VALERIE ST. PIERRE SMITH

ART| DESIGN | EDUCATION | SCHOLARSHIP
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EDUCATION

- MFA San Diego State University, Theatre: Costume Design
- BFA Stephens College, Theatre

PROFESSIONAL ARTS EXPERIENCE

- 2019 – present VSmith Healing Art + Design, LLC (dba Beauty is Medicine), Solopreneur: Artisan | Designer | Educator | Scholar
- 1998 – 2019 Interdisciplinary Artisan | Designer - freelance
- 2012 – 2015 Program Director, Crooked Tree Arts Center, Petoskey, MI

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

- 2015 – 2020 Associate Professor of Theatre, Head of Costume Design. University of Nebraska at Omaha
- 2006 – 2011 Assistant Professor of Theatre, Costume Designer & Costume Shop Director. The George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

CREATIVE ACTIVITY

Performances *(selected)*

- *Camino,* multi-media presentation; Creative Mornings, Omaha, NE
- *Gather in Beauty: Starting in a Good Way,* multi-media spoken word performance; Costume Society of America Midwest Symposium, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- *Tales from the Underworld*, costume designer, collaborator; Pilobolus Dance Theatre world premiere American Dance Festival, Raleigh-Durham, NC
- *Bulrusher*, costume designer; McCarter Theatre + Berkeley Repertory Theatre co-production, Princeton, NJ, Berkeley, CA (Director: Nicole A. Watson)
- *Noctuary*, costume designer, collaborator; Pilobolus Dance Theatre, world premiere, American Dance Festival, Raleigh-Durham, NC
- *Awaken Heart*, costume designer, collaborator; Pilobolus Dance Theatre, world premiere, American Dance Festival, Raleigh-Durham, NC
- *The Ballad*, costume designer, collaborator; Pilobolus Dance Theatre, world premiere, American Dance Festival, Raleigh-Durham, NC
- *Orlando*, scenic + costume designer; University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE
- *Epic,* costume designer; Great Plains Theatre Conference. (Director: Michael John Garces)
- *Hooded: or Being Black for Dummes*, costume designer; Mixed Blood Theatre, Minneapolis, MN (Director: Tom Jones)
- *The Bishop* (film), wardrobe | makeup | hair; Diperna & Associates, New York City, NY (Director: Kip Fagan)
- *Mermaid Hour: Remixed*, costume designer; world premiere, Mixed Blood Theatre, Minneapolis, MN (Director: Leah Anderson)
- *Stranger from Paradise*, costume designer; world premiere, Opera Omaha, Omaha, NE (Director: Kevin Lawler, Maestro: Hal France)

- *Grandchildren of the Buffalo Soldiers*, costume designer; National Museum of the American Indian, Washington, D.C (Director: Vincent P. Scott)

Exhibitions *(selected)*

- 2026 *Mountain Plains Contemporary Art Biennial,* "*Dazhewaagani,*" hand drawn digital laser engraving on upcycled velveteen and denim jacket, ribbon and cotton neckerchief; exhibiting artist, Salina Arts Center, Salina, KS (Juror: Hesse McGraw, Founder and Artistic Director of Artist Venture Fund and former Executive Director of Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.)
- *Beyond the Bins*, exhibiting artist, Creative Reuse Omaha, Omaha, NE (Juror: Anonymous)
    - *"Jingle,"* hand drawn digital laser engraving on upcycled velveteen and leather, hand dyed linen recycled dress
    - *"Ancestors,"* mixed media, wool and silk with hand drawn digital embroidery
    - *"Relic of a Colonized Mind,"* mixed media on upcycled metal
- *Home, Community and Sense of Place*, exhibiting artist, Opera Omaha with Joslyn Castle and the Orpheum Theatre, Omaha, NE (Juror: Anonymous)
    - *"Ancestors Dance: Waawaate,"* hand drawn digital painting on transparency
    - *"Way Finding: Calling Our Spirits Home,"* found branch, paint, ribbon
    - *"Sisters,"* hand drawn acrylic screen print on vellum
- *Omaha Fashion Week, "Cycles,"* wearable art and fashion collection*;* featured designer, Beauty is Medicine; Omaha Design Center, Omaha, NE (Jurors: Anonymous, professional panel, nationally recognized)
- *Echoes of Tradition: A Contemporary Showcase*, organizer, exhibiting artist; in conjunction with the Indigenous Haute Couture Residency; Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, Alberta, Canada
- *The Pleasure of Small Art*, "*Lilith*," hand drawn digital print on cotton sateen; exhibiting artist, MVA (Modern Visual Art) Gallery, Bethlehem, PA (Juror: Anonymous)
- *Calgary Fashion Week,* wearable art and fashion*;* as part of the Indigenous Couture Collective; Calgary, Alberta, Canada
- *Gathering*, multi- media, site- specific installation and community engagement programming; creator, organizer, collaborator, exhibiting artist; Amplify Arts at Generator Space, Omaha, NE
- *"Take What You Need,"* creator, interactive community art installation; Hot Shops Arts Center, Omaha, NE
- *10x10x10xTieton*, exhibiting artist, Tieton Arts + Humanities, Tieton, WA (Juror: Angelina Villalobos, Artist, Activities, Muralist, Seattle, WA)
    - "*Nisowaabigwan* (Third Flower)," hand drawn digital print on cotton sateen
    - "*Lilith*," hand drawn digital print on cotton sateen
- 2024 *Mountain Plains Contemporary Art Biennial,* "*Indigenous Mermaid,*" hand drawn digital print on silk twill; exhibiting artist, Salina Arts Center, Salina, KS (Juror: Jane Burke, Curator, Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, CO)
- *Native Stories of Perseverance in Art + Cancer*, "*Mashkiki-wii,*" mixed media installation; exhibiting artist, The Union for Contemporary Art in partnership with University of Nebraska Medical Center, Omaha, NE

- *Great Plains Theatre Commons Design Wing Response,* "*On Whom We Stand,"* mixed media installation; exhibiting artist, Great Plains Theatre Commons national convening, Omaha, NE
- *"Our Town/Our UNO"* mixed media exhibit; co-creator/curator; University of Nebraska at Omaha's Criss Library, in collaboration with UNO Archives

CREATIVE RESEARCH Residencies, Conference Proceedings, and Presentations (*selected*)

- "Animating Language, Animating Dress: Reworking English Language Influences on Our Understanding of Dress," Costume Society of America Midwest Symposium, Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- "Decolonizing the Narrative Series: Valerie St. Pierre Smith," Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, Alberta, Canada.
- Indigenous Haute Couture- Digital Embellishment Artist Residency, selected designer; Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, Alberta, Canada (Jurors: Anonymous, international professional panel)
- Amplify Arts Alternate Currents Working Group, cohort member
- "Pocket Guide to Cultural Appropriation in Design." Invited Presenter: United States Institute of Theatre Technology National Conference (virtual)
- "Appropriation and Representation in Design," Inaugural speaker for *The Salon* speaker series. Selected by, and presented to (virtual), graduate students, Center for Pedagogy in Arts and Design at The Pennsylvania State University
- "Finding Authentic Voices: Representing Cultures Other Than Our Own." Presenter, United States Institute for Theatre Technology national conference, Louisville, KY
- "Connective Threads: Inspiration, Appropriation and Artistic License." Presenter, *Fashion, Race and Cultural Appropriation in Fashion* symposium, Central Saint Martins, University of Arts- London, London, England
- "Feathers and Fringe: Commodity, Spectacle and What It Looks Like to Be 'Indian'." Panelist, oral paper presentation. Association of Theatre in Higher Education national conference, Las Vegas, NV
- "Coyote and Raven: Spectacle, Performance and Indigenous Identity." Panel Chair/coordinator, oral paper presentation. Association of Theatre in Higher Education national conference, Las Vegas, NV

INVITED PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES (*selected*)

- "Rendering Sound," collaborative teaching exercise with flutist Nina Assimakopoulos, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Interlochen, MI
- "Decolonizing the Narrative Series: Valerie St. Pierre Smith: Beauty is Medicine." Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, Alberta, Canada
- Speaker, Aim for the Stars: Science and Art, University of Nebraska at Omaha Summer Camp, Omaha, NE
- "Appropriation and Representation in Design." *The Salon*, Center for Pedagogy in Arts and Design at The Pennsylvania State University

- "Pocket Guide to Cultural Appropriation in Design." Invited speaker, United States Institute of Theatre Technology National Conference
- "Directing Native Plays." Invited panelist, Association of Theatre in Higher Education national conference, Boston, MA
- "What Native Looks Like." Offutt Air Force Base Diversity and Inclusion Committee panel, Native American Heritage month luncheon presentation
- "Cultural Appropriation and Pop Culture." University of California-Stanislau, Prof. Stefani Overman-Tesi
- "Inspiration, Appropriation, and Design in Production." Invited speaker, presented (virtual) to faculty and students, Department of Theatre, Shenandoah University. Shenandoah, VA.
- St. Pierre Smith, V., et. al. "Experiences of Women of Color in Theatre." Invited Panelist, People of Color Network, United States Institute for Theatre Technology national conference, Louisville, KY

PUBLICATIONS AND POSTERS (*selected*)

- *Weaving the Strands: Reframing Inspiration, Appropriation, and Representation in Art + Design* (working title), author, Routledge Press, anticipated date 2026, New York
- "Who R You: The Economics of Identity – or – What Does It Cost to Be Me?" *We Free Us*, Amplify Arts Alternate Currents Reader, 2024, Omaha, NE
- "Pocket Guide to Cultural Appropriation in Design." *United States Institute for Theatre Technology Costume Commission Digital Archives,* 2020, USITT digital archives
- Darby, J., Elkin-Mohler, C. and Stanlake, C. *Critical Companion to Native American and First Nations Theatre and Performance: Indigenous,* contributor, Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, 2020, New York
- "Finding Authentic Voices: Representing Cultures Other Than Our Own." *United States Institute for Theatre Technology Costume Commission Digital Archives* United States Institute for Theatre Technology Costume Commission, 2019,
- "An Interview with Valerie St. Pierre Smith." Words by Wright, J. In *Ethics, Hierarchy, and Imperialism: Preserving Voices Vulnerable to Erasure.* Shades of Noir / University of the Arts, 2018, London
- "The Three Sisters: Lessons on Inspiration, Appropriation, and Design." *HowlRound Theatre Commons*, November 1, 2018. https://howlround.com/three-sisters
- "Connective Threads: Inspiration, Appropriation and Artistic License," author/presenter, United
  States Institute for Theatre Technology digital archives
- "Character Storyboards," innovative teaching project essay, *Projects for Teaching Costume Design & Technology vol. 2*, published by USITT
- "The State of Design: Designing for the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian" poster presentation USITT national conference, Charlotte, N.C.
- "Fearless Footwear: Demystifying Shoe Modification," presented with Teri Tavares, session presentation USITT national conference, Houston, Texas

- "E-Style; Teaching Costume History and Design within an Online Learning Environment," poster presentation USITT national conference, Houston, Texas
- *The Development of an Aesthetic: Costume Design Concept and Approach to William Shakespeare's The Tempest*, San Diego State University
- "Creature Feature," author, TD&T magazine vol. 37 no. 3, summer 2001; United States Institute for Theatre Technology Tech Expo catalog
- "The Mask of Quick Change," author, United States Institute for Theatre Technology Tech Expo catalog

TEACHING ACTIVITY

Guest Teaching Activity

- Guest faculty, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Indigenous Haute Couture- Digital Embellishment Artist Residency, Banff, Alberta, Canada
- Faculty, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Interlochen, MI, Summer Intensives
- "Rendering Sound," collaborative teaching exercise with flutist Nina Assimakopoulos, Interlochen Center for the Arts, Interlochen, MI
- Independent community sewing, patterning, and garment construction classes
- Workshop presenter, Healing Ribbons, inter-tribal indigenous women's healing group

Academic Courses Delivered

- **Undergraduate *(selected)***
  - Special Topics: Form and Figure
  - Special Topics in the Arts: Riots and Revolutions
  - Foundations of Production Design
  - Period Styles in Dress and Decor
  - Patterning and Draping
  - History of Costume
  - Introduction to Theatre
  - 3D Techniques of Costume Crafts (service-learning course)
  - Theatre Production Lab
  - Understanding the Theatre
  - Introduction to Costume Design (New York Times newspapers in curriculum course)
  - Theatrical Makeup Design
  - Summer Internship
  - London Theatre Seminar: 2-week, 3 credit, study abroad course

- **Graduate (*selected*)**
  - Costume Design
  - History of Costume
  - Period Styles in Dress and Decor
  - Patterning and Draping – Special Topics
  - 3D Techniques of Costume Crafts (service-learning course)
  - Collaborative Design Studies
  - Mentorship
  - MFA Theses Direction

MENTORSHIP *(selected)*

- Carina DuMarce, Indigenous Theatre Artist, The Union for Contemporary Art Performing Arts Inside/Outside Fellow
- Jocelyn Reed, costume designer, *Blood @ The Root*; UNO Theatre + The Union for Contemporary Art
- Marissa Sorce, assistant costume designer, *Gloria* and *Hooded: Or Being Black for Dummes*; Mixed Blood Theatre, Minneapolis, MN.
- Randy Wong-Westbrooke, associate costume designer, *Mermaid Hour: Remixed*; Mixed Blood Theatre, Minneapolis, MN.
- KayLee Taylor, craftsperson/researcher for "Crowning Kings," laser cutting application in costume craft project, accepted exhibitor at USITT national conference's Tech Expo. Published in USITT Tech Expo catalog.
- Melissa Valdez, costume designer, *Shakespeare's Dog;* UNO Theatre- *Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V Costume Parade nomination.
- KayLee Taylor, craftsperson/researcher, "The Applications of 3D Printing Technology in Jewelry Making for Costuming," presented at USITT national conference.
- Melissa Valdez, costume design research, "How Getting Outside of the Box Inspired My Design for *Animal Farm*," presented at USITT national conference.
- Leslie Little, hair designer, *Threepenny Opera*; UNO Theatre *award winner, KC/ACTF Region V Allied Crafts.
- Melissa Valdez, costume designer, *Animal Farm*; UNO Theatre *award winner, KC/ACTF Region V, National Design Division. Runner Up, National KC/ACTF festival Washington D.C.

RELATED SERVICE

Service to the Profession *(selected)*

- Grant reviewer, The Playwright's Center, Minneapolis, MN
- Grant reviewer, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Kansas City, MO
- United States Institute for Theatre Technology
  - Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion National Committee member
  - Vice Commissioner of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Community. Costume Commission
- Mentor, United States Institute for Theatre Technology Gateway Program for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Panelist/Juror, Omaha Fashion Week, multiple seasons
- Fashion Arts Collective (formerly Fashion Institute Midwest), supported designer
- Association of Theatre in Higher Education (ATHE)
  - LatinX, Indigenous, and the Americas focus group member
  - Women and Theatre focus group member
- United States Institute for Theatre Technology (USITT) National Conference Portfolio Reviewer

Program + College Service *(selected)*

- Scholarship Coordinator, Department of Theatre, UNO
- Undergraduate Academic Advisor, Department of Theatre, UNO; all theatre majors and minors within Program
- Student Recruitment
- Departmental Curriculum Revision, Department of Theatre, UNO
- Cultural Enrichment Grant committee, College of Communication, Fine Art and Media, UNO
- Dean search committee, College of Communication, Fine Art and Media, UNO

Community/Social Advocacy and Service *(selected)*

- Research and creative practice focus: identity, representation, decolonization in design and creative practices
- Founding board member, Healing Ribbons: a healing and wellness group for intergenerational Indigenous matriarchs, reclaiming empowerment, and identity through sewing and traditional craft
- Mentor, The Union for Contemporary Art Inside/Outside Performing Arts Fellowship
- Mentor, United States Institute of Theatre Technology, Gateway Program
- Creator, *"Take What You Need,"* ongoing interactive community art installation, based upon the Honorable Harvest; Hot Shops Arts Center, Omaha, NE

HONORS, AWARDS, AND AFFILIATIONS (*selected*)

- International Indigenous Fashions Council- founding member
- Indigenous Haute Couture- Digital Embellishment Artist Residency, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Banff, Alberta, Canada
- Fulbright Scholar Program; Scotland Distinguished Scholar Award in Art and Humanities at the University of Edinburgh, College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, finalist
- Amplify Arts Alternate Currents Working Group, member
- Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival Region V Commendation for Achievement in Costume Design, *The Clearing*
- Great Plains Theatre Commons' Design Wing, fellow
- The Indigenous Fashion Collective, member
- ImagineNATIVE, member
- United Scenic Artists 829, member
- Costume Society of America, member
- United States Institute for Theatre Technology, member
- Invited Collaborator, Shades of Noir Creatives of Color database, London, England