the company and the arts within Calgary, the province, and the country. Led strategy for new play development at the company. Contributed directly to the artistic voice of ATP by directing each season.

1998 – 2006

Artistic Associate, Dramaturg, Alberta Theatre Projects

Leadership Team position. Drove vision for new work at ATP. Reporting to Artistic Director, set strategy for Festival; fulfilled role as artistic liaison with staff and Board; oversaw all activities related to new play festival. Solicited, responded to, and shepherded new work for ATP. Supervised Associate Dramaturg. Drove the expansion of the Festival in 2006 into a second space to include more diverse work for ATP's audience. Oversaw the world premieres of 30+ new Canadian plays.

2004 – 2006

Coordinator, translation projects, Banff Playwrights' Lab (formerly Colony)

Selected, commissioned translations of, and dramaturged translations of plays from French Canada and France for this playwrights' retreat. Organized associated outreach activities and panels. Directed public reading component.

1999 – 2003 Faculty Dramaturg under various titles, Banff Playwrights' Lab (formerly Colony)

Leadership Team position. Contributed to vision, process design, and execution of this writer's retreat. Oversaw development of new work. Liaison between ATP and Colony.

Service to community, selected

2021 – current Member, Canadian Actors Equity Association; Directors, Fight Directors, Choreographers Committee

2023 Mentor, Playwrights Guild of Canada mentorship program

2022 -- 2023 Mentor, Canadian Directors and Choreographers Guild mentorship Program

Multiple years Mentor, Ignite Festival

Volunteer, Honens Piano Competition, University of Alberta Alumni Association, Ramsay School Council Executive, Wreck City, Creative Calgary, Betty Mitchell Awards, other

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Peer Juror, Canada Council, AFA, Calgary Arts Development, Siminovitch Prize, other

Related skills, selected

Bilingual: French and English, elementary Spanish, basic Italian

Reads music

D2L, Canvas, Slack, Basecamp, Word, Outlook 365, Excel, etc.

Dance: ballet, jazz, modern, African, contact improvisation, ballroom, choreography.