

## **Yolisa Dalamba, BA. MA.**

Yolisa hails from Azania, better known as South Afrika. Yolisa's name means, "the one who brings joy" in her native Xhosa language, popularized by the infamous Miriam Makeba. Yolisa is a staunch believer of holistic Afrikan-centred practices in healing, teaching, education, cultural analysis, social transformation. She is a critical cultural consultant, educator, multidisciplinary artist and community activist due to her involvement in the global anti-apartheid movement since the 70's and 80's in Canada. Yolisa's life work is underpinned by the fundamental belief that- **ONLY WE HAVE THE POWER TO TRULY HEAL & LIBERATE OURSELVES AS AFRIKANS.**

Yolisa holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honors degree from Brock University, St. Catharines, Ontario, and a Masters degree from Witwatersrand University in Johannesburg, South Africa. Yolisa's areas of expertise range from artistic projects such as publishing, producing theatre for social transformation; health, wellness and self-recovery workshops; anti-racism research, training and consulting, as well as small business initiatives.

Yolisa strongly believes in self-empowerment through self-awareness, Afrikan healing and spirituality, and creativity. She was influenced by Black Consciousness and Pan Afrikanism from an early age Yolisa has published two important academic papers addressing the call for an "African Renaissance" as well as conducting a hugely successful national research project for the SA Human Rights Commission on racism in public secondary schools with Salim Vally. She has delivered numerous academic presentations and workshops on a variety of topics including:

- Daring to Name Racism, Power, & White Privilege – Is White Anti-racism an Oxymoron
- Beyond Curry & Kwanza – Multiculturalism vs Anti-Racism
- A Black Feminist Analysis of Haile Gerima's Film Sankofa: Race, Class & Gender
- The Call for an Afrikan Renaissance: The New South Afrika
- Loving Our Children – teaching self-esteem to Afrikan children based on Afrikan principles & interactive techniques: games, movies, storytelling, etc.
- Conflict Resolution - Afrikan Style! – the village, I'n'I philosophy, the role of elders & the community, spirituality
- Unleashing Our Power – Afrikan Youth Leadership & Lifeskills Training
- Reclaiming Afrikan Knowledge Systems through Afrikan-centred Participatory Exercises
- Losing Our Sons – Black Mothers Living with the Trauma of Loss – healing through Afrikan spiritual methods
- Afrikan Philosophy in Daily Life: Applying the Principles of Maat, Kwanzaa & Ubuntu

Yolisa lectured at the School of Dramatic Art while engaged in graduate studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Afrika for 5 years. She specialized in: Drama & Theatre in Education which focused on popular community-

based pedagogy as well as curriculum development and teacher education; issues of Race and Representation as they relate to African Studies, Women and Gender Studies, Cultural Studies and Film studies; Anti-Oppression theory and practice related to curriculum development, liberatory consciousnesses and social transformation. In South Africa, Yolisa's belief in the need for a healthy and dynamic relationship between theory, academe, lived experience and activism was strongly reaffirmed. Much of Yolisa's academic work sought to explore this actively with students in relation to alternative learning and teaching processes and curriculum development.

Yolisa is currently working on a number of timely and exciting projects underpinned by theory as a site for liberatory pedagogy and critical analysis. Yolisa is primarily an educator whose work is located in the areas of – youth and women's empowerment, community transformation, curriculum development, the need for renewed anti-racism and anti-apartheid movements and critical cultural analysis through film, theatre, multimedia. She also trains and teaches community groups and individuals in Theatre of the Oppressed techniques combined with the theories of Paulo Freire and Afrikan thinkers such as Steve Biko, bell hooks, Patricia Hill-Collins, Asa Hilliard to name a few.

This summer, Yolisa is pleased to be working with the Council on African Canadian Education (CACE) in Nova Scotia who will host a Summer Institute on Africentric Leadership and Management for Educators. She highly regards the achievements of all those involved in pioneering this timely initiative and is confident it will inspire others. "It is a vital contribution to Canada but particularly Canada's Afrikan community no matter where they reside and Yolisa is honored to be involved in this historic initiative. I wish it the greatest success."