

## Violet Harlo Biography

Shape-shifting and genre-bending, Violet Harlo is a transdisciplinary artist who weaves together storytelling, sound, movement, sculpture, drawing, and video into live works of art.

Since 1990, Violet Harlo has performed and exhibited at 85 venues in 42 cities in the United States, Canada and Scotland. Highlights include screening a video series at MOMA, singing a duet with the renowned poet Jerome Rothenberg at Poet's House in NYC, touring upstate New York migrant camps with Border Art Workshop, and representing the United States for an international performance series at Banff Center for the Arts in Canada.

Harlo's unique form of stage performance is multi-layered and often incorporates kinetic and wearable props, soundscapes, unusual costumes, live video projection, and a three-dimensional form of cognitive mapping. Harlo seeks to create a multi-sensory experience so that the artwork is not just what is happening on stage but also what audience members conjure in their minds of what they witness. Thus, a part of the artwork is what the audience takes with them when they leave.

In addition to contemporary stage and gallery spaces such as PS122 and PS1 in New York and LACE in Los Angeles, Harlo has also performed at unusual site-specific environments such a dry creek bed in St. Louis, a farm hayloft in upstate New York, and a theater carved out of an underground train yard in Glasgow, Scotland. Harlo's largest site-specific project *The Reversicon* began in 2006 at the Headlands Center for the Arts as a way to performatively engage with the environment of the center. Since then, the project has expanded to 51 sites in 14 regional areas across the country and involved two dozen collaborators.

Harlo is a passionate Teaching Artist who has taught students of all ages. Harlo believes everyone deserves access to the arts, and it shows in the range of contexts in which she has taught for the past 27 years: universities, public schools, city programs, veterans centers, arts organizations, migrant camps, libraries, a tribal reservation school, homeless shelters, and a safe house for orphans without immigration papers.

An expert educator in performance art and arts integration, Harlo has guest lectured at 20 universities since 1990. From 1995-1998, Harlo founded and directed the 4D Institute for Live Art where they worked with community members to explore and share their stories through performance art. From 2005-2012, Harlo had an on-going relationship with the Performance Studies PhD program of Southern Illinois University as a visiting artist sharing strategies for developing layered, authentic performance work.

More information at [www.violetharlo.com](http://www.violetharlo.com).



## **Violet Harlo's Visiting Artist Engagement Offerings**

### **Individual or Small Group Consultations**

Consultations are usually 30 minutes on campus or longer sessions during meals. Harlo suggests students come to the meeting with a "burning question" about their research, creative practice or performance work. This question provides the basis for the exploratory discussion, and Harlo often makes cognitive maps to track the topics covered. These notes and information about resources are given to the student to continue their investigation. Students are welcome to audio record sessions.

*"Through their work and teaching, Violet has taught me to use art to look for strange and beautiful answers to the many questions I have about myself and the world."*

- Joe Hassert, Professor, College of Southern Nevada, NV

### **Class Visits or Workshops**

Each visit is custom-designed to match the class framework and the needs of the teacher and students. For instance, Harlo can provide a presentation on how her work relates to the class topics and participate in class discussion. Harlo can also view student work in progress and provide feedback or facilitate a group reflection process for student ensemble work. Harlo can also lead workshops during or outside class time that support class material. Workshops can also be a way to introduce students to techniques that Harlo uses such as: developing personal narrative text, creating a performative response to text or performance, using charismatic props and costumes in innovative ways, supporting a solo performer with a physical theatre version of the Greek Chorus, and exploring developmental scores for creating performance work.

*"Harlo is real and riveting. Their workshops encourage you to think with your whole body."*

- Nicole Defenbaugh, Professor, Performance Studies, Bloomsburg University, PA

### **Site-Specific Performance Project – *The Reversicon***

Students are invited to participate in Harlo's ongoing project *The Reversicon*. This project began at the Headlands Center for the Arts in 2006 as a way for Harlo to performatively explore the unusual environment of the center. The project has since expanded to 51 locations in 14 regional areas. Harlo has worked with two dozen collaborators – including 14 Performance Studies students from Louisiana State University and Southern Illinois University. Students choose a local site that is meaningful to them and create site-specific performance for two hours while documenting the process through photography. Performances involve duets, small groups and the whole group. Everyone has an opportunity to perform, document, witness, and reflect. If possible, students are invited to review the documentation and create a short slideshow to share with their performance community.

*"The Reversicon experience opened new pathways in my thought process as an artist; these channels continue to invite me, educate me, and push in new creative directions."*

- Nico Wood, Performance Artist, Performance Studies PhD from Southern Illinois University, IL

### **Performing on Stage with Students**

Harlo's theater performances can be staged with sections where 2-8 students can perform on stage with Harlo. This allows students to experience performing together with Harlo while sharing in the learning that happens on stage. These sections are short, involve no text, and focus on simple actions. These sections use a technique Harlo calls "Physical Theatre Greek Chorus" wherein two or more performers support a solo performer by performing actions that visually amplify the solo performer and also provide added layers of meaning or subtext. The process is low-stress for the students. They meet for an hour before the dress rehearsal to walk through the actions with Harlo and then run the dress rehearsal. That's it! During the performance, the students sit in the front row so that they can see the whole show and easily take the stage.

*"Working with Violet allowed me to witness Violet's energy and commitment on a level that pure audiencing does not assume. Being on stage with Violet meant feeling the physical presence of their immense performance energy, and working with Violet in this capacity meant watching their process, learning from their staging techniques in rehearsal, and embodying the theoretical essence of their script."*

- Meggie Mapes, Communications Specialist, University of Kansas, KS

## VIOLET HARLO

www.violetharlo.com violetharlo@violetharlo.com

### Education

1990	BFA	Sculpture (Valedictorian, School of Fine Arts)	Washington University, St. Louis, MO
1993	MFA	Visual Arts (Performance Art Focus)	University of California, San Diego, CA
2004		Certificate of Completion, Project Zero Institute	Harvard University, Boston, MA

### Selected Performance and Exhibition Venues

*Presented 35 performance pieces as well as visual and media art at 85 venues in 42 cities since 1990.*

American Festival, Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY	Julia Morgan Center for the Arts, Berkeley, CA
Arches Theatre, Glasgow, UK	Kenan Center, Lockport, NY
Arts Company, Boston, MA	Kleinau Theatre, Carbondale, IL
Athenaeum, La Jolla, CA	Los Angeles Contemporary Exhibitions, Los Angeles, CA
Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta, Canada	Marsh Theater, Berkeley, CA
Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley, CA	Milkbar, Richmond, CA
Centro Cultural de la Raza, San Diego, CA	Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA
Center of Contemporary Art, Lexington, KY	Museum of Modern Art, New York, NY
Centre for Contemporary Art, Glasgow, UK	Open Embodiments Somatechnics, Tucson, AZ
Chabot Space and Science Center, Oakland, CA	Performance Space 122, New York, NY
Counterpulse, San Francisco, CA	Poets House, New York, NY
[Dis]Embodied Poetics Conference, Boulder, CO	Pro Arts, Oakland, CA
Intl. Festival of Performance Art, Cleveland, OH	PS1, New York, NY
Contemporary Arts Forum, Santa Barbara, CA	Real Art Ways, Hartford, CT
Diverse Works, Houston, TX	Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA
El Campo Ruse Theatre, San Diego, CA	Ronald Feldman Fine Arts, New York, NY
Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, NY	Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville, IL
Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA	Southern Exposure, San Francisco, CA
Highways, Los Angeles, CA	Stillwell Theatre, Kennesaw, GA
HopKins Black Box Theatre, Baton Rouge, CA	Sushi Performance & Visual Art, San Diego, CA
Intersection Gallery, San Diego, CA	Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, San Francisco, CA
International Society for Improved Music, Denver, CO	

### Art Residencies

*Participated in residencies involving performance, teaching, and community engagement.*

Appalshop, Whitesburg, KY	Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA
Banff Center for the Arts, Alberta, Canada	Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA
Dance Theater Workshop, New York, NY	Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA
Diverse Works, Houston, TX	Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL
Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA	Ucross Foundation for the Arts, Clearmont, WY

### Grants and Awards

*Received grants and awards to pursue artistic research, create artwork, travel and present performance work.*

Ethan A. H. Shepley Award, St. Louis, MO	New York Council of the Arts, New York, NY
Helen Fabish Sculpture Award, St. Louis, MO	Russell Foundation Grant, San Diego, CA
Janis Risque Sculpture Competition, St. Louis, MO	Roger Conant Hatch Poetry Competition, St. Louis, MO
Just Buffalo Literary Center Grant, Buffalo, NY	

### Publication and Media Coverage

*Harlo's writing is included in Artful Teaching published by Teacher's Press in 2011. Interviews & reviews listed below.*

Art in America Magazine	WGBH PBS Station, Boston, MA	San Diego Union-Tribune
High Performance Magazine	MA Channel 7, Billings, MT	The Billings Gazette
Romance Languages Annual	KSDS Radio, San Diego, CA	San Francisco Bay Guardian

### **Visiting Artist Band Lecturer at Universities & Professional Organizations 1993-2017**

California College of the Arts, Oakland, CA  
California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, CA  
California State University, San Marcos, CA  
Cal State Summer Arts Institute, Fresno, CA  
Grossmont-Cuyamaca College, San Diego, CA  
Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, GA  
Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, CA  
Mills College, Oakland, CA  
MiraCosta College, San Diego, CA  
National Communications Assoc., San Francisco, CA  
San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA  
San Diego State University, San Diego, CA  
San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, CA  
Senior Stages, San Diego, CA  
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL  
The Advertising Arts College, San Diego, CA  
The Meeting Planners Association, San Diego, CA  
The Writer's Voice, Billings, MT and Scottsdale, AZ  
The Writing Center, San Diego, CA  
University of California, Berkeley, CA  
University of California, Irvine, CA  
University of California, Riverside, CA  
University of California, San Diego, CA  
University of California, Santa Barbara, CA  
University of San Francisco, San Francisco, CA  
Villanova University, Villanova, PA  
Washington University, St. Louis, MO  
Young Presidents Organization, San Diego, CA

### **Administrator for Arts Organizations 1998-2017**

2009-2017 Public Art Program Coordinator, Alameda County Arts Commission, Oakland, CA  
2008-2009 Schools Program Coordinator, Creative Education Institute, Oakland, CA  
2002-2008 Art IS Education Program Coordinator, Alameda County Office of Education, Hayward, CA  
2002 Interim Education Director, Mexican Museum, San Francisco, CA  
1999-2002 Education Director, Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA  
1998-1999 Program Manager, Leap...Imagination in Learning, San Francisco, CA  
1998 Co-Director, Zero 2 One Mentoring Program, San Diego, CA  
1995-1998 Founder and Director, 4D Institute for Live Art, San Diego, CA

### **Teaching Artist for Arts Organizations and Schools 1988-2017**

Albany Library, Albany, CA  
Athenaeum Arts and Music Library, La Jolla, CA  
Barona Reservation Indian School, Barona, CA  
Benvenue Children's House, Berkeley, CA  
Border Art Workshop at migrant schools in Lockport & Brockport, NY, San Diego & Los Angeles, CA  
Brookside Elementary, San Diego, CA  
Children's Museum, San Diego, CA  
Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA  
Downtown College Prep High School, San Jose, CA  
Ecole Bilingue de Berkeley, Berkeley, CA  
Gateways Summer Program, Miramar, CA  
Jefferson Elementary School, Berkeley, CA  
Jewish Cultural Arts Center, St. Louis, MO  
Le Conte Elementary, Berkeley, CA  
Lincoln Acres Elementary School, National City, CA  
Lindo Park Elementary School, Lakeside, CA  
Marin Elementary School, Albany, CA  
Oxford Elementary School, Berkeley, CA  
Paden Elementary, Alameda, CA  
School of the Madeleine, Berkeley, CA  
The Athenian, Danville, CA  
The Writing Center, San Diego, CA

### **Presenter for Certification Programs, K-12 Faculty & Arts Organizations 2000-2017**

Alameda County Office of Education, Hayward, CA  
Alameda Unified School District, Alameda, CA  
Arts Education Initiative, Oakland, CA  
Berkeley Unified School District, Berkeley, CA  
Cal Performances, Berkeley, CA  
California Alliance for Arts Education, Sacramento, CA  
California Department of Education, Sacramento, CA  
California Educational Theatre Assoc., Sacramento, CA  
California Kindergarten Association, Santa Clara, CA  
Castro Valley Unified School District, Castro Valley, CA  
Charter School of San Diego, San Diego, CA  
Expressive Arts Institute, San Diego, CA  
Grossmont HS Unified School District, Grossmont, CA  
Mills College, Oakland, CA  
Mountain House School District, Byron, CA  
Museum of Children's Art, Oakland, CA  
Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA  
Oakland Unified School District, Oakland, CA  
Opera Piccola, Oakland, CA  
Piedmont Unified School District, Piedmont, CA  
Richmond Art Center, Richmond, CA  
Sacramento Metropolitan Arts Commission, Sacramento, CA  
SF Arts Providers Alliance, San Francisco, CA  
Teachers for Social Justice, San Francisco, CA  
University of California, Berkeley, CA

### **Board and Panel Service 1998-2017**

- 2006 Public Art Review Panel, Alameda County Arts Commission, Oakland, CA
- 2003 New Works Review Panel, Craft & Cultural Affairs Dept., City of Oakland, Oakland, CA
- 1998-2000 Board of Directors, National Performance Network, New Orleans, LA
- 1998 Advisory Board, Sushi Performance & Visual Art, San Diego, CA

### **Community Service and Volunteer Work 2000-2017**

*Provided pro bono performances, services and community engagement events for community organizations.*

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| Art is On Salon, Berkeley, CA                | Marsh Theater, Berkeley, CA                        |
| BAR Corporation, Carbondale, IL              | Milkbar Art Salon, Oakland, CA                     |
| Children's Hospital, Oakland, CA             | Montalvo Arts Center, Saratoga, CA                 |
| California Arts Council, Asilomar, CA        | National Performance Network, San Francisco, CA    |
| Headlands Center for the Arts, Sausalito, CA | Piedmont Gardens Senior Home, Oakland, CA          |
| Highways Performance Space, Los Angeles, CA  | Salvation Army Homeless Shelter, Oakland, CA       |
| Kaiser Hospital Pediatric Ward, Oakland, CA  | Triple Threat Art Collaborative, San Francisco, CA |

### **Professional Development 1999-2017**

*Participation in workshops and conferences to engage in research, further collaborations, and learn new skills.*

- 2016 Site-Specific Performance, Milkbar Theatre, Oakland, CA (3 day institute)
- 2015 Performance Studies Division/National Communications Assoc. Conference, Las Vegas, NV (4 day conference)  
International Open Embodiments Somatechnics Conference, Tucson, AZ (3 day conference)
- 2014 Performance Studies Division/National Communications Association Conference, Chicago, IL (3 day conference)  
[Dis]Embodied Poetics Conference, Naropa University, Boulder, CO. (3 day conference)  
Integrated Learning Conference, Alameda County Office of Education, Oakland, CA (3 day conference)  
Site-Specific Performance, Counterpulse, San Francisco, CA (1/2 day workshop)
- 2013 Performance Studies Division/National Communications Assoc. Conference, Washington, D.C. (3 day conference)  
Integrated Learning Conference, Alameda County Office of Education, Oakland, CA (3 day conference)  
Site-Specific Performance, Milkbar Theatre, Oakland, CA (1/2 day workshop)
- 2012 Integrated Learning Conference, Alameda County Office of Education, Oakland, CA (3 day conference)  
Site-Specific Performance, Milkbar Theatre, Oakland, CA (2 day workshop)
- 2011 Interdisciplinary Performance Workshop, Triple Threat, San Francisco (1/2 day workshop)  
Restorative Justice Workshop, Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth, Oakland, CA (1 day workshop)  
Integrated Learning Conference, Alameda County Office of Education, Oakland, CA (3 day conference)  
Interdisciplinary Performance Workshops, Art Workouts, San Francisco, CA (5 two-hour workshops)
- 2010 International Society of Improvised Music, Santa Cruz, CA (3 day conference)  
Movement Score Workshop, 7<sup>th</sup> Street Studios, Berkeley, CA (1/2 day workshop)  
Aerial InterPlay Storytelling Workshop, Wing It! Performance Ensemble, Berkeley, CA (1/2 day workshop)
- 2009 Aerial Dance: Flying by the Seat of Your Pants, Sonya Smith, San Francisco, CA (1/2 day workshop)  
International Society of Improvised Music, Denver, CO (3 day conference)
- 2006 Arts Integration Conference, Ford Foundation, Washington, D.C. (3 day conference)  
Project Zero Summer Institute, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Boston, MA  
(5 day training, 42 hours, Certificate of Completion)  
Teaching for Understanding Online Course, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Boston, MA  
(13 week course, 42 hours, Certificate of Completion)
- 2005 Online Arts Advocacy Training, Ford Foundation, New York, NY (2 day training)
- 2004 Arts Advocacy Speakers Training, Ford Foundation, Oakland, CA (1 day training)
- 2001 Physically Integrated Dance Workshop, AXIS Dance Company (1/2 day workshop)
- 1999 American Sign Language I, Berkeley City College, Berkeley, CA (12 week course, 72 hours, 4 units)  
Improvisational Interdisciplinary Performance Workshop, Body Tales, Fairfax, CA (1 day workshop)