



WEREWERE-LIKING GNEPO

Ivory Coast

World Theatre Day Message Author 2018

WEREWERE-LIKING GNEPO was born May 1, 1950 in Bondé, Cameroon. She has lived in the Ivory Coast since 1978. She is a multidisciplinary artist. As a writer she has nearly thirty published titles to her name, including novels, plays, stories, essays, art books and poetry. As a Painter, since taking up the brush for the first time in 1968, she has held many exhibitions around the world. More widely in theatre, besides being a heralded playwright, she is also an innovative puppeteer and has been the director of many large theatre frescoes, all described as African operas, many of which have toured the world. She has acted for both stage and screen and is also a Rap artist.

As a researcher in Traditional Pedagogical Techniques at the University of Abidjan (ILENA) from 1979 to 1985 she participated in the revolution of ritual theatre, and initiated the artistic group Ki-Yi Mbock off the back of her experiences in this field. She has developed a special training system inspired by African initiations which allows her to reach out to hundreds of young people in difficult circumstances and reintegrate them into society. This earned her the Prince Clauss Prize for "Hero of the City" in 2000. She founded the Pan-African Ki-Yi Foundation, which seeks to galvanise the youth by encouraging Creativity as a route to personal development in 2001, with which she has been working ever since.

Her hard work across a number of disciplines has seen her recognised with countless awards, including but not limited to; the Arletty Prize from France, the René Praile from Belgium, the Fonlon Nichols from the University of Alberta in Canada, the Chevalier des Arts et Lettres Françaises, Commander of the National Order of Merit of Côte d'Ivoire, Member of the High Council of La Francophonie from 1997 to 2003, Noma Prize 2005 and the Laureate of the Book of the Year 2007 for her novel The Memory Amputee. She is today a permanent member of the Academy of Sciences, Arts and Cultures of Africa and African Diasporas, in the Ivory Coast.