

YVETTE “JAMUNA” SIRKER, MFA

ROPE -- Artist In Residence

Yvette “Jamuna” Sirker is an award winning playwright, theater producer, director and choreographer. Her work has been seen Off-Broadway, Off-Off Broadway, in regional theaters, colleges and university across the United States. In addition to her work as a freelance playwright, Ms. Sirker is presently the Artistic Director of 10 SHORTS AT THE WHITNEY, an annual festival of short theatrical works by Berkshire-based performing artists with a focus on providing professional development for area artists of color.

Active in the field of arts education, Ms. Sirker is an Arts Integration Specialist with twenty-one years’ experience developing programs in acting, dance, and creative writing for a broad spectrum of organizations, age groups, and educational purposes. She has written and directed scores of plays for the sole purpose of empowering young people through creative expression. Arts Integration credits include Enchanted Circle Theater, The Bennington School, Juvenile Resource Center, Westfield Department of Youth Services, Bridge Street School, Jackson Street School, William R. Peck School, The Renaissance School, Duggan Middle School, Care Center, the New Orleans Public School's Talented in Theater program, New Orleans Public School’s Arts in Education Program, the New Orleans Chapter of Young Audiences, and Zhoux Zhoux Theatre Company.

As Writing & Media Specialist for Reid Middle School in Pittsfield, MA, Ms. Sirker fuses broadcast journalism, public speaking and video production to support student achievement in accordance with the Massachusetts framework for English Language Arts (ELA). Since 2009, she has served as Adjunct Professor of Communications for Berkshire Community College where she has taught Introduction to Oral Communication, Oral Interpretation of Literature, Fundamentals of Acting, Acting in the Style of American Realism and Theater Styles.

For R.O.P.E., Ms. Sirker has served as playwright, curriculum designer, teaching artist, and grant writer. Working in collaboration with Nakeida Bethel-Smith and Marla Robertson, she designed the curriculum and served as playwright for the acclaimed multi-disciplinary theatrical work, *ENUF!* Based on the true life stories of 12 young ROPE women from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, *ENUF!* was inspired by OBIE Award winning play, *For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf* by Ntozake Shange. *ENUF!* gives focus to the experience of young women of color living in a predominantly white society. With music by Jerome Edgerton and Youth Alive Band, *ENUF!* premiered in August

of 2013 as a Barrington Stage Company (BSC) education project with funding from Women's Fund of Western Massachusetts. The 30-minute play drew sold out houses leading to encore performances at BSC's St. Germaine Theater. The continued demand for this work led Sirker to co-produce to *ENUF! On Tour* with Mrs. Edgerton. *ENUF! On Tour* performances included Taconic High School, Pittsfield High School, Berkshire Art and Technology High School, Simon's Rock College as a Berkshire Festival of Women's Writers project, and Berkshire Community College. Ms. Sirker has served as ROPE Artist in Residence in area after school programs.

Ms. Sirker holds a B.A. in English from Cornell University and an MFA in Acting from New York University. Professional memberships and affiliations include Actors Equity Association, Screen Actors Guild, Dramatists Guild of America. Additional certifications include Honors in Dance from the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and Master Yoga Teacher Certification from Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health.

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Playwright, Producer, Director, Choreographer and Teaching Artist

Ms. Sirker has developed arts programming for colleges, universities, public schools and social service organizations. Since August 2009, Ms. Sirker has served as an Adjunct Professor in Berkshire Community College's Division of Humanities having developed curriculum in the departments of communication and fine and performing arts. With 25 years' experience as a theater professional, Ms. Sirker is an award winning playwright, director and producer. Her work has been seen Off-Broadway, Off-Off Broadway, in regional theaters, colleges and universities across the United States. Ms. Sirker holds a B.A. in English from Cornell University, an M.F.A. in Acting from New York University, a Honors in Dance degree from the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and is a certified Kripalu Master Yoga Instructor.