

Lenelle Moïse

booking@lenellemoise.com



poet

playwright

composer

performer

“Brings fierce passion.” — *The New York Times*

BIOGRAPHY

Lenelle Moïse is an award-winning poet, playwright, composer and performance artist. She is the author of *Haiti Glass*, a Lambda Literary Award finalist. With humor, charm and power, her solo performances address **intersectional feminism, LGBTQ identities, Black History, Haitian-American culture, immigration, and inclusion**. Her plays include *K.I.S.S.I.N.G.*, the Ruby Prize-winning *Merit*, the Off-Broadway hit *Expatriate*, and *The Many Faces of Nia*. Equipped with an MFA in Playwriting from Smith College, Lenelle leads energetic writing and movement workshops for students and creative adults. To bring her to your theatre, campus or conference, email: booking@lenellemoise.com



QUOTES

“Moïse writes on subjects from race and class struggles to love and feminist-fueled anger, her verses tumbling out in a delivery that's like smooth notes of jazz...soulful.” — *Time Out New York*

“A force of nature—a performer who not only recites her smart, passionate works (from handmade scrolls) but embodies them physically, explosively, and sings as much as she speaks..” — *The Valley Advocate*

“Lenelle Moïse’s work is part love song, part battle cry. A Haitian-American powerhouse, she defies the limits of genre: poet, playwright, performer, essayist, artist and activist.” — *Smith’d*

“Piercing, covering territory both intimate and political...vivid and powerful.”
— *Curve Magazine*

“See Moïse push stories from her mouth like it might save your life.” — *The Root*



POWERFUL READINGS



HAITI GLASS

Lenelle Moïse

Haiti Glass (Book Reading + Signing)

In her debut collection of verse and prose, Lenelle Moïse moves deftly between memories of growing up as a Haitian immigrant in the suburbs of Boston, to bearing witness to brutality and catastrophe, to intellectual, playful explorations of pop culture enigmas. *Haiti Glass* (City Lights/ Sister Spit) lays bare a world of resistance and survival, mourning and lust, triumph and prayer.

Length: 30 to 60 minutes.

Keywords: Haiti, Environmental Disaster, Immigration, LGBTQ, Black History, Women's History

Best Venues: Colleges, Bookstores, Literary Festivals



Speaking Intersections

Celebrating the feminist proverb, “the personal as political,” *Speaking Intersections* is a fierce and lively reading of monologues, poetry, essays and new material about the intersection of race, class, gender, sexuality and spirit.

Length: 45 minute performance, 15 minute Q&A.

Keywords: LGBTQ, Black History, Women's History, Immigration, Unity, Inclusion, Diversity

Best Venues: Colleges, High Schools, Feminist Conferences

DYNAMIC PERFORMANCES



Where There Are Voices (Work-in-Progress)

Looking through a diaspora lens, *Where There Are Voices* braids urgent poems with layered songs. Lenelle Moïse shares intricate stories of creative resilience, stubborn compassion and death-defying love. Whether she's talking about Haiti, conjuring Jean-Michel Basquiat, or recounting her run-in with a skinhead on a crowded city train, Moïse testifies to interconnectedness and the will to live.

Length: 60 minutes, no intermission.

Keywords: Haiti, Environmental Disaster, Black History, Spirituality, Popular Culture

Best Venues: black box/experimental theatres, galleries



Word Life

An interactive, autobiographical one-woman show about coming of age Haitian-American, working-class, politicized and queer. This is a powerfully theatrical fusion of poetry, storytelling and song.

Length: 90 minutes, no intermission.

Keywords: LGBTQ, Feminism, Spirituality, Race, Identity, Humor, Identity

Best Venues: black box/experimental theatres

INSPIRING WORKSHOPS

Equipped with an MFA in Playwriting from Smith College, Lenelle has taught master classes at Northwestern University and the University of Texas at Austin. She has led workshops in poetry, performance, and/or playwriting for Poets House, Planned Parenthood, Fire & Ink, the Smith School of Social Work and more. Visit <http://lenellemoise.com/learn> for workshop descriptions.

Length: 2 to 3 hours.

Keywords: Theatre, Dance, Voice, Creativity, Unity

Best Venue: dance studios, black box theatres, experimental spaces



“Improv, dancing, moving and singing...the balance of fun, laughter and seriousness. [Moise’s workshop] was such a lovely way to be present.”

—Chloe Jhangiani, MSW Council for Students of Color at Smith College



ARTICLE: Lambda Literary Review of *Haiti Glass* by Lenelle Moïse

The year 2014 will be hard pressed to give us a more powerful debut poetry collection than Lenelle Moïse's *Haiti Glass* (City Lights/ Sister Spit). Moïse comes to the page an accomplished performer, poet, essayist, and playwright, having served as Northampton's Poet Laureate and been published in numerous anthologies. Longtime fans of her bold writing will delight in this debut, and its magnetic force will bring waves of new readers to her incredible talent.

This slim collection offers a wild range of form, from narrative poems to short, staccato pairs gracing the page. Moïse deals in the language of contradiction, sharp images and verbs present in nearly every stanza. From the title poem, Moïse juxtaposes glass in a mouth: "wish so hard / scrapes my soft palette." It's a perfect prologue to what is about to unfold. Her poetry embraces everything from her native Haiti, to the experience of an immigrant child, to Basquiat, to the loss of her uncle to AIDS. With brilliant control, Moïse pulls taut the wire that transforms pain into poetry. In "Adaptation," she describes a Haitian child's arrival in New York City: "...with / newborn precision, i pushed / through bodies on a foreign walkway. held / my toddler-immigrant back as upright / as arrogance." Her images echo against each other, creating reverberations that are felt throughout the entire collection.

Several poems illustrate her expertise as a storyteller, including the haunting "Remember Noah," in which pairs of lines stream along, retelling the familiar parable as a sinister act: "if noah had been merciful / he would have taught us how to swim." The precise heat of anger glows in many poems, most notably "Life Is Another Word," which addresses a soundbite news story about the violent rape of a Haitian woman who was forced to perform sex acts on her own son: "a poet will tell you / a thousand times / this shit is / not poetry." We are lucky to have a poet who is specific and brave enough to touch these topics. She weaves intersectionality in sharp metaphors, such as in "Where Our Protest Sound:" "haiti's first cousin / forcibly kissed / by a hurricane called / katrina."

It may be these arresting confrontations with what is heartbreaking and wrong with the world that make her pauses for beauty so gorgeous. In "Madivinez" she calls her mother to ask for the Kreyol word for "lesbian," after not finding it in the dictionary. She later pencils in the new word next to "ke," Kreyol for heart: "glamorous, holy, haitian dyke heart. / something i want / to be." There's a tension of not being fully accepted as a queer woman by the men in her family, but upon this tension Moïse tightropes into stunning epiphany. "Gift A Sea" is a mere two stanzas; while her grandfather is "praying rocks / against the woman / in my love," she remembers:

but before
when i was tiny thirsty
he bought me a vintage typewriter
heavy and teal it splashed under my palms
a thrifted gift a sea in my blood
the first tool
my damp fingers used
to cool and name myself.

This is the rare book of poetry that makes one pause while reading, look up from the page, whistle low. It's poetry to be savored, then devoured, then shared. —Courtney Gillette

Read this article online at: <http://www.lambdaliterary.org/reviews/03/26/haiti-glass-by-lenelle-moise/#sthash.Fnn3lJaq.dpuf>

CONTACT

Official Website
lenellemoise.com

Videos
vimeo.com/lenellemoise

Email
booking@lenellemoise.com

