

# BEYOND THE BARS *UNTIL SHE'S FREE*

9TH ANNUAL JUSTICE CONFERENCE AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



Building the Movement  
**FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019**  
Lerner Hall, Columbia University



## **Welcome to Beyond the Bars 2019: Until She's Free**

This year's conference is focusing on both the incarceration and criminalization of women and girls, as well as their families and communities. Our focus is inclusive of transgender, non-binary, and gender non-conforming people. The many struggles for justice, equity and safety led by women and girls directly impacted by the criminal legal system are at the heart of this conference, as we create a space to further strengthen and advance change.

### Conference Schedule

#### **THURSDAY NIGHT**

##### **Until She's Free: A Night of Culture**

7:00-9:30pm, MIST Harlem  
(Doors at 6:30, Event Starts at 7:00pm)

#### **FRIDAY NIGHT**

##### **Until She's Free: Building the Movement**

7:30-9:30pm, Lerner Hall, Columbia University  
(Doors at 6:45pm - Event Starts at 7:30pm)

#### **SATURDAY**

##### **Until She's Free: Plenaries and Breakout Sessions**

9:30-5pm, Columbia School of Social Work

##### **Youth Summit: #SayHerMagicMatters**

9:30-5pm, Columbia School of Social Work

##### **Film Screenings and Talkbacks**

5:30-8pm, Columbia School of Social Work

#### **SUNDAY**

##### **Building the Grassroots - Organizing Workshops**

10:00 - 5:00pm, Columbia School of Social Work

## Program

### **“FREEDOM”**

Taína Asili

### **WELCOME**

Center for Justice at Columbia University  
Beyond the Bars Fellowship  
Criminal Justice Caucus  
at Columbia School of Social Work

### **A MESSAGE FROM ANGELA DAVIS**

#### **“An Ode to Grandmom + the Juror Project”**

A Scribe Called Quess?

### **THE GROWING MOVEMENT TO END GENDER BASED VIOLENCE**

Beth Richie

Eve Ensler

Kiara Jean

Lala Zanell

Moderator: Farah Tanis

### **PERFORMANCE**

Truthworker Theatre Company

### **A GLOBAL MOVEMENT**

Women from Across the World

### **BUILDING A MOVEMENT: THE RISING VOICES OF WOMEN**

Alejandra Pablos

Gina Clayton-Johnson

Jessica Nowlan

Mariame Kaba

Moderator: Andrea James

### **CLOSING PERFORMANCE**

Taína Asili

**Hosted by YOLANDA JOHNSON-PETERKIN**

## BIOS

**Taina Asili** is a Puerto Rican singer, filmmaker and activist carrying on the tradition of her ancestors, fusing past and present struggles into one soulful and defiant voice. Taina Asili's music is a powerful force for social change. In January 2017, Taina performed at The Women's March on Washington. Her music video "No Es Mi Presidente," which she wrote and directed, premiered in Rolling Stone and received national acclaim. The Huffington Post named her in a list of in a list of "12 Freedom Fighting Bands To Get You Through the Trump Years", and Billboard Magazine featured her in a list of "11 Songs of Protest & Resistance by Latino Artists." Taina is a member of Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration in Albany, NY

**Gina Clayton-Johnson** is the Executive Director of Essie Justice Group, which she founded (named after her great grandmother Essie Bailey) in 2014 to harness the collective power of women with incarcerated loved ones to end mass incarceration's harm to women and communities. Gina has spent more than a decade advocating for communities of color. As an undergrad at University of Southern California, she became a youth organizer for the NAACP, leading campaigns addressing campus policing, voter registration and state sentencing laws. Her experiences as an organizer and civil rights activist in South Los Angeles led her to pursue law. In her first year as a student at Harvard Law School, someone Gina loves was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Despite years of work in racial justice and organizing prior to law school, it was this painful personal experience that would put her on a new course. As an attorney in Harlem, NY, Gina represented women of color who were facing eviction as the result of a family member's criminal matter. She designed and implemented the Housing Defense Practice at The Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem (NDS) after seeing how women with loved ones behind bars were suffering, resulting in weakened communities. Gina began to look for organizations and academic literature that addressed criminal justice with a focus on women with incarcerated loved ones - and found none. She founded Essie Justice Group for those women.

**Eve Ensler** is a Tony Award-winning playwright, author, performer, and activist. Her international phenomenon *The Vagina Monologues* has been published in 48 languages and performed in more than 140 countries. She is the author of the NYT bestseller *I Am an Emotional Creature*, the highly praised *In the Body of the World*, and many more. In May of 2019 Bloomsbury Publishing will release her new book,

The Apology. She is founder of V-Day, the 20 year old global activist movement which has raised over 100 million dollars to end violence to end violence against all women and girls (cisgender, transgender and gender non-conforming), and the founder of One Billion Rising, the largest global mass action to end gender based violence in over 200 countries. She is a co-founder of the City of Joy, a revolutionary center for women survivors of violence in the DRC, along with Christine Schuler Deschryver and 2018 Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Denis Mukwege. She is one of Newsweek's "150 Women Who Changed the World" and the Guardian's "100 Most Influential Women."

**Andrea James J.D.** is the Founder and Executive Director of the National Council For Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls, Founder of Families for Justice as Healing, author of *Upper Bunkies Unite: And Other Thoughts on the Politics of Mass Incarceration*, a 2015 Soros Justice Fellow, and recipient of the 2016 Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights award. As a former criminal defense attorney and a formerly incarcerated woman Andrea shares her personal and professional experiences to raise awareness of the affect of incarceration of women on themselves, their children and communities. Her work is focused on ending incarceration of women and girls as we know it today, and contributing to the shift to a justice system led by community solutions.

**Kiara Jean** is a 17- year old Haitian-Bahamian youth from North Miami, FL currently attending Penn Foster, an online-based high school. Kiara enjoys advocating for the rights of Black Girls and has been a part of S.O.U.L Sisters Leadership Collective's Sisterhood Academy and the Youth Leaders Board program where she advocates for changes in her community. Kiara feels strongly about the importance of the #METOO Movement because she feels that girls shouldn't go through sexual abuse alone and is also interested in issues surrounding the deportation of Haitian Immigrants. Kiara enjoys dancing and singing and is excited for the future where her voice will be heard on different issues affecting women of color.

**Yolanda Johnson-Peterkin** has been working to serve people with criminal justice histories for over a decade; prior to her current role as Chief of Housing Community Activities at NYCHA, Yolanda was Director of Operations for Reentry at the Women's Prison Association. This position gives her an opportunity to work on systemic change by reunifying formerly incarcerated people with their families. This unique

program is one of the first across the United States and is the lead for duplication across the country. Mrs. Johnson Peterkin and her peers published an article in the Race/Ethnicity Journal titled Life Capacity Beyond Reentry: A Critical Examination of Racism and Prisoner Reentry Reform in the US. Yolanda received her Master's degree in Social Work from Hunter College. She has received honors from the Correctional Association of New York, Citizens Against Recidivism, and the NAACP.

**Mariame Kaba** is an organizer, educator and curator who is active in movements for racial, gender, and transformative justice. She is the founder and director of Project NIA, a grassroots organization with a vision to end youth incarceration. She has co-founded multiple organizations and projects over the years including We Charge Genocide, the Chicago Freedom School, the Chicago Taskforce on Violence against Girls and Young Women, Love & Protect and most recently Survived & Punished. Mariame is also a co-organizer of the Just Practice Collaborative, a training and mentoring group focused on sustaining a community of practitioners that provide community-based accountability and support structures for all parties involved with incidents and patterns of sexual, domestic, relationship, and intimate community violence. She is on the advisory boards of the Chicago Torture Justice Memorials, Critical Resistance and the Chicago Community Bond Fund. Her writing has appeared in the Nation Magazine, the Guardian, The Washington Post, In These Times, Jacobin, The New Inquiry and more. She runs Prison Culture blog ([www.usprisonculture.com/blog](http://www.usprisonculture.com/blog)).

**Jessica Nowlan** is the Executive Director of the Young Women's Freedom Center and co-founder of the Sister Warriors Freedom Coalition. She is deeply committed to the liberation and freedom of women and girls and has spent the majority of her career working to develop and implement innovative programming and strategies based on the principles that those most impacted must be at the forefront of decision making about their own lives. Her own experience as a young person navigating the juvenile justice system, as a single mother dealing with poverty, homelessness, and intimate partner violence, coupled with her experience in the field, propels her work to advance the field. Prior to her current role, Jessica worked for several years as a Social Entrepreneur and as a consultant to organizations working with women and girls and at the intersections of violence, poverty, racial justice, incarceration/ re-entry and workforce development. Jessica is a Bay Area native and currently lives in Oakland with her youngest sons.

**Alejandra Pablos** is an immigrant and reproductive rights community organizer. Alejandra is currently organizing her own deportation defense campaign called “KeepAleFree”, made of sister friends, organizers and creators. On December 11th 2018 she was ordered deported by an immigration judge and is appealing that decision. Alongside of community members, and with Mijente, Alejandra will be asking the governor of Arizona for a pardon, in order to help her fight this deportation order. Alejandra was recently detained by Immigration Customs Enforcement for 43 days and communities nationwide organized to bring her home after she was granted a bond. In both her professional and personal roles, Alejandra focuses on on “community defense” education and advocacy by sharing her own personal story of accessing full reproductive healthcare and about navigating the immigration system that is criminalizing immigrant folks and how to fight back. Growing up in Arizona has informed her activism around immigration and mass incarceration. She is story-teller with We Testify where she shares her abortion story as a form of resistance and liberation. She is also a member of Mijente, a national political home for organizers, and has worked with many immigrant rights and prison abolition organizers throughout the country. For more info or about her case and fundraising, [KeepAleFree.org](http://KeepAleFree.org)

**A Scribe Called Quess?** is a poet, educator, actor, activist, and playwright. He is a founding member of Slam New Orleans, Louisiana’s national championship winning slam poetry team in 2010, 2012 and 2013. His accomplishments earned him honors from the Mayor of New Orleans and City Council. He has written for and acted in plays with Junebug Productions, ArtSpot Productions, Urban Bush Women, Contemporary Arts Center’s DISTILLERY residency and other esteemed outfits. He is also a founder and lead organizer of Take Em Down NOLA, a multicultural, multigenerational coalition of organizers committed to the removal of White Supremacist symbols in New Orleans. He is a 2018 Hewlett 50 Arts Commissions award recipient along with non-profit Policy Link for their forthcoming production, We the 100 Million, lifting up the lives of the 100 Millions Americans living near or in poverty. His second book of poetry, Sleeper Cell, is on sale now.

**Beth E. Richie** is Head of the Department of Criminology, Law and Justice and Professor of African American Studies at The University of Illinois at Chicago. The emphasis of her scholarly and activist work has been on the ways that race/ethnicity and social position affect women’s experience of violence and incarceration, focusing

on the experiences of African American battered women and sexual assault survivors. Dr. Richie is the author of *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence and America's PrisonNation* (NYU Press, 2012) which chronicles the evolution of the contemporary anti-violence movement during the time of mass incarceration in the United States and numerous articles concerning Black feminism and gender violence, race and criminal justice policy, and the social dynamics around issues of sexuality, prison abolition, and grassroots organizations in African American Communities. Her earlier book *Compelled to Crime: the Gender Entrapment of Black Battered Women*, is taught in many college courses and is cited in the popular press for its original arguments concerning race, gender and crime. Dr. Richie's work has been supported by grants from The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, The Ford Foundation, and The National Institute for Justice and The National Institute of Corrections. She has been awarded the Audre Lorde Legacy Award from the Union Institute, The Advocacy Award from the US Department of Health and Human Services, and The Visionary Award from the Violence Intervention Project and the UIC Woman of the Year Award. Dr. Richie is a board member of The Institute on Domestic Violence in the African Community, The National Network for Women in Prison, A Call To Men and a founding member of INCITE!: Women of Color Against Violence. In 2013 she was awarded an Honorary Degree from the City University of New York Law School and in 2014 she was appointed as a Sr. Advisor to the NFL to work on their domestic violence and sexual assault prevention program.

**Farah Tanis** is a transnational feminist and co-founder, Executive Director of Black Women's Blueprint working at the grassroots to address the spectrum of sexual violence against women and girls in Black/African American communities, and working with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) across the nation on issues of gender, race, sexuality, anti-violence policy and practice. Tanis launched and Chairs the first Truth and Reconciliation Commission in the U.S. ever to focus on Black women and their historical and contemporary experiences with sexual assault. She is founder and is lead curator at the Museum of Women's Resistance (MoWRe), which in 2013 became internationally recognized as a Site of Conscience. Tanis created Mother Tongue Monologues, a theatrical and multimedia art vehicle for addressing Black sexual politics in African American, African, Afro-Caribbean communities. Tanis is a 2012 U.S.



Human Rights Institute Fellow (USHRN) and a member of the Task Force on the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD). Tanis is the recipient of several awards for her human rights work, including a 2014 Feminist Majority Foundation and Ms. Magazine Wonder Award.

**Truthworker Theatre Company** is a social justice based, hip-hop theatre company founded and directed by Samara Gaev, for high school and college-aged youth in Brooklyn, NY. Providing youth leadership programming, professional stipends, and rigorous artistic training; Truthworker raises awareness and catalyzes action for racial, gender, and economic justice. Young visionaries directly impacted by mass incarceration write and perform original productions that interrogate the prison industrial complex, challenge systems of oppression, invite healing dialogue, and foster artistic interventions, inspiring solutions for collective liberation. Truthworker is a safe space for young people to be the subjects, not the objects, of their own stories as they unpack, problematize, and shift the dominant, often stereotypical narratives in mainstream media. In a country with the largest prison population in the world, Truthworker's bold storytelling is geared towards enlivening creative solutionaries.

**LaLa Zanell** is a dedicated and passionate advocate, Michigan native now residing in New York. A gifted public speaker, thought leader, and speechwriter who speaks out on issues related to anti-LGBTQ violence, and especially the disproportionate violence that Trans and gender non-conforming people of color face as a tool for her personal healing. LaLa was a member of the National Coalition of Anti violence Program (NCAVP) Movement Building Committee. Professionally, LaLa is the Trans Justice Campaign Manager at the ACLU. Previously, LaLa was the formal Lead Organizer at the New York City Anti-Violence project (AVP). In addition LaLa spoke at the White House for the first Women's history month briefing to include transwoman and the last Transgender briefing under the Obama administration, testified at the first historic Congressional Forum on violence against transgender people. LaLa continues her part to culture shift as a chair of the policy and working group committee for Communities United for Police Reform (CPR) were they recently had a small victory with the passing of Intro 541 which would but an end to unconstitutional searched by the NYPD. Made 2015 Trans 100 list for LaLa's dedicated work with making the lives of Tran Woman of Color better.

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