



# TENISI DAVIS

INTERDISCIPLINARY ARTIST/ PRODUCER

## CONTACT

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## AWARDS

- Coming Up Taller Award** (For artistic & cultural excellence), President and First Lady Bush, 2006
- Key to The City of Bridgeport** (For exceptional work in theatre, film, TV, and community), Mayor Joseph P. Ganim, 2019
- New England/Tri-State Areas 40 Under 40** An award given to 40 successful, community involved entrepreneurs under 40 years old in the Tri-state & New England region, 2023
- Berry Gordy Artistic and Social Justice Award** (For vision and success), Greater Bridgeport NAACP, 2019
- Certificate of Accomplishment** (In the performing arts and community building), Senator Christopher S. Murphy, 2019

## EDUCATION

- Housatonic Community College**, School of Theatre Arts (Bridgeport, CT)
- The Alvin Ailey School**, School of Dance (New York, NY)
- Music & Arts Center for Humanity**, School of Performing Arts (Bridgeport, CT)
- Performance Art Center of Connecticut**, Ballet, Contemporary, and Choreography (Trumbull, CT)
- Breakin Through Acting**, Script Analysis & Performance Technique (Los Angeles, CA)
- Shiek Acting Studio**, On-Camera Technique (New York, NY)
- Premier Actors Network**, Advanced Acting Class (Atlanta, GA)

## PLAYWRIGHT RESIDENCIES

- Long Wharf Theatre** (2022-2023, New Haven, CT)
  - Developed a script with expert guidance, receiving feedback and workshop production.
- The Momentary** (2024, Bentonville, AR)
  - Created and refined a script while co-developing a festival at the museum. Completed final draft of play while in residency.

## PROFESSIONAL OVERVIEW

As an interdisciplinary artist, I bring a versatile and accomplished skill set encompassing roles as an actor, producer, musician, choreographer, creative writer, designer, and activist. My extensive background spans theater, film, national commercials, and network television. I am deeply committed to creating and producing art that animates historical events, social narratives, and original ideas across a range of visual and performance mediums. My work has engaged and resonated with diverse audiences throughout the northeastern United States and beyond, illustrating my ability to connect and communicate complex themes through the arts effectively.

## WORK EXPERIENCE

### Film, Television, & Stage Actor

ACTOR'S EQUITY ASSOCIATION | SCREEN ACTORS GUILD 2017-present

- Notable Projects:** (Short list)
  - NBC's Manifest
  - NBC's The Blacklist
  - CBS's FBI
  - CBS's Blue Bloods
  - Frederick Douglas: An American Slave (One-man/Theatre)
  - Detroit '67 (Regional Theatre).
- Key Strengths:** Skilled in interpreting scripts, applying diverse acting techniques, and collaborating effectively with directors and fellow actors.

### Co-Founder & Executive Producer

Moja Productions 2023-present

- Innovator:** Co-founder and creator of KaniniFest: A One-Act BIPOC Play and Cultural Festival.
- Leadership:** Co-created organizational goals and secured funding, leading to the successful launch of KaniniFest, a BIPOC playwright festival.
- Program Development:** Developed and managed programs that provided emerging BIPOC playwrights with opportunities to have their work produced on a national stage.

### Co-Founder & Artistic Director

Rebirth Arts Collective 2010-2019

- Leadership:** Designed and implemented the organization's mission, structure, and financial strategy, leading to successful community engagement and artistic projects.
- Artistic Direction:** Oversaw and directed various productions, including Cold Sht, Letters from the Sky, and Walk in My Shoes.
- Youth Program Development:** Established a Summer Arts Intensive Program providing free performance art education to underserved youth.

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### PROFESSIONAL STRENGTHS

- **Creative Writing:** Expertise in adapting historical events and social themes into compelling scripts, plays, essays, and poems.
- **Playwriting:** Skilled in developing rich characters and narratives for both one-act and full-length productions.
- **Grant Writing:** Proven ability to research and secure funding, crafting proposals aligned with organizational goals.
- **Directing:** Experienced in leading script read-throughs, character development, performance coaching, and scene blocking.
- **Cultural Research:** Specialized knowledge in social constructivism, race & ethnicity, religious history, imperialism, and the history of capitalism.
- **Tech Design:** Developed a virtual music program for Bridgeport public schools.
- **Graphic & Web Design**

### EXPERTISE

- Acting
- Script Writing
- Music: West African, Afro-Latin, World percussion
- Dance: West African
- Film Making
- Poetry
- Producing
- Festival Production
- Pan- Africanism
- African- American Culture: Then & Now

### CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- **2020:** *"The Value of Teaching Civil Rights History in Schools,"* Winstead School District Symposium, CT
- **2017:** *"Increasing Philanthropy Engagement amongst Youth,"* Fairfield County's Community Foundation, CT
- **2016:** *"Exploring Race Relations in America,"* Connecticut Congressman Jim Himes, CT

### PUBLICATIONS

- **2024:** *"BIPOC's of NorthWest Arkansas,"* URBANE Magazine
- **2016:** *Arts Council of Greater New Haven*
- **2014:** *"A Time to Kill,"* Town Players of New Haven
- **2011:** *"Playwright Depicts Black Experience,"* Connecticut Post

### REFERENCES

#### Laurence Caso

☎ 203-216-8982

✉ laurence@theklein.org

#### Sandy Edwards

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#### Prof. Geoffrey Sheehan

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✉ GSheehan@hcc.commnet.edu

### WORK EXPERIENCE

#### Director of Education/Programming & Instructor

Klein Memorial Auditorium

2018-present

- **Teaching:** Designed and taught courses to Klein Theatre Arts students in acting, film making, African dance & drums, and scriptwriting.
- **Program Expansion:** Increased participant engagement by 40% and secured partnerships with key educational institutions.
- **Launched Virtual Learning Platforms:** Successfully launched virtual learning platforms that expanded program accessibility, reaching an additional 1,000 participants annually during CO-VID.

#### Guest Director

Fairfield University

February - April 2024

- **Collaborator:** Worked with PWI on a piece of theater that emphasizes social justice, in an effort to show students the importance of working with a wide array of artistic voices.
- **Director:** Directed the undergrad play for their Spring showcase.

#### Guest Lecturer

University of Arkansas School of the Arts

September - October 2024

- Conducted a lecture on the arts in Pan-Africanism and how self producing/producing affords more freedom in the creative space.

#### Teaching Artist

Neighborhood Studios of Fairfield County

2006-2017

- **Teaching:** Provided instruction in dance, music, theater, and creative writing, fostering artistic expression among inner-city youth.

#### Drum & Dance Instructor

Casey Family Services

2003-2010

- **Instruction:** Taught drumming and dance to foster and adopted students, emphasizing social-emotional learning.

#### Drum Instructor

Department of Juvenile Justice Connecticut

2006-2009

- **Instruction:** Engaged incarcerated youth in music education, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment.

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### ARTIST STATEMENT

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN,

I am Tenisi Davis, an interdisciplinary artist from Bridgeport, Connecticut, a city known for its economic challenges from which I have emerged to gain both national and international acclaim. My artistic journey has been marked by notable performances at venues such as the National Black Theater in New York City and TheatreSquared in Fayetteville, Arkansas, as well as featured roles in acclaimed television series like CBS's Blue Bloods and NBC's Manifest. My diverse body of work, celebrated for its versatility and depth, brings to life the complexities of the human condition through multiple expressive forms.

My robust artistic foundation was formed at the Music and Art Center for Humanity, Housatonic Community College's Theater Program, and the Alvin Ailey Foundation. This training, supplemented by mentorship from esteemed figures such as Baba Tunisi "Jack" Davis and Abdulaye Sylla in African percussion and dance, has enabled me to craft intricate narratives that extend beyond dialogue to embody the expressive power of movement and rhythm in film, theater, and television.

As a playwright, I have deepened my narrative skills, culminating in works like "We are Only Dead if We are Forgotten", a play completed during my residency at The Momentary in Bentonville, Arkansas. This piece, exploring the transformative journey of siblings Asata and Amari, underscores my commitment to portraying profound familial and cultural narratives that resonate broadly.

In filmmaking, I have written and self-produced three films and am currently developing the series B'PORT, which uncovers the vibrant, often hidden stories of Bridgeport, spotlighting themes of community resilience and transformation. My work not only entertains but also challenges and inspires, drawing viewers into deeper reflection on societal issues.

As the co-founder of MOJA Productions, I have also co-created KaniniFest: A One-Act Play and Cultural Festival in Bentonville, Arkansas. Sponsored by the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art and The Momentary, this festival supports underserved, underrepresented, and emerging BIPOC playwrights, fostering a platform for cultural dialogue and global unity through the arts.

My contributions to art and activism have been recognized with several prestigious awards, including the Coming Up Taller Award from President and First Lady Laura Bush at the White House and the Berry Gordy Artistic Award from the NAACP for my portrayal of Frederick Douglass. Additionally, my impact on culture and community was honored with the Key to the City of Bridgeport.

From my initial engagement with poetry, hip hop, and African dance and drumming at age 7, I have evolved into a cultural storyteller, weaving the rich textures of these early influences into my extensive career. I bring a comprehensive portfolio of artistic endeavors, propelled by a vision of art as a catalyst for personal and societal evolution. I am committed to creating works that provoke thought, inspire change, and empower communities globally.

SINCERELY,



TENISI DAVIS

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