



Alumni Network: Melissa Hillman “90”



Area of focus.

Directing concentration.

Describe your career, especially what you are doing now.

Artistic Director of Impact Theatre in Berkeley, CA. Faculty member at the Berkeley Digital Film Institute, the Berkeley Rep School of Theatre, and CSU East Bay

How has your Cal State experience helped you career-wise?

What I learned from Edgardo de la Cruz about directing has been invaluable to me as a professional director. I use things that he taught me every day of my life. Rhoda Kaufman's lit and history classes prepared me very well for UC Berkeley's rigorous PhD program, and her teaching style had an enormous influence on mine. The years of direct, hands-on experience at CSUH gave me a head start in both the professional and academic worlds. Ed Wright, Doug Cattaneo, and Tom Hird all had an enormous influence on how I run my professional theatre company and how I interface with techs and designers. I think what stands out most in my mind is that Edgardo and Rhoda taught as a matter of course both mainstream approaches and avant garde approaches in text, history, and praxis. We were all graduating with a much wider breadth of knowledge than most theatre undergraduates, and that gave me an edge in both the academic and professional worlds.

If friends or family are important to your life's story, say so here.

I met my husband, Jon Nagel, in CSUH's Theatre Arts program. We dated as undergrads in 1987 and never completely lost touch. He worked in Cal's scene shop when I was in grad school there in the 90s! We were married in 2006.

Tell us your best advice for students.

Never shortchange yourself. Every dream, no matter how grand, is potentially realistic and achievable.

Melissa Hillman

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External links:

<http://impacttheatre.com>

<http://berkeleydigital.com>