

The image features a woman's face framed by a blue and white patterned plate. The plate is set on a white lace tablecloth. The woman has dark hair, is wearing large hoop earrings, and has a visible scar on her neck. The text "the good manners of colonized subjects" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

the

good

manners

of colonized subjects

a solo play by

SHEBANA COELHO

*"A harmonic juxtaposition of fierce strength
and joy...a performance in the body,
from the body."*

*- Donna Blanchard, Managing Director,
Kumu Kahua Theatre, Honolulu, Hawaii*

*"a poetic story through gestures, postures,
movements that makes the audience feel every
word, practically taste every word... mesmerizing."*

*-Regina Meredith Fitiao,
MFA, Amerika Samoa*



the good manners of colonized subjects

THE GOOD MANNERS OF COLONIZED SUBJECTS is a solo play about a human animal, fragmented by colonization, who journeys through memoir and myth to confront fear and reclaim lost poetry and dance, indigenous to her spirit, collective to the species.

Written and performed by India-born, New Mexico-based artist Shebana Coelho, it interweaves poetry, monologues, storytelling and choreography drawn from flamenco and Indian classical theater/dance.

In scenes of sound song movement, the play evokes cultural and emotional colonizations— first in the history of British India, in the life of one individual who grew up as part of an English speaking “created class” within the Catholic & Muslim communities of Bombay – and then, the colonization comes closer – it lands in the United States – with narratives about her as a South Asian-American immigrant and encounters with

summary

Duration: 75 minutes.

written, directed, performed
by Shebana Coelho

Developed in
collaboration with:

Larry and Deborah Littlebird
Listening Ground
Story Consultants

Alice Blumenfeld
Manuela Carpio Flamenco
choreography

Aparna Sindhoor
Sanskrit theater

SPECIAL THANKS
G. Venu-Natanakairali Arts

poster photo
Manoj Parameswaran

poster design
Gabrielle Seredowych

performance photos
Genevieve Russell



Indian-ness in New Mexico where she now lives, one of the only U.S states that was also a colony of Spain, with a mix of Native, Hispanic and Anglo inhabitants and complicated histories/views of cultural identity and oppression.

And just when you think this is a story about one kind of colonization, it arrives at another: the core conflict between art and fear. The performer invites fear in for tea – and then is frozen, unable to leave (because she’s a good mannered subject) even when the dancers call....till a dark ant of the earth bites fear and liberates her into healing encounters with land and spirit in the diverse languages that she has lived. The dance becomes ecstasy, returning to our common incandescent experience in the prehistoric cave of art and shadows.

a return to the cave of shadows

As part of a new cross-cultural initiative, Faraway is Close, the play will be presented with accompanying creativity workshops that nurture participants to stand up in their own story.

The primary text of the play is English...with threads of Urdu, Portuguese, Spanish-Caló, Konkani – which reflect the performer’s origins and journeys.



synopsis

PRELUDE: We dip our feet into the lake

A shared Sanskrit ritual with the audience to begin the natya, the drama

IN THE BEGINNING: in the compás of seguiriya

Dance was the first language

MERA NAM, The Journey of Names:

Encounters in Urdu, Portuguese, Konkani and the lament of uncles when the British left India

ELOCUTION part 1, just the facts:

The accepted colonization of voice in elocution

ELOCUTION, part 2, educating Indians: words made square

Quotes on “Indians educated in English” to govern the rest

ELOCUTION Part 3, an invitation into chaos:

The audience chooses anecdotes about how the rivers of colonization, immigration and chaos intersect with South Asian-American identity and being brown during 9/11

SITA on the side:

As my grandmother blesses Sita with her tears, so I speak her story of earth

IN THE CAVE

Longing in the cave that sings a song, but something is in the way

THE GOOD MANNERS of Colonized Subjects: in the key of soléa

Tea with fear...and liberation

THAT CAVE exists

we return to the incandescence of first dark, first art, the first Hominid

HOW TO DANCE, meaning love

The rain dance of the Beloved

mera

nam

kya

hai

whose

story

what

name

elements

by Shebana Coelho



The narrative follows three acts: deconstructing the past, the animal in conflict, and an ecstatic return to origin.



The dance scenes are composed of flamenco floreos, and mudra hand gestures, eye movements and dance (bharatanatyam) elements from Indian classical theater and dance. I've chosen flamenco because it has been my dance of awakening. And there's also an old connection between it and India: the ancient journey of the Spanish Roma gitanos, gypsies who shaped flamenco began in north India. For most of the play, I dance flamenco barefoot.

The play evokes – where do you belong? – not as confrontation but as an invitation to explore, at a cellular level, trace memories of indigeneity and origins. It suggests we can be reconciled through catharsis, creating our own story and living it.

Audience Reactions:

“profound...story and dance and healing.”

“Intensely personal, intensely universal.”

“...a razor wire journey about staying human.”

“... a stunning performance of ...power and true realness.”

[READ MORE TESTIMONIALS](#)





relevance & impact

More and more, we are not only defined by the place we were born, the place we grew up or the place where we happen to live.

Fragmented by colonization, displaced by immigration, we are seeking a different kind of integration. That's the play's journey in memoir and metaphor and that journey is especially relevant now – when as societies, as individuals we are seeing – in action and subtext – the wide reaching effects of colonizing and being colonized.

The title poem came to me so organically. Then I looked up and saw that colonization being discussed everywhere. When I say “decolonizing,” I mean getting rid of a foreignness, and I mean foreign as I’ve seen it used medically – a foreign object, something that does not belong to that particular body, something that is not indigenous to my spirit. It has less to do with only culture, because I believe in the fluidity of cultures and communities inspiring each other, and I feel connected to many different places.



we
are
seeking
a
different
kind
of
inte-
grat-
ion.

I believe that if I go to the necessary depth to tell my resonant story, my hope is that it will inspire others to a resonant depth of listening, creating and connecting.

I feel art heals through metaphor; it creates a safe space for what needs to be seen and borne and transformed.



FARAWAY IS CLOSE

This vision is at the heart of **FARAWAY IS CLOSE**, the umbrella organization for my cross-cultural work. It's why – for the past six years – in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Zuni Pueblo, American Samoa and Mongolia, I've facilitated creativity workshops to inspire participants to create their own embodied poems and stories.

THE FIRST WORK IN PROGRESS PERFORMANCES were on August 12 & 15, 2018 at the Santa Fe Women's Club, Santa Fe, New Mexico, on October 10 at The ARTS at Marks Garage in Honolulu, Hawaii, on January 29, 2019 at American Samoa Community College in Pago Pago and April 27 at The Barn at Gravity Hill, NJ.

The profound audience responses spoke to the play's particular resonance for communities of color, immigrants and activists and also those who come from a legacy of colonizers who described going on a parallel journey of reconciliation as they watched.



the play asks,
where do
you
belong?

Most recently, the play was presented in New York City in **June 2019** as part of the **Pan Asian Repertory Theater's NUWORKS festival** and in **Albuquerque at Maple Street Dance Space in November 2019.**

Every encounter with a new place and audience impacts the subtle energy of the play and inspires an addition or modification. Therefore, instead of premiering the play in one fixed place or in one fixed way, **I prefer to present it in different incarnations - a narrative of co-creating that honors the way the audience is part of the natya, the drama.**

The dream to present these incarnations in the US and internationally, in theaters, festivals, universities, community centers, and in forgotten mythic landscapes such as ruins and caves - along with **cross cultural creativity workshops that dissolve boundaries and fear of the "other" and help us feel our shared belonging to land, story and spirit.**

**Faraway is Close presents Where Do You Belong?
Creative Engagements to Dissolve Borders**


Especially now, I believe it's vital that we inspire each other to remember the histories only we can remember, tell the stories only we can tell, live the lives only we can live; one step, one dance at a time, creating a collective network of resonance and healing.



[Click for PHOTOS of the performance](#)

VIDEO CLIPS
available on request

Stance on Dance interview



Stance on Dance
Creating dialogue and community around dance.

Shifting Geologies, Sifting Forms
September 20, 2018

An Interview with Shebana Coelho
BY EMMALY WIEDERHOLT; PHOTOS BY GENEVIEVE RUSSELL

Shebana Coelho is a writer and performer originally from India who now resides in Santa Fe, NM. Her current project, The Good Manners of Colonized Subjects, combines flamenco, Sanskrit theater and spoken text, and explores themes of colonization, indigeneity and resonance.

Samoa News



Performance artist previews original play at ASCC



Pago Pago, AMERICAN SAMOA — American Samoa Community College (ASCC) students in the class Drama Workshop (DRA 151) and interested members of the campus community witnessed stagecraft of a variety rarely seen on-island last week when performance artist Shebana Coelho visited the College to give a sampling of her work. The ASCC Fine Arts Department sponsored the event, which

Nuestra America Interview
KSFR-Santa Fe

Tue, 7 August 2018

POD **Nuestra America August 7, 2018 Sheban Coelho Poet, Director, Performer**



THESE ELEMENTS MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO BRING THE GOOD TO YOU

I'm open to performing in many different spaces - from a blackbox theater to community centers & outdoor spaces like caves, fields, ruins. If the venue is not a theater, a makeshift stage would be appreciated or risers because a significant portion of the dance is performed close to the ground. If neither of these options are possible, I suggest limiting the seating to 30-40 to allow for staggered seating & clear sight lines.

STAGE Specs: height-16 inches width-7 feet length-8 feet. (taller and wider is fine, this is the minimum size) [CLICK FOR PHOTOS](#)

SET: one small table + 2 chairs. [Photos here.](#)

A SOUND SYSTEM/speakers because there are music cues + SOUND OP/PRODUCTION ASSISTANT who will rehearse with the artist to press play at appointed moments in the play. There are about 9 sound cues and a script that clearly marks them. Ideally, we'll have 2 rehearsals (about 1.5 hours each) before the performance. Alternatively, I can bring a Stage Manager but that is an additional cost.

PROMOTION: I hope you will promote the event enthusiastically through flyers, email, social media, press releases - you know your community best, you know what will work best. Our team has sample press releases you can adapt and we can help with the design of promo materials. Really, what matters most is your having the time and energy because we have learned that it takes all that and more to generate audiences.

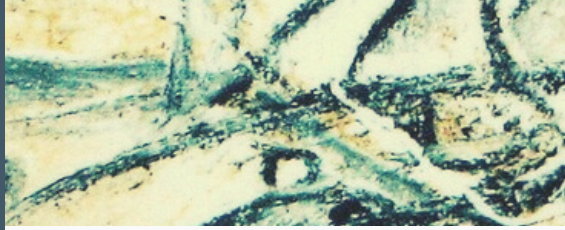
Accompanying workshops: The choices are: a short 45 min "creativity session" before the play or a longer workshop the day before or after or earlier that same day. If it's of interest, I'm open to longer workshops as well. I like to facilitate workshops with participants sitting in a circle. We need enough space to dance and move around. Some refreshments are a nice addition, if possible.

BOOKING FEE

I believe in compensation that honors the value of the production, the artist and your capacity.

Please contact me for more information - what matters to me is that we connect, that I learn more about your community and that we explore together how this project may be of service and inspiration to your audiences.

...may this story inspire the stories only you can tell...



shebana coelho

WRITER DIRECTOR PERFORMER

SHEBANA COELHO is an award-winning writer and director. She received a Fiction Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts, a Fulbright grant to Mongolia and a CEC ArtsLink award.

Her documentaries have been broadcast on outlets such as BBC Radio Four, the Discovery Channel and PBS and have been recognized by a TELLY award and a South Asian Journalist Association best documentary award. In 2017, she produced and directed the documentary, *Nasario remember the Río Puerco* (broadcast on New Mexico PBS), a meditation on landscape and memory, featuring acclaimed NM folklorist Nasario García and his oral histories of a forgotten valley.

She has also written for Al Jazeera America, Howl Round, Theatre Communications Group's Blog, Vela, and Time Out Mumbai. Her poems and stories have been featured in US and international journals such as Chronogram magazine, Slice, Juked, Malpais Review, Mizna, Sin Fronteras, NPR's On Being blog and Best Women's Travel Writing (vol 10).

Her performance training includes nine years of flamenco study in New Mexico and Spain, performances at Spanish Market, recitals, private events and plays, collaborative storytelling with master elder storyteller Larry Littlebird (Heirloom Food and Story, East Indian and Pueblo stories) and intensive Sanskrit theater workshops with practitioners such as G Venu at Natanakairali Arts (Kerala) and Adishakti Arts (Pondicherry). Most recently, she studied in Jerez, Spain with Chiqui de Jerez, Diego de la Margara and Manuela Carpio.

She is the founding director of *Faraway is Close*, a new experiential project that fosters open-hearted connections in story, dance and film, across cultures & communities. For the past 6 years, she has facilitated creativity workshops in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Zuni pueblo, Ramallah (Palestine), Mongolia and American Samoa.

Shebana Coelho is one of those people whose natural grace and intelligence can't help but inspire the rest of us to shine brighter. Her natural voice in writing and open heart mixed with imaginative powers make her a fine teacher of writing.

-Joan Logghe
Santa Fe Poet Laureate 2010-2012
Writing teacher for over thirty years

As one of the founding editors of *Granta* magazine, a novelist, and a creative writing instructor, I have worked with many writers—including Salman Rushdie, Hanif Kureishi and Kiran Desai, who have proved that the multi-cultural world of India resonates to a world audience—and have read thousands more.

Shebana is undoubtedly the real thing, with a sophisticated understanding that identity is a complex and wonderful subject.

-Jonathan Levi
Guide for the Perpelexed





this incarnation has been developed with:

listening ground

STORY/ARTISTIC CONSULTANTS

LISTENING GROUND perpetuates the orality of tribal American people for future generations. Co-founded by Larry & Deborah Littlebird. LARRY LITTLEBIRD is from Laguna and Santo Domingo Pueblos. Over the past five decades, he has been a strong Native voice with a multi-faceted background as a filmmaker, artist, master storyteller, dancer, education specialist, life coach. Deborah Littlebird has worked alongside her husband, Larry as co-producer/director of six annual tribal American storytelling conferences in Santa Fe, story theater productions, oral tradition video and podcast projects and developed educational storytelling curriculums. She co-produced the Native theater production, *The Faraway Drum*, a collaboration between Southwest/Alaskan tribal people which premiered at UNM's Popejoy Hall in Albuquerque and toured nationally. She is the producer and director of the online video series *Slow Story*.

aparna sindhoor

SANSKRIT THEATER CHOREOGRAPHY

Aparna Sindhoor is the Artistic Director of Navarasa Dance Theater, a pioneering South-Asian Contemporary Dance Theater company with a wide repertoire of classical and contemporary works inspired by Bharatanatyam and folk dance forms, martial arts (Kalarippayattu), diverse theater and music traditions, aerial dance, yoga and storytelling. Sindhoor has conceived and choreographed over 20 full-length dance works. She trained in Bharatanatyam (an Indian classical dance form) for over 20 years and holds a Vidwat (Masters) in Dance. Her works have been showcased in the US, Canada, Germany and India including venues and festivals like Jacob's Pillow, Lincoln Center, New Jersey Performance Arts Center, La MaMa and New Haven Festival of Arts and Ideas.

alice blumenfeld

FLAMENCO CHOREOGRAPHY

Alice Blumenfeld holds an MFA in dance from Hollins University and a BA in Comparative Literature from New York University. She received a Fulbright Grant for research in flamenco choreography. Since 2013 she has created five evening length performances, and her choreography has been featured at festivals across the United States. Blumenfeld toured nationally and worked as a teaching artist with Flamenco Vivo Carlota Santana since 2009. She has worked with a range of dance companies, including; Névida Tirado, Jácome Flamenco, EntreFlamenco, The American Bolero Dance Co., Grammy Award winner Hernán Romero, and many others.

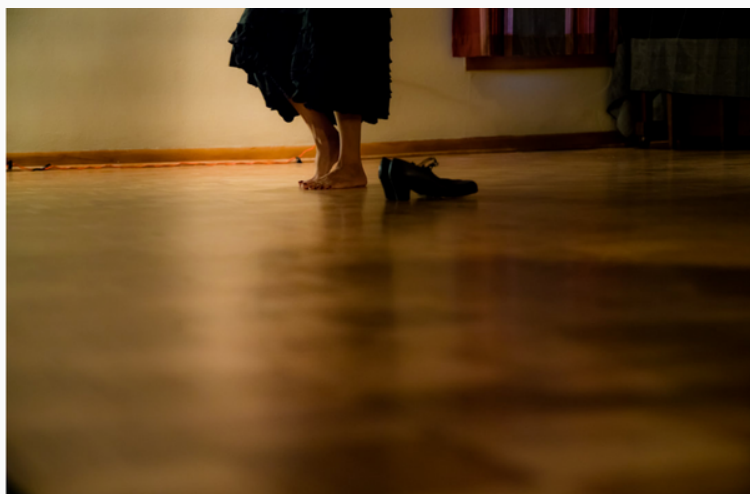


manuela carpio

FLAMENCO CHOREOGRAPHY

Manuela Carpio is a renowned flamenco dancer, singer and choreographer and the descendant of two great gypsy families of Jerez de la Frontera, the "cuna," the cradle of flamenco. She began an international career at the age of nine and received the Copa Jerez de Baile at the age of 17, awarded by the Jerez Flamenco Chair. She is now in her fifth decade and with her company, she has performed to acclaim in numerous venues in Europe and the US such as Carnegie Hall, Teatro Salle Ravel, and Teatro Villamarta.

For "The Good Manners of Colonized Subjects," she has choreographed and sings a special "soléa rota" a broken soléa, with original lyrics written by Shebana Coelho to an old cante, an old song about a forgotten stone in the sea.



the good manners of colonized subjects

INFO/CONTACT

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cell 609 651 5840



EARLIER
INCARNATIONS

SANTA FE
NEW JERSEY
AMERICAN
SAMOA
NEW YORK



(SAMPLE PROGRAM)

FARAWAY IS CLOSE
PRESENTS

where do you belong

CREATIVE ENGAGEMENTS TO DISSOLVE BORDERS

PAGE 12

the good manners of
colonized subjects

a solo play by India-born, New Mexico-based artist Shebana Coelho about art and fear, what oppresses, what liberates, that interweaves poetry, monologues, improvisation and choreography from flamenco & Sanskrit classical theater.

At a time of fraught conversations about borders and fear of the other, the narrative unravels the insidious ways colonization works inside and outside the skin, through culture, history, emotion and celebrates a return to a shared incandescence in the Hominid cave of shadows.

faraway is close
creativity workshop

Inspired by stories and sounds of different cultures - faraway & close - and guided by readings, visualizations, dance and theatrical exercises, we will create short prose/lyric pieces to awaken the story indigenous to you, the one only you can tell.

Through listening to stories from diverse perspectives & creating from that encounter, we connect with who or what may seem "other," borders blur & collectively, we step into our shared belonging to land, story and community

Facilitated by Shebana Coelho



BOOKINGS/INFO

CELL 609 651 5840
SHEBANA@GMAIL.COM
SHEBANACOELHO.COM



HOST A NEW INCARNATION OF 'THE GOOD MANNERS OF COLONIZED SUBJECTS' + CREATIVITY WORKSHOP

SAMPLE PROGRAMS

AN AFTERNOON or

AN EVENING or

A WEEKEND OF

CREATIVE ENGAGEMENTS TO DISSOLVE BORDERS

AFTERNOON PROGRAM: 3-4 hours

Matinee performance of The Good Manners of Colonized Subjects (@70 min)

followed by a 1-3 hour workshop to deepen and explore through metaphor and movement issues of belonging, identity, colonization, cultural hierarchies, indigeneity - raised by the play.

EVENING: 2-3 hours

Evening performance of The Good Manners of Colonized Subjects either preceded or followed by a short creativity session

WEEKEND (over 2 days)

Day 1: evening performance of The Good Manners of Colonized Subjects preceded by a CROSS CULTURAL CHAI reception and followed by a LYRIC INTERACTIVE Q&A that invites sensory and lyric responses to the play.

DAY 2: morning cross cultural creativity workshop to generate prose and lyric, memoir and fiction about decolonizing and re-rooting, excavating the oldest stone in the spirit. intersections with local artists who share 5 minutes of their work that participants respond to in writing. Creating of short embodied performance pieces/staged readings.

Lunch break

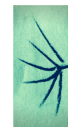
afternoon - informal sharing of writing/staged readings by participants and local artists.

THESE ARE SUGGESTIONS. A STANDALONE WORKSHOP OR PERFORMANCE IS ALSO A FINE OPTION.

FARAWAY IS CLOSE CREATIVITY WORKSHOPS

resonant cross cultural
experiences that connect us to
different cultures and also to what
may feel distant within us, the
stories under the skin.

inSpire
cross Cultural
Encounters
aWaken
pLAy



FARAWAY
IS CLOSE

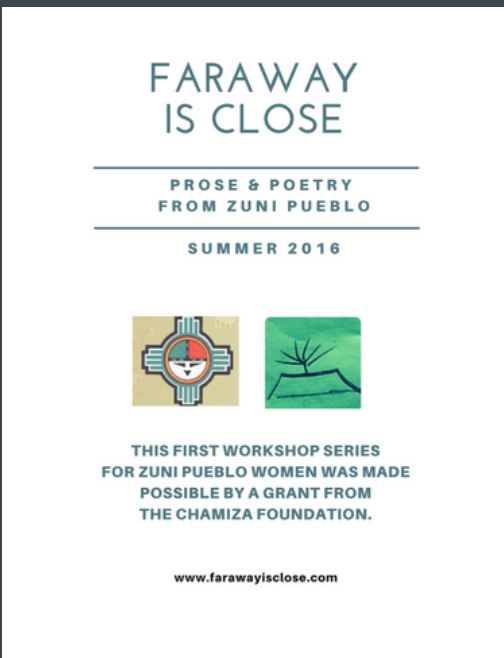
CREATE

*the landscape
of your stories*

farawayisclose.com

SUITABLE FOR EVERYONE - BECAUSE CREATIVITY IS UNIVERSAL

Artists, writers, family care providers, non-profit groups, women's rights activists, theater makers and dancers have participated in these workshops in New Mexico (santa fe & zuni pueblo), Mongolia, American Samoa, Palestine and Hawaii



INFO & TESTIMONIALS
farawayisclose.com



TAILORED WORKSHOPS

INSPIRED ALCHEMY

METAPHOR & MOVEMENT

SELF EXPRESSION IS COLLECTIVE HEALING

FACILITATED BY SHEBANA COELHO

....a writer/director, originally from India, now based in New Mexico. She received a Fiction Fellowship from the New York Foundation for the Arts and a Fulbright to Mongolia. Her work spans genres, stories, films, radio, theater, performance and has been broadcast on BBC Radio Four, PBS among others. She has facilitated creativity workshops for the past six years in Santa Fe, Mongolia, Palestine, Zuni pueblo and American Samoa. shebanacoelho.com

INDIVIDUAL & GROUP SESSIONS