

## Nicole Garneau ■ Artist Statement

My cultural work is interdisciplinary, and includes performance, visual art, installation, music, parties, street theater, earth works, environmental intervention, new genre public art, and project art. I make both solo and collaborative performances that often address a political issue. I also teach, do research, write, make ceremonies, and do healing work. My work is informed by feminism; spirituality; ceremony; critical race analysis; queer theory; the politics of the body; and the social/political implications of natural disasters. I am interested in creating cultural work that is directly political, critically conscious, and community building.

I began making art outside because inside a performance space, the performers and audience are so comfortable with their respective roles and norms that it's really hard to surprise anybody. I don't know how to do politically engaged work inside a theater. On the street, the simplest things might seem shocking or provoking: 739 cups of water; blowing kisses in a blizzard. There's a charge to those gestures that comes from the fact that there are so many things beyond the performer's control. There are a lot of questions I still have around performing on the street vs. in performance spaces. I'm also exploring something about radical honesty and sincerity as aesthetic choices.

As I approach the fifth and final year of UPRISING, I am asking myself what is next, and I am trying not to attach to any of the wonderful new ideas emerging. This I know: in 2012, I will present UPRISINGS around the world at performance festivals and other events. I plan to publish a book the UPRISING project. I aim to release the book in 2013 and support the release of the book through performances, lecture/demos, and readings. In the coming years, I will focus on writing and the creation of a tourable, solo, evening-length performance work. There is a lot more work to be done on the Chicago Heat Wave, and 2015 will be the 20-year anniversary of this tragic event. I am currently contemplating how to scale up/deepen the exploration of social isolation and the politics of natural disasters that I began in the HEAT:05 project and I am seeking collaborators.

I was born in Chicago, Illinois and lived in Chicago until 2012, when I went on tour with the UPRISING project. I am currently based in Copenhagen, and will be in Europe through the summer of 2012. I earned a BA in Theater from the University of Illinois at Chicago and an MA in Interdisciplinary Art from Columbia College Chicago. In 1993-94, I worked as an actor in the Theatre of Moscow South-West, performing in Russian.

Since 1995, I have worked closely with Insight Arts, an arts organization located in the East Rogers Park neighborhood of Chicago that is dedicated to increasing access to cultural work that promotes social justice and defends human rights. In 1998 I helped found Big Smith Performance ensemble, a group that presented percussive music and interdisciplinary performance around the Midwest and internationally until 2005. I have performed with Lucky Plush Productions and Breakbone Dance Company.