

Sandra Golding - Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund Report

Performing Sankofa

Sankofa: "Symbol of the wisdom of learning from the past to build for the future", or "Go Back to Fetch It"

African Holistic Dance Artist Research / Teaching visit from UK to South Africa
Friday 29th June - Tuesday 17th July 2018

TAUHADI LIGHT-WORKERS COMMUNITY

Welcomes



SISTA SANDRA GOLDING
AFRICAN HOLISTIC DANCE PRACTITIONER
Director of MOVING INTO BALANCE U.K.

Dear Tribe

Please join our tribe member Amathongo Institute of Holistic Healing in welcoming and hosting our sister Sandra Golding on her soul searching, sharing and exchange mission to South Africa.

Mme Golding arrives on Saturday, June 30 and will be with us for two whole weeks...☺

Meet and Greet on Sunday at the Soweto Holistic Morning, Five Roses Park in Mofolo, 9-12am. Let's enjoy quality time, eat scrumptious food and talk wellness, healing and upliftment through African Holistic Dance and Healing Arts.

Sister Sandra will be based in Johannesburg with a scheduled visit to the Grahamstown Arts Festival.

Beacon of Light, thank you for blessing us with your presence.

Ngowenu
Nkgono Nthabiseng Chabeli
Thokozani Njalo...

As UK's leading, African Holistic Dance Practitioner ¹, I'd like to thank the Lisa Ullmann Scholarship Fund for enabling my two week research and teaching trip to South Africa. I worked partly in collaboration with **Tauhadi Lightworkers Community** and was based in several township areas of Johannesburg, working with diverse South African communities.

I was invited to help deliver a Symposium over 2 weeks in June/July: **Moving Tu Balance – African Holistic Healing South Africa Research & Teaching Visit** – hosted by **Tauhadi Lightworkers Community**, a community-led NPO (Not for Profit Organisation), led by **Ms. Nthabiseng Chabeli** Founder & Executive Director.

The overall aim and purpose of my project visit was to learn more about the importance of the role of women, cosmology, symbolism, spirituality and hidden cultural knowledge. I wish to explore how creativity *within African Dance forms* is used for healing within communities. Also, as there are no recognised training programs for African holistic dance practitioners in the UK, the only training is to go to the source i.e. *Africa*, which is why *Performing Sankofa* is so significant within my own creative journey and process.

Travelling to South Africa for this research and teaching visit has contributed immensely at this stage of my artistic and professional development. I made progress in achieving almost all of my key aims which were to:

- Meet and exchange ideas of good practice with an organisation which works with women in community traditional dance, music, song and other therapeutic interventions.
- Explore and connect with the integrated somatic dance movement context of South African culture for the development of my practice of African Holistic Dance.
- Attend the Grahams town Art Festival Johannesburg. (*wasn't able to attend*)
- Bring everything back to the UK and impart my learning to others.

"African Holistic Dance' began to emerge as a spiritual practice, a vehicle for inner change with the potential to support one's personal growth and a tool for liberation. This practice has now evolved into 'Moving Tu Balance'. It is still evolving out of ancient wisdom; drawing from the vibrant and subtle energies of Africa, whilst sustaining a deep and strong connection to the earth and the universe through movement, music, ritual and visualisation. 'Standing in your cultural ground'..." Sandra Golding

¹ www.movingtubalance.co.uk

² *Narratives in Black British Dance – Embodied Practices, edited by Adesola Akinleye - Ch8*



Sandra Golding moving in safe space at Yolanda and Sechaba Motsieola's. Photography by Nomikelo Woizaro (Nikki)

Highlights in my travels:

- Workshops with Tauhadi,
- Connections with female-led community organisation
- Meeting wonderful women and people, connecting as human beings
- Creating and being in the south- African environment and re-connecting with my spiritual roots
- Remembrance ceremony, with dance and song
- Teaching of 2nd yr dance students at Moving Into Dance
- Meeting the Go Go's
- Connecting with David April
- Unveiling African Spirituality Conference

Suggestions which could help future Awardees:

- Organisation of documentation of journey – try to plan personal methodology before leaving UK.
- Be open and flexible, do research, promote your award, use your contacts and networks and have a 'Plan B'!
- If carrying out physical delivery (performance or workshop) allow time for your body to recover as a performer and practitioner, especially when travelling long distances.
- Allow for:
 - Jet-Lag;
 - civil unrest;

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² *Narratives in Black British Dance – Embodied Practices, edited by Adesola Akinleye - Ch8*

- transport issues;
- illness; accommodating to climate / time of year – seasonal variations;
- access to technology/wi-fi;
- gender issues – travelling alone as a woman, safety etc.

Plans to share information about my project:

- I am booked to deliver a series of short Lectures / Talks, at the MAC (Midland Arts Centre) and at Handsworth Library, Birmingham as part of Black History Month, Birmingham in October/November 2018.
- Radio interview on local community radio station.

Description & Reflections on my project:

The Symposium, 01 – 17 July 2018: Moving Tu Balance – African Holistic Healing South Africa Research & Teaching Visit by Sandra Golding hosted by *Tauhadi Lightworkers Community*

This inclusive Programme co-created by myself and Tauhadi, was held in various locations across Johannesburg and aimed at local intergenerational diverse communities. I was scheduled to teach and lead workshops in African holistic dance, to meet with key local arts organisations and community groups and the programme comprised a series of; talks, lectures, sessions, seminars and visits to local organisations.



Sunday 1st July started off with a 'Meet and Greet' at the ***Soweto Holistic Morning***, Five Roses Park in Mofolo from 9am-2pm. I delivered an Introduction to *African Holistic Dance* – an hour long morning workshop in Five Roses Park and also a talk to a group of 20 people/participants who were intergenerational and intergenerational, families groups, all of African ethnic origin. Participants also took part in yoga and capoeira activities.

On Mon 2nd July, Nthabiseng from Tauhadi and myself were due to have a planning meeting to arrange the rest of the planned schedule for my visit.

However, due to local civil unrest, roads were closed due to community protests and violence on the streets. People could not go to work, public transport was stopped and it became unsafe to travel and leave the safety of homes and spaces that I was staying in. We therefore had to cancel this planning session at short notice and wait till conditions were safer. I stayed in Mid Rand with the family who were supporting my visit. They tried to help get me to other locations but there was too much unrest and it was too dangerous for me to travel.

This had a huge impact on the delivery of the rest of my scheduled visit as the unrest went on for a few days and it was therefore difficult for me to commit to anything till it was safer to travel from where I was staying

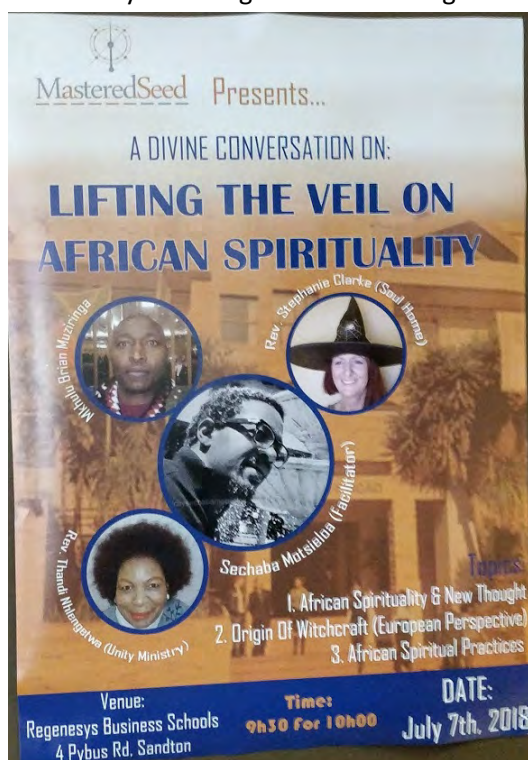
to the various locations of the Symposium. Though I was subsequently able to carry out most of my planned schedule, I had to re-organise some of my planned schedule, research and visits.

Tues 3rd July. **Healing Spaces Joburg CBD Tour: Moving Into Dance**, Mophatong + Newtown Precinct, Maboneng Precinct and Constitutional Hill. I met with **Thandi Tshabalala**, Artistic Admin Assistant of **Moving into Dance in Mophatong**. Moving Into Dance has been at the forefront of training in Contemporary African Dance and has been the core feeder of professional dance company, as well as accredited training organisation which has produced a multitude of award winning and productive dancers, choreographers, arts administrators and teachers throughout South Africa and internationally. I also had a guided tour of **The Market Theatre**, Johannesburg opened in 1976, known for operating as an independent, non-racial theatre during the country's apartheid regime. Famous Jazz venues and hub of Jazz music that used to exist – (e.g.; Kippies) I then went to the **Museum Africa** – a major museum of South Africa. Seeing history of Sarah Bartman, new African movements in terms of the National Congress. Political historical perspective between 1913 – 1990 and key women who were great modernists of South Africa e.g.; Charlotte Maxeke (1874-1939) and poet S.E.K.Mqhayi – *New African Movement*. And great thinkers to history politics and culture etc. The day ended with Tseya Yoga – Braamfontein.

Wed 4th July. I used this time and took advantage of the environment and space to reflect on my practice. I took pictures and explored dance movement. I explored the environment that I was in within the gated community, the safe spaces within the park, the architecture, the individuality within the homes.

Thurs 5th July. I Met with **Gladys Agulas** in Johannesburg at **Moving into Dance**, who gave me more information from her background as a Special Needs Specialist. (A contact from Louise Katerega who is also a specialist needs specialist) I was able to spend more time observing the second year students within their rehearsals. From this visit I was invited to teach the second year students within the following week, giving them an introduction to African Holistic Dance in Somatic practice.

Fri 6th July. Although I wasn't feeling well I went out into local environment wrapped up warm, explored the estate, and took photographs. I was able to reconnect with nature and my surroundings. Sechaba Motsieola introduced me to jazz music of Nomfundo Kusile. I was inspired to move and seeds were planted to create a piece which I wish to dedicate to the family once completed. This was also an opportunity for me to prepare and teach a class for the following week to second year students in the following week at Moving into Dance studios. I danced, did stretches, meditated and connected with environment inside and outside the home. *Feelings /Reflections – An immense feeling of love flows from within the home, the bricks, the children, the housekeeper, the family. I will forever be grateful being able to create in this safe, supportive space.*



Sat 7th July. Programme changed – weather was really bad so we cancelled going to the **Grahamstown National Arts Festival**. This evolved into a 'spiritual weekend for the mind and being introduced to different spiritual philosophies of understanding. I had the opportunity to attend a conference: **Lifting the Veil on African Spirituality** at the Regenesys Business School, Sandton.

Sun 8th July. In the morning, I went to **Centre of Spiritual Living** held at the *Fairway*. It was a new, science of the mind service and ideal for my research. In the afternoon, I went to Soweto, we visited: **UbuNTU Spiritual Science Dialogue** in Credo Mutwa Cultural Village, Soweto.

Later in the afternoon, we had the memorial celebration for an elder in the community, who was a member for the Mothers Union (Nthabiseng's Grandmother). They came to the home, to pay respects for the first anniversary of her passing, they came, sang and they danced. I could see their traditional movements emerge (Zulu / South African) the basic movements reminded me of dancing with Kokuma Dance Theatre Company in the early days when I had a South African dance theatre teacher. About 25 women descended into the house, I was feeling the strength and energy coming from the women, a wave and sea of movement, of song and rhythms in the kitchen and living room. They then left in their minibus and there was silence. I was left thinking "what just happened?". As the evening approached I had the opportunity to walk to the local store for provisions and experience the community at night, before finally spending the night in Soweto in the safety of Nthabiseng's home.

Mon 9th July. **African Holistic Dance Youth Teaching Day** at Eastrand Youth School Holiday Camp, Daveyton, Gauteng. I delivered workshops with children (organised by Tauhadi) - a collaboration with Nthabiseng where we did a combination of meditation and introduction to African holistic dance – should have been one workshop but ended up as three! 25 children in each workshop, Yr 7's (11yr olds). I worked with about 75 children in total. I then travelled to Alexandra and carried out a live radio Interview on **Alex FM**, another rough area. I also prepared for teaching the class at Moving Into Dance.

Tues 10th July. I went to teach Moving Into Dance – 2nd Year Students. 10 students. I delivered a talk about myself, my practice and an intro to African holistic dance. I spoke about the connection with the earth, the universe and introduced the embodiment of sacred geometry into the movement vocabulary. At the end of the class they felt more confident, grounded and gave positive feedback.



"Young bodies connecting to new world, momentarily lost internally in the language of silence. Primordial language of life, language of the body, pure in shape and in form. Cycles of movement flowing effortlessly, connecting to the seed. Connecting undulating movements flowing from the seed, wheels of life, spiralling out in cycles connecting with the cosmos, the earth and the nature within.." Sandra Golding

Thurs 12th July. I went back to Soweto to meet with the **Go Go's** – a group of African elder women who run the **Botshelo Health life oldies** – an **NPO (non-profit organisation)** comprised of Soweto residents who are 55yrs+, from communities around the Oppenheimer Credo Mutwa heritage site. These women are similar to the African-Caribbean women and community organisations that I work with in the UK, like Tauhadi. They are very active in their communities and health and wellbeing is high on their agenda. I then went around the cultural heritage village site and took photos and connected with the environment and people.

Fri 13th July. I delivered a Dance/movement workshop at the **radio station - Alex FM**. This was advertised on the radio at short notice and I had 5 people who came along to take part in the Board room of the radio

station. Some people could not attend and rang in to ask “could we do it again?”. Then we went to the **community centre in Alexandra**, to talk to the community worker and see the multi-use space. They provide space for artists to generate creative activities for young people in the area. I engaged in a consultation and research about my dance **Ambassadors** programme with the young people and elders within the community. Being able to maintain and sustain links with young people working in their communities and with elders is important to my research. We also delivered a collaborative **Sound Healing** session in the Community centre park area with musicians and poets.

Sat 14th July. Meeting with **David April, Arts consultant**. A ‘1st generation company member who became Executive Director of Moving Into Dance. Currently lead Dance Curator for the National Arts Festival opening in Grahamstown this year.

Key Reflections:

Earlier in my career, I trained in classical and contemporary dance. I gained over 15yrs valuable experience in African Caribbean dance as principal dancer/teacher of Birmingham based Kokuma Dance Theatre Company. In 2009, I graduated with an *MA Dance and somatic wellbeing: Connections to the living body*, at the University of Central Lancaster. During the summer of 2015 I delivered, an African Holistic Dance (AHD) workshop for the Spiritual Living Consciousness Awakening retreat and conference in the Centre for Peace Geneva. All of which has contributed to the focus of my work, promoting the unification of African arts through performance in collaboration with national and international artists.

My dedication and passion for the survival of African and Caribbean dance has resulted in my development and delivery of **African Holistic Dance (AHD)**, a complementary therapeutic dance and somatic movement education within the community. With a focus on the Health and Wellbeing of the individual and their relationship with their bodies and connection with nature.

My intention is to work in the heart of the community and I have experience of working in diverse and challenging environments. I also currently work as a community development coordinator for the mothers union for the Church of England. I feel that you get a real on the ground perspective from the people when also staying in areas of deprivation and marginalised communities thus it was important to be in the heart of the townships. Networking and being on the ground, being connected to women who are doing deeper work and learning from women-led organisations e.g.; Tauhadi, workshops, presentations etc. and the Go Go’s, and how they are taking their work out was important and invaluable to my research. Although I wasn’t able to be fully involved in their activities, I learnt about their work in the community. Making connections with other women was essential but I need to go back again as there wasn’t sufficient time to further explore practices.

L.K: So whilst we are all looking back over your career, what are you looking forward to?

S.G: “..I want to archive my work and train others in AHD, deliver workshops and make new solo work to tour where I’ve just made some new connections in South Africa, I am ready to go now. After putting my career on hold to manage a family, it’s my time... I have to stand in my truth and stand in my cultural ground because this is what I teach and encourage.”- Interview by Louise Katerega for Animated – current issues and practice in participatory dance magazine by People Dancing – Spring 2018. ³

It also takes large amounts of time to travel in South Africa, as distances are often longer and served by limited public transport. So my planned schedule changed constantly and also arrangements that I was able to make. I also underestimated the amount of time it would take me to reach places. In addition, I didn’t achieve the total amount of funding to support my visit that I was hoping for. Thus I had to amend and revise the research that I was able to carry out as I was limited by financial budget. In addition as I was working with smaller community-led groups working in the heart of the community, I had to be flexible to accommodate their needs in addition my own whilst I was learning about South Africa. I had to travel whilst it was light to



2nd Year Students at Moving Into Dance, Mophatong. Photography by Nomikelo Woizaro (Nikki)

ensure that I was safe. But working in the heart of the community you get a real on the ground perspective from the people living in those environments and of traditions. However, Nikki from Cape Town travelled up to stay with me during this visit and support my work and research visit. She hosted me on my previous trip to South Africa, in her home and her work and support were invaluable in this research visit. She volunteered to act as my: P.A; interpreter; photographer / video recording and many other areas.

My overall aim now is to assist in creating an international *Knowledge Exchange Programme (Ambassadors project)* between African indigenous holistic healers with their counterparts within the UK and beyond. So it was important to develop a

potential partnership with Tauhadi Lightworkers regarding my Ambassadors scheme and future funding developments. Other ideas and collaborations include initiating and managing an annual African Holistic Healing Arts Convention. Thus it was important for me to create a teaching methodology that incorporated traditional dance, art, music and song for the Tauhadi Lightworkers Community well- being programme. Taking into consideration that Tauhadi is a small non funded community organisation that is carrying out fantastic work in the community with very limited capacity and resources. I wished to work with this type of organisation to support an organisation that was smaller and not a usual target for funding. Fulfilling a promise to return to Soweto allowed me to work on this grass root level and develop trust.

Creatively, I want to begin to look at *displacement* and *disconnection* as themes related to; identity; cultural heritage; psychological, emotional and physical impact on the human body and migration. Historically African people have been displaced from their ancestral land in various ways through enslavement and taken to the Caribbean and the America's. In the case of South Africa from the land to townships, in both cases there has been a disconnection from their natural environment which may impact on the individual and community in various ways. Hence the importance for me of *Sankofa*.



"My job is mostly about listening. Because of my background I have a strong affinity with the inner city and that's helped me develop relationships with individuals...I can be a bridge to connect and build relationships with Mothers Union members who live in rural and suburban areas, for example. ..Communities that are not afraid to make a difference" by Sandra Golding – *A Faith & Families Magazine* by Mothers' Union – Jul/Aug 2018 issue.⁴

For me in reflection, the older folk have still got a connection with their spirituality through their traditional movements. This was shown to me in particular at the Remembrance event. This celebrated the life of their sister who was in her 80's, women coming in and descending on the house, what should have been 10 women ended up as 25 squashed in to a small area. In the living room, against the wall, holding handbags, jackets and walking sticks. Watching them sing and it was beautiful, using a leather instrument the size of a bible, as a drum to

Unveiling African Spirituality. Photography by Sechaba Motsieola

make rhythm. The singing, the movement and the dancing, seeing the traditional movements coming out and then they stop and pray, very connected with their roots and culture, christian beliefs entwined with the traditional. Exploring movement of a people in this multifaceted way was invaluable and I give thanks to all the amazing people who have helped me on my Sankofa journey. Having the time and space for reflection enabled a greater appreciation of the environment I was in, along with the assistance and support I have received.

I give thanks in particular to:

- *Lisa Ullmann Fund*
- *Nthabiseng Chabeli - Tauhadi Lightworkers Community*
- *Nomikelo Woizaro (Nikki)*
- *Yolanda and Sechaba Motsieola*
- *Gladys Agulas*
- *Louise Katarega*
- *Anita Kaushik*
- *My Mother, Father and my children; Justyn, Aisha and Kenyetta for their continued support*