

## **Director. Producer. Creative Leader.**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Leah Raidt (she/they) is a queer Creative Leader whose work uplifts and advances queer, feminist artists and narratives. Their mission is to transform personal & collective challenges and traumas into opportunities that disrupt broken systems, build resilience, and expand our capacity for bravery & joy.

### **EDUCATION**

**The Theatre School at DePaul University, *B.F.A Acting, Manga Cum Laude*, 2011**

### **TEACHING & LEADERSHIP**

**DRAMA FACULTY CHAIR: The Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts, Summer 2022/2023/2024**

- Complete administration paperwork (hire & contract guests artists, planning, scheduling, budget)
- Serve as communication liaison between drama faculty and program administration.
- Teach acting to 33 high-school drama students at an immersive 3-week, gov't funded intensive arts camp
- Perform 20 minute all-school presentation intended to empower/embolden community of 300 teen artists
- Direct and produce final showcase performance

**GRANT PANELIST, Chicago Department Cultural Affairs & Special Events, Spring 2024**

- Review grant applications and collaborate with grant panel to make recommendations to DCASE staff

**IMPACT STRATEGIST / EVENT PLANNER, Full Spectrum Features Community Storytellers, 2024**

- Mentor storyteller on community event planning via visioning, goal setting, resource allocation, identifying partnerships, identifying permitting & insurance needs, creating tasks & timelines, and building a budget.

**VISITING FACULTY: Kentucky College of Art & Design, Fall 2023 & Summer 2024**

- Devise, plan & execute inaugural course: "The Warwick Artist Residency: Convivial Creation in Solitude"
- Co-facilitate "Approaching Creativity Through the Body" workshop with Juliet Barrett, Fall 2023

**Trauma-Informed Meditation Training & Facilitation, Independent small business, 2022-Present**

- Teach 4-5 day Vedic Meditation course to individuals or small groups through trauma-informed lens
- Facilitate weekly group meditation & Vedic knowledge talks in virtual, in-person & hybrid format

**ACTING TEACHER / PRIVATE COACH / ADMIN: The Green Room Studio Chicago, 2012-2024**

- Marketing & administration duties
- Support diversity of students toward career advancement, audition prep, acting technique, personal development via weekly on-camera acting classes and personalized 1:1 coaching.

**PROGRAM FOUNDER / INSTRUCTOR, ATC's College Audition Clinic, 2017-2024**

- Pitched, developed and launched holistic program (now in it's 5th year) aimed to mentor and prepare high-school seniors & their parents for the high-demand audition process for collegiate performing arts programs.

**STANDARDIZED PATIENT & SP TRAINER: UIC, Graham Clinical Performance Center, 2016-2022**

- Portray mock patient encounters. Evaluate students via checklist and written feedback.
- Lead training and preparation sessions for groups of standardized patients.
- Facilitate self-reflective verbal debriefing sessions with students on their communication, bedside manner.

**WEIGHT WATCHERS LEADER, Weight Watchers, November 2013-May 2017**

- Facilitate group discussion & 1:1 support around health/wellness, reflection, goal setting and strategies.
- Continued education/training in nutrition, positive psychology, and personal development tools

## FILM & PRODUCTION

### **DIRECTOR / LEAD PRODUCER / CO-CREATOR: *Lee Baby*, short-film, 2021-Present**

- Develop film fundraising/producing strategies & project budget creation/management
  - Fundraised \$24K: (\$13K- community crowdfunding initiatives, \$11.5K- grant funding)
  - Garnered \$64K+ in-kind donations
  - Pitched & secured community partnerships with Chicago Filmmakers fiscal sponsorship, DePaul University School of Cinematic Arts internship/mentorship, & Taus Jafar of kokohabibo records llc.
- Produced a 3 day film shoot (Oct 2022) on a trauma-informed set centering queer/trans leadership & team
  - Interview, hire, contract & on-board a 30 person production team
  - Pre-production: Secure necessary production insurance, permits, equipment & gear rental
- Demonstrates strong organizational and visioning skills, self-motivation

### **PRODUCER, CO-CREATOR, ACTOR: *Rough River Lake*, short-film, 2020-2021**

- Queer ensemble comedy about the complexity of building inclusive space in places steeped in dominant culture. The film shot on a queer-femme-led set at my grandmother's lake house in rural Kentucky.
- Fundraised \$30K through fiscal sponsorship with Full Spectrum Features
- Creative consultant in script development and executing director vision

### **PRODUCTION COORDINATOR: *Cap Gun Collective*, *Eat Sh\*t Good Concept Shoot*, Winter 2022**

- Mentor: Director/Producer PJ Fishwick
- Communication liaison & logistics coordinator for COVID safety, meals, craft services

### **PRODUCTION ASSISTANT: *Lord + Thomas FCB Chicago*, 3 day Commercial shoot, 2017**

- Manage craft services & meals for production

### **ACTOR** - Resume available upon request

- Over 10 years experienced as a booked actor for commercial, film & theatre
- Self-promotion marketing and archiving skills

## TRAINING

### **Chicago Director's Workshop, PROP Thtr, 2019-2020**

- Selected as 1 of 5 Chicago-based directors to develop and hone unique vision and voice
- Business, Branding, Marketing, and Mastering the Art of the Pitch with Tara Branham

### **Vedic Meditation Initiator Training Program with Mark Price of Alchemy Collective, 2020-2021**

- 600+ hours of advanced meditation practice, including a 2 week retreat and anti-racism work group
- Life coaching services with Kelsey Mathes of KAM Meditation

### **The Embody Lab, Integrative Somatic & Trauma Therapies Certificate Program, 2021-2022**

#### *\*Scholarship recipient\**

- Explore a unified somatic approach to trauma-informed care: including a deeper understanding of the body's relationship with social, environmental, developmental, relational, spiritual, and cultural wounding and healing. Faculty: Dr. Peter Levine, Staci Haines, Dr. Scott Lyons, Nkem Ndefo, Dr. Peter Porges, Dr. Arielle Schwartz, Dr. Sara King, Sherri Mitchell, Susan McConnell, Dr. Albert Wong, Deb Dana, Lisa Dion, Kekuni Minton, Fresh "Lev" White, Manuela Mischke-Reeds, Nikki Myers

### **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction, Patrick Mellen at The Actors Fund, Spring 2021**

- Completed traditional 8-week MBSR course & multiple all-day retreat(s) for on-going training

### **The School at Steppenwolf, 2014**

- Summer Intensive ensemble actor training with courses in Viewpoints, Feldenkrais, scene study

## GRANTS & AWARDS

- 2024 Hollywood New Director’s Festival, Award for *Lee Baby*, “Best LGBTQ+ Film”
- *Halyna Hutchins Producer Award*, 2022 Cinema Femme Short-Film Festival for “exemplary work at managing crew and creating a safe set” for the short-film *Rough River Lake*
- 2023 Chicago DCASE (Dept. Cultural Affairs & Special Events) IAP Grant: \$6,000 for *Lee Baby*
- 2024 *Lee Baby* receives Honorable Mention Filmmaker, Oxford Film Festival
- 2023 Puffin Foundation, \$1,500 grant funding for *Lee Baby* film
- 2023 IL Arts Council Agency, individual artist grant of \$4,000 for *Lee Baby* film
- 2022 Semi-finalist, Camera Ambassador Community Builders Grant, *Lee & Charlie*
- *Rough River Lake*: 2022 Best Short-Film & Audience Pick at the London International Film Festival
- 2022 KY Governor’s School for the Arts Toyota Alumni Fund Grant recipient: *Rough River Lake*
- 2019 KY Governor’s School for the Arts Toyota Alumni Fund Grant recipient for work to develop/produce/direct one person show *Reverse Missionary* alongside creative partner Juliet Barrett

## REFERENCES

Bill Caise, [wcaise@icloud.com](mailto:wcaise@icloud.com)

Assistant Director of Black Cultural Center and Professor at Purdue University.

Nathaniel Hendrickson (they/them), [NathanielHendrickson@gmail.com](mailto:NathanielHendrickson@gmail.com)

Visiting Professor at KY College of Art & Design

Chile, [chile@fullspectrumfeatures.com](mailto:chile@fullspectrumfeatures.com)

Senior Programs Manager at Full Spectrum Features, [chile@fullspectrumfeatures.com](mailto:chile@fullspectrumfeatures.com)

## STUDENT & CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

### **Meditation Students are saying...**

*"Leah is a super down to earth, trauma informed teacher and life-long learner. Leah's vigilance and awareness of the need for accountability in the lineage of Vedic meditation makes them a huge asset to the evolving ecosystems of dismantling patriarchy and affirming convivial and fraternal relationships. To have Leah as a teacher is to have them as a life-long friend."*

—Nathaniel Hendrickson, Artist & Professor

*"Leah builds truly intentional rooms and uses a wide variety of exercises. After our 4 day course, I feel confident and knowledgeable to begin my daily meditation practice. Leah also works with an eye towards how our individual practices can be in service of the collective. Absolutely study with them! "*

— Olivia Lilley, Producer, Screenwriter & Professor at DePaul University

### **High-school students at The Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts are saying...**

\*feedback generated via anonymous post-program survey sent by KY GSA administration.

- *"Leah helped me get out of my shell with some of the movement and voice things we did. I am now more willing to take up space and make bold decisions."*
- *"Put plainly, Leah is the first person who has let me feel. Let me move how my body needs to, make ridiculous sounds, and take time in order to release stress that's been holding me back in life. Following her classes I have found an ability to identify how I'm feeling and ask for help when I need it."*
- *"Leah- She brought a fun energy to every class. She taught us several breathing and voice techniques that I had never heard of before."*
- *"Leah was very kind and considerate of our needs."*
- *"always very enthusiastic and energetic about her work, Leah provided many good lessons about breath work and life as a whole"*

### **Actor coaching clients are saying...**

*"Leah was patient, creative, engaging and most importantly for a child - fun during the coaching process. We couldn't have been happier with the results and have recommended her to other parents." —Parent*

*"Leah's support and direction gave me a level of self awareness I didn't have before, as well as a feeling of empowerment." —Katherine Bourne Taylor, Actor & coaching client*

*"Leah and I worked together during a transitional moment in my career. She offered space for me to analyze my own needs and helped me navigate the next steps in my career. In the ever-changing landscape of this industry, Leah offered surprising, fresh advice and provided resources to support me every step of the way. Her insight and genuine, unbiased opinion have been absolutely invaluable to me and I would suggest anyone who is curious about career coaching to seek out Leah Raidt!" —Autumn Joy, Actor*