



The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre

Katie Mitchell

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The Director's Craft is a unique and completely indispensable step-by-step guide to directing for the stage.

Written by one of the most adventurous and respected directors working today, this book will be an essential item in every student and practitioner's kitbag. It provides detailed assistance with each aspect of the varied challenges facing all theatre directors, and does so with startling clarity. It will inspire everyone, from the beginner just starting out to the experienced practitioner looking to reinvigorate their practice.

Katie Mitchell shares and explains the key practical tools she uses to approach her work with both actors, production teams, and the text itself. She addresses topics such as:

the ideas that underpin a play's text
preparing improvisations
Twelve Golden Rules for working with actors
managing the transition from rehearsal room to theatre
analyzing your work after a run has ended.

Each chapter concludes with a summary of its critical points, making this an ideal reference work for both

directors and actors at any stage of their development.

The Director's Craft: A Handbook for the Theatre Details

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Nikki says

Clear and linear description of the process the author uses and ways in which it can be applied to different situations. I will definitely be using it as a touchstone for future projects, not least because after each section within each chapter, there is a summary of the key points; having read it once, the key points are easily located and present reminders of the finer points of the process.

Maria Shury-Smith says

A thoroughly useful and comprehensive guide to directing. It is Katie Mitchell's honesty about work she has directed of lesser success that is particularly refreshing as the reader is encouraged to reclaim their own mistakes in the same way the author has done and put the experience to good use on the next job. Necessary reading for all would-be directors!

Daniel says

Prudent, practical, clearly written and inspiring. It's an exacting standard of preparation for directing, and could perhaps be a bit more specific of how to analyze/read work that actors do (leaving that mostly up to directors' own tastes) but as a groundwork for a craft, it is eye opening.

Tomas Howells says

KATIE FUCKING MITCHELL!!!! need i say more...

Büke Erkoç says

Wow! Katie Mitchell explains everything from the casting process until the opening night press talk ?♥?

Justen Bennett says

This is a book I wish I'd read earlier in my directing career. Mitchell lays out a clear, relatable process that addresses directing today. Taking care to acknowledge that not every production has the resources of the National Theatre at its disposal, she refers to ways to cut back on the process and other adaptations to address a wider spectrum of budget and time. Some fantastic exercises you can pull out or a full process you can follow, I found her methods complementary to my own. I look forward to experimenting with adding

some of her techniques, especially in the pre-production period, to my own work.

Kate says

Katie Mitchell is a director with a deservedly big reputation for excellent work. This handbook is a well-crafted look at the craft of making theatre from the viewpoint of the director. It is practical and shows a clear eye for what is and what is not important in the process. It's an excellent book for students and all practitioners of making theatre.

Nathan Sims says

A very thorough and precise explanation of the director's process. Great information on script analysis and some interesting ideas and suggestions on approaching rehearsals with actors. Some things I definitely want to explore the next time I direct a show. Well worth reading.

Ana says

During my MA I took a directing module and noticed I didn't actually know a lot of theory about it. My classmates and teachers spoke a lot about this Katie Mitchell book, since she is one of the most important contemporary British directors. She studied the same MA I was studying so I thought it might be a good place to start having more directing theory as I thought we might have some common ground due to our studies.

What a mistake.

Well, don't take me wrong. I am going to write something that might make you hate me if you do theatre, but such is life. I don't like Stanislavsky. Well, I do like him, but I like the late Stanislavsky; the one who realized he had made a mistake with his first method, revised it and started proposing exercises based on actions, knowing he had a lot left to explore and discover. Then, what particularly bothers me, is not Stanislavsky per se, but the people who learnt his teachings without acquiring his need to continue exploring and experimenting with acting, and so they went and established a school where, according to them, they teach a "method". You know, cause there is a universal formula for acting that is valid and useful in absolutely every situation.

"Ok... but what has this got to do?" you may ask. Well, Katie Mitchell's book is like the people who did "The Method" based on Stanislavsky's teachings. The Director's Craft is a director's manual, giving you a series of steps and assuming these steps are useful in absolutely every situation. It explains how you should analyze the text before starting rehearsals, how to stage the text, how you should treat the actors and the creatives... I do not believe in methods nor in universal truths, even less so for something as changing and human as theatre, but I respect people can think whatever they want; so Katie Mitchell's attempt to create a method would maybe not bother me so much, except for the fact that so many times when she is giving "advice" she does it with this condescending and pretentious tone that... well...

I was told that she wrote this book early on in her career, when she thought (like young Stanislavsky did) that

there could be a universal formula for directing; that later she realized her mistake and began making more explorations and changing her way of working. I think this is very good, but where is the revision of the book that says that? I think it is worrying that in a way it is written for students - for people who maybe are already theatre professionals but are just starting and could use the wise advice of someone more experienced - but if you speak to them so condescendingly, I wonder if those who consider this book a sort of bible notice that there is so much more. And well, I know from experience that many directors nowadays do follow the directing practices mentioned in this book, and that they work. But just because something works does it mean there is nothing more? Bah. As you can tell, I didn't like it. I think having this sort of attitude towards things ("this is the way it must be done") is what limits their development. But I mean, if you want to know about how the majority of directors do things, you should read it. Me, I'll be looking for alternative ways of directing, and alternative books on directing.

Amaranthos says

Es el mejor libro de dirección de teatro de la vida.
MI BIBLIA.

Eliot Fiend says

very detailed, methodical approach to play analysis and directing. useful 'handbook' style for new directors.

Mo says

best book on directing ever
