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## News from Nursha

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### Quote of the Month



*"The arts provide a more insightful and comprehensive education because they invite students to explore the emotional, intuitive, and irrational aspects of life that science is hard pressed to explain"*

~ Dr. Charles Fowler  
(Advocate for Art Education)

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### NURSHA IN THE NEWS

## September

Greetings (Contact First Name),



September is here, the crisp scent of fall is in the air, and the back to school rush begins. After an intensely hot August, the spirit of learning and rejuvenation rises in all of us. The Nursha Project Team is bringing knowledge and power to you. Enlighten your college experience with Micia Mosely and Red Summer who both will be offering up their talents and humor. East Coast shout outs! If you've been hitting the books and pulling all-nighters, take a study break to rock out with Sistas in the Pit! For our West Coast Family: If you haven't already, now is the time to discover the talents and magic of Thandiwe DeShazor.

As Labor day fast approaches; months of planning for site improvements and planned growth finally begins for our operations and presence. We welcome you to collaborate with us, share your thoughts or send us what inspires you. You'll find in this newsletter and future ones, more and more links to do just that. We look forward to hearing from you.

Gratefully,

The Nursha Project Team  
[staff@nurshaproject.com](mailto:staff@nurshaproject.com)

Visit our site or look for notifications in our newsletters for our exciting new offerings as they develop and bloom.

## FEATURE ARTICLE

### CAN THE PURPOSE OF ART BE TO TRANSFORM OUR FEELINGS?

an offering by Tahira Platt

I was just about to enjoy a nice, and generous and perfectly chilled Sauvignon Blanc filled just below the rim, when the call came in. They were in a cab late at night and had been running around Manhattan in the middle of an oppressive heat wave. "Reach deep within myself, seek and find that which would cause others to truly think, inspire the reader to take a moment or join a march. Be Free! Feel Free! They in unison unleashed me with " I am free to let my art be my words. My art is my words." It was my mission; should I choose to accept it. I accepted. As I was searching for a point

*"I feel,*

*therefore*

*I can be free"*

Thandiwe review premieres in Examiner.com.



Examiner.com Arts and Entertainment reporter, Keven Thomas, published a favorable review of "Children of the Last Days" on August 17th. His review titled "Afro Solo Show won't be 'Last Days'" for gifted performer.

[Read More...](#)



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Nursha Project

## NURSHA ARTISTS

[Thandiwe De Shazor](#)

[Micia Mosley](#)

[Dawn Robinson](#)

[Red Sumner](#)

Visit us on



## JUST MISSED

**Friday Night Stand Up**  
MICIA MOSELY  
PERFORMS  
Friday August 28, 2009  
@ 8pm & 10pm  
210 Front Street  
New York, NY

**MichFest 2009**  
Tuesday August 4th -  
9th in Hart, Michigan



of inspiration for this article, I went to my bookcase and opened a copy of Audre Lorde's [Sister Outsider](#) (1987, 2007). A personal treasure chest shimmied in between the biographies of Barbara Jordan, Meshell Ndegeocello and Sherly Swoopes. Leafing through the well-worn, dog-eared, margin-marked pages, I happened upon this quote- "The Black mother within each of us- the poet- whispers in our dreams: I feel, therefore I can be free." (pg.38). Audre is specifically referring to the revolutionary use of poetry by women of color as a counter-narrative to the Western European male-centered philosophy showcased by philosopher Rene Descartes' quote: "I think, therefore I am". It is from Lorde's words that I found my inspiration again and wish and offer to explore with you.

[Read more...](#)

## NURSHA SPOTLIGHT

### THRASHING AROUND WITH SISTAS IN THE PIT!

Nursha Project™ Artists "Sistas in the Pit" are rocking audiences and giving the Bay area a healthy doses of their electric rifts and angst revving rhythms. Flying high off a fantastic show at Fisherman's Wharf in SF on Aug 17th, they performed again for "Sistas Steppin in Pride"! Everyone danced, whistled, bellowed and celebrated their awesomeness! Power to our sisters!



Didn't catch these shows? Fear not, more performance dates are being announced within the next couple of weeks. Check the Nursha website for updates.

## IN MEMORIAM



It is with saddened hearts we share with you the passing of our colleague and friend, **Jennifer Ongiri**. As a close friend and collaborator from Oakland, CA, Jennifer passed away August 15, 2009 in her home surrounded by her family after her courageous battle with cancer, diagnosed this past April. Jennifer was born in Lancaster, PA on June 7, 1972. She lived in Lancaster and Bethlehem, PA, Melbourne, FL and Oakland, CA where she lived for the past decade. Jennifer lived her life fully with many interests and hobbies including film making, aviation, swimming, and sailing. Her film, "Definition: Aya de Leon" was featured during the 2007 S.F. LBGT International Film Festival. She was very proud of a film she worked on about the history of the Jack London Aquatic Center female rowing team. She also worked on several music videos and short films. She had a close relationship with her family and was blessed to find love shortly before her illness with Angel Reyes who cared for her throughout her illness and whose love was immense and unconditional. Her memorial was held Wed. August 19, 2009 in Oakland.

"Definition: Aya de Leon" is available for purchase [online here](#).

Shalonda Ingram worked closely with Jennifer and Marla Leeche as co-producers of indie film: Definition: Aya De Leon.



## NURSHA ARTIST NEWS

### MICIA MOSELY GOES BACK TO COLLEGE @ HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE

Micia Mosely is helping college freshmen start the school year off by introducing the ladies of WMGA and instructing various workshops to the incoming students at Hampshire College in



Nursha Project's Shalonda Ingram managed festival's stage productions, while Red Summer welcomed crowds to the Women of Color Tent. This annual festival has been going strong for 20+ years. Nursha Project has been both on stage and behind the scenes for these fun filled days for the past 5 years. 2010 is already looking great! Mark your calendars early and join us!

Visit [michfest.com](http://michfest.com) for details...

#### TO OUR READERS:

Here in the Nursha Project office, we have been looking at this section with some eyes calling for the chopping block. We are considering changing it's name and purpose to "Last Chance" a quick section to see and support Nursha Artists and Productions that are just about to close or have performances within days of this newsletter release.

#### WE WANT YOUR OPINION

Send email  
[staff@nurshaproject.com](mailto:staff@nurshaproject.com)

or [Click Here.](#)  
Add JUST MISSED as the subject

## ON THE HORIZON

### THE QUEEN OF KINGS JOINS THE NURSHA FAMILY



Nursha Project welcomes **Mildred Dred Gerestant** to our network. Known as DRED, witness a particularly mystical form of drag. Her performance is a challenge to societal ideas of what it means to be male or female, reminding the audience that there is some of each in everyone.

DRED's motto is "Love all of who you are..." Appearing around New York City and abroad, the actor and "gender illusionist" is the creator of The Dred Love Experience.

Amherst, MA. Returns to NYC for some stand-up shows then the teacher becomes the student. Micia learns how to be a "Butch Mama" in the new play about a fledgling support group for diverse butch lesbians who aspire to be Butch Mamas and their group of eccentric admirers. Come see this hysterical, smart comedy at the WOW Cafe Theatre in NYC.



She will also be performing excerpts of WMGA in NYC's East Village for the 4th Annual Arts Block Party. Come celebrate the Arts and enjoy free performances of all types!

#### New Student Orientation

Sunday September 6, 2009 @ 2pm  
Excerpts from Where My Girls At?\* & Workshops  
Hampshire College  
Amherst, MA -Free to students-

#### Death Comedy Jam

Saturday September 12, 2009 @ 11pm  
The Creek  
10-93 Jackson Ave  
Long Island City, NY  
( 7 train to Vernon Jackson, G to 21st/Van Alsly, E/ V to 23rd st Ely Ave)  
FREE  
[Read More](#)

#### Butch Mama's

September 18 and 19, 2009 ( PREVIEWS)  
September 24, 25 and 26, 2009 @ 8 pm  
The WOW Café Theatre, (Off-Off Broadway)  
4th Street, Manhattan  
\$15 per ticket online / \$17 at the door  
Wheelchair Accessible  
To purchase tickets, please go to:  
Phone: 212.777.4280 #1 (Butch Mamas VM)  
(tickets for previews are not available online)  
[Read More](#)



#### 4th Annual Arts Block Party

Saturday, Sept 26 @ 4pm  
NYC - Block of 4th St. (btw Bowery & 2nd Ave.)  
FREE !!!

Butch Mama's  
Written & Produced by Ms. K.S. Stevens  
Directed by Ms. Shenelle Eaton Foster

## PHILANDER SMITH COLLEGE HOSTS RED SUMMER FOR CORONATION

Nursha Project™ Artist, Red Summer goes back to college! Red Summer will be performing at the crowning ceremonies of Miss Philander Smith at Philander Smith College in Little Rock, Arkansas. Find out which lucky lady wins the crown while Red Summer drops knowledge!



For Red fans who aren't currently a Philander student, don't worry, Red and Nursha Project are currently determining October dates to catch her unique talent and voice.

#### Miss Philander Smith College Coronation/ Poetry Night

Saturday, September 12  
Philander Smith College  
One Trudie Kibbe Reed Drive  
Little Rock, AR  
Private Event



**Support the Arts**  
**Donate to Nursha Project**

## Continued: THE PURPOSE OF ART: TRANSFORM OUR FEELINGS

an offering by Tahira

Send Dred a warm welcome

email:  
[nursha@nurshaproject.com](mailto:nursha@nurshaproject.com)

or [click here](#).  
Add Welcome to your subject

Check out our next issue for a Full write-up and spotlight on Dred.

## NURSHA TEAM HELPS CREATE A DISASTER



October 2009

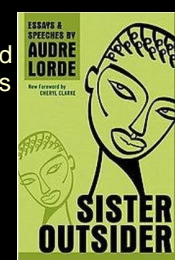
Ain Gordon is creating his one woman show: "A Disaster Begins" with collaboration from Nursha Project Productions. On board to help make this show a reality is Shalonda Ingram working the behind the scenes and Jonathan Rosenfeld heading up graphics and marketing .

Ain Gordon, a recipient of such honors as the Obie Award, NYFA Playwriting Fellow and the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellow. A Disaster Begins, is a piece based on one young woman's account of the Galveston hurricane that decimated the Texas island in 1900. This tragic historical disaster that took the lives of 6,000 people reveals the shocking truth behind the narrator's stories of pubescent despair, presidential corruption, pre-marital sex, patriotic fervor and writer's block.

**A Disaster Begins**  
October 1 -3, 2009, 8pm  
Barnevelder Movement/  
Arts Complex

For ticketing and more info:  
[Read More...](#)

"I feel, therefore I can be free". What a truly universal idea. During college, I double-majored in Psychology and American Studies and it was painfully clear which discipline was valued more. Always the "hard" sciences and its method; in my classes it was Psychology. Its neuroticism with the strict use of the scientific method trumped the "soft" social theory of American Studies with its interdisciplinary use of writing, stories, art and research. Paradoxically, I would find myself studying like issues in both majors, and realize that many cultural theorists had written hundreds of papers about the same old phenomena and timeless questions that social psychologists were just now are exploring and testing.



Oftentimes in fact, both disciplines would come to highly similar conclusions! The exploration and learning of universal truths are equally found in art from every period. The idea of being free, and the feelings associated with freedom's birth have been recorded, and shared; first by art and story telling and then in writing and social research. Throughout the ages art has reflected what is perceived as truths and reflected our welcoming, enjoying and fear of these truths. Art was and is story telling with our eyes, words, hands. We've all experienced that surge of emotions that compel us to act- to take a chance, to create the new. Who hasn't found themselves with a blank page, canvas, wall, audience or open space and were told create something. Then a surge of feeling arises and you realize you are free to create whatever you want and free to feel whatever you want about it. So what's the big deal? Seems so simple, right? And yet, "I feel, therefore I can be free" is a complex and radical statement. In our culture, we are taught to discount our feelings while Art programs are often the first ones cut when budgets need trimming. We are trained to uphold the perceived objectivity of rationality, of thought, of scientific proof when evaluating worth. Our education governing boards and city comptrollers honor empiricism and data as the only tools that we can use with any credulity, to explore the mysteries of life and what over time is most valuable. Empiricism, with its higher social capital, wins again. Storytelling and invoked feelings aren't quantifiable, and are therefore often simply, dismissed.

Feeling and thinking are universal human traits and actions. All recorded cultures have a tradition of storytelling. Through storytelling, feelings, and the arts; multiple lessons are explored, validated, and taught concurrently. Comparatively a scientific empirical analysis is a highly specific, classed, single focus and rigid form of truth-seeking. Audre's belief in the use of feelings as a means to find life's answers actually empowers and emboldens all peoples. A feeling person is not a lesser person. Their contributions should not be invalidated just because you cannot display their findings on Excel charts. The Artist who cannot replicate the moment, but instead expresses the memory of it; is not less convinced of its existence and the moment's power and significance. Audre's statement bestows agency on those who choose not to use the scientific method as the sole path to enlightenment. It grants power and social capital to us who are brave enough to listen to our inner poet. Isn't that a purpose and the beauty of art- to transform our feelings into tangible, shareable creations which explore what it means to be free?

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Select responses will be shared in our next newsletter.

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