

# New York Theatre Review

The New York Theater Review began as an annually published collection of plays and essays that has transitioned into a web based indie theater media outlet for the off-off Broadway community. NYTR was launched in 2005 by Brooke Stowe to help increase recognition of downtown New York theater artists and productions and today is managed and edited by Jody Christopherson.

**Tuesday, June 5, 2012**

**Jody Christopherson on Iyaba Ibo Mandingo's "unFramed" presented by soloNova Arts Festival**

*unFramed*

**Iyaba Ibo Mandingo - Writer/Performer**

What's more American than having a critical opinion about your country? Having that opinion censored. Especially if you are an artist. There's something exceptionally dangerous about inspirational modes of expression that rouse people to action. Thankfully.

Spoken word poet, activist, painter from Antigua, Iyaba Ibo Mandingo joined the ranks of Walt Whitman, Amiri Baraka, Allan Ginsberg (and many more) in September 2001. After performing a post 9/11 poem critical of America's history of racism and international relations, he was arrested by the FBI and processed for deportation under the Patriot Act. The poem he was arrested for performing describes a tree used to hang slaves by Abraham Lincoln before signing the emancipation proclamation. After the arrest this poem was not performed in front of audiences. Until now.

Mandingo tells his story while literally creating a self portrait- a mixture of exploring an artists uncensored creative process and the creation of a national work of art (his paint is mixed with soil from the locations he performs in to enhance texture). While the text of his performance does not change, each night he allows his self portrait to be different.

Watching an artist whose medium is storytelling with paint, with slam poetry is different than watching an actor on stage- not to say that Mandingo doesn't entertain, use himself generously or charm the audience (who he directly addresses throughout *unFramed*). There is an authenticity and immediate in his work- similar to the way that Mandingo paints using only his hands. It's as if we are witnessing the absence of tools, of device. Perhaps by allowing truth, ugly and beautiful, the evolution of the moment, we get closer to seeing a clearer picture of what is actually in front of us, *unFramed*.

### **unFramed**

Genre: Storytelling through Poetry and Painting

*unFRAMED* invites audiences into the studio of the artist where poetry and painting ignite. Using canvas, paint, poetry, prose, and song, Antigua-born Iyaba Ibo Mandingo tells his story of life as an immigrant in America, from “Mommy Me No Wanna Go Merrica” - a prophetic piece that hints at the many trials he will face in a new land - to his powerful political poetry that would lead to his arrest and attempted deportation in post 9/11 America. Throughout the play Iyaba shares his rage, his determination, and his hope **while he paints his self-portrait.**

Iyaba Ibo Mandingo - Writer/Performer  
Brent Buell - Director

Perf #1 - Monday, June 4 at 7:00 pm  
Perf #2 - Saturday, June 9 at 7:00 pm  
Perf #3 - Sunday, June 10 at 4:00 pm  
Perf #4 - Wednesday, June 13 at 7:00 pm  
Perf #5 - Saturday, June 16 at 9:00 pm

Tickets are \$20 for individual shows; \$30 for two-shows; \$100 festival pass (50% discount)

Tickets will be available online at [www.terranovalcollective.org](http://www.terranovalcollective.org). Tickets may also be purchased in-person at Box Office ½ hour in advance of the performances.

Running Time: All shows are 90 minutes (or less)

*Jody Christopherson is a performer, writer. She is the editor and creator of NYTR blogspot, a blog she began for NYTR while working under Brook Stowe as a script selector and developer for the NYTR print editions. Jody is also an Arts Blogger for [The Huffington Post](http://The Huffington Post) and has been a guest blogger for [Big Vision](http://Big Vision), [Empty Wallet](http://Empty Wallet), [One Producer in the City](http://One Producer in the City), [Indie Theater Companion](http://Indie Theater Companion). As a theater maker she has been awarded grants from Philadelphia Shakespeare, Bowery Arts and Sciences, commissions from Blue Box productions and the Exquisite Corpse Festival. Her work as an performer has been seen at: Ensemble Studio Theater, the Humana Festival, Classic Stage Company, the Bushwick Starr,*

*Bowery Poetry Club, The Brick Theater, Nebraska Rep, Here Arts Center and more. Member, [Independent Theater Bloggers Association](#).*