

# AKHÉ

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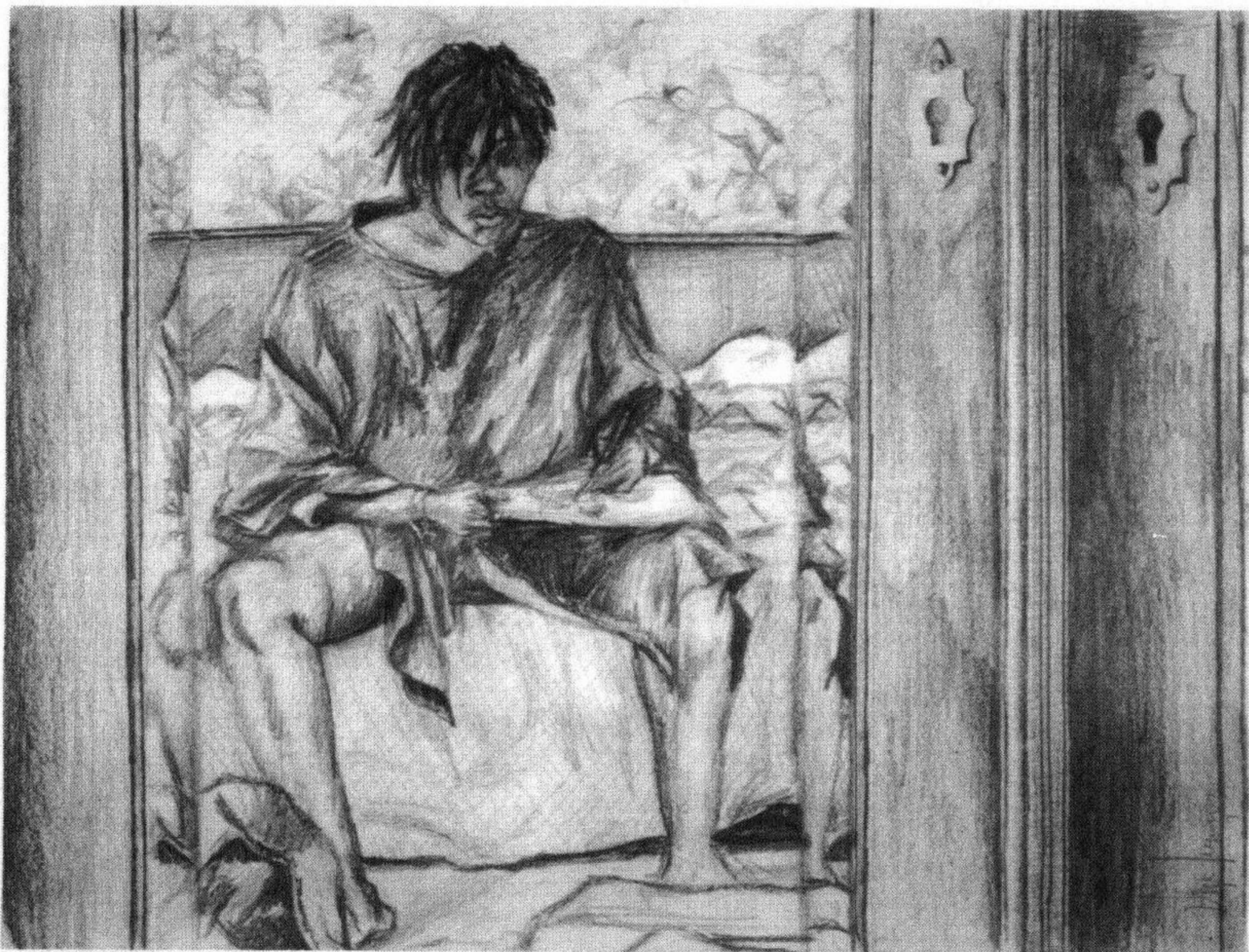
**July/August, 1990**

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**A Journal For Black Lesbians**

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**For more artwork and poetry by Olga François, see pages 23, 24 & 25.**

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Aché (pronounced a-chay) is a bi-monthly publication by black lesbians for the benefit of all black women. Aché reflects and celebrates the wide spectrum of black lesbian experiences. We are committed to open and critical dialogue about the issues affecting our lives. We especially encourage submissions from women who have never been published.

The deadline for submissions is the 1st of the month prior to publication. Neatly hand-written, typed materials and 3.5" Macintosh disks using Word Perfect, MacWrite or Microsoft Word are accepted. Include name, address, & phone # on all submissions. Don't submit originals: we do not have the resources to return them. Please specify if you would not like your full name reproduced in Aché.

Our editorial team will edit, if necessary, for clarity and length. Every effort will be made to maintain the author's form, written style and language.

Aché will not print anything that is oppressive or demeaning to ourselves as lesbians and black women. The appearance of names or images in this publication does not indicate the sexual orientation of that person or persons. Subscriptions are \$10-25/yr. (donations always welcome.) To subscribe, phone or mail your name & address to: Aché: P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA. 94706 (415) 834-0703

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Aché is dedicated to the memory of Pat Parker & all the black women who have passed before us and whose work we continue today.

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## Aché Presents...

### **"Mulheres Negras" (Black Women of Brazil) (25 min.)**

An upbeat documentary that looks at the ways Black women have coped with racism while validating their lives through their own music and religion. A celebration of the many faces of Black women in Brazil.

### **"Update Brazil" (15 min.)**

A look at Brazil's innovative solution to domestic violence and sexual assault: the establishment of police stations completely run and operated by plainclothed but armed women offering legal assistance and emotional support.

## July 25th, 7:30pm



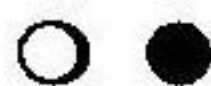
### **"Stormé: The Lady of the Jewel Box" (21 min.)**

An intimate documentary by Michelle Parkerson about Stormé DeLarverie, former M.C. and male impersonator of the legendary Jewel Box Revue. "Stormé" profiles an extraordinary woman, an era, and an integral slice of black gay history.

### **"Hairpiece: A Film For Nappy- Headed People" (10 min.)**

An animated satire of the question of self image for black women living in a society where beautiful hair is viewed as hair that blows in the wind and lets you be free. Motown tunes accompany a quick-paced inventory of relaxers, gels and curlers, an experience all-too-familiar to black women confronted with an unattainable ideal of beauty.

## August 29th, 7:30pm



**Aché's presents films (& more) the  
last Wednesday of every month at La  
Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berk.**

## • From the Editor •

◆ This is a very special issue of Aché for me. After nursing Aché for 16 months, I've come to that place where all mothers eventually arrive -- the time and place where I must let go of my baby, trusting that I've laid a strong enough foundation for her to survive without me holding her every step of the way.

Over the past 8 months, a group of 11 women: DeeAnne Davis, Reatha Fowler, Winn Gilmore, Rebecca Hall, Amana Johnson, Teri Lethridge, Janet Wallace, Jean Weisinger, Skye Ward, Erica Wilson and myself have worked long and hard, organizing, dreaming, and creating a structure for this *rapidly* growing project. This issue marks the actual turning over of the decision-making process and the implementation of our production systems (Yes! I'm even turning over some of the workload!!) So, I'm excited. I'm looking forward to having more time and energy doing the aspects of Aché that I enjoy most -- producing more events that bring us together, and strengthening our network with sisters outside the Bay Area.

◆ For this issue, a request for submissions was sent out to over 25 black gay men's organizations nationwide on the topic of building alliances between our communities. Though we had only the best intentions, we found ourselves fighting the urge to censor unpopular or "non-progressive," "irrelevant" responses from the gay men across the country, sometimes simply because they spoke in a "male" voice. We struggled *not* to define for our readership what the voices from the black gay men's community should sound like. Ultimately, I'm very proud of this issue. It should spark some great "kitchen table" discussions, some of which I hope prompt you to write to us and share.

Bless you all. Lisbet

# While You Were Out

by Skye Ward

## Viva Winnie & Nelson Mandela!!

◆ **IMANI HARRINGTON**, gave a splendid reading from her poetic work, "If You Save Your Life, You've Saved A Soul" on June 15th at Modern Times Bookstore. Harrington, a compelling actor, performed monologues from a work-in-progress which reflects on the atrocities confronting Black women under patriarchal rule. A beautiful crowd of sistahs came out to support her and she in turn blessed us with her gifts.

◆ **WINN GILMORE** participated in a line-up of performers for "Perverse Verse," a benefit performance for the Nimehuatzin Nicaraguan AIDS Foundation on June 23rd. In keeping with the multi-cultural theme of the evening Gilmore read an excerpt from her fiction "Boca Chica"--it was a marvelous reading of an imaginative and stimulating piece! It was good to see a black lesbian writer/activist lending her support and talents to such a worthwhile event.

◆ Naughty **NATALIE DEVORA** set the house on fire at the Aché-Colors after-party on Gay Pride Day, June 24th. Sistahs knew they were in for a hot erotic reading when Natalie walked on stage wearing a black low-cut dress (late-afternoon!) and opened the set with her signature piece "White Chocolate." The over 350 lesbians of color in attendance showed their appreciation with interruptions of affirming moans and testifying--go Natalie!

◆ **BELINDA SULLIVAN** returned to Old Wives Tales on June 28th for an evening of storytelling for adults and children. Unfortunately I walked in after the event but the energy was still quite warm, and according to a few of the women remaining in the bookstore it was a memorable evening.

◆ **AGENDA FOR UNITY, GAY DAY PARADE CONTINGENT.** Well, what can I say, we were beautiful! The Unity contingent was made up of members from Black Gay Men United, the NIA Collective, Aché and brothers and sisters who came from the sidelines along the parade route. A special note of thanks and appreciation goes out to NIA coordinator **SHEILA HEAD**. (*I marched in the parade and was unable to take photographs of the contingent - if you have photographs to share please contact Aché.*)

◆ The parade afterparty co-hosted by Aché & Colors packed the S.F. American Indian Hall with over 350 women at a hot event. Many thanks to the Asian-Pacific sisters who performed a special dance routine, all the women who read their poetry, and all the women who worked to make this event such a success. Again next year??

◆ And last, thank you to the brother who wore his Aché t-shirt on the 4-hr. PBS Gay Pride program "Town Meeting" - national television!!! Aché!

## CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Lipstick Lesbians. Designer dykes. Femmes. Baby butches. L.A. ladies. San Francisco woman-lovers. "ROLES: What they was, what they is, what they gonna be" is Aché's next theme, and we'd love to get some submissions from you!

What was role-playing's significance in the past? Does it serve a purpose beyond mere personal choice? Is it a mimicry of heterosexuality? Is it true that supposed butches are real pussycats behind closed doors? Is a femme a butch in drag?

If you have thoughts about these or related butch-femme concerns, submit! Write a story, a poem, an article, and send to: Aché, P.O. Box 6071, CA. 94706.

## GOT A LITTLE FREE TIME?

Aché can use your help.  
We're looking for:

◆ **WORD PROCESSORS**

◆ **EDITORS**

(with prior editing experience)

◆ **CALENDAR COORDINATORS**

(women willing to take on gathering all the information for one specific area of the calendar: conferences, dance, film, music, nightlife, readings, radio, television, theater, etc.)

◆ **VISUAL & GRAPHIC ARTISTS**

◆ **REPORTERS** (to cover events)

◆ **WRITERS**

◆ **FUNDRAISERS**

◆ **PRODUCERS OF EVENTS**

◆ **GRANTWRITERS**

If you can help,  
please call us at  
(415) 824-0703.

## **LOOKING FOR HOME: LESBIAN & GAY MEDIA ARTISTS OF COLOR**

Panel Discussion at "The Rules Of Attraction"  
A Conference on Lesbian & Gay Media  
June 16th, 1990, San Francisco, California

**"One of my concerns as a lesbian filmmaker is to challenge this normalizing and universalizing tendency in the lesbian and gay community—and to assert the diversity of cultural and racial identities within the umbrella category of Gay & Lesbian."**

[Pratibha Parmar - Indian-British videomaker]

The organizers of the 14th San Francisco International Lesbian and Gay Film Festival presented a two-day conference entitled "The Rules of Attraction: A Conference on Lesbian & Gay Media" on June 16-17. The conference site was in a converted dance studio with a limited seating capacity of approximately 90-100 people. The two sessions I attended, "Feminist Theory/Lesbian Media: Rethinking Sexual Representation;" and "Looking For Home: Lesbian & Gay Media Artists of Color" were filled to capacity with lesbian/gay artists of various disciplines. Space limitations in this issue prevent me from commenting on the Feminist Theory session; but I highly recommend purchasing the conference cassette tape, specifically to hear New York-based experimental filmmaker Abigail Child's presentation. Her presentation retitled, "Female Sexuality/Lesbian Theory" was a spicy reading of lesbian erotic poetry interwoven with theoretical statements. Those of you who get fed up with feminist theorizing will appreciate her imaginative approach.

Cornelius Moore, director of the Southern African Media Center of California Newsreel, was the moderator for a media artists of color panel, which he wryly described as the "colored folks" panel. In his introduction he noted that "the best discussions for us [people of color] are the ones we have with ourselves, within institutions that we create ourselves; these will finally liberate us from the old burden of being the 'other' within the [conference setting]." His frank reference to tokenism and the need for autonomy among people of color set the tone for an informative and lively panel discus-

sion.

The first speaker on the panel was black lesbian videomaker Silvia Rhue whose many works include "Women in Love: Bonding Strategies of Black Lesbians" and her current work "Cherchez La Femme," which traces lesbian images in Hollywood films. Rhue's slideshow (now video) "We Have a Legacy," which premiered at the 1st Annual National Black Gay & Lesbian Leadership Forum in Los Angeles, is a beautiful and empowering video that documents famous black people throughout history who are gay and lesbian. Rhue spent an entire year doing research for the project.

On the panel, Rhue spoke about her encounters with homophobic black artists, producers and other black talent while making her videos. In response to a question she articulated the difficulty in enlisting the help of black lesbians who are willing to be "out" — not only in erotic video ventures, but in general. Rhue summed up her presentation by quoting an unnamed source who said: "We live in a society that's overwhelmed by impotence, incompetence, and incoherence, obsessed with death and the symbols of death." She added, "I, in doing these types of videos, films and writings, try to stick a little dynamite in the antarctic frozen tundra of racism, sexism and homophobia; I try to blow a little plug out of it as much as I can."

Following Rhue's presentation were two poignant and provocative speakers, Susana Muñoz, an Argentinean filmmaker living in San Francisco; and Pratibha Parmar, an Indian-

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## Conference Report

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British videomaker living in London. Muñoz hit a few nerves and generated a bit of agitation among several people of color in the audience when she began discussing the egocentrism and xenophobia that prohibit mainstream and gay media artists from appreciating the extraordinary obstacles filmmakers in "Third-World" countries confront. To some people in the audience there was an implied ranking of oppressions among gays & lesbians in this country with those in more repressive countries. Muñoz brought her argument around to say that ultimately we must resist divide and conquer tactics and view separatism as a transitional process. Muñoz said, "I think it is very narrow-minded to perceive ourselves only as one thing. I understand that certain people need to first organize amongst themselves and find their strength – but once that period is over, if it continues to be like that, it leads nowhere."

Pratibha Parmar continued the discussion with a discourse on role conflicts, multiple identities, and the "burden of representation" media artists of color struggle with. Parmar noted that often time gay and lesbian media artists of color feel pressure from various segments of their communities to "tell it all" and/or try to address all the "isms" in one piece of work. She succinctly stated, "Sometimes I feel that there is an expectation that my one single piece of work has to stand for the totality of everything...you feel another opportunity may not arise to have your voice heard, and then the urgency is to say everything at once, in one outburst. I have a multitude of stories to tell, and I want to take my time telling them."

Concluding the panel discussion was Richard Fung, a Chinese Canadian videomaker born in Trinidad and living in Toronto. In his work, Fung is concerned with constructing his targeted audiences (e.g. gay, Chinese, West Indian, working-class) in the role of "subject-viewer." Fung commented, "When we see ourselves as subjects we have to ask questions of ourselves – not just am I desirable or not desirable to the 'other,' but what do I desire – what do I want?"

If you are interested in purchasing cassette tapes of these sessions write to: Conference Recording Service, 1308 Gilman Street, Berkeley, CA 94706 or phone (415) 527-3600.

### SOFT TARGETS by Essex Hemphill

He was arrested and detained  
for nailing Barbie doll heads  
to telephone poles.

He was beaten  
while in custody, accused  
of defacing public property.

After healing,  
he resumed  
his irreverent campaign,

this outlawed  
spook terrorist  
continued hammering horse nails

through Barbie heads  
and setting them aflame.

Barbie never told Black girls  
they are beautiful.

She never acknowledged  
their breathtaking Negritude.

She never told them  
to possess their own souls.

They were merely shadows  
clutching the edges of her mirror.

Barbie never told Black girls  
they are beautiful,

not in the ghetto evenings  
after double dutch,

nor in the integrated suburbs,  
after ballet class.

©1989 Essex Hemphill

# WinnSome Words

I was out on the fishing bank the other day with my friend Marty, and I'd just hauled in a 23-inch bass (no, this is not just another fish story) when she told me this issue of you Negro gay ladies' journal was devoted to your relationships with men. "Well," I grunted to Marty as I leaned over and dropped my trophy fish into my bucket, "*what* relationships with men? You mean," I asked, threading another night crawler and spoiled chicken liver onto the hook, "yall's sons, brothers, fathers—"

"Yeah, them," Marty responded testily. "And the others, too."

"Oh, I see," I said proudly. With Marty, I always have to be on my Ps and Qs to show her just how liberal and understanding I am. You see, I'm Marty's honorary non-gay Negro lady-friend. "You mean yall's relationships with Negro gay men, then." I smiled, smugly assured that I'd figured out what she meant.

"And the others, too," Marty added. Checkmate, she could just as well have said as she raised her eyebrows arrogantly. "You may not have known this," she said, then paused dramatically, peering closer to her limp fishing line, "but some of us have re-la-tions with men."

Now I'd heard it all. "What kind of re-la-tions?" I asked skeptically. Marty's a real joker: she loves to pull my leg.

"Quite a few lesbians sleep with men: some, occasionally; others frequently."

"Well, hell!" I exclaimed. "There's a name for that, too. It's called bisexuality." I looked around, hoping no one had overheard me. From my indignant tone, you'd have thought I, myself, was a gay lady.

"No," she said, shaking her head omnisciently. "They say they're woman-centered, woman-loving women who also like to have sex with men. And who's to say they aren't lesbians?"

"Well, shit, Marty! You may as well say I'm a gay lady, too, since I have enough 'woman-loving' energy to go fishing with the likes of you. If this lesbian thing isn't based at least in part on who you make love with, then I may be as 'woman-loving' as the next woman... or man, for that matter!"

Marty cocked her left eyebrow and looked over at me as if I'd just solved the sphinx's riddle.

"What is lesbianism, then?" I asked. "Sure, it's other things, as well, but by definition, sexual preference is its hallmark. Would you," I asked, "call a man who has sex only with women, but who loves the energy of other men, a gay man? For instance, my ex-boyfriend, Dick, loved to screw ladies."

I tugged back unnecessarily hard at what seemed to be a tiny bite. My adrenalin flowed. I remembered the last time he'd been caught with one of my friends in a less compromising position. "He loved doing that, but would he hang out with women?! Heck, no! He loved other men's company so

by Winn Gilmore

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# AN OPEN LETTER

by DeeAnne Davis

The other day I had a conversation with one of the owners of an African art store located in West Oakland. I ran into a friend at the flea market and at her suggestion, hopped back into my car and headed over to this shop owned by two black men in search of a pair of earrings. I was feeling good about going there with the intention of supporting their business.

You see, I have this vision. It has to do with community. It's a vision of a thriving, healthy, diverse community of black people. Both my creative and political work draws on this ideal. It

**HE ASKED ME IF I EVER THOUGHT IT WAS POSSIBLE THAT I WOULD LOVE A MAN AGAIN? I TOLD HIM I ALREADY LOVE MEN. I CHOOSE TO LOVE WOMEN INTIMATELY, SEXUALLY...**

is essential, in a way, to my survival: the hope, the belief in the goodness of life and its manifestation of strong community to hold us and get us through.

I'm not just talking about the black community. I'm talking about all humans having a base in some community. I'm really talking about a healed planet. Community within community, converging and diverging, pulsing with life. In this vision, individuals stand on their own merit, groups maintain what is unique about their culture, while the whole discovers the value of our commonalities. Yet I know that for black people, any realization of this communal ideal must begin with our own healing.

So, walking into a store where two brothers sell their own crafts, jewels birthed from their

own black hands, was like walking into a piece of my vision. I wanted to believe that I was welcome with open arms, as a sister and all of who I am.

There were three black men in the store. I had come over to find gold hoop earrings. I inquired and one of the brothers asked me if the earrings were for a special friend. I paused, then said yes. He looked at me hard. I met his stare. He was searching for the meaning of "friend." I went into another part of the store to browse and the owner/jeweler followed me. Laughing,

I told him I found my exchange with his friend amusing. Did he want to know if I'm gay? I asked. Are you? Yes, I said, I love women. He wanted to know why. I replied: Women are special. Women fill me up in a way I've never met in a man. I'm me when I am with women. I can explore and feel support, caring, deep understand-

ing, love. We share similar kinds of pain, truth, power.

The conversation progressed over many familiar points of departure. Finally he asked: Do you want to have children? Yes, I admitted. Then you have to come to me. Humph, I thought. And then: I do have options, but, yes, that would be my preferred method. I also believe we can live in community--with me loving a woman, our child relating to both you and the woman in my life who, ideally, would live with me and the child. Then you would both have to be my women, he stated. You would have a relationship with her, yes, but it wouldn't be sexual. Are you saying, he asked, that I wouldn't have a relationship with you either, after I had impregnated you? We would not be sexually intimate. Then, no, he replied, you are disre-

# ON COMMUNITY TIES

garding my needs. I have a need for love, family, to be respected, to be a part of my children's lives and to be with the woman I have loved to bring them into the world. He went on to mention that he had been asked by at least one woman to impregnate her for money. He refused for the same reason.

Noble, I said, but not typical. Most of our homes are fatherless. And, believe me, there is not a shortage of black babies coming into the world. Yet we, as black women, are raising the children ourselves, regardless of our sexuality.

Why not do it as a choice with some power over that part of our lives rather than do it in pain: cause my man done left me or my man beats me. And I want his lovin and I want my children to have a father, but I'd be better off alone...or loved by a woman.

Our children being raised in homes without fathers or male rolemodels disturbs me, and at least in part, suggests that we are supporting its existence by allowing it to continue, I said. Our families are taking a severe beating, from the power structure *and* internally. What are we going to do about our pain--I asked--which does not necessitate me crawling into your arms or bed as a solution/consolation?

I insisted that women have always been the primary caretakers and that I believe there is a way to live in community with men and women, which includes same sex love and childrearing. It already exists. And if it exists, I told him, we have to look at it as a viable choice.

He asked me if I ever thought it was possible that I would love a man again? I told him I already love men. I choose to love women intimately, sexually. I believe we can all work to-

gether in community. There is a place in the black community for all of us.

Then we talked about black men's pain. Their need for the balance of a woman. Her softness. But this softness, I intoned, is in you. You just have to be willing to tap into it, love it, let it be. This hardness you claim I need from you to be balanced and complete, it's in me. I already possess it. I use it every day. It is a part of my legacy.

I told him I believe part of what black men need to do that black women are already doing is

## **WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT OUR PAIN, I ASKED, WHICH DOES NOT NECESSITATE ME CRAWLING INTO YOUR ARMS OR BED AS A SOLUTION/ CONSOLATION?**

talk to each other. Express their pain to one another.

We do talk, he asserted. We know what each of us is experiencing and feeling as black men in America. Our pain is deep and began as children who were not nurtured, but expected to be shells of iron ore since birth. The hugs we needed as boys were never extended to us. The women and men we needed to be understanding and hold us through our pain told us to be men, to wipe away those tears forever. And when we stepped out into the world as these fabled men, he continued, we were knocked down repeatedly. We couldn't find sustaining work or a place in the society where we were allowed to grow, where our brilliance was accepted. So we drink wine on the street corners. Or we lash back. Or we assimilate into deeper pain. Or find some

(continued on page 16)

to be a woman in new york city  
is to be a warrior  
these days  
i'm so sick of violence  
i'm ready to kill somebody  
like every two-footed dog  
i heard say bitch this year  
& laugh/yes every mother's son  
why waste the oxygen?  
consider the greenhouse effect  
& all this so called expression  
of popular culture  
that uses me for an asswipe  
or a jack off rag  
may the poison you disperse  
so freely/choke you slowly  
while mr. t fucks you up every orifice  
(wit no grease)  
& i'll play those records LOUD in yr ear  
yeah motherfucker i house you  
you in MY HUT NOW  
little mister man  
you who are not my daddy  
my brother my son or lover  
MIND YR BIZNESS  
my hair my ass my tiddies  
my girlfriend are MINE  
you know you cd be LIVING  
instead of barking & scratching  
on street corners  
whyn't you STAND UP  
let go of yr dick  
& be a human being.

©1990 storme webber

# WEAVING THE FUTURE of Black Gender Politics

BY CRAIG G. HARRIS

**L**ast weekend I took advantage of a blue moon free afternoon and headed to the Mart on 125th Street looking for some much needed household decorations. I bought three prints: a Horace Pippin, a Romare Bearden, and a Paul Goodnight.

When I returned home, I noticed that I had selected graphics which were predominated by images of formidable, beautiful Black women, and eagerly welcomed them into my environment. I chose to hang the largest, which is my favorite, at the focal point of my living room. It is the 1987 Goodnight entitled "Links and Lineage."

The painting depicts a mother cornrowing her young daughter's hair. The daughter, in turn, is combing out the gray strands of her grandmother who is busy crafting an intricate quilt. The scene reminds of Alice Walker's observation:

**...in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., there hangs a quilt unlike any other in the world. In fanciful, inspired, and yet simple and identifiable figures, it portrays the story of the Crucifixion. It is considered rare, beyond price. Though it follows no known pattern of quilt-making, and though it is made of bits and pieces of worthless rags, it is obviously the work of a person of powerful imagination and deep spiritual feeling. Below the quilt I saw a note that says it was made by an 'anonymous' Black woman in Alabama, a hundred years ago.<sup>1</sup>**

For too long, it has been the unfortunate plight of Black women, as a class, to be forced to create from remnants—weaving the fabrics of their lives into priceless works of art while suffering conditions which are tantamount to crucifixion at the hands of the State and her ostensibly progressive brothers.

Margaret Sloan-Hunter, a founding editor of *Ms.* magazine, articulated such oppression quite eloquently in her keynote address to the National Black Gay & Lesbian Conference in Los Angeles, California, on February 14, 1988. Describing her involvement in the Black Power Movement, Sloan-Hunter recalled that when working with the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), the role of women

(continued on pg. 12)

This piece originally appeared in  
the July, 1989 issue of *Aché*.

# Black Gender Politics

(continued from pg. 11)

was one of "making lemonade, taking care of the children, and giving up a lot of pussy."<sup>2</sup> She continued with a story about asking Stokeley Carmichael about the position of Black women in the movement. His response: "Prone."<sup>3</sup>

Consistent with the beliefs and behaviors of many Black men, Carmichael probably thought his response was rather cool. I doubt that he realized the significance of the relationship between the oppression he encountered from the larger society as a Black man, and the subjugation of Black women by leaders of the Movement and Black men in general, nor the psychosocial stressors which propelled his flippancy.

Psychologist Richard Majors describes this phenomenon among Black men as follows:

Being cool is a unique response to adverse social, political and economic conditions. Cool provides control, inner strength, stability and confidence. Being cool, illustrated in its various poses and postures, becomes a very powerful and necessary tool in the Black man's constant fight for his soul...Cool Pose, however, is not without its price. Many Black males fail to discriminate the appropriate uses of Cool Pose and act cool much of the time, without regard to time or space....Perhaps Black men have become so conditioned to keeping up their guard against oppression from the dominant white society that this particular attitude and behavior represents for them the best safeguard against further mental or physical abuse. However, this same behavior makes it difficult for these males to let their guard down and show affection, even for people that they actually care about or for people that may really care about them (e.g., girlfriends, wives, mothers, fathers, 'good' friends, etc.).<sup>4</sup>

While Majors' makes keen insights into the psyche of Black (heterosexual) males and its manifestations of aggressive, self-destructive behaviors which threaten the stability and cohesiveness of the overall Black community, he fails to investigate the impact of the variable of sexual orientation/affectional preference on intraracial community-

building.

The added dynamic of homophobia to the cruelties manifested by a racist and sexist society has relegated Black Lesbians to a status of voluntary or involuntary outsiders--either not known to, or kept apart from her brothers and heterosexual sisters.

Audre Lorde provides personal examples of this in a speech she delivered at the Women's Center of Medgar Evers College:

When I weaned my daughter in 1963 to go to Washington in August to work in the coffee tents along with Lena Horne, making coffee for the marshalls because that's what most Black women did in the 1963 March on Washington, I was a Black Lesbian....When I picketed for Welfare Mothers' Rights, and against the enforced sterilization of young Black girls, when I fought institutionalized racism in the New York City Schools, I was a Black lesbian. But you did not know it because we did not identify ourselves, so now you can say that Black Lesbians and Gay men have nothing to do with the struggles of the Black Nation.<sup>6</sup>

Lorde describes the fear provoked by Black Lesbians, saying:

The terror of Black Lesbians is buried in that deep inner place where we have been taught to fear all difference--to kill it or ignore it...the one accusation that seems to render even the most vocal straight Black woman totally silent and ineffective is the suggestion that she might be a Black Lesbian...let anyone, particularly a Black man, accuse a straight Black woman of being a Black Lesbian, and right away that sister becomes immobilized, as if that is the most horrible thing she could be, and must at all costs be proven false.<sup>7</sup>

Within the Lesbian/Gay community, women have not been spared the affront of misogyny. According to John Nierenberg:

Gay misogyny is consistently reinforced by confused self-images that result in insecurity

(continued on pg. 31)



## THE ONLY P.C. TALK I WANT TO HEAR REGARDS MY PERSONAL COMPUTER

BY DARLENE ANGELA

i would like to spend some time on something that has been eating away at me for months. it's got to do with this issue of political correctness (a.k.a. "p.c.") i admit i came out (in feminisim, in lesbianism) in a "p.c." atmosphere. i learned the right words to say; i learned the right groups to affiliate with; i learned the right women to associate with; i learned the right books to read. i was one of the many afflicted with "p.c."itis of the first degree. today, i am recovering from "p.c."itis, and i have a story to tell.

hold on girls, 'cause i'm not gonna be too nice. i'm gonna be raw dawg honest. after all, this is Aché, and it is a tool for communication among us. so, if you don't like what i'm gonna say, write it. i'd love to hear from you.

for all of you present "p.c."ers, do you know that fine line where your politics begin to step on the necks of your sisters? are you aware of shoving your correctness in their faces? have you ever noticed that your political correctness is inappropriate? in case you don't know what i'm talking about, let me say it in

(continued on page 33)

We experienced a great deal of conflict in deciding to run this piece, because of its reference to a specific incident, and its being directed for the most part at one individual. However, we did feel this piece attempts to illuminate realities that do exist in the relationships between black lesbians and gay men. What struck us about the piece, above all, was the author's honesty and his courage in articulating some very disturbing (but nonetheless real) dynamics in our interactions. As Aché is committed to the ongoing dialogues that must take place between our various communities, we offer this piece and encourage our readers to respond.

## TALE OF TWO CONFERENCES

by Colin Robinson

FEBRUARY 1988

For me, there is a lonely space at the conclusion of communal rituals like this weekend's national Black Gay & Lesbian conference in L.A., when we separate and go back to our individual battlefronts in our respective cities and communities to continue our work--go back empowered and disappointed, energized and exhausted, re-committed and frustrated, rewarded and challenged, exhilarated and angry. But we go back changed; to reflect, to mourn, and to plan.

I leave L.A. moved by Lesbian feminist Margaret Sloan Hunter's humour and whirlwind remarks at the closing session, grateful for her words to Gay men: "I have hope in you more than any other men on the planet." I leave having listened to her share her special pain at the sexism of Black men.

But I leave without being able to say to her that I hear her, that I have learned to value women from my mothers and my sisters and I know I have not arrived but that it is a continual lesson. I leave without being able to say that though I am with her in her struggle, my own battlefield is (like hers once was) the struggle to love myself--as a man, as a Gay man, as a Black man--that my struggle is also a struggle against sexism, and sometimes against women and feminists and Lesbians.

I leave without saying guiltlessly that femininity belongs to me too, that when I call a man my sister that is a revolutionary claim, as much a tribute to womanhood as it is a celebration of my full self. That it is powerful for me to feminize myself.

(continued on page 15)

**Lesbians at the conference were assaulted by numerous instances of sexism and looksism. One male keynote speaker told a looksist joke implying that a woman would need a magic shop to become presentable. In other instances, one male poet publicly called a lesbian "a stupid bitch," while another described a lesbian as "stinking" in one of his poems.**

**"Black gay men and lesbians gather in Atlanta," by Ayofemi Stowe Folayan  
Gay Community News, February 25-March 3, 1990 (Vol. 17, No. 31), p. 6**

at work in the Bronx  
90:03:12

Dear A.S.F.

I was hurt to read your misrepresentation of a reference in my poem "He Didn't Smell" in your GCN reportage on the recent National Black Gay & Lesbian conference in Atlanta. It is always disappointing--and often painful--when the people we work and struggle together with do not bring their differences to the table, but choose instead to air them in other contexts--especially when they do so in the White press.

While I'm sure it wasn't malicious, you don't really represent accurately for your readers the context of my speech. By mentioning my words in the same breath as Craig's "stupid bitch" remark--with which you equate them--readers lose the fact that they are a specific device in an intentionally ironic poem. But listeners to the poem have

missed that point also. Indeed, precisely because on past occasions on which I've read the poem in public women have felt offended, and after reading the visible responses of the women in the room in Atlanta, I felt some responsibility to explain that the poem is not intentionally offensive and to invite dialogue from the women in the room. Your reporting doesn't capture that.

And of course, you misquote me. I recognize that at long readings, poorly scheduled into hectic conferences, we often don't hear the full context or grasp the intent of a poem, and may easily focus on volatile fragments out of their true context. So here's the full text of the poem--exactly as it was read in Atlanta.

**HE DIDN'T SMELL  
like he should  
like I expected  
he was warm and hairy  
jealous...unpossessing  
flexible and giving  
ready well-to-do  
always reassuring  
sometimes insecure  
forever well-intentioned  
But he was white.**

**Women smell.  
It was worse than I imagined  
when she bled  
she was perfect painted hard and  
brittle candy  
I welcomed her warmth  
her heat when she would melt  
into mercury  
she was full  
but I was always needed  
she could take without my missing  
knew her needs  
and always how to feel  
she was safe  
and sex was risky  
erect her breasts mocked biceps  
she took me up the ass  
But I was gay.**

(continued on page 32)

## Community Ties

(continued from page 7)

kind of in-between gig. He went on to say, I am a jeweler with my own shop, a way for me to live with myself in a country that doesn't give a shit about me. And I make it. But I'm not in a relationship, a deep, caring relationship with a black woman. None of my partners are. This saddens me. I'm looking for a mate, a partner, a woman to grow with and share life.

And so it came back to me: you think black women have had it easy? We are raped by our fathers, brothers, the man next door, the white man. We raise children bare-handed with no one to hold us when we need it. We are told from every corner of society that we are whores, worthy only of giving pussy, producing children or doing domestic work. Even with college educations, we are paid at the bottom rung of the ladder.

For him, he reiterated, it is similar. Everything said about black men is negative. We are lazy, non-fathers, rapists, criminals, not worthy of respect or a dime.

And my loving women, I told him, does not mean I don't love you, as a brother. Loving women is what I need to be whole.

To this he said: So, if all men were together and all women were together, we wouldn't procreate. Please, I replied, humans aren't that stupid. And that won't happen, anyway, will it?

He continued: If you believe in God the creator, you know that He deemed men and women to balance each other, in strength and weakness and procreational

juices.

I don't know what the creator had in mind, I remarked. Maybe She had diversity in mind. I do know that besides men loving and being with women intimately, there are men who love men and women who love women. It exists in the black community, so why won't we accept the reality instead of treating homosexuals like aberrations.

We are all equal. You are the queen of the earth, he said. And we are all going through it, whatever it is. You'll come back. I can see it in your eyes. After you get done experimenting, masturbating with the same juices, out of balance.

You should know this love I have with women is not masturbation. The balance exists within each of us...the ying and the yang, male and female energy. I don't need male juices to prove my love for my male friends, family and co-workers. My children will have significant males in their lives. The community can provide that.

So. The earrings. Yes, we're back to the earrings.

I couldn't leave it alone and added: I do love black men. I just fear that there is so much pain between us that we will never really give each other the kind of support each of us needs to develop the strength that comes from being balanced on the inside. Or if we will ever really see and be with each other whether it be in intimate love, in community, in political struggle, or in creating economic viability.

Maybe the answers to these

questions lie in whatever it is we're going through right now. I think so. Because black women loving women are out here. We're in struggle for ourselves AND the black community. We're skilled, multi-faceted seekers of truth. We're strong. I want the black community to accept us and love us. We are certainly in love with it. It is our brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, aunts, uncles, cousins, nieces, nephews, friends...and lovers.

We said goodbye. He asked me to come again. I did not spend my money there.

I went to the car and drove away, wiping tears from my face. The tears came in anger, disappointment and sadness, a sense of vulnerability overtaking me. I had come to show my support, and in return, I expected to be accepted--whole. But I know that I must never settle. I must demand to be accepted on my own terms. Still, I haven't lost my vision for the African-American community--working together, when necessary, to bring about a changed reality that is good for all of us. After all, it's an integral part of me as a political person AND as a dreamer with high expectations.

**DeeAnne Davis is a writer and actress living in Oakland. She is currently on the board of the Aunt Lute Foundation and is a former editor for Sinister Wisdom.**

# Goodbye to an old friend...

## jeté

by Debra K. Floyd

I will never forget that afternoon about eight years ago when Leon Jackson asked me to partner with him in a dance piece he had recently choreographed. As he explained to me what the dance was about, I grew more and more nervous at the thought of partnering with such a well-known dancer. Leon had just returned to his hometown Oakland after a long stint in New York, where he was in the original cast of the Broadway production of The Wiz.

Of course, the usual and most typical inward response was, why me? I mean, really now, I truly was the new kid on the block when it came to the Black dance community. There were many other women for him to choose who were much more known than me. He said he liked my style of dance as well as my acting ability.

The part that stuck with me most was when he said he believed in me. The piece was extremely challenging to me on the dance technique level and very demanding emotionally on top of everything. I was a wreck rehearsing for this piece because I knew it was to be my debut into the Black dance scene in the Bay

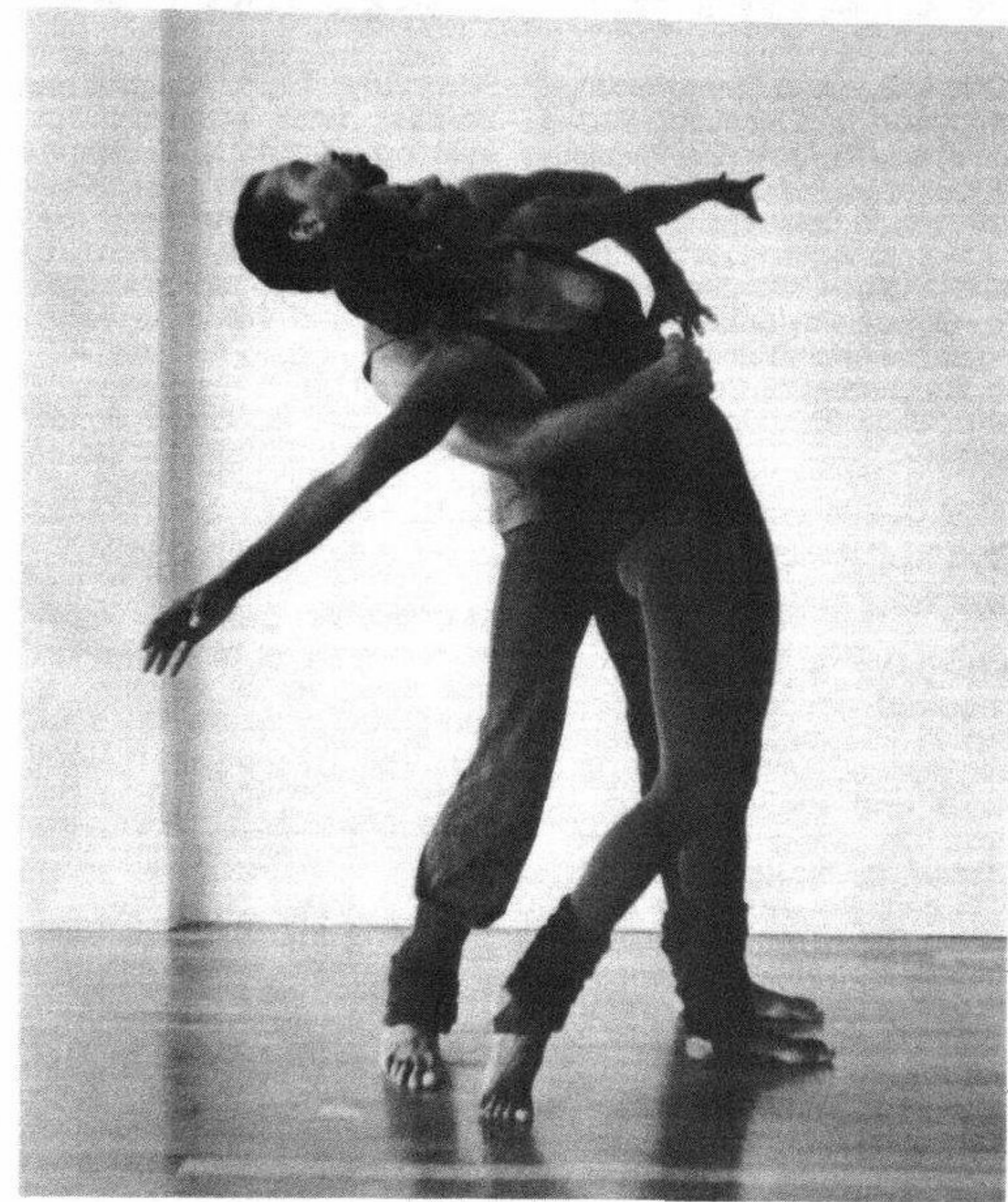


Photo by Harry Wade

Area. I also knew that, along with many Black dancers, the white dance critics were going to be present—and they are known to be the pits in critiquing Black dancers.

As we waited for the curtains to open and the lights to come up, I remember praying that my legs not give out underneath me and that I not forget the steps. Once the music started, I danced and “emoted” as I never have be-

fore. The lifts were smooth and the steps all fell into place. I still can feel the emotional silence at the end of the piece, just before the audience gave us a full house standing ovation. I remember saying to myself that I did not care what the dance critics thought or wrote about the piece, the audience loved it and that was all that mattered. That and the fact that Leon believed in me.

“My Love Is Gone” (the  
(continued on page 34)

# JULY & AUGUST LISTINGS

## ◆ CLASSES ◆

**MONDAYS - Afro-Venezuelan Percussion** is a free ongoing workshop with Jackeline Rago, 5:30pm at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley.

**THURSDAYS - Introduction to Afro-Cuban Rhythms** is a free ongoing workshop with Guillermo Céspedes, 5:30pm at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley.

## DANCE CLASSES

(not listed in the calendar)

**SATURDAYS & WEDNESDAYS (ongoing)** advanced, beginning & intermediate modern jazz dance, with **Debra K. Floyd** and live drumming. These ongoing classes are located at Finn Hall, 1819-10th St. in Berkeley. Advance Beg. are on Saturdays from 10:00-11:30am and Intermed. are on Wednesdays from 7:30-9:30pm and Saturday, 11:30-1:30pm starting with floor barre. Fee \$7.00 single class (there are student and class card rates.)

## ◆ DANCE ◆

**SAT.-SUN., July 14-15 - Harambée Dance Ensemble** presents a Pan African Dance Experience featuring Ancestral Spirits with special guests Bill Bell plus Our Boys Steelpan Orchestra. Oakland Ensemble Theater, 1428 Alice St., Oak. \$10 adv./\$12 door. For more information call 563-3519/532-8558. Box office: 839-5510.

## ◆ EVENTS ◆

**FRI., July 13 - "Unspoken Voices"** is a multi-cultural evening of poetry, music & performance with Jean Weisinger, Angela Wellman, Joy Gamble, Renaye Brown, Stephanie Smith, Julia Youngblood, Maya Valverde, Nina Jo Smith, Angela Pallares, Akiba Tiamaya & Terry Hess. 7:30pm. \$4-7 donation. Benefit for the International Women's Exchange. Modern Times Bookstore, 968 Valencia St. in S.F. Info: 282-9246.

**SAT., July 14 - Camping Women** (currently all black women but open to all women) is sponsoring a "South Bay Winery Tour" (including a non-alcoholic winery visit.) For more information call Danella at (415) 524-8033.

**SAT., July 21 - A Gay Games '90 send-off party for the Asian/Pacific women** going to the Vancouver Games. Fundraiser for a video project documenting their participation. For more information call 482-5920.

**SUN., July 22 - Lesbians in Interracial Relationships Workshop:** look at problems & the impact of racism - develop strategies to cope as well as affirm & support the positive aspects of our relationships. Facilitated by Toni Taylor & Terry Berman. 10am-5pm. \$15-25. Pre-register by 7/18. For more info call 255-9825 or 841-8314.

**SUN., July 29 - Dee Russell & Dave Lippman - Anti-fashion Queen Russell meets Prince of Proto-Fascism George**

Shrub, singing CIA agent from the Committee to Intervene Anywhere. Russell presents wickedly funny characters and skits with a pointedly quirky African-American slant. 7:30pm. \$6-8. La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley.

**MON., July 30 - An artist's exhibit/reading/reception** for Jean Weisinger at Geva's Caribbean Cuisine, 482A Hayes, S.F. 7-10pm. \$8-12 donation. Food/no-host bar. RSVP by 7/25 at 647-3549.

**FRI., August 3 - A Slideshow on Black Women's Goddesses** is an informal but focused discussion with music & slides, researching myth/truth of the original mother and her creation myths as told in ancient Kemet, Sub-Saharan African, and old Europe, and her continuing survival as the Black Madonna. Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 7-9pm. Women only, reservations suggested. \$4-6.

**SUN., August 12 - Camping Women** (see July 14) is sponsoring a "Wandering The Wetlands" trip. For more information call Jeanine at (415) 444-7973.

**SUN., August 18 - The 11th Annual GIT TOGETHER** will be held from 11am to sunset at the Pinewood site in Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland. Activities include food, softball, volleyball, football and music. Charcoal & paper products provided. Bring something to BBQ, drinks or dish to share, \$1 donation to pay for site rental. For more information call 835-1552.

# JULY & AUGUST LISTINGS

**THUR., August 23 - An Open Studio/Birthday Reception for artist Deirdre Harvin** will be held from 6-10pm at Studio, 622 E. 17th St. #2, in Oakland. RSVP to (415) 268-8085.

**THUR., August 30 - An erotica reading featuring Natalie Devora, Karla Rosales and Willye Woman.** 7:30pm. Donation. Old Wives Tales, 1009 Valencia St. in S.F.

## ◆ FILM ◆

**WED., July 25 - The Aché series continues with 2 special videos from Brazil: "Mulheres Negras (Black Women of Brazil)"** an upbeat documentary that looks at the ways Black women in Brazil have coped with racism while validating their lives through their own music and religion. Also showing is **"Update Brazil: Women's Police Stations"** a look at Brazil's innovative solution to domestic violence and sexual assault. The films start at 7:30pm at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. Donations.

**WED., August 29 - Aché presents: a film by Michelle Parkerson "Stormé: The Lady of the Jewel Box,"** an intimate documentary about Stormé DeLarverie, former M.C. and male impersonator of the legendary Jewel Box Revue, predecessor to La Cage Aux Folles. "Stormé" profiles an extraordinary woman, an era, and an integral slice of black and gay history. Also, back by popular demand - **"Hairpiece: A Film for Nappy-Headed People"** a short animated satire on the question

of Black women's hair & self image through an exploration of the world of relaxers, gets and curlers.... The films start at 7:30pm at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. Donation.

## ◆ MUSIC ◆

**THUR., July 12 - Different Touch,** a quartet with the energy of a unique blend of Brazilian influenced rhythms and contemporary sounds of mainstream Latin jazz fusion, will be performing at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. 8pm. \$6.

**FRI., July 13- "Steel Drum Benefit Festival, Part 1"** featuring **Our Boys Steel Orchestra,** a remarkable steel orchestra formed in Tobago in 1955 and recently transplanted to the bay area. This event is a benefit for Steel Band Pan Arts, a community steel drum orchestra. At La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. 9pm. \$10.

**SAT., July 14 - The bay area's hottest Afro-Cuban dance band, Conjunto Céspedes,** will be performing at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. 9:30pm. \$7.

**SUN., July 15 - Grace Jones** will be performing at Club Oasis, 200 No. 1st St. in San Jose. 9pm. \$20 @ BASS. Info: 408-292-2212.

**THUR., July 19- "Steel Drum Benefit Festival, Part 2"** (see July 13) featuring **Harmonics Steelband,** a congenial mix of pannists from around the Caribbean. At La Peña, 3105

Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. 8pm. \$7-9.

**FRI., July 20 - Gwen Avery in concert.** For this special solo performance "Sugar Mama" fuses blues, powerful gospel, and her unique this is music sound. The energy of this performance will keep you out of your seat. New composition "Play With Me" will fill you up. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez, S.F. 8pm. \$10. Info: 895-6221.

**FRI., July 20 - She's back in town!! Clea,** performing jazz & rock & roll & original music straight from the heart to touch your innermost - the cutting edge!! Don't miss this. 8pm at Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave., Oakland. \$5-7. Women only, reservations suggested. 428-9684.

**FRI., July 20 - Linda Tillery's Hoochie Coochie Band** will be performing at the Great American Music Hall, 859 O'Farrell in S.F. 9pm. \$10. For info call 885-0750.

**SAT., July 21- South African township dance music with Diksha** at La Peña, 3105 Shattuck Ave. in Berkeley. 9:30pm. \$7.

**TUES., July 24 - Fela Anikulapo Kuti & Jimmy Cliff** will be performing at 8pm at the Warfield, 982 Market St. in S.F. \$19-20. For info call 775-7722.

**SAT., July 28- Melanie DeMore** whose repertoire ranges from soulful ballads to folk to spirituals and gospel, will be performing at Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. Women only, reservations suggested. \$6-8.

(continued on page 22)

# July 1990

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"		R-"Acoustic Journey" R-"Spectrum"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythms	R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"		R-"Acoustic Journey"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythms M-Different Touch	E-"Unspoken Voices" M-Steel Drum Fest. Pt. 1 R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	D-Harambee Dance Ensemble E-Camping Women M-Conj. Céspedes
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
D-Harambee Dance Ensemble M-Grace Jones	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"		R-"Acoustic Journey"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythms M-Steel Drum Fest. Pt. 2	M-Clea M-Gwen Avery M-Linda Tillery R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	E-Asian/Pacific party M-Diksha R-"Akabu" T-S.F. Mime Troupe
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
E-Interracial Relationship workshop T-S.F. Mime Troupe	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"	M-Fela & Jimmy Cliff	F-Aché presents "Black Women of Brazil" & "Update Brazil: Women's Police Stations" R-"Acoustic Journey"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythms	R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	M-Melanie DeMore T-S.F. Mime Troupe
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
E-Dee Russell/Dave Lippman T-S.F. Mime Troupe	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion E-Jean Weisinger reception TV-"South Africa Now"					
29	30	31				

C-Class, D-Dance, E-Events, F-Film, M-Music, N-Nightlife, R-Radio, TV-Television, T-Theatre

# August 1990

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			R-"Acoustic Journey" R-"Spectrum"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythm M-Cassandra Wilson	E-slideshow on Black Women's Goddesses M-Cassandra Wilson M-Donyell Carter/Glenda Choate R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South	M-Cassandra Wilson M-Rashida Oji T-S.F. Mime Troupe
			1	2	3	4
T-S.F. Mime Troupe	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"		R-"Acoustic Journey"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythm	M-Ray Anderson w/Amina Claudine Myers R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	M-Ray Anderson w/Amina Claudine Myers TV-"Eyes on the Prize Pt. 2" T-S.F. Mime Troupe
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
E-Camping Women TV-"Eyes on the Prize Pt. 2" TV-"Black Power, Black Panthers" T-S.F. Mime Troupe	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"		M-Third World R-"Acoustic Journey"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythm	R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	E-11th Annual Gift Together T-S.F. Mime Troupe
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
T-S.F. Mime Troupe	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"		M-Eddie Palmieri R-"Acoustic Journey"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythm E-Reception for Deirdre Harvin M-Eddie Palmieri	M-Eddie Palmieri R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	M-Eddie Palmieri T-S.F. Mime Troupe
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
M-Eddie Palmieri T-S.F. Mime Troupe	C-Afro-Venezuelan Percussion TV-"South Africa Now"		F-Aché presents: "Storme: The Lady of the Jewel Box" & "Hairpiece: A Film for Nappy-Headed People" at La Peña R-"Acoustic Journey"	C-Afro-Cuban Rhythm E-Erotica Reading M-Yomo Toro	R-"La Verdad Musical" TV-"South Africa Now"	
26	27	28	29	30	31	

C-Class, D-Dance, E-Events, F-Film, M-Music, N-Nightlife, R-Radio, TV-Television, T-Theatre

# JULY & AUGUST LISTINGS

(continued from page 19)

**THUR.-SAT., August 2-4** - Vocalist **Cassandra Wilson** will be performing at Koncepts Cultural Gallery, 480 - 3rd St. (nr. Broadway) in Oakland. Thur. @ 8:30 & 10pm, \$13, and Fri./Sat. @ 9 & 10:30pm, \$15. For more information: 763-0682.

**FRI., August 3** - **Donyell Carter** brings her thought provoking poetry in a rich combination with pianist **Glenda Choate**. Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. Women only, reservations suggested. \$6-8. 428-9684.

**SAT., August 4** - Dynamic singer-guitarist **Rashida Oji** will be performing at Mama Bears, 6536 Telegraph Ave. in Oakland. 8pm. Women only, reservations suggested. \$6-8. 428-9684.

**FRI.-SAT., August 10-11** - The **Ray Anderson Quartet** featuring **Amina Claudine Myers** on piano will be performing at Koncepts Cultural Gallery, 480 - 3rd St. (nr. Broadway) in Oakland. 9 & 11pm, \$13. For more information: 763-0682.

**WED., August 15** - **Third World** will be performing at the Stone, 412 Broadway in S.F. 8pm. Tickets at BASS.

**WED.-SUN., August 22-26** - **Ed- die Palmieri**, the "spaceman of salsa" and the finest pianist in latin music, will bring his band to Kimball's East, 5800 Shellmound in Emeryville. For more information call 658-2555.

**THUR., August 30** - **Yomo Toro**, the reigning virtuoso of the Puerto Rican cuatro, will be performing at Zellerbach Hall on the U.C. Berkeley

campus. 8pm. \$10-16.

## ◆ RADIO ◆

**FRIDAYS** - "**La Verdad Musical/The Musical Truth**" with **Avotcja**. She plays jazz, blues, salsa, reggae, hip hop, and the whole spectrum of Pan-African music. Avotcja's show also has interviews and ticket give-aways. Fridays from 12-3pm on KPOO 89.5 FM. She also hosts "**Rhythm Drive**" on Thursdays from 4:30 to 6pm on KPFA, 94.1 FM.

**WEDNESDAYS** - "**Acoustic Journey**" Surprise yourself with traditional music from Africa, Asia, Latin America and some new ways of using it. Karolyn van Putten pilots this musical voyage including in-studio guest interviews and live performances. KALW, 91.7 FM from 9:00 to 10:00 pm. Call 648-1177 for info.

**WED., July 4, August 1** - "**Spectrum - In Musical Form**" is broadcast the first Wednesday every month with **Tamu Duewa & Sadiki Nia** from 1:30am to 5am on KPFA, 94.1FM

**SAT., July 21** - "**Akabu**" is a monthly program covering local and national issues & events relating to women of color. Hosted by **Tamu Duewa**. 1pm on KPFA, 94.1 FM.

## ◆ TELEVISION ◆

**MONDAYS & FRIDAYS (ongoing)** - "**South Africa Now**" is a weekly news magazine produced by black South Afri-

cans that airs every Monday at 11pm on KQED, channel 9 & Fridays at 8:30pm on KQEC channel 32.

**SAT-SUN., Aug. 11, 12** - "**Eyes on the Prize II**" a tremendous documentary tracing the civil rights movement with rare footage, will be shown on KQED, channel 9, at 12 noon-5:30pm on Sat., and 10:30am-4:15pm on Sunday.

**SUN., Aug. 12** - "**Black Power, Black Panthers**" is a KQED documentary tracing the rise and fall of Huey Newton and the Black Panther Party, their influence on the city of Oakland and the rest of the country, and the fate of the party leaders today. 4:15-5:30pm on KQED, channel 9.

## ◆ THEATER ◆

**SAT.-SUN., July 21 thru Sept. 3** The **San Francisco Mime Troupe** brings its 28th year of free shows in the park. 7/21-22 - Mission Dolores Park, S.F.; 7/28-29 - Live Oak Park, Shattuck & Berryman in Berk.; 8/4-5 - G.G. Park behind DeYoung Museum; 8/11 - Mosswood Park, Macarthur Blvd. at Broadway; 8/12 - Washington Square Park, Columbus & Union in S.F.; 8/18 - Panhandle nr. G.G. park; 8/19 - Rittler Park, Otis Dr. at Grand Ave. in Alameda; 8/25 - Precita Park, Folsom & Precita in S.F.; 8/26 - Glen Park, Bosworth & O'Shaughnessy in S.F.; 9/1-2 - Ho Chi Minh Park, Hillegass & Derby in Berk.; 9/3 - Mission Dolores Park in S.F. All shows start at 2pm. For more information call 285-1717.



" Me "

Alga Pankov 2

## olga francios

I am twenty-two years old. I was born in New Orleans, Louisiana.

\*An exchange between a 20 year old Black American lesbian and a 20 year old Black American man in Southern France.

i am twenty years old  
i am sitting in the middle of southern france, not knowing...  
i am sitting wanting my lover to comfort me, but she's in the states, millions of miles away  
i am twenty years old contemplating the work that i must do. work.  
i am 20 yrs old.  
sitting not wanting to do my french & art history papers?  
wanting to paint, but am unable to lift the brush.  
i am 20 years old, my mother is 38, she can't pay the phone bill. possibly not the rent & she's going crazy because she thinks that i have no money sitting in the middle of southern france. me.  
i am 20 yrs old.  
i spark no art movement. i barely can move myself. i paint on paper, because i once could not afford canvas  
now  
i am 20 yrs old.  
i have 2 thousand dollars.  
my brother was shot down last week trying to take maybe 2 hundred & i am sitting in the south of france, on an unmade bed not knowing...  
i am 20 yrs old.  
i am experiencing lost. & need. & want.  
i am 20 yrs old  
sitting in the south of france, wanting a dream in Paris, i guess she's just a dream & i should let her go, but we all know how hard that is for me.  
i am 20 yrs old &  
i don't understand what happened, i don't understand what's happening  
and i don't think i want to understand what going to happen  
i am 20 yrs old, sitting in the middle of southern france, on an unmade bed.  
fuck it i'm going to sleep.

\*TOLD BY ME

man, when you look at  
me  
i feel your sadness.  
i feel your wanting,  
drink in hand you try  
to make it  
through another night,  
to another morning.  
you toast the madness  
& the fear of  
becoming another  
candidate for residence  
in it's halls.

drink in hand you sit in  
constant fear  
of the street corner  
destiny- the digestion of  
life. we've seen it all  
too often.  
we wonder why so  
many are consumed.  
we sit & we wonder &  
we wonder & we  
watch. the time.  
the clock on the wall,  
the big hands on the 5  
& the small one's  
reaching out for you,  
your heart is tapping  
the admittance desk.  
madness. & i want to  
sing along.

Man, i want to take  
your hand, lift you up,  
press your body against  
mine & give you what  
you think you need .but  
i can't. /there are other  
ways to show you i  
care.

man, i love you.  
don't look at me. leave  
me alone. find someone  
else, i can't help you,  
pour me a drink, where  
the hell is that noise  
coming from, can  
someone please stop  
that damn tapping. or

at least tell me what  
key to sing in.



Np

"Homage - i adore you"

Lya Manira

# Reality Check

by Reatha Fowler

When I initially began composing this, my ideas and thoughts on the subject of men were very emphatic and ideal. I thought of approaching it from my positive experiences with male friends and role models. As an African American lesbian who believes in social change, it is incomprehensible to me that change can be made without men. African American men, although many are sexist, homophobic dogs, are oppressed just as me. I can see that we must all work together to create that change.

## Does The African American Community Hold The Key To My Closet?

I tried looking at this subject with a different approach. I realized a contradiction exists for me. I cannot get past that description of African American men as sexist and homophobic with a desire to oppress me. How do I give my skills and open heart to a community and create a better life for all oppressed people when someone is trying to silence me? How do I say this without sounding like the last angry dyke? It saddens and angers me to realize that my people are disgusted, threatened and frightened by who I am. As a pediatrician, I bring a skill and service to the African American community that is gladly accepted and appreciated. I want to help make a difference for all of us. When the children I work with look at me, often they do not see their mother or their neighbor. I wear my hair and clothe my body in a manner that is not typical for a woman to them. Children are honest and curious. They want to know if I'm a man or a woman. I look into the faces of their mothers and I can see it. *Please can't you be more discreet with your sexuality—your obvious independence from male oppression?*

## Can We Be Gay On Sunday?

The African American church is an excellent

example of how our community is in denial around positive images of gay men and lesbians. Gay men and lesbians are all up and down the aisles, in the pulpit, in the church. They see us, but they feel, as some of our parents do, that if you don't talk about it, it will go away. How long has it taken the African American church to respond to AIDS in our community? How can we be so blind?

## Why Are They Laughing?

Some would agree that our comedy reflects African American thought and life. I was unable to show my support for Karen Williams by attending the Black Comedy Competition. I could not sit through three hours of "brothers" degrading me as a woman, as a lesbian, as a fat person. "In Living Color" is presently a very popular program. But, if you look at the content of the humor you can clearly see that it promotes violence against women and makes fun of oppression. The most popular skit is the one with the two gay men who review movies or books. Black people just love to make fun of us. Those jokes get the biggest laughs with all African American comedians. Does it not feel like a knife in your back? Why is it they rarely make fun of lesbians? Is it safe to make fun of men who are gay because they are seen as weak, but lesbians are believed to be strong and independent, not to be laughed at but feared?

## It Has A Good Beat, But Can You Dance To It?

The plethora of Rap music (which freely refers to women as bitches, promotes doing the "wild thing" to as many as possible, refers to gay men in very negative language, emphasizes using violence to gain respect from women) is frightening. The combination of crack and negative Rap music is killing our children's minds. Young people are making these pea-headed babies (babies with the abnormally small-sized head associated with crack

(continued on page 27)

babies) who have low-earning potential, but will be able to recite the lyrics to a song by N.W.A. I realize that the majority of Rap music is positive and revolutionary, but the media has chosen to publicize the negative and that is what appears to be appreciated by many of our young people.

### Can You Accept Me?

Let me take it to a more personal level. It's OK that I'm a lesbian if I'm just not too open about it. I have a close and dear friend who I love very much. We have been supportive to each other for the last nine years. He's a straight African American man. I've always been out with my sexuality and I thought it was OK with him because we continued to be emotionally close. I've come to realize that it is OK to talk about my lifestyle, but not OK to talk about being a lesbian on a personal level. The last six months have been a difficult time for me. I'm doing some self-discovery, self-acceptance and experiencing loss in a painful way. Whenever I would try to talk about this or express some sadness or difficulty around my ex-partner, I felt shut out by him. My statements or concerns were met with a quick change in the subject, as if I hadn't said what I said. I became invisible as a lesbian. I did not exist. Now I need to reevaluate my friendship and question what truths really exist. This has brought such frustration and pain. If someone who loves me can't really accept me and see me as valid, how do I expect an entire community to accept me?

### Is There Really Something There Between Your Legs?

Looking at the historical position of the African American man one can understand why they are threatened by who I am. Men in society are socialized to oppress, dominate and to flaunt their privilege. This socialization process for the African American male puts them at odds with their oppression as a race of people. Consequently, African

American men have a serious problem with self image. If you are male and of color in an oppressed society, who can you oppress? No one but your woman. African American men have been stripped of their manhood. That's why they spend so much energy holding onto their cocks, the only thing they have to prove that they are a man by definition. Here I come not needing or wanting their dicks. What can they do with me? Even those who have some political consciousness have difficulty with me as a lesbian.

### Did You Say Faith?

I would like to believe that there is a solution to these issues I have raised – solutions that can allow me to be a whole person as I move through our community. I need to be honest with myself about the risks I take in being who I am and working within our community. I am not being fair to myself if I ignore these obstacles. We live so much of our lives in denial. I would rather acknowledge that problems exist and try to find a solution by working together as honest women and men.

☛ next topic "on the table":

**Butch/Femme?!!**  
**ROLES: what they was,**  
**what they is,**  
**what they gon' be?**  
 (DEADLINE: August 1st)

Submissions may be in the form of letters, essays, poetry/prose, short statements, or artwork. Mail submissions to:

**Aché,**  
**P.O. Box 6071,**  
**Albany, CA. 94706**

WE ARE HERE/ PRESENT  
IN THIS CULTURAL CONTEXT  
AS THE BROTHERS SPEAK AGAINST SECTARIANISM  
HETERO-CENTRICITY IS THE ORDER OF THE DAY  
THE BLK MAN LIFTED TO HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE  
AS THE BLK WOMAN SEEMS TO BE ONCE AGAIN  
CAST IN THE SUPPORTING ROLE  
"SAVE THE BLK FAMILY"/ STEP BACK SISTER  
& LET YO MAN TAKE THE LEAD--  
STEVE BIKO WAS A FREE & FREEDOM INSPIRING SPIRIT  
& WE PRAISE HIM  
WE ALL UNDERSTAND THE WRONG OF RACISM  
OPPRESSION ON THE BASIS OF COLOR  
BUT IF I RELAX & FOLLOW MY FEELINGS  
THE WAY YOUR EYES MAKE ME WANT TO  
TOUCH & KISS/ SUDDENLY WE BECOME  
THE TRANSGRESSORS/ SUBJECT TO SCORN  
LOOKS THAT SAY WE ARE PART OF THE PROBLEM  
(& HERE WE BE/ FREEDOM FIGHTERS/ WHO RISK OUR LIVES  
BEIN OUR COLORED LESBIAN SELVES)  
RISK ATTACK/ EVEN BY THESE UNIFORMED/ UNI-FORMED  
MEN WHO PURPORT TO BE OUR DEFENDERS  
WE SEEM TO BE STANDING ON THE END OF THE LINE  
FOR OUR SERVING OF FREEDOM  
WE MAY CONTRIBUTE AS LONG AS WE HIDE  
IN PLAIN SIGHT/ DISGUISE THAT WHICH MAY  
DISGUST THE PARTIARCHAL SENSIBILITY  
MUTILATE OUR WHOLE SELVES/ TO FIT INTO SOME  
CREATED IMAGE OF AFRIKA/ WIT A LITTLE EXTRA  
DOGGING OF WOMEN ADDED IN/ AS COMPENSATION FOR  
YEARS OF "EMASCULATION" & "DEFEMINIZATION"  
NO BROTHER/ THIS AIN'T NO SHAKA ZULU MOVIE  
YOU AIN'T TARZAN ME NO JANE NOR CHEETAH  
MY AFRIKA IS NO BLK AMERIKAN MAN'S ILLUSTRATED/ CLASSIC COMIC  
WHERE HE AT LAST REIGNS  
THE KING IN HIS CASTLE--  
NAW/ MY AFRIKA IS MATRIARCHAL  
(OOH DID SHE REALLY SAY THE M WORD?)  
YEAH/ HERE'S A COUPLE MORE  
MATRI LINEAL MATRI FOCAL  
EVERYBODY ON THIS PLANET DESCENDANTS  
OF ONE BLACK WOMAN/ COME ON Y'ALL  
MY ANCIENT SISTERS/ POWERFUL AND PRODUCTIVE  
RULERS AND WARRIORS  
MOTHERS AND LOVERS OF OTHER WOMEN  
THE SHAMANS/ THE MAGIC WOMEN & MEN  
THE HEALERS/ OFTEN HOMOSEXUAL  
DIFFERENT/ SPECIAL/ WALKED ACROSS SAVANNAHS  
AND NOBODY HOLLERED "QUEER BULLDAGGER FAGGOT"  
WE WAS WHOLE/ IMPORTANT/ RESPECTED  
BEARERS OF CULTURE/ LISTEN SISTERS HEAR ME BROTHERS  
DON'T LET NOBODY CALL YOU OUT YR NAME  
DON'T EVER FORGET WHO YOU ARE.

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## **Womanist Face Aches**

by **Michelle T. Clinton**

history ain't none of my friend  
history loud talks me like worn out worker  
a cleaning lady w/ humiliations  
hidden in the folds of her skin  
culture warns me to hush my mouth  
& honor the blood lines  
as in brother/ as in black/ as in kin ship of slavery  
the way i can't razor cut women & men apart  
the afra/ afro/ american chained  
shackle of nigger sensibilities:

yesterday i drove past 4 black youth  
handcuffed & on their knees  
across the street from usc  
& like 'why-did-they-need-6-cop-cars  
for-4-boys-in-tennis-shoes' type thing  
& everytime rashidi visits the west side  
he gets hassled  
& stopped & searched

never happens to me

& antar told me he can't walk up on a  
white woman alone at the insta teller  
cause his shiney face & hair bumps  
just about stop her heart  
dead from beating

& i usta wanna be a man  
but not for the dick part  
if i could just play off  
a couple of extra inches  
& draw a bogus moustache w/ a felt tip pen  
i could roam venice beach in peace

except as a black one/ i'd look criminal  
w/ shoulders & penis & animal instincts  
cause the man to track you down

just like history hunts my tongue  
w/ its grotesque evidence  
traces of coon  
hunts klansmen took for sport  
celebrating white supremacy w/ razor cuts  
through the groin  
& stuffed our brothers open mouth  
w/ his own testicles

mother sister baby  
love cut the body down  
& cleared the breathing passages  
& cleaned the corpse as if it were a premature infant  
precious & bound for better times  
sweeter places in the future tense  
when manhood could recover & recycle

history as in story as in stolen whipped & lied to  
culture as in colored as in strips of a dissected heart  
what does a survivor of the jewish holocaust say  
to the remains of an african one:

i know you  
your center soft as domesticated animals  
wronged as the white rats who absorb human cancers  
my vagina the most dangerous thing i own  
sends out an aura of infinite vulnerability  
& wraps me in skin  
linked to that suffering

i stretch for body parts that won't go numb  
bring this heart out of shock  
re-birth the dark pulse  
a marrow of gut emotion  
black enough  
to swallow & digest this  
the twisted present  
tense.

---

**PAPI WAS A DANCING MAN**  
**(dedicated to Zenithia & Kito)**

Papi was 25 shades blacker than midnight  
Blue-Black, they called him  
Papi  
was a "pretty -boy"  
Skin so smooth .....  
He looked like he was carved out of ebony  
Papi never just walked  
He was smooth like his skin  
moved like a panther  
like the wind  
like a well sung song  
Papi was beautiful to watch  
wore his pride like armour  
like a weapon  
like a shield  
In cities designed to make him disappear  
He wore his blackness like a badge of honor  
moved through the whiter than thou madness  
with the grace of greased lightning  
Danced his way across stages  
that tried to bury him  
in the filth of "their" fear  
Papi was 25 shades blacker than midnight  
The kind of unstoppable Black  
"they" couldn't hold back  
no matter how much "they" tried  
Papi was untouchable  
Even when "they" tried to get at him  
by trying to get to me  
He danced in "their" faces  
on all "their" sacred places  
and made a joke of "their" ignorance  
By stealing "their" shows (on "their" stages), and  
giving lessons on the real Black Power  
his unshakeable power  
our undeniable survival power  
Papi  
Papi was 25 shades blacker than midnight  
25 times blacker than was tolerable  
by terrified white folks  
by immaculate "knee-grow" jet setters  
Hair "too bad" to be so confident  
too African looking to be so proud  
too loud to be so arrogant  
too damn Black (or so they said)  
But, even when Black was  
a never to be spoken word  
"they" couldn't stop his beauty  
I mean, like  
when Papi smiled  
even the wind held it's breath  
And while all the foolish tongues rattled... he danced  
He danced, and spread his Blackness.....  
across the whiteness of this stolen land  
And he danced, and danced, and danced, and danced,  
and kept holding my hand  
Held on tight til I was strong enough.....  
to see the light & write this poem  
Papi was 25 shades blacker than midnight

Avotcja

# Black Gender Politics

(continued from pg. 12)

**and self-abuse. The gay male...has a variety of motivations for his misogyny: to reassure himself and others of his "masculinity," to reassure other gay and straight misogynists of his alliance with Men....<sup>8</sup>**

Comparing Majors' theory of Black men and the "Cool Pose" with Nierenberg's reasoning for Gay misogyny, we are not surprised to find that many Black Gay men are guilty of repeated conscious and unconscious injustices against Black women in general, and their Lesbian sisters in particular. Black Gay men's discomfort with self-identification of their sexuality and subsequent isolation have further led to their misunderstanding and fear, rather than hatred, of Black Lesbians.

It cannot go unrecognized that the Black Lesbian community is far more advanced along the process of creating institutions and building coalitions rooted in the tradition of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs founded in 1896, the Women's Suffrage Movement, and the Women's Liberation/Feminist Movement. Black Gay men, however, are only beginning the process of organizing to combat the oppression we face as Blacks and as Gays. While this autonomous organizing is an essential element of the growth process of the Black Gay male community, we must be mindful of the need to be attuned to the issues of Black women, particularly Black Lesbians, and incorporate these issues into our agendas.

Black Gay men must also work in coalition with Black Lesbians to learn from each other and to tackle the bias we encounter from our heterosexual sisters and brothers, and the many difficult problems facing the overall Black community. In the words of Barbara Smith:

**Blackness is an inestimable bond....Even as a baby I suffered the result of racial oppression and I had to learn to cope with it long before I had any inkling of what it might mean to be a woman or a Lesbian. This does not mean that racism is more important than other oppressions. But as I've often stated, it is the most pervasive and dangerous oppression in my life.**

**My perceptions about race are not something that I have to explain to activist Black Gay men, nor do I need to delineate the challenge of being queer in the Black community. I also don't have to explain the talk I talk, why I cannot get into white women's music, why I do not call Black persons past a certain age by their first names, or why I am so worried about our youth. It's all understood. We share language, culture, values, the African genius, family ties--in short, we share Blackness.<sup>9</sup>**

Smith is not naive enough to believe that the bond of ethnicity will cause her associations with all Black Gay men to be characterized by mutual respect and cooperation, but rather, ac-

knowledges the growing number of pro-feminist Black Gay men:

**Of course, I am blessed to be in contact with highly progressive and aware Black Gay men who have chosen to define their situation politically and not merely as a lifestyle. I am not saying that our differences never cause problems or that sexism never enters in, but I've observed a great deal of willingness to grapple with these issues. If there's one thing that most impresses me about our interactions, it is how much kindness there is between us. Perhaps because sexual and romantic agendas are suspended, we can all just relax and treat each other like folks. I often imagine what our heterosexual sisters and brothers might think if they could see us, supposed man and woman-haters, steadily working for our liberation and having a damned good time in the process.<sup>10</sup>**

More Black men need to have the sensitivity and political insights of those Smith depicts. More Black Gay men must come to the realization that their oppression is inextricably linked to the oppression of a wide range of disenfranchised peoples, but most importantly, that of Black Lesbians and Black heterosexual women.

It is essential that Black Gay men become visible in the anti-rape movement with the understanding that the same motivation which causes acts of sexual

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## Tale of 2 Conferences

(continued from page 15)

You'll notice immediately that it is not about a Lesbian, nor does it use the word "stinking." More importantly, though, as a writer you must know that everything we say in our fictions is not autobiographical or an expression of our own beliefs or feelings. I hope that after reading the poem, it will be clear that it is ironic and that it deliberately mocks the stereotypes we hold so dear which limit our experiences of each other and our capacity to achieve intimacy. It's so ironic that people don't see past the "women smell" stereotype in the poem to its intent. But, maybe that's *my* failing as a writer.

But the very question of moving beyond the stereotypes is precisely what I want most of all to engage in this response. I may be sounding overly defensive--it is true that your article does not refer to me (or Craig) by name. But what I'm most upset and angry about, actually--and this is what is most difficult to express--is that you didn't come and talk to me. Perhaps my poem appeared provocative and my comments disingenuous? Perhaps it's unfair to expect women to constantly take on the responsibility of explaining to men how and why our actions and attitudes are sexist, or to have to debate with us to convince us of our obvious misogyny.

But I don't think women--or even feminist women for that matter--should have a monopoly over the power to define what is or isn't sexist; that if a woman says it's "wrong," it's wrong. I hope we gave up that oppressive

hegemony with nationalism. I need to be able to speak in some fashion for my own actions and speech in the same way that I ought to take responsibility for them and acknowledge their effects on others.

As a man, I cannot know the hurt or anger or rage or whatever other feelings women may have collectively towards men as a result of sexism and misogyny. I often would like to believe that I have "arrived" sufficiently to be able to, but am constantly reminded of the arrogance of this notion. I can, however, relate to these feelings, given my experience in the United States as a Black man and as a Gay man.

I experienced from several younger Lesbians at the conference--and heard other male friends I trust relate--an anger, an intolerance and an inability to reach out that leaves me frustrated as to our ability to work together. This raises concerns about the future of our movement, as it seems in marked contrast to my experiences of family with older Black Lesbians.

I consider myself pro-feminist, am proud of my sensitivity, and believe, perhaps with a touch of hubris, that my consciousness in this regard surpasses that of many of my peers.

Only recently, however, have I come to recognize the manifestations of some of my less conscious sexism. But as a Black Gay man who has struggled painfully for self-esteem and suffered as my father's child in a household of women, I am learning to give up guilt and learn that my efforts to build my own self-esteem are what are

most important and that my efforts to empower women cannot be at the expense of my own empowerment. It is very easy to hit each other over the heads with damning labels like "sexist," "racist," "homophobic"....(The New Alliance Party has cultivated into an artform they call "Social Therapy." It is quite another matter to care about each other enough to help each other grow and to give each other power.

So, I say all this to say that I am learning to expect my sisters--and therefore *you*--to come to me, to talk to me and to work with me if you have concerns about my sexism. I am beginning to demand that you help empower me to be less sexist, if you have any interest in my being that way. I consider my efforts to learn and to grow genuine and feel that I must be met at least part of the way. And I will not bear the responsibility for how women who refuse this dialogue perceive my actions.

Struggle must be empowering; otherwise it has no value. At the conference I was frightened by the rigidity of the politics of the students younger than myself with whom I spoke--both men and women. (But that may be all about my getting old.) There is no point in my making any effort to grapple with sexism as it affects women if there is no reward for me; if my pro-feminist efforts cannot improve my relationship and my communication with you: why even bother? I'm in this so I can be more honest with you here and now, not so I can adhere to some static higher moral imperative.

(continued on page 34)

# P.C. TALK

(continued from page 13)

Simple terms.

if i'm in a women's center, and i call you "lady," don't throw the book of non-sexist/non-gender specific language usage at me; i do know better. if i call women "chicks" (or chickee), don't verbally vomit to me about how that word objectifies women; i do know better. if i wear eyeliner, lipstick, eye shadow, and a skin tight, low-cut, backless dress topped off with come-fuck-me pumps, don't critique my choice of appearance all the while philosophizing about how i am wearing clothes of oppression; i do know better. if i wear reeboks or don't buy organic food or eat at mcdonald's or paint nudes of women or use the word bitch or

and less rigid and leading me to a more open place where true dialogue can occur and where laughter is appreciated.

don't forget "p.c." can also mean pure caca. politically closed. painfully constricting. pitiful coward. preventing connection. political collapse. and personal computer.

girls, "p.c."itis is stifling. inflexible. closed. unattractive. boring. old. and so are "p.c."ers. so try something new. believe that i know the rhetoric; trust that i've read the right books; assume that i am aware: remember that i can tell the difference between what is and is not oppressive. give me some credit in my ability to make choices in my

**DON'T FORGET "P.C." CAN ALSO MEAN  
PURE CACA. POLITICALLY CLOSED.  
PAINFULLY CONSTRICTING. PITIFUL  
COWARD. PREVENTING CONNECTION.  
POLITICAL COLLAPSE. AND PERSONAL  
COMPUTER....**

have male friends or own a house or am monogamous or am non-monogamous (you see, sometimes what is "p.c." changes) or eat meat or read harlequin romance novels, don't make your women's studies prof or gloria steinem happy by breaking your brain to tell me all you ever learned about "p.c."ness; i know better.

in fact, i know it very well. 'cause i've been there and done come back again. you see, i know that all of that "p.c." stuff, taken to its extreme, can only divide you and me. i know that being "p.c." can be a set-back 'cause it does not take into consideration the fact that maybe i eat at mcdonald's, not buy organic, because i cannot afford to eat anywhere else; or i wear reeboks, but can you honestly say that you live, eat, and shit in an environment that is completely free of oppressing someone somewhere, somehow, sometime; or that my loosened tongue is a mark of becoming less dogmatic

life that are good for me - whether you like them or not. i am not out to spite you, and do not need reminding about how to be "p.c." frankly, i am through with being "p.c." and am branching out to see what it is like to be "p.i." (or politically incorrect, for those who do not know.)

so, the moral of my story is simple: keep your "p.c."ness to yourself if i'm around. i'm having fun stepping out of the restricted boundaries characteristic of "p.c."itis. let me have my hobbies. remember, if you don't like the q-dancers, you don't have to look at them; even better, stay home. but, don't tell me not to look. besides, you know me well enough to know that when the shit hits the fan, i'll be on your side shielding you from the flying pieces and freshening you up. after all, sisterhood is powerful; the personal is political; and trust is mandatory.

## Tale of 2 Conferences

(continued from page 32)

Perhaps the two most valuable lessons I learned at the conference are: (1) the importance of confronting each other directly with our disagreements and differences if we pretend that we care about each other and have any investment in working together; and (2) that political responsibility is difficult and that honesty and integrity are of far greater value than the appearance of political correctness.

What I've said here are things I genuinely believe and feel about how we work together as men and women. I myself have been very guilty of withholding my feelings and criticisms from people with whom I have had differences, but sharing them publicly with others. The last time a Lesbian called me sexist, I thought I was being just the opposite. I went into shock and felt so hurt and disoriented that I couldn't have any discussion with her and was unable to function properly for the rest of the meeting. And I will probably never enter into any constructive dialogue with her, let alone tell her how I felt. So, voilà! For whatever male ego reasons, I'm doing it differently this time. I hope you'll respond soon and that you'll be honest. I hope that you'll respond not only to the substance of the poem, but also to the other issues I've raised here.

Colin

### Editor's note:

There will be a response from Ayofemi Stowe Folayan in the next issue of *Aché*.

## , Goodbye to an Old Friend...

(continued from page 17)

name of that dance) became our signature piece and the beginning of a long standing dance partnership. The theme was about him dying and how I was to go on without him. It began with my solo that flowed into the duet portion, where he came alive and we danced together one last time.

Then, for a brief moment, I turned away, believing that somehow nothing had changed, when I turned back...he was gone. We always took the audience out with that dance, no matter how many times people saw it. Even with all the other pieces we did together, we were always known for this one in particular.

On April 1st of this year, my buddy danced on to another place and I am left to dance without him. My career has taken a few turns, and I have become more of a solo performer. I still enjoy the memories of the times I had rehearsing and performing with him. Audiences loved seeing Leon on stage doing either solo or company work. (We both were founding members of CitiCentre Dance Theatre in Oakland.) No matter what the themes were, he made everything look superb. A part of the dance in me died as he took those last breaths. I am still trying to deal with that performing part of me that is left. I feel all the emotion that I placed so well in each section of that dance. Because we performed it so many times, it became easy to leave all of the various emotions the dance called for imprinted onto the audience and all over the

stage itself. The feelings are real now and a lot harder to deal with for I have no audience or stage to leave them with, just inside of me.

There are days when I think I won't dance anymore, and then I remind myself that I did have a performing career separate from my partnering with Leon. It still hurts and only patience and time will heal all I am going through.

What I did decide to do is wear a black arm band whenever I do anything that deals with dance--be it teaching, choreographing, or once again performing. The black band is a reminder of the good times I had with Leon, of all the tricks of the trade he taught me, and of the tremendous amount of respect I have for such a fine, fine performer. It also reminds me that the dance, art and fashion design community have all been devastated at the loss of very talented and creative men to AIDS. When and how are we going to put an end to this devastation?

I am hoping the black band is a silent reminder for us to examine what we, as individuals, can do--and if we know of someone with AIDS, that we not lose contact with them because of our fears. Dying is a time when love and support take on new meanings for everyone involved.

I miss my good buddy more than I could ever express. To help keep me going, I will always love and thank him for all he gave to me as a Black woman, and as a performer. ●

# Black Gender Politics

(continued from pg. 31)

violence to be inflicted upon Black women, causes the escalation of incidents of fag-bashing. It is important to Black Gay men to support the Equal Rights Amendment with the realization that a capitalist system which denies parity of workers' compensation on the basis of gender, is the same system which disburses unequal pay on the basis of race, and further, will deny employment on the basis of sexual orientation/affectional preference. Black Gay men must become active in the Pro-choice Movement and see the direct correlations between a woman's right to decide not to complete the gestation process and likewise, to be protected from forced obstetrical interventions, and the rights of HIV-infected Black Gay men to access drug therapies through clinical trials.

We must always strive to see these connections and to create a movement which is more powerful, and as priceless as the quilt which hangs in the Smithsonian. As a reminder, and as inspiration, let us look to the images of the three generations of Black women in "Links and Lineage"—the grandmother piecing together the bits and scraps to weave a protective covering for generations to come.

©1989, Craig G. Harris

<sup>1</sup>Walker, Alice *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, NY, 1984, p. 239.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, Craig G., "Coming To Power," *The Advocate*, April 12, 1988, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Majors, Richard G., "Cool Pose: The Proud Signature of Black Survival,"

*Changing Men*, Winter 1986, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Lorde, Audre, *A Burst of Light*. Firebrand Books, Ithaca, NY, 1988, p. 23.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid. pp. 21-22.

<sup>8</sup>Nierenberg, John R., "Misogyny, Gay and Straight," *New Men, New Minds*, ed. Franklin Abbott, The Crossing Press, Freedom, CA., 1987, p. 133.

<sup>9</sup>Smith, Barbara, "Working for Liberation and Having a Damned Good Time," *New York Native*, March 3, 1986, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

Craig G. Harris is a New York based author and activist.

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## WinnSome Words

(continued from page 7)

much that he spent every waking moment — those not spent in bed — bowling with them, watching ball games with them, and tom-cattin' around with them! But, my Dick a homo? Huh!! Get what I'm saying? Loving the company of ones own sex, but sleeping with the other, does not a homosexual make."

"Yeah," Marty half-chuckled, yanking back on her line.

Her rod tip twittered, then bent nearly double. Damn! She had five bass and a trout now, and I only had one bass...huge, but still only one.

"Where's your Dick now... no pun intended," she added haughtily, reeling in a leaping bass.

"Come on, Marty," I moaned. "You know what I mean. Are you trying to tell me that yall are trying to redefine

lesbianism to include bisexuality? I understand," I concluded disgustedly as she landed the jerking rainbow trout, "the power of a community naming itself — like coloreds becoming Negroes becoming Blacks becoming Afro-Americans becoming African-Americans — not that I go that far, myself — but this is too much."

"Uhhnn," she commented, bending over to place a thumb in the flopping fish's mouth smooth as a mother sticking her finger into and around a baby's to removed unchewed food. "Maybe...just maybe...you got a point, there." She smiled, lifting the fish high above her head and smiling at it. "This'll be good eating tonight."

"So, unlike calling yourself an African-American as opposed to a colored person; and unlike referring to yourself as people as opposed to mankind; unlike these things, claiming lesbianism isn't political, huh? It isn't a sexo-politico-holisto kind of thing?" I asked, incredulous.

"Look, I'm not defending them," Marty insisted, swinging around on me, fish in hand. She waved it threateningly at me, and I backed up. "I'm just telling you about some of the things that're going on right now in my community."

"Oh," I said, meekly. "I was just wondering, is all." I almost mumbled. But, like a stubborn catfish, I continued, "Why don't they just call themselves what they are: bisexual. And why you'd get so defensive about them, I don't know. Pass me a salmon egg, please. My bait is attracting all the wrong fish." ●

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## **THE BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH BOOK: Speaking for Ourselves**

*Edited by Evelyn C. White*

In this landmark anthology, black women speak of their experiences and insights on a topic central to everyone's life: health. Forty of the country's most respected writers and health care providers are featured here, including the founder of the National Black Women's Health Project **Byllye Y. Avery**, Planned Parenthood director **Faye Wattleton**, Children's Defense Fund director **Marian Wright Edelman**, **Alice Walker**, **Audre Lorde**, **Pat Parker**, **Angela Y. Davis**, **Barbara Smith**, **Jewelle Gomez**, **Lucille Clifton**, **Imani Harrington** and many others.

The topics range from first-person accounts of management and recovery from health problems -- such as diabetes, stress, cancer, hypertension, sickle cell anemia, lupus, and substance addiction -- to political analysis of the health care system. Other subjects include reproductive rights, teen pregnancy, AIDS, the black women's self-care movement, woman-centered healing, the heritage of black folk medicine, community organizing, and profiles of today's black women health care providers: nurses, midwives, doctors, therapists, dentists and activists.

**THE BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH BOOK** is a direct response to the growing health crisis in the African-American community. It is also a testimony to the collective energy, resilience and determination of black women to lead peaceful, productive and healthy lives.

**THE BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH BOOK**, (list price \$14.95) is now available at bookstores or call/write to:

The Seal Press  
3131 Western Ave. #410  
Seattle, WA. 98121  
(206) 283-7844

### **DEAR SISTERS,**

This letter is to inform you of our collective, the Nia Collective, and to invite you to join and work with us.

The NIA collective was created by and for lesbians of African descent during the Black caucus at the 1987 Lesbian of Color conference in S.F. The word "Nia" means purpose in Swahili. African Americans also know the word as the 5th principle of Kwanzaa, a winter harvest celebration, similar to those held in Africa.

The Collective's principal project has been the Gathering for lesbians of African descent. Our third Gathering will be Nov. 16-18, 1990, at the Marin Headlands in Sausalito. The purpose of the Gathering is to reaffirm our existence; to create a safe atmosphere for growth and empowerment; and to nurture an environment of continual solidarity and warmth in our community. The Nia Collective also sponsors other activities throughout the year.

The Nia Collective is now open for membership to all lesbians of African descent. There is no application process. We would like to invite you to our next meeting on Sunday, July 15th at 10:30am. For further information contact Reatha at 835-1552. We look forward to your participation!!

# From Our Sisters Around The Country

## **I AM YOUR SISTER:**

FORGING Global CONNECTIONS  
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**AUDRE LORDE  
& her work**

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02123. Make check payable to **I AM YOUR SISTER**. For tax deductions, make payable to Boston Women's Health Book Collective with memo note: Sister Conference; or call 617-424-6791 for information.

## **MAMARROOTS: AJAMA-JEBI**

**AN AFRAGODDESS SPIRITUAL  
& CULTURAL NETWORK**

Join our innovative International Sistahood! Sistah-membership includes a free subscription to the quarterly: **MAMARROOTS: AJAMA-JEBI**, dedicated to Afrikan Matristic Spirituality, Mythology, Herstory, Culture & Politics.

**MAMARROOTS: AJAMA-JEBI** (She who can never be guilty when She takes action...) **SISTAHOOD**. Clearly, taking action requires Aché, which the Yoruba people is the Divine Breath of Life...the Vital Force of Balance that connects and flows thru us...MAMA...weaving Her Blessed Life-Breath thru us ALL: to create the Sacred Universal cloth of being...

As Aché is essential to every living creature, it is also essential to create a Spiritual Sistahood of "Afra-Aché" support and sistah-webbing between those of us re-memembering our Afracentric selves, spiritually, mentally, emotionally. **MAMARROOTS: AJAMA-JEBI** is the beginning of a self-affirming sistah-webbing network...a positive network for sistahs to dialogue (NOMMA-the power of wimmin weaving the WORD) and build stronger sistah-bonds, spiritually and culturally.

We welcome contributions & submissions: articles, reviews, images, short stories, rituals, events, correspondence, resources. Membership/sub.: \$18-25/yr. For a brochure of Afragoddess cards, t-shirts and other products by Asungi: send a SASE to: Asungi Productions, 3661 N. Cambell Ave. Suite 108, Tucson AZ. 85719-1524. (602) 327-0987

# BULLETIN BOARD

**THE DEADLINE TO LIST ON THE NEXT BULLETIN BOARD IS AUGUST 15TH.  
THE BULLETIN BOARD IS AVAILABLE & FREE TO ALL WOMEN OF COLOR...**

## ▼ GROUPS ▼

**Al-Anon for Black Gay & Lesbian ACofA's** will meet every Thursday at 7:30pm at Bethany Methodist Church (social hall) 1268 Sanchez at Clipper - enter Clipper St. For more information call 995-2581.

**Support group for Black Lesbians in multicultural relationships** meets the 1st Sunday of each month in Oakland. For info: 839-3302 or 653-5732.

**Black Lesbians exploring the issue of fear** in our lives, and how it separates us. Group meets weekly on Friday eves. 3-month commitment required. For info call Joyce at 839-3302 or Takai at 346-5872.

**Lesbians of Color Support Group** every Thursday evening from 6:30 - 8pm at the Pacific Center, 2712 Telegraph Ave., Berkeley.

**Mujerío**, the bay area Latina Lesbian organization, holds monthly meetings on the 3rd Saturday of each month. 5pm. All Latina Lesbians welcome. Info: 587-7384.

**Multi-cultural Lesbian writers group** forming. For more information call 995-2730.

## ▼ HOUSING ▼

**ROOMATE WANTED**, sunny room in large Apt w/ Bay win-

dows. Great location, North Oakland. \$300. 658-5373

## ▼ NOTICES ▼

**FINALLY! AN AFRAGODDESS SPIRITUAL AND CULTURAL NETWORK:** Join our innovative International Sistahood! Sistah-membership includes a free subscription to the quarterly: **MAMAROOTS: AJAMAJEBI...** dedicated to Afrikan Matristic Spirituality, Mythology, Herstory, Culture & Politics. We welcome \$ contributions and submissions: articles, reviews, images, short stories, rituals, events, correspondence, resources. Membership/sub.: \$18-25/yr. Also, for a brochure of Afragoddess cards, t-shirts and other products by Asungi: send a SASE for info/sub: Asungi Productions, 3661 N. Cambell Ave. Suite 108, Tucson AZ 85719-1524. (602) 327-0987

**TO SEND LETTERS OF PROTEST** of the insensitive depiction of Black Gay men in the television program "IN LIVING COLOR". Letters should be sent to: Jaime Kellner, President, Fox Broadcasting, P.O. Box 900, Beverly Hills, CA 90213. Send a carbon copy of your letter to Gay Men of African Descent and to the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation, both located at 80 Vrick Street, #3E, New York, NY 10013.

Darlene Angela sends her warmest thanks & gratitude to you Black lesbians (you know who you are) who participated in her research project. In May 1990, I received my Master of Arts degree in Research Psychology from SFSU - a feat that could not have been completed without your help. Here reads the preface of my thesis: "I would like to thank the women who had the courage and willingness to speak with me- for without their participation, this study could not have been done...aché."

**THE OAKLAND CHAPTER OF BAY AREA CAMPING WOMEN** (primarily Black Lesbians) upcoming events: July 14-1 day trip "A South Bay Winery Tour". A non-alcoholic winery visit included in this tour. For more info contact Danella, 524-8033. August 12, 2pm-4pm, "Wandering the Wetlands". For more info Contact Jeanine, 444-7973. October 12-14, "Ailensworth Campout", two day festival celebration, rich history of this one time all Black town. Plan ahead for this trip. For more info contact Anita, 548-5124.

**BLACK LESBIAN ANTHOLOGY** seeking quality, unpublished POETRY (any length or form) and FICTION (including plays and experimental pieces). All topics and genres desired: Send poetry to Terri Jewell, 211 W. Saginaw, #2, Lansing MI 48933. Send fiction to Stephanie Byrd, 705 E. Seneca, #7, Ithica, NY 14850. Please send

# BULLETIN BOARD

SASE with each submission and/or inquiry. Deadline: August 15th, 1990.

**Sapphire Theatre Company** is looking for an artist to design their logo. If you're interested contact Sacul at 655-1615.

**WRITING FOR PERFORMANCE**  
A 10-week writing workshop for women of color & working-class women by Cherrie Moraga will begin on July 12, on Thursday from 7-10pm. This workshop will focus on developing both the eye (images) and the ear (musicality of language) in our writing. We will explore forms that are directed toward performance--the cuento, oral history, personal narrative as monologue, dramatic dialogue, performance poetry, teatro poesis, and the stage play. \$150 (payment plans avail.) Held in Mission Dist. (S.F.) location. For info call (415) 641-7657.

Help! I'm a 26-yr.-old African American lesbian looking to connect with my sisters everywhere but especially within Trenton, N.J. and surrounding areas. If this is you, please call me, Lisa (609) 396-0617.

**Are you a disabled woman who likes to perform?** Come join "Why Crips" - Disabled Women's Theatre Arts Project. We do readers theater, skits, songs, etc. Come share your creativity. Give us a call today at (415) 601-5819.

**Donate your paperback books to women in jail!** Especially in demand is poetry, lesbian erotica & fiction, and books by and about people of color. To donate materials contact Amy or Catherine at

Alameda County Library Extension Services, (415) 745-1477.

"80% of the students in the S.F. Unified School District are youths of color" states a school board member. "Are there any gays that are Mexican, Black or Asian?" asks a Lincoln High student. The **Community United Against Violence** Speakers Bureau needs to reflect the population it serves - volunteer!! For more information call Geneva at 864-3112.

Happy birthday wishes to Angela P. For all the hours & hours of proofreading, licking envelopes, meetings, typing, stamping, moral support and overall editor maintenance, thank you.

## ▼ SERVICES ▼

"Let's break the bonds of the emotions of oppression and fly with the sun in our hearts"  
**Counseling for Women**  
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**SUPER FUN KIDSITTING**  
Creative childcare specially tailored to meet your child's personality. Sports, arts and crafts or adventures. Occasional sitting ONLY. Take a break this weekend and leave your kids to us. (Oakland & Berkeley.) Heather, 832-4753.

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Children's rooms, kitchen, and bathrooms. Professional, experienced designer. Montez, 832-4753.

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Black woman mathematician available for tutoring children and adults. \$12/hr. 654-5432.

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Precision haircuts, styles, colors and perms. 550-7666.

**Dancing Lady** who is very interested in keeping her strip tease skills honed, is available for your next special event. If you're having a party or even a smaller more intimate occasion--let me entertain you!! Fee negotiable. For info. call Teri, 532-8836.

# THE BACK PAGE

#A



Artwork by Storme Webber

#C



I love the shapes of us,  
we daughters of the diaspora...

Artwork by Tobe Melora Correal

#B



Artwork by Barbara Sandidge

#D



Artwork by Storme Webber

T-SHIRTS are white 100% cotton available in Lg & XL. (\$12) Sweatshirts are available in red, gold, white, gray in XL, (\$20) 2XL & 3XL. 4XL. (\$25) Not all sizes & colors are available in each design. To order, mail check with your 1st & 2nd choices to: Aché, P.O. Box 6071, Albany, CA. 94706. Phone (415) 824-0703 first to confirm availability.

"Ach  ." Ach  , vol. 2, no. 4, July-August, 1990, p. [1]. Archives of Sexuality and Gender, [link.gale.com/apps/doc/FCUCJQ309848160/AHSI?u=umuser&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=7df4db5f](https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/FCUCJQ309848160/AHSI?u=umuser&sid=bookmark-AHSI&xid=7df4db5f). Accessed 8 Dec. 2022.