



# Shaina Lynn Simmons

Lead Artist  
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**Shaina Lynn Simmons** is a New Orleans native, writer, performance artist, and activist. Her art reflects the realities of the black woman's experience. And hopes to honor the covert legacy of black women while birthing new possibilities of existence for all women of color. She is the recent recipient of the 2016 Theater Grant from The Puffin Foundation for her recent project AfroFuturo. Shaina's passion for the black diaspora is prominent in her local, national, and international initiatives with [pursuifofnappiness.org](http://pursuifofnappiness.org).

Shaina's latest project AfroFuturo has exhibited at the Ludwig Foundation in La Havana, Cuba and Plaza de La Raza in Los Angeles, CA in collaboration with El Acercamiento. Her one woman show Bayou Blues was shortlisted for the Amnesty International Freedom of Expression Award. It has been produced at the 2015 Edinburgh Festival Fringe, New Orleans Fringe Festival, Capital Fringe Festival, Emerging Artists Theatre Fall New Works Series at TADA! in NYC. Shaina's performed poetry at Bowery Poetry Club, The Inspired Word NYC, BusBoys and Poets, Spit Dat, and featured at the infamous La-Ti-Do.





# AFROFUTURO

AfroFuturo is the historical, mythological, and contemporary realities of Afro Cuban and Afro American women.

AfroFuturo is a photo, video, and live performance installation. It investigates hair as a concept of beauty and the connexions between the historical, mythological, and contemporary realities of Afro Cuban and Afro American women.





*"Oshun: The Weave" 30x60" (2016)*





*"Yemaya: The Afro" 30x60" (2016)*





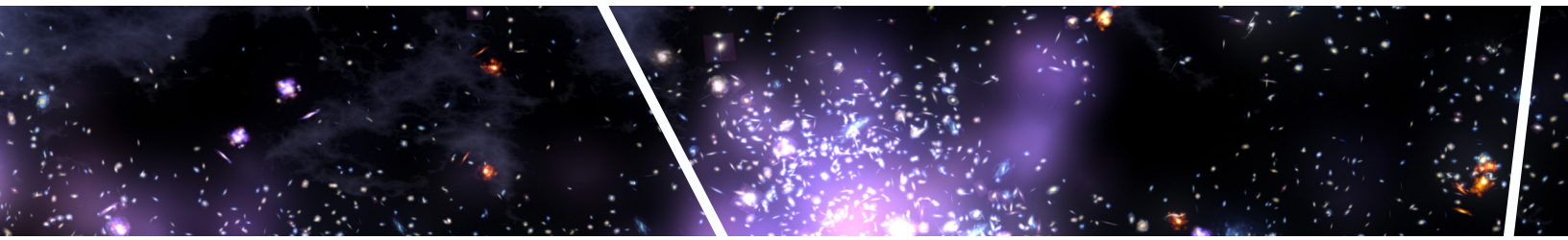
*"Oya: The Braids" 30x60" (2016)*





*(Performance Photos)*





*(Performance Photos)*



SHAINA LYNN SIMMONS | theshainalynn.com  
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## EDUCATION

2017 MFA, California Institute of the Arts, School of Theater, Acting  
2011 BA, Marymount Manhattan College, Theater Arts

## SELECTED EMPLOYMENT

2016-2015 Development Associate, CalArts Center for New Performance, Valencia, CA

Conducted research on prospects, including individuals, corporations and foundations identified by CNP leadership as potential sources of funds for programs and organizational objectives and ongoing research in business, philanthropy and related fields to identify potential donors and donor information. Prepared reports including contact and giving history and record research in database for prospect tracking and cultivation. Participated in the development of fundraising strategy.

2016-2011 CEO/Editor-in-Chief, Pursuit of Nappiness LLC., Los Angeles, CA  
Set strategy and vision for yearly programming. Generated online content for the company websites. Curated and wrote blog and social media materials. Managed international and local community events.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCE

2017 Americorp Artistic Scholar, Los Angeles, CA  
2016 CalArts Teaching Assistant Conversations in Contemporary Theater, Valencia, CA  
2015 Voice and Movement for Theater Workshop, Some Places Chronicles, Los Angeles, CA  
2015 Teaching Artist, Community Arts Partnership (CAP) Plaza De La Raza, Los Angeles, CA  
2015 Teaching Artist, CAP Hart Park, Valencia, CA  
2015 CSI Teaching Artist, CAP, Los Angeles, CA  
2013 Theater Teaching Artist, Creative Kids, Washington, D.C.



2010 Theater Teaching Artist, Double Discovery Center (DDC) at Columbia University, New York City, New York

2009 Theater/Poetry Teaching Assistant, The Black Aesthetics Institute, Washington, D.C.

2008 Theater Teacher/Aftercare camp Counselor, Browne Academy, Alexandria, VA

## WRITINGS/PUBLICATIONS

2016 The Huffington Post: Say Dark Meat: The Wrong Way To Approach A Dark Skinned Woman

## EXHIBITIONS

2017 Afro Futuro Fábrica de Arte El Acercamiento/The Approach Exhibition, Havana, Cuba

2017 Work-in-Progress Rhizomatic Performance Lab Hammer Museum, Los Angeles, CA

2016 Afro Futuro Miami Art Week Centro Cultural Español Miami, FL

2016 Afro Futuro El Acercamiento/The Approach Exhibition, Plaza de la Raza Los Angeles, CA

## SELECTED PERFORMANCES

2017 Bayou Blues, Carolina Performing Arts, Chapel Hill, NC

2017 High Voltage Series, The Electric Lodge, Los Angeles, CA

2016 What To Send Up, Boston Court Theater, Dir. Aleshea Harris, Pasadena, CA

2015 Going Solo Onstage, Some Places Chronicles, Los Angeles, CA

2015 Bayou Blues, Solo, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Edinburgh, Scotland

2014 Bessie & Bill, Bessie, Discovery Theater at The Smithsonian, Washington, D.C.

2014 Glove Story, Bobbi, DC Black Theater Festival, Dir. Ken Pisani, Washington, D.C.

2013 Bayou Blues, Solo, DC Capital Fringe Festival Washington, D.C.

2013 Bayou Blues, Solo, Emerging Artist Theater (EMT) Fall New Works Series, TADA! Theater, New York City, New York

2013 Bayou Blues, Solo, New Orleans Fringe Festival, New Orleans, Louisiana

2012 Proud Nigga 2 Soldier, Lily, dir. Poet AF Black, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania



## AWARDS HONORS & GRANTS

2016 Puffin Foundation Grant for Theater

2016 Diversity Grant, California Institute of the Arts

2016 CalArts Commission for Sustainability Grant, California Institute of the Arts

2015 Interdisciplinary Grant, California Institute of the Arts

2015 RAW DC Performer of the Year, RAW Artist, Washington, D.C.

2014 SheRocks Honoree, Love Life Media, Washington, D.C.

2013 Runner Up, Monologue Madness, Washington, D.C.

2013 June Fringe Artist of the Month, DC Capital Fringe Festival, Washington, D.C.

2009 Miss Elegance, Miss Black Virginia USA, Danville, Virginia

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

2017 Goddess Exchange: LA Self Love, Pursuit of Nappiness, LLC., Harriet Tubman Center for Social Justice Los Angeles, CA

2016 Artist of Color Meet Up, Pursuit of Nappiness, LLC., Edinburgh Festival Fringe Edinburgh, Scotland

2015 Goddess Exchange: NOLA Black Women & Mental Illness, Pursuit of Nappiness, LLC., Community Book Center, New Orleans, LA

2015 Artist of Color Meet Up, Pursuit of Nappiness, LLC., Edinburgh Festival Fringe Edinburgh, Scotland