



Lenelle Moïse

Powerhouse poet, theatre artist and dynamic speaker Lenelle Moïse offers interactive performances and workshops that address race, class, feminism, LGBTQ identities, new theatre aesthetics, immigration and Haitian-American culture at colleges, theatres and conferences across the United States.

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www.lenellemoise.com



★ PRESS QUOTES

"Lenelle Moïse brings fierce passion..."
-The New York Times

"Moïse writes on subjects from race & class struggles to love and feminist-fueled anger, her verses tumbling out in a delivery that's like smooth notes of jazz...soulful."
-Time Out New York

"When politicized poet, playwright & performance artist Lenelle Moïse takes the stage, get ready for a bout of powerful gut-wrenching incisive truth...a masterful performer."
-Getunderground.com

"Sensuality, humor, adept political insight—a storyteller, performer & activist in one."
-The F-Word Zine

"Lenelle Moïse...gives vivid life...intensity."
-Variety

"Piercing, covering territory both intimate & political...vivid & powerful."
-Curve Magazine

★ BIOGRAPHY

Lenelle Moïse is an award-winning poet, playwright, essayist and nationally-touring performance artist. She creates intimate, fiery, politicized texts about the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, culture and compassion. Her delivery is at once conversational and polished. Fueled by the motto "Words rouse worlds," she regularly presents interactive performances and workshops that empower diverse groups of people to creatively speak up and act for social change.

Equipped with an MFA from Smith College, Moïse has been a guest artist at the United Nations, the Culture Project, the Omega Institute and dozens of colleges and universities across the United States (see page 4). Her writing is published in a number of anthologies, including *Word Warriors: 35 Women Leaders in the Spoken Word Revolution*, *We Don't Need Another Wave: Dispatches from the Next Generation of Feminists* and *Brassage: An Anthology of Poems by Haitian Women*.

She is the recipient of the 2010 Astraea Lesbian Writers Fund Award in Poetry and a 2010 Hedgebrook Women Playwrights Festival fellow. She currently lives in Northampton, MA where she is the 2010-2012 Poet Laureate.

★ LINKS

www.lenellemoise.com

www.youtube.com/lenellemoise

www.cdbaby.com/cd/lenellemoise

www.myspace.com/lenellemoise

★ AVAILABLE PERFORMANCES



1) **WOMB-WORDS, THIRSTING 90-minute theatrical performance.** Mixing a brew full of womanist Vodou jazz, queer theory hip-hop, humor, power and movement, WOMB-WORDS, THIRSTING is an interactive evening of patchwork poetic storytelling delivered from the heart, mind and gut. Join Haitian-American solo performer Lenelle Moïse as she re-conceives memory and boldly speaks out about childhood, class, sexuality, revolution, cultural hybridity and reclaiming F-words. WOMB-WORDS, THIRSTING is a theatrical, high-energy and empowering event about coming of age working class, immigrant and queer(ed).

Technical specifications:

- >1 microphone
- >1 mic stand
- >1 music stand
- >if available, 3 rehearsal blocks (black square cubes/rectangles)
- >1 wooden chair
- >1 small table on which to build an altar
- >speakers/amps and plug-ins*
- >a professional/ skilled engineer who will stay for the duration of the show**

*Lenelle creates live sound design throughout this performance with a phrase looping machine. A microphone plugs into the looper and 1/4 output plug is needed to connect to speakers/amps in the performance space.

**Lenelle is flexible about some of her tech needs. Email her directly to discuss appropriate alternatives: lenelle@lenellemoise.com



2) **SPEAKING INTERSECTIONS 45-minute performance.**

A powerful reading of personal-political texts. Lenelle's original poetry and thought-provoking essays collectively discuss the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality, culture and resistance. Followed by a 15-minute Q&A with the audience.

Technical specifications:

- >1 microphone
- >1 mic stand
- >1 music stand

See more programs at www.lenellemoise.com/produce

★ AVAILABLE WORKSHOPS

1) **SPOKEN WORD, SELF-NAMING & RESISTANCE.** This workshop explores poetry as an activist art form. Acclaimed politicized poet Lenelle Moïse discusses the history of the Spoken Word, especially as it relates to jazz, the Black Arts Movement, Hip Hop and Slam (competitive Spoken Word). Participants receive writing prompts, recommended readings, performance tips and practical advice about how to get started from a *working* performance poet.

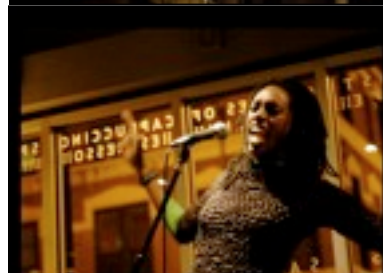


2) **RADICAL VOICE & MOVEMENT.** This is an interactive and highly physical performance workshop for actors, musicians, dancers, poets or anyone interested in radical self-expression and improvisational vocal composition. As Lenelle guides participants through a series of ensemble theatre exercises and "sound jams," the voice and body are explored as political texts that compliment the written word.



★ SELECTED PAST VENUES

Amherst College (Amherst, MA)
Brown University (Providence, RI)
Carleton College (Northfield, MN)
Chatham College (Pittsburgh, PA)
Colby College (Waterville, ME)
Cornell University (Ithaca, NY)
Dartmouth College (Hanover, NH)
Dickinson University (Carlisle, PA)
Episcopal Divinity School (Cambridge, MA)
Evergreen State College (Olympia, WA)
George Mason University (Fairfax, VA)
Goddard College (Plainfield, VT)
Hampshire College (Amherst, MA)
Hobart & Williams Smith Colleges (Geneva, NY)
Humboldt State University (Arcata, CA)
Ithaca College (Ithaca, NY)
Keene State College (Keene, NH)
Lehigh University (Bethlehem, PA)
Louisiana State University (Baton Rouge, LA)
Loyola University (Chicago, IL)
MIT (Cambridge, MA)
Mount Holyoke College (South Hadley, MA)
Oberlin College (Oberlin, OH)
Omega Institute for Holistic Studies (Rhinebeck, NY):
The Ohio State University (Columbus, OH)
Skidmore College (Saratoga Springs, NY)
Smith College (Northampton, MA)
SUNY Cobleskill (Cobleskill, NY)
SUNY Cortland (Cortland, NY)
SUNY Geneseo (Geneseo, NY)
UC Santa Barbara (Santa Barbara, CA)
UMass Amherst (Amherst, MA)
University of Cincinnati (Cincinnati, OH)
University of Louisville (Louisville, KY)
University of New Hampshire (Durham, NH)
University of North Carolina Asheville (Asheville, NC)
Wayne State University (Detroit, MI)
Wesleyan University (Middleton, CT)
Williams College (Williamstown, MA)
Worcester Polytechnical Institute (Worcester, MA)
Yale University (New Haven, CT)



★ INTERVIEW

The Williams Record February 2009



On the 'Record' with Lenelle Moïse

After her “Womb-Words, Thirsting” solo show in the Adams Memorial Theatre Thursday evening, Lenelle Moïse, renowned poet, playwright, screenwriter and performance artist, reflected on her own performance as well as the outcome of Claiming Williams with Lisa Li, executive editor.

How did you come to devote your life to writing about issues pertaining to race, gender, class and sexuality?

I am committed to telling challenging and entertaining stories that inspire people to act for social change. When I was a student, I desperately wanted to have conversations about race, class, gender and sexuality with my peers but, in our culture, there are too few examples of how to do this with celebration and without censorship. I quickly realized that talking from my heart was an effective way to communicate what was going on in my head. Poetry is the language of the heart, so some of my work spins sociological theory into poetry. And over time I’ve learned that – contrary to popular belief – talking about race, class, gender and sexuality can be a lot of fun. The words “black” or “feminist” or “immigrant” or “lesbian” might intimidate on paper but when you meet me, I’m just a down-to-earth poet with a pocket full of stories to tell. I feel collective laughter is a bridge to collective understanding, so I lace the painful truths with humor. It’s like that line from *Mary Poppins*: “A spoon full of sugar makes the medicine go down.” Events like Claiming Williams are good medicine. I think “Womb-Words, Thirsting” brought a little sugar to the table last week.

What did you hope to accomplish with your performance?

As an activist – I write to inform and to incite necessary debates. As a theater artist, I aim to inspire, to affirm, to empower, to unify, to rock minds and to open hearts. I feel successful when the staging of my work creates a safe forum for audiences – diverse in age, race, class and political affiliation – to breathe, clap, sigh, weep, learn and laugh together in one packed room. I always hope my audiences will realize their connectedness in the live moment. We might feel like separate individuals, couples or cliques when we walk into a theater but when we walk out, the event should have reminded us that, ultimately, we are all in it together.

How did you think your performance fit in with the rest of the Claiming Williams events and lectures?

“Womb-Words, Thirsting” is a lot about finding home and feeling safe, which was one of Claiming Williams’ central themes.

You have performed on campus twice this year, did you notice any changes between the two experiences?

The crowd was bigger and more boisterous the second time around – and thank goodness! After a day of lectures and community forums, people seemed to walk into the Adams Memorial Theatre warm and ready to relax, relate and release.

You went to some of the other lectures – what did you think about those experiences?

Dorothy Allison is one of my favorite writers – ever! In person, she has such grounded, folky grace, easy eloquence, deep wisdom, unabashed confidence and generosity. It was a treat to hear her speak first thing in the morning. I also appreciated alum Kiana Green’s [’07] first professional talk about Sakia Gunn. I discuss Gunn’s story as part of “Womb-Words, Thirsting” so it was a relief to have her name already floating in the collective consciousness on campus.

What did you think of Claiming Williams? Did you think it was successful?

I perform and lead workshops at colleges across the country and I think every school should create a day like Claiming Williams. You’re really onto something necessary, unique and empowering here. Ignorance is not an excuse for bias-related incidents in a diverse, academic environment. Claiming Williams gave students, staff and faculty a safe space to start talking about the tough stuff. As the day progressed, I saw community members balance critical thinking with heart-to-hearts. You know, integration isn’t just Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s dream anymore – it’s our everyday reality. Claiming Williams has the potential to build a bridge to connect us safely to that reality. The event was successful. I was honored to be a part of it. It’ll be even better in the future. And I’d join you again.



★ CONTACT

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★ TESTIMONIALS

"Riveting force of nature."

-Myriam J.A. Chancy, author of *Searching for Safe Places: Afro-Caribbean Women in Exile*

"Lenelle Moïse and her performance were a tour de force. *WOMB-WORDS, THIRSTING* was engaging, thought-provoking and entertaining from the first vocal expression to the last word, and the audience would have been more than happy to hear more. Lenelle's willingness to engage with students and community members on a personal and intimate level through group discussions and workshops went above and beyond, and left students and faculty clamoring for a return engagement. The subjects touched upon in Lenelle's work are critically important for college students to examine and ponder. Lenelle leaves them with plenty to think about, and, hopefully, a broader mind with which to do the thinking."

-Holly L. Cargill-Cramer, Director of Communications and Public Affairs @ SUNY Cobleskill

"Lenelle Moïse examines issues of race, class, gender and sexuality—issues that impact all of our lives—in a beautifully creative way that is all at once funny, sad, provocative, inspiring, and engaging. As we work on campus and in our communities to do the hard work of learning from each other and building coalitions to work for social change, Lenelle's powerful performance challenges the audience, with her incisive stories and poetry, to do just that. She is a much needed powerhouse of truth and inspiration."

-Kaite Dunn, Student @ Evergreen State College

"Lenelle writes about now—about this generation."

-Jorge Ignacio Cortinas, playwright