
LILA

Creative Writing | Theatre | Divine Play

The Borderlands

*Because I, a mestiza
continually walk out of one
culture
and into another,
because I am in all cultures
at the same time,
alma entre dos mundos,
tres, cuatro,
me zumba la cabeza con lo
contradictorio.
Estoy norteada por todas la
voces que me hablan
simultáneamente.*

- Anzaldúa

*But the skin of the earth is
seamless.
The sea cannot be fenced,
El mar does not stop at
borders.
To show the white man what
she thought of his
arrogance,
Yemaya blew that wire fence
down.
This land was Mexican once,
Was Indian always
And is
And will be again.*

Lila, Sanskrit for Divine Play is a circle of mixed-race women and trans storytellers who wish to explore what it means to make art from a place of being from multiple ancestries. We stand on the borderlands between cultures, races, spiritualities, genders, languages, homelands. We have been told we are inferior for our mixedness. Dualism has told us that we are impure, half-breed, inferior. We stand together in solidarity and in resistance to these ideas. We embrace our whole selves and seek healing from the internal split which divides us, the dualist thinking which creates illusions of racial and gender purity, and which label us as inferior.

As mixed-race women, artists and artist-facilitators, Rehana and Lishai join hands to co-facilitate the co-creation of a theatre production with *Lila* - an emerging group of mixed women/trans artist-storytellers. Lila is made up of artists who are also community workers, teachers, healers and academics, who in their work, create space for other people to tell their stories. We believe that we cannot liberate others unless we are also liberating ourselves. Reflecting on our own stories, experiences and histories allows us to better understand ourselves, and our purpose in the



There are reasons people leave their homelands that remain unnamed - I am from the shadows of those reasons. I'm also from so many new beginnings - if you hold this story up to the light, you'll see refractions of your own story.

- Lishai Peel



How do you learn to hold your own truth with both hands? Affirming your past, deliberate in your future and present in the now? As women who live on the cusp of different worlds, we constantly learn & relearn how to live in the full light of our vastness.

- Rehana Tejpar

world. We each have the responsibility to be our whole selves, and follow our individual and collective truth(s).

We believe that being of mixed ancestry offers us an entry into a new way of being - a new consciousness which embodies pluralism, inclusivity and gender fluidity. As women, we seek to explore the divine feminine as a site of resilience and strength in the face of adversity and oppression. Women for eons have sat in circle, because in our collectivity we reclaim our strength, learn from one another and tend to the internal flame that allows us to continue living our truth, guided by our intuition, in harmony with nature and embracing all the parts of our being.

We are calling on mixed-race/mestiza women/trans storytellers! We are embarking on a co-creative journey, using the pen, the word and the body to excavate and share our stories of migration and resilience. Together we wish to play, share stories of what it means to be of multiple cultures and races, and tend to the fire of our divine femininity.

Our vision is to stage a production weaving our individual and collective stories in late 2015. Join us on **Sunday Sept 21st**, for a pilot workshop creation at **Aluna Theatre** from **2.30-6.30pm**. Please email info@lishai.ca to register or for more information.

Location TBA.

Rehana Tejpar

Rehana Tejpar is a mother, dancer, theatre artist and community arts facilitator dedicated to staging stories of social importance, and evoking community dialogue. Rehana is passionate about co-creating community learning projects and theatre productions with young people, especially young women and has worked in Canada, Kenya and India. She has facilitated the co-creation of several community theatre productions with children and youth including *Let's Talk About Rex!* in Rexdale, Toronto. She co-wrote the play *Unshackling Education*, the dance - theatre piece *Maíz* in residence with Aluna Theatre, and danced/choreographed to the poetry of Rumi and Hafiz in *Love Flows Down*. She recently danced in *One Against Many* by Magorzata Nowacka in Matanzas Cuba and is looking forward to performing in the upcoming Vanguardia Dance Festival, part of Harbourfront Next Steps, in *Memory Lane* by Victoria Mata. Rehana holds a Masters in Education and is passionate about creating learning spaces which nurture the radiance of the inter-dependent self to emerge.

Lishai Peel

Lishai is a poet and a community animator with roots in diasporic storytelling. She shares stories that stretch across continents, gifted to her by her grandmother and the women who came before her. She has performed and taught workshops all over Canada; most recently working with The Toronto District School Board and The City of Toronto to develop and facilitate arts based curriculum. Her graphic novel "Why Birds and Wolves Don't Trade Stones" was published in 2013 and is available on Amazon. And her debut album, "From Here On" was released in May 2014. She writes with a commitment to joy and integrity.

"I chose to pursue a career as a storyteller because it is an extension of who I am and because I trust that some stories need to be told, some stories heal and forgive and there are some places you can only travel to by gathering with community, sharing stories, and trusting that people will catch your words and hold them." - Lishai