

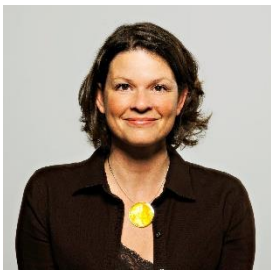
Quest Artists' Profiles

At Quest we know that theatre is not only fun, but also can bring an added range of extraordinary developmental benefits for young people. Each residency is built collaboratively between our multi-talented teams of artist/instructors and the students they work with in Alberta schools. Our expertise lies in facilitating young people's creative process, drawing out contributions from everyone, and working together to make something amazing.

All our instructors are professional or emerging artists* in the Alberta theatre scene who love to share their passion of theatre with young people. All our artist instructors have an up-to-date vulnerable sector check.

*Because of the pandemic we have lost many of our long-time theatre artists to other industries. This has been an opportunity to train and learn from emerging artists and build more racial diversity into our teams. All team members have a post secondary degree in drama or equivalent, have gone through a rigorous audition process, have received training from our long-term artists, and have shadowed and been mentored by our more mature artists in a school environment. Please keep in mind that some emerging artists have emerged during the pandemic which has led to limited opportunities for theatre work and artistic development.

Active Artist Instructor Profiles



Nikki Loach (She/Her) | Artistic Director, Artist Instructor, Leader, and Artists in Schools Program Overview

Nikki Loach is the Artistic Director of Quest Theatre, a professional director, actor, play creator and facilitator of stories driven by young people. She has been an artist/instructor for over 30 years, working primarily with Quest Theatre (the best!), but also with Trickster Theatre, Storybook Theatre, and even a few churches.

Nikki's play creation, directing and collaborative projects include, *Snow Angel*, *Flibbertigibbet's Story Exhibit*, *We Are All Treaty People*, and *Hello Friend*, for Quest Theatre. *Hay Fever*, *King Henry IV Part I*, *London Cuckolds*, *The Constant Wife*, and *The Edible Woman* at Theatre Junction, *Billy Bishop Goes to War* for Alberta Theatre Projects, and *Gaslight*, *A Christmas Carol* (01,02,03), *Crimes of the Heart* and *Miracle Worker* for Theatre Calgary.



Claire Bolton (She/Her) | Artist Instructor, Leader, and Artist in School Program Coordinator

A graduate of the University of Calgary's Drama department (BFA '09) with a minor in dance, Claire's love of teaching and spreading the joy of dance, opera, and theatre to young people started with Quest Theatre as their 2009 Quest Intern. Claire is also Co-Artistic Director of Full Circle Theatre, a teacher for Puddle of Mud Productions, a member of Calgary Opera's Let's Create an Opera Program and a professional Stage Manager in the Calgary Theatre Scene with recent engagements with Theatre Calgary, Vertigo Theatre and the Making Treaty 7 Cultural Society. Through her decade (plus)

long journey with Quest Theatre, she has had the opportunity to work in many different areas of the company including a residency team member, a residency leader, the Summer Camp Coordinator, and the Artists in School Program Coordinator.



Dani Driusso (She/Her) | Artist Instructor and Leader

Dani Driusso is an author, actor and artist who began her journey with Quest Theatre as the 2015 Quest intern. Her success with young people lies in her playful and positive approach in encouraging the creative process with young people. Dani loves to bring fun and immersive experiences to each classroom, which empowers students to utilize their voice and ideas. With years of experience being a team member both for Quest’s Artists in School and Summer Camp programs, Dani has become a mentor to our emerging artists.

In addition to a BFA in theatre from the University of Calgary, Dani also brings over 10 years of experience teaching Special fx makeup and working professionally with major makeup brands in Canada. Dani also utilizes her performance skills in motivational speaking engagements across Canada to support emerging leaders, highlighting topics of Identity, confidence, and the power of unleashing our voice.



Kathleen Ballangan (She/Her) | Artist Instructor

Kathleen Faith Ballangan is absolutely delighted to be joining the Quest Theatre team as their 2022-23 season intern! Kathleen is a newly emerging Filipino-Canadian actor and artist with a passion for drama and arts education. Born and raised in Mohkintsis, also known as Calgary, she graduated with a BFA in Drama from the University of Calgary in June of 2022. Kathleen performed in Theatre Calgary’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* for Theatre Calgary’s Shakespeare on the Go. She hopes that her work,

both as an actor on stage and as an artist in schools, will ignite the flame for young people (especially young people of colour) to take an interest in theatre and the arts. If not an actor, Kathleen would be a teacher! She loves being able to play in the intersection of these two worlds.



Keshia Cheesman (She/Her) | Artist Instructor

Keshia Cheesman is a Caribbean-Canadian theatre artist based in Mohkintsis (Calgary, AB). She has worked as an actor, playwright, and deviser with Calgary theatre companies such as The Shakespeare Company, Swallow-a-Bicycle, One Yellow Rabbit, Handsome Alice Theatre, Downstage, Alberta Theatre Projects, and Theatre Calgary. Keshia is passionate about creating art rooted in the truth of humanity and told by diverse and marginalized communities, as well as uplifting children and youth through the power of theatre. Keshia

performed with her co-writer Bianca Miranda, *The F Word*, a Co-production between Lunchbox Theatre and Alberta Theatre Projects.



Christian Daly (He/Him) | Artist Instructor

Christian is an improviser, actor, writer, and musician who graduated from the University of Calgary with a BFA in Drama in 2022. Having been an assistant for Quest Summer Camps in 2021, Christian has now moved into working in the Artists in Schools program. His acting credits include performing in the *Merry Wives of Winsor* for Theatre Calgary's Shakespeare on the Go, and *The Tao of the World* and *The Bus Stop* for the University of Calgary's main stage productions. He also went through the Kinkonauts' conservatory improv training, and can be regularly seen improvising or doing tech with the company. To hopefully keep the spirit of improv alive and well, Christian can also be found occasionally teaching improv workshops at the University of Calgary and Bishop Carroll High School. Outside of the theatre, Christian enjoys being creative in other ways by playing Euphonium in the University of Calgary's Symphonic Band."



Amelia Daniels (She/Her) | Artist Instructor

Amelia is a multidisciplinary artist residing in Calgary. A graduate of Rosebud School of the Arts Amelia also holds a BSc in Kinesiology with a minor in Linguistics from the University of Lethbridge. Earning her jack-of-all-trades label, Amelia is a team member of Quest's Artist in School program, is a practicing lifeguard, active in the girl guide movement, and is no stranger to stage management, marketing and performing for theatre and film. Amelia's various theatre credits include performing or stage managing for Rosebud Theatre, Fire Exit Theatre, Medicine Hat Musical Theatre, Opia Theatre Productions, Viral Ventures, Creating Genesis and H2/4H Productions.



Chris Duthie (He/Him) | Artist Instructor

Christopher Duthie is an actor, playwright, musician, and indie theatre producer. He has been acting professionally for more than a decade in productions with Theatre Calgary, Vertigo Theatre, One Yellow Rabbit, Ghost River Theatre, Lunchbox Theatre, Quest Theatre, Alberta Theatre Projects and others. He is represented by Details Talent for voice over and film/tv, recently appearing in *Under the Banner of Heaven*, *Ties That Bind* and *The Children of Ar*.

His plays and creations include: *A Dinner Party* (Bad Knaps Theatre Collective, The Guild Hall Theatre - Gwen Pharis Ringwood Award for Drama - Shortlist 2020, Calgary Theatre Critic's Choice Award - Best Original Play 2020); *n00b* (Vertigo Theatre Y-Stage Series. Tour: Young People's Theatre/Persephone Theatre); *SensoryBox* (Ghost River Theatre) *SensoryBox TYA* (Young People's Theatre) and *La Boîte Sensorielle* (L'UniThéâtre) co-created with Eric Rose; *Of Fighting Age* co-created with Col Cseke and David van Belle (Verb Theatre/Glenbow Museum/High Performance Rodeo). He is a co-founder of Bad Knaps Theatre Collective who are currently developing Christopher's first rock opera *Identikit*. He holds an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph and a BFA in Drama from the University of Calgary.



Ali Grams (She/Her) | Artist Instructor

Ali Grams is a professional theatre artist born and raised in Calgary, Alberta. Ali is an avid actor, singer, and dancer and is thrilled to be joining Quest Theatre as an instructor. Her performing credits include *Little Red Riding Hood* with Green Fools, *Cinderella* with Untold Stories, and *Where Words Once Were* with Storybook Theatre. She has studied at the Canadian College of Performing Arts, Capilano University, and Bow Valley College. Ali also regularly works with YYC Princess, is a lover of Shakespeare, and has a keen interest in the areas of directing and theatre administration.



Aurora Huszti (She/Her) | Artist Instructor

Aurora is a performer, writer and musician with expertise in interpretive theatre through her work with Alberta Parks. She received her BFA in Drama from the University of Calgary, then spent four years working and living in Kananaskis Country where Aurora delighted families and campers by performing nightly interpretive theatre shows. Aurora has been improvising in the Calgary scene for a decade, and is proud to call The Kinkoanuts her improv home. Aurora's focus on improv has taught her the value of failing with joy and following her fears. Aurora is interested in the collective creation process, with an emphasis on improv driven creation practices.



Judith Mendelsohn (She/Her) | Artist Instructor

Judith Mendelsohn is a physical theatre performer based in Calgary who writes and creates clown performances primarily for children. Her primary focus is in Drama Education and loves unleashing children's natural sense of play to create performances that children are passionate and proud to perform. She has a diploma in acting from Mount Royal, an MFA in theatre from the University of Calgary and has a diploma in acting from Ecole Philippe Gaulier in Paris. You will often see Judith walking tall on her stilts at festivals and events across Canada. Judith recently independently produced and performs in an immersive theatre experience for kids called Imagine Action. Judith is proud to have been a member of the Quest Residency team since 2011.



Ana Mulino (She/Her) | Artist Instructor

Ana Mulino is a Venezuelan-Canadian theatre artist based in Calgary, Alberta. After having graduated from the University of Alberta in 2021 with a BA in both Drama and East Asian Studies, she has enjoyed creating theatre with young people at Trickster Theatre, Quest Theatre, and Morpheus Theatre. She has recently performed in Morpheus Theatre's *Goodnight Desdemona (Good Morning Juliet)* Ana's artistic ventures include acting, improvisation, dramaturgy and directing. Ana is passionate about discovery and working with grandiose ideas to make theatre fun and exciting for everyone involved!



Joel Shaefer (He/Him) | Artist Instructor

Joel is an actor, singer, dancer, instrumentalist, and music director. He holds a Master of Arts in Musical Theatre from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and is a graduate of Randolph College for the Performing arts. Select credits include: *Tick, Tick... Boom!*, *Naughty... But Nice: Vaccin8!* (Forte), *The Louder We Get*, *Ragtime*, *Billy Elliot*, *TC Sings for Pride* (Theatre Calgary), *Beauty and the Beast* (YPT), *Slipper* (ATP). Joel also runs a private studio where he teaches voice, and is the Associate Artistic Director for Innovative Arts, Inc. Select

Music Direction credits include: *TC Sings For Pride* (Theatre Calgary), *Legally Blonde* [Music Director and Co-Director], *Elf*, *The Sound of Music*, *Annie* (SBT).



Andy Weir (He/Him) | Artist Instructor

Andy Weir is a Calgary based actor, juggler, writer, and educator. After completing his BFA at the University of Calgary, Andy joined Quest family of artists as their lovable intern for the 2016-17 season. Andy has performed in Quest’s school touring shows, *Shoes of Sand* and *Hello Friend*. In the summer he chases the sun out to the mountains where he lives and works with Alberta Parks doing educational shows in the campgrounds - and after 16 different shows over 8 years he’s played countless plants and animals, and even the

occasional force of nature. Needless to say, Andy greatly enjoys turning ordinary things into wacky characters, and is thrilled by the opportunity to help kids do the same with Quest! Andy will be performing in Kunji Ikeda’s *Roll for Initiative* for Cloudsway Theatre in April of 2023.

Artists with Less Availability this Season

Delia Barnett	Isabella Inez	Mario Lemvar	Maya Simon
Griffin Cork	Hayley Klepper	Caitlyn Milot	Truus Verkley
Iván Gómez	Alyssa Latimer	Lizzie Rajchel	

Quest Theatre Alumni Artists who have built and evolved our AIS program

Aaron Coates	Braden Griffiths	Scott Roberts
Ainsley Daumler	Kendra Hutchinson	Lara Schmitz
Karen Johnson Diamond	Cheryl Hutton	Nova Lea Thorne
Devon Dubnyk	Kunji Ikeda	Marshall Vielle
Elizabeth Breaker Ferguson	Duval Lang	
Vincent Forcier	Geneviève Paré	