

Artistic Touch

Contributed by Just

"The indigenous people in general are facing discrimination around the globe due to their non-compliance to the western dominant culture. I think it is time people stop judging them as primitive backwards people that have never evolved beyond the Stone Age. These people have a lot to teach, so we all need to come together and learn from each other". — Yamile Yemoonyah

If you look deep into the eyes of Yamile Yemoonyah you would be in awe by the unfathomable story she has to tell. The dark gaze of aspiration, serenity, and desire holds the divinity of a people that are on a verge to becoming extinct. She is not supernatural nor of a different "species". She is an ordinary woman fighting to carry on the breath of her ancestor's culture. A culture that was once an unspecific noun for Yamile due to her being an adoptee, has suddenly divulged into her circumference infusing it's every custom into the essence of her existence. But her eyes do not narrate alone. They are accompanied by the soft tips of her finger that manipulates a keen depiction of her people's traditional legends, universal teachings, and current undertakings. With just a simple stroke of that perfect pointed ink pen and a bit of Yamile's artistic touch the tales of the Embera people are born again.

Growing up in Germany compared to driving up a steep narrow icy hill with bald tires for Yamile. Suffering from identity crisis was not only a phase but a normal mode throughout her development. She was an intercultural adoptee, adapting to a society that refused to welcome her. Although she received warmth and support from her beloved parents she often felt lost and empty as if something was missing. For most intercultural adoptees it is not only the family that they have detached from, but it is the lost of an entire culture. Her parents were both Dutch so Yamile spoke two languages; German and Dutch. Her multicultural background and lack of knowledge of her original culture made it extremely hard for her to define herself. She faced many difficulties. No one knew, for example what to do with her hair. There were no salons that knew how to treat black hair, let alone products like shampoos or afro combs. She was also one of three other children of color in her school. Fitting in amongst her peers was a task immeasurable. At one point in her childhood she encountered racism. She said, "I do remember an incident. When I was twelve years old and I was waiting for my mother to pick me up at a youth center. I waited out front when a guy came up to me. He started yelling at me, saying that I should go home where I came from, that all "Auslander" (foreigners) should leave the country because Germany belongs to the German people and that if he ever saw me again he would kill me. Of course I was shocked and scared and didn't go anywhere by myself for a while".

Yamile was born in Manizalez, Colombia on September 12th, 1974. Throughout her life she always knew that she was adopted and that she was originally from Colombia along with her adopted brother. Yet, she didn't find out until later on in life the details of her heritage and family. Her birth father was of Afro-Colombian descent. Her birth mother is of the Embera people; an indigenous community that dwells in the west coast of Colombia and Darien, Panama. The culture of the Embera is still in existence including shamanic traditions and language. However, it is striving to survive due to the fact that their territory is being used by drug traffickers; Guerillas and Paramilitaries. According to Yamile over 80% of the worldwide cocaine production is being smuggled in that area. She stated, "Many Embera have been murdered trying to fore come this".

Her birth father decided to move to the city to find work and her mother followed. A year later she was given up for adoption and moved to Germany where she grew up. When she learned of the Embera she fell in love and instantly embraced the culture. It was as if she knew of it all along. Some may perceive that cultural traits are due to social interactions throughout ones childhood. Though true in some cases it is not 100% accurate. For Yamile, even though she grew up in Europe, her outlook on life has for a long time unconsciously reflected her indigenous and Afro-Colombian roots. She said, "So after I started researching my origins a lot of things started to make sense to me and I was finally able to be at peace with my own Self. Now I see myself as a creation that came here to the earth plain to show that all cultures are based on the same spiritual principles but express them in their own beautiful ways. We should celebrate our oneness as well as our differences. There is so much we can all learn from each other". Just like her people she is very spiritual. She believes that all life forms have a spirit that can be contacted and communicated with, be it a being of the mineral, the plant or the animal kingdom, or even Mother Earth herself as well as other planetary and star beings. Because of this innate connection Yamile feels it is very important to raise awareness about the Embera and their struggle. Therefore she displays that through her art. Tree Spirit: T-shirt design, originally also ink pen on paper Cosmic Center: 60x80 cm ink pen on paper Kali-Persephone: 60x80 cm ink on paper

For as long as she can remember she has always been interested in art. Her parents were great nurturers of that interest. They took her to museums where ever she went; places like the Louvre in Paris, the MOMA in New York City, the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam and many more. When she was younger her teacher never allowed her to create art the way she wanted to. She never favored the conservative styles of art so she decided not to go on to art school. Instead she self taught herself and currently sells her work on online sites like RedBubble and Zazzle. In addition she does offline

art shows. Just recently she featured in an art show called Artville in Berlin, Oct 30th thru November 2nd. Yamile also showcases her work at <http://kabai33.com>. That particular blogspot has a shop where she sell exclusive pieces, wall art (cards, matted print, laminated prints, mounted prints, canvas prints, framed prints, posters, and t-shirts). She creates energy jewelry as well which is designed to help people going through energetic transformations due to the higher vibrational cosmic energies coming in now that we are entering in to a new age as the Mayans, Hindus and many other cultures have been predicting for centuries.

Yamile Yemoonya now lives in Berlin where the last couple of years have been focused on drawing, line art, and painting paper cut-outs; a tradition Kuna art form called Mola. She has not traveled back to her birth place, Colombia, to visit her people. However she spends her days building and promoting awareness of the Embera people making her art the medium to express teachings, hardships, and customs of their life. For her it is vital to teach two main lessons of the Embera; one lesson being the ability to maintain a sustainable lifestyle in balance with nature and the other being the cosmic cycles that influence life on earth (see 2012). She affirmed, "I try to educate people about this wherever I can and especially through my art. I am very grateful for the opportunity to give back to my ancestors in this way because they have given me the gift of creativity in the first place".

Check out some of Yamile's work:

1. <http://myspace.com/yemoonyah>
2. http://www.facebook.com/people/Yamile_Yemoonyah/14814821443. <http://www.redbubble.com/people/kabai33>
4. <http://yemoonyah.stumbleupon.com>