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Women & Masks: An Arts-Based Research Conference



MELODY ANDERSON



Melody Anderson (she/her) studied art at Camosun College in Victoria, B.C., and Emily Carr School of Art and Design in Vancouver. She began making masks in 1980 under the mentorship of designer, Catherine Hahn, for the horse-drawn Caravan Stage Company, an avant grade touring company which brought populist political theatre to rural audiences. She later became part of the core group that formed the Caravan Farm Theatre on the company's eighty-acre farm in rural British Columbia. The numerous masks she has made over the years have played a role in forging the Caravan's distinct style and body of work — a genre-defying blend of mask, live music, large scale design elements and site-specific staging marked by eclecticism, inclusivity and audacity.

In 1992, Melody was a member of the collective that created *The Number 14*, (a show set on a city bus, featuring an array of masked characters). The production toured internationally for Axis Theatre for twenty years, including two runs at the New Victory Theatre in New York where it received a Drama Desk nomination.

In the course of her career Melody has created more than three thousand masks for over fifty productions. Her masks are also used for actor training across North America. Her “emotion” masks, inspired by the work of Dr. Paul Ekman, have been replicated by Balinese maskmakers and most recently were 3D printed by Psychology Researcher, Nick Baltneck,

at Institut de Psychologie, Université Lyon, France, for a study based on visual/tactile emotion recognition. His research aims to develop a method to help blind children assess emotions easily. Melody's forthcoming book, *Making Masks*, documents her work and includes step-by-step instructions for the various mask-making processes she employs.

In 2012 Melody shifted her creative focus to playwriting and joined Wet Ink Collective, an organization supporting and promoting women playwrights. Her play, *Me and You*, which follows the relationship of two sisters over the course of a lifetime (employing masks to represent the aging process), premiered at the Arts Club Theatre in Vancouver in 2018.

Scripts in progress include *Ditto*, a wry exploration of the nature of individuality and the ramifications of unbridled reproductive technology; *Fling*, which deals with sexual identity, love, loss, memory and the peeling away of family secrets; and *Mister Aesop*, a fresh examination of the morals of Aesop for young audiences. Her plays are available online at the Canadian Play Outlet.

She is a member of Playwrights Guild of Canada, Playwrights Theatre Centre and Wet Ink Collective, and a recipient of six Jessie Richardson awards and five nominations for both design and collective creation.

She lives in Vancouver, B.C. with actor/playwright Peter Anderson, on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish People, the x^wməθk^wəy^əm (Musqueam), Skwxwu'7mesh (Squamish) and səli'lwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations.



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LAURA ANDERSON BARBATA



Born in Mexico City, **Laura Anderson Barbata** is a transdisciplinary artist currently based in Brooklyn and Mexico City. Since 1992 she has worked primarily in the social realm, and has initiated projects in the Venezuelan Amazon, Trinidad and Tobago, Mexico, Norway, and the United States. Among them is her ongoing project *The Repatriation of Julia Pastrana*, begun in 2005, which resulted in the removal of Pastrana's body from the Schreiner Collection in Oslo and its successful repatriation and burial in Sinaloa, Mexico, Pastrana's birth state. The project continues with upcoming publications, zines, exhibitions and performances.

Barbata is also known for her project *Transcommunality* (2001–ongoing), working with stilt walkers, artists and artisans

from Mexico, New York, and the Caribbean. This project has been presented at various museums, schools, and other venues as exhibitions and "Interventions", among them the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth, Texas; BRIC Arts | Media House, Brooklyn; Rutgers University; United Nations Plaza, New York; University of Wisconsin, Madison; Museo Textil de Oaxaca, México; Museo de la Ciudad de México; MUCA Roma, UNAM, Mexico City; the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum and Newcomb Art Museum, New Orleans.

Her work is in various private and public collections, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; el Museo de Arte Moderno, México D.F.; Landesbank Baden-Württemberg Gallery, Stuttgart, Germany; Fundación Cisneros; Museo Carrillo Gil, México; Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego; Museum of Latin American Art MOLAA, Long Beach; USC Fisher Museum of Art; Museo de Arte de Lima; Museo Jaureguía, Navarra, Spain and Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, among others

Her work has been featured in numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, *Sculpture Today* (Phaidon Press), *Kunstforum Germany*, *ARTnews*, *Art in America*, *ArtNexus*, and *160 Años de Fotografía en México* (INBA).

Barbata is a recipient of the Rockefeller Foundation Bellagio Center artist in residence, 2019; the Anonymous Was a Woman 2016 Award; Defense of Human Rights Award 2017, from the Instituto de Administración Pública de Tabasco, México; an Honorary Fellow of LACIS (the Latin American, Caribbean, and Iberian Studies Program), University of Wisconsin, Madison; and a Fellow of the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary TBA21 Academy; Miembro del Sistema Nacional de Creadores, México (2014-2017) and professor at the Escuela Nacional de Escultura, Pintura y Grabado La Esmeralda of the Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes from 2010 until 2015.

Visit her website is [here](#):





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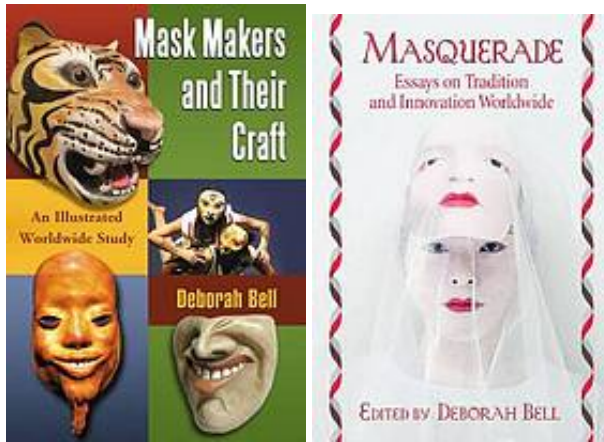


DEBORAH BELL



Deborah Bell has designed costumes for theatre, musicals, dance, and opera and recently retired as Professor of Costume Design at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, where she taught for forty-one years. During her career she lectured at universities in Japan, South Korea, Italy, Estonia, and the United States. A member of United Scenic Artists since 1977, Bell exhibited design work at the Prague Quadrennial and received the American College Theatre Festival's Faculty Recognition Award as well as the Southeast USITT Founders' Award for Outstanding Educator. In 2006 she received the Herbert D. Greggs Award for her article, "The Mask Maker's Magic." Her book, [*Mask Makers and Their Craft: An Illustrated Worldwide Study*](#) (McFarland, 2010 – reprinted in 2014) became a best-seller in the Pop Culture category and is the culmination of interviews with mask makers in Mexico, Trinidad, Brazil, Canada, Japan, South Korea, Bali, Sweden, Italy, Nigeria, Malawi, and both coasts of the United States. She edited [*Masquerade: Essays on Tradition and Innovation Worldwide*](#) (McFarland, 2015).

In Nigeria she explored the work of mask makers influenced by Yoruba traditions, and in Malawi she studied sacred masks created for *Gule Wamkulu* (the Great Dance). She was especially fascinated with carnival designs in Trinidad and Mexican Day of the Dead masks, as well as the masks created by Balinese mask makers for sacred rituals. These special interests became the inspiration for *Designing Weddings and Other Ceremonies*, the course she developed and taught for several years. This course examined the cultural impetus of theatrical spectacle underlying sacred and non-sacred ceremonies and their rituals worldwide.





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VANESSA BENITES BORDIN



Vanessa Benites Bordin is an actress-performer, theater director, and professor in the theater program at the State University of Amazonas (UEA). She received her PhD and MA from the School of Communications and Arts of the University of São Paulo (ECA – USP) in the area of Theater Pedagogy and Theater Artist Training. She has a BFA from the University of Santa Maria, RS. Her artistic and pedagogical practices include: theatrical improvisation, storytelling, clowning and Tikuna masks.



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KATRIEN VAN BEURDEN



Katrien van Beurden is the founder and artistic director of Troupe Courage (formerly Theatre Hotel Courage), an international actor company that has been traveling the world for decades to discover stories of survival in all layers of society. With a bag full of masks she traveled from war zones in Palestine, Iraq, Iran, and Ghana to women's prisons, from extremely wealthy oil families in the US to tribes in India. Together with the archetypal characters Van Beurden creates a stage for the stories and emotions of the local communities to be shared and told. Troupe Courage has developed a modern and completely unique playing style that is both primal and deeply tragic and above all very virtuoso. It always revolves around the ingenuity of people in all their efforts to survive.

With van Beurden's latest project 'Warriors of BB' Troupe Courage now moves into its own neighbourhood. They do not want to meet the people in the neighborhood as the highly educated two-parent families, or the square's business proprietors, but they want to meet the people behind them and perhaps invisible to them: what is their struggle? What are they fighting for or against? How do they survive? And above all, in what unique and brilliant ways do they deal with their struggle? Troupe Courage searches for the neighbourhood archetypes: Who is the shrewd defector? The old man? The silent one? The intellectual? The child? In the performance 'Warriors of BB', people from the neighborhood will meet and get to know themselves and each other in a loving, confrontational and comic way, sharing and performing their survival stories.



“Katrien brought a whole new level of skill and concentration to our work. The work is deadly serious and enormous fun. Katrien is concentrated, critical and compassionate. The work engages feelings way below conscious thought. I am proud to call her a colleague and a comrade.” – Di Trevis, director National Theatre London / Royal Shakespeare Company

“Van Beurden makes theatre at a high artistic level that is accessible to all layers of society; a theatre that has inexhaustible play possibilities, is precise, primordial, topical, vulnerable but above all very much alive. With her skill,

passion and enterprising attitude, Van Beurden has created a theatre in which the most diverse people are automatically connected; a unique harmony that is visible on stage.” – Stef Collignon, director Amerborgh Netherlands

“Theatre Hotel Courage collects stories as an explorer. Everywhere the company goes, it finds stories about people who, no matter how complex the situation, will, must, no will survive.” – Dennis Molendijk, Director

<https://vimeo.com/189594138/86ece82c2d>

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SARAH BERNSTEIN

Sarah Bernstein is an interdisciplinary artist, astrologer, poet and performer. Her work explores the intersection of performance, narrative, astrological research, and diaristic practices. She is currently pursuing an MFA in Time Based Art at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.



"Karen" by Sarah Bernstein

For the conference, Bernstein will present "Karen," a body of work Bernstein created in 2020. This work engages with the gestural language of masked theater traditions, monologue, Butoh dance and astrology. It investigates and creates a thematic bridge between the contemporary cultural usage of "Karen", Hans Christian Anderson's literary protagonist of The Red Shoes (also named Karen), and an astrological interpretation of the asteroid Karen (2651) within the United States 1776 birth chart.

To see more of Bernstein's work, visit her [website](http://www.sarahbernstein.info): www.sarahbernstein.info

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POLINA BORISOVA



Polina Borisova is a Franco-Russian puppeteer, settled in Toulouse. Graduated from the St. Petersburg State Theatre Art Academy, with a major in “puppet concept and stage design” (Russia, 1996-2001), Polina comes to Charleville-Mézières, to enter ESNAM, National Superior School of Puppetry Arts (France, 2005-2008). Today Polina is an associate artist at Odradek / Pupella-Noguès Company. Created in 2011 her solo “Go!” is touring internationally, while she directs workshops and takes part of numerous projects in puppetry and animation.





Join us for Go! On Saturday September 26 at 6 PM EST or watch it on your own time here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=48mBTI5nxtw>. Borisova will take part in a talk back on Sunday September 26 at 11

AM EST.

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JUDY BRAHA



Judy Braha has been a director, actor, teacher and artist for social justice for over four decades. Long-time head of the M.F.A. Directing Program at Boston University's School of Theater, her credits include theaters and universities throughout New England and beyond. With a commitment to raising consciousness around the power of the arts as activism, Judy collaborates with Andre de Quadros in the BU College of Fine Arts **Prison Arts Project**, teaching incarcerated students in Massachusetts' prisons and jails. They also work together within the BU community, teaching the socially conscious Collaborative Arts Incubator and the groundbreaking series **Race, Prison, Justice, Arts**.

As a director, Judy's work often has concern for human rights at its center: ***Golda's Balcony*** (NEW REP), ***To Kill A Mockingbird*** (GSC), ***Emilie, La Marquise du Chatelet, Defends Her Life Tonight*** (CST), ***Othello, I Am Lear***, a devised piece on aging (ASP), ***Deported, a dream play*** (BPT), ***Our Class, Our Country's Good*** and ***The Exonerated*** at BU/SOT and the new work ***Mr. Fullerton*** (GBPT). Most currently, a new solo work about the feminist, suffragist, abolitionist, Julia Ward Howe, ***Representation and How to Get It***. A longtime member of the Society of Directors and Choreographers, AEA and SAG-AFTRA, Judy is also proud to have been a founding board member of Stage Source, New England Theater's service organization committed to connecting theaters, artists and their communities.

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LAINI BURTON





Dr Laini Burton is Senior Lecturer at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University, Australia where she is the Research Higher Degree Convenor. Her research interests centre on body politics, bio-art and design, contemporary art practise and criticism, fashion theory, performance and body/spatial relations. Laini's research activities reflect local, national and international connections as she regularly participates in conferences and panels. At the postgraduate level, Laini supervises PhD, DVA and Masters research candidates whose areas of investigation align with her research expertise. She has been Program Director of Honours Degrees in Design, Fine Art, Photography and Digital Media, Head of Studio Art, and has developed curriculum and taught 1st, 2nd and 3rd-year tertiary courses across art and design. Her recent publications appear in the journal *Fashion Theory: The Journal of Dress, Body and Culture* in both the UK and Russia, the text *Fashion Theory: A Reader* (Routledge), and *What is Performance Art? Australian Perspectives* (Power Publications). Her current publication project, a book titled *Masks in Fashion and Popular Culture: Anonymity, Empowerment, and Identity*, will be published by Bloomsbury, London in 2023.

Image: Powermask Image by Aad Hoogdoorn

For more information: <http://qcagoldcoast.academia.edu/LainiBurton> ORCID ID: orcid.org/0000-0002-2124-6304#sthash.LWFuC7FD.dpuf Twitter: @lainiburton

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MANDUHAI BUYANDELGER



Manduhai Buyandelger received her BA and MA in Literature and Linguistics from the National University of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar and her Ph.D. from Harvard University. Prior to coming to MIT was a post-doctoral fellow at Harvard Society of Fellows. Her first book *Tragic Spirits: Shamanism, Gender, and Memory in Contemporary Mongolia* (University of Chicago Press, 2013) won a 2014 Francis L.K. Hsu book prize from the Society of East Asian Anthropology and was shortlisted as one of the top five social science books on Asia by the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) in 2015. The book tells a story of the collapse of the socialist state and the responses of marginalized rural nomads to devastating changes through the revival of their previously suppressed shamanic practices. Her second book, *A Thousand Steps to the Parliament: Constructing Electable Women in Mongolia* (Forthcoming with the UCP) examines women candidates' competition for parliamentary seats and their transformation into electable selves to persevere in the campaigns that have become defining forces of Mongolia's today. Manduhai Buyandelger's forthcoming projects include "Being Someone Else" on Immersive Technologies such as the VR and other collaborations in Mongolia.



Read Buyandelger's interview on an anthropologist's take on masks in the time of COVID here:

<https://shass.mit.edu/news/news-2020-pandemic-meanings-masks-anthropologist-manduhai-buyandelger>

<http://press.uchicago.edu/ucp/books/book/chicago/T/bo14941659.html>

Winner of Francis Hsu Prize on East Asian Anthropology

<http://seaa.americananthro.org/awards/past-seaa-awards/>

International Convention of Asia Scholars shortlist

<http://www.icassecretariat.org/shortlists-icas-book-prize-2015-ibp-2015>



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MAGGIE-ROSE CONDIT-SUMMERSON



Maggie-Rose Condit-Summerson

(she/her) is an interdisciplinary artist and educator whose work explores the sticky relationships between femininity and the marketplace, embodiment, and the politics of visibility. Her works often incorporate performance and video, regurgitating symbols of the cute and the ladylike by combining materials like cosmetic supplies, confectionary ingredients, smiley face stickers, as well as digital stock images. Maggie-Rose received her MFA in Visual Studies from Pacific Northwest College of Art in Portland, Oregon and is currently pursuing a PhD in Art Education and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at The Pennsylvania State University.



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ANA AND DÉBORA CORREA



Ana and Débora Correa are founding members of the group **Yuyachkani**, which recently celebrated 50 years as a cultural movement in Perú. Their work has been among the most important in Latin Americas so called New Popular Theater, with a strong commitment to grass-roots community issues, mobilization, and advocacy. Yuyachkani won Perus National Human Rights Award in 2000. Since 1971, *Grupo Cultural Yuyachkani* has been working at the forefront of theatrical experimentation, political performance, and collective creation, while making a commitment to collective creation as a mode of theatrical production and to group theater as a life style.

“Yuyachkani” is a Quechua word that means “I am thinking, I am remembering.” Under this name, the theater group has

devoted itself to the collective exploration of embodied social memory, particularly in relation to questions of ethnicity, violence, and memory in Peru. Known for its creative embrace of both indigenous performance forms as well as cosmopolitan theatrical forms, Yuyachkani offers insight into Peruvian and Latin American theater, and to broader issues of postcolonial social aesthetics.

Yuyachkani has created performances intimately aligned with Peruvian society, involving the spectator in an act that is at once reflective and emotional. *Yuyachkani* creates a theater for all that reveals Peru's great diversity, drawing on rituals, the sacred, and Andean space to provoke an introspective investigation into the past that can help us understand the present.





<https://www.facebook.com/Ana-y-Debora-Correa-114916225327367/>

<https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/enc02-interviews/item/1919-enc02-interview-correa.html>

<http://hemi.es.its.nyu.edu/hemi/en/enc07-interviews/item/1797-interview-with-ana-and-d%C3%A9bora-correa>

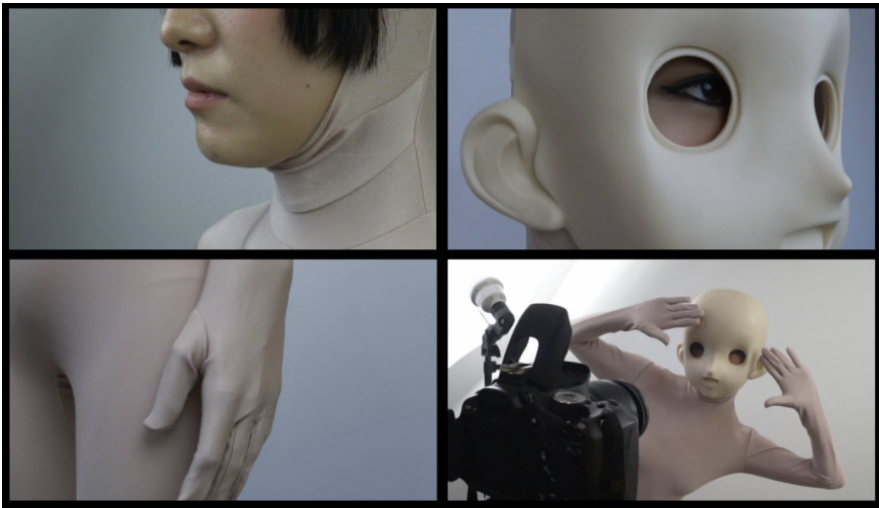


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DHO YEE CHUNG



Dho Yee Chung is a media artist originally from South Korea. Her work questions how media mediates and shapes the narratives of human activity in order to understand the self in the digital era. She holds an MFA in Graphic Design at Yale University. Currently, she is an assistant professor at Oakland University in Michigan.

She writes:

My work entails ideological, cultural, and aesthetic reflections on the meaning and complexity of the new forms of a surface. There are some reoccurring visual themes in my work such as skin, mask, and costume. Within my work, they function as an apparatus that disguises their appearance. In this way, they can manipulate the impression that others might have of them. The use of masks raises a question on authenticity and how hyperreality can be easily fabricated. In addition, masks are considered as extensions of the outer surface of a body within my practice. Just like skin, mask and costume function as a physical system that maintains continuity of contact from its origin point through various transformations. I intend to explore the extended surface where personal desire and the expectations of consumer society are embodied in order to seek a complex stage of mediation between individuals and reality. Furthermore, I am particularly interested in images of women encoded with the desires of consumer society. One of my videos, “A Prototype of Desiring

Being, 2018”, elaborates this idea by depicting a female figure posing in front of a camera. This figure in costume and mask embodies confusions, fears, and desires in response to the projection of social expectation onto itself. The skin-toned costume suggests an empty surface for self-representation, which is a process of externalizing an impression that others might have of oneself. This surface plays a unique role as a shelter, filter, or mask and costume for camouflage instead of a simple representation. My works and research investigate various phenomena happening on this complex surface of representation.

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ATHENE CURRIE



Dr. Athene Currie recently graduated with a PhD from Queensland College of Art (QCA), Griffith University, Australia. Athene's arts practice began in New Zealand where she trained in photography, stage and screen performance. Athene attended the National Art School in Sydney and achieved a BA with Honour's in Photography at QCA. Her short film *Water/milk* (2000) was a finalist in the Pacific Film and Television New Film Makers Awards and recently acquired by Griffith Art Museum, Brisbane. The studio outcomes for *Performing the Transformative* are the live performance *Suitcase* (2021) and an installation of video works screened at QCA Galleries. Dr Currie is a teacher of Visual Art and is currently writing for publication on the theme of Menopause and {I}: Posthumanism, Eco Feminism and Bodily Ego.

PDF of Dr. Currie's work [here](#).



For more information visit: www.athenecurrie.com



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MARIE DARLING



Marie Darling is an artist teacher currently living in the Washington, D.C. area, teaching middle school art in Bethesda, MD. She has been teaching art at the middle school level for 10 years. She received her Bachelor of Arts from Tyler School of Art, Temple University and then her Art Teaching Certification from Rosemont College. Marie graduated with a Master's of Art Education from Boston University, January of this year and is now working on getting her Teaching African Teaching Certification through the African Studies Program at BU.

Marie is a mom of two kids which keeps her busy but is the source of her thirst for knowledge and creativity. Between teaching and motherhood she finds time to create art, keeping her pulse on the art world while helping to influence her ideas for lessons to use in the classroom. As a life-long learner she tries to give her students a way to explore identity,

learn about different cultures and have a more global perspective on everyday life. She strongly believes that art is the great connector and through art, we can gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and each other.

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LAURITA DOLLIS



Laurita Dollis, known as the Big Queen of the Wild Magnolias Mardi Gras Indians, grew up in Pontchartrain Park. Her husband, Bo Dollis (the legendary Big Chief of the Wild Magnolias) brought her into the tradition.

“When I first met him he was already a chief, he was already recording music; I met him in 1976. And we were going out courting, and from that time, I started helping him sew on his Indian suit.”

“Rita’s husband is, who helped bring Mardi Gras Indian culture to international attention in the early ’70s, working with

crack local musicians like Willie Tee, Earl Turbinton, Snooks Eaglin and Alfred 'Uganda' Roberts to blend traditional Indian chants and percussion with New Orleans funk, on wax.”

“I made my suit, and I wore it, and it felt so royal. The royal-ness was unbelievable. The respect that queens get is unbelievable. And from that time I never stopped. That was about 22 years ago. It's a wonderful feeling to wear it.”

From: https://www.mardigras.com/new_orleans_parades/article_7a05076c-c43e-53cc-8d10-d0b7c1181e60.html

Read more about the Rita and the Queens [here](#):

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CHIARA DURAZZINI



Chiara Durazzini is a native of Florence, Italy, and moved to Boston in 2000. She is the co-founder and artistic director of the Commedia dell'Arte troupe "Pazzi Lazzi" for which she performs, teaches and directs, and of the amateur Italian theatre company "All'italiana – Boston Italian Theatre Company" which involves expats and Italian speakers in staging shows by Italian playwrights. With these two companies, Chiara has acted and directed original shows like "Aria di Commedia" (2014), "Isabella Unmasked – The Legacy of an Italian Renaissance Woman" (2017) and "Pinocchio – A Commedia Adventure" (2020), and renowned plays like "Questi Fantasmi" (2018) by Eduardo De Filippo and "La Giara" (2019) by Luigi Pirandello. She has also acted for several local Boston companies: some of her favorite roles include Tinker Bell in "Pan" (Company One) and the Virgin Mary in "Anger Box" (Apollinaire Theatre Company). A dance and physical theater lover and practitioner, she has trained with the Commedia dell'Arte master Claudia Contin Arlecchino, with Tina Nielsen of Odin Teatret and with Prof. Arnaldo Picchi. She obtained her Master's degree in Art, Music and Theatre from the University of Bologna, Italy. She frequently collaborates with mask-makers Eric Bornstein of Behind the Mask Studio (Somerville, MA) and Alice Bertolini of Specialità Veneziane (Venice, Italy).



FOR MORE LINKS RELATED TO CHIARA'S TEACHING, COLLABORATIONS, AND PERFORMANCES:



Pazzi Lazzi Troupe: <http://www.pazzilazzitroupe.com>

Behind the Masks Studio: <http://www.behindthemask.org/>

Specialità Veneziane: <http://specialitaveneziane.it/>

Firenze of Papier Machè: <https://www.firenzeofpapiermache.it/>

Claudia Contin Arlecchino: <http://www.portoarlecchino.com/>

Multi-instrumentalist Dan Meyers: <https://danmeyersmusic.com/>

