

# TE'A Presents "Under The Veil"

## ICAR Alumna & Co. Transform Conflict Through Theater

By Fareeha Khan, ICAR Undergraduate Student and Alumni Outreach Intern, fkhano@gmu.edu

### EVENTS

ICAR Alumna, Radha Kramer works as grassroots organizer committed to addressing the conflicts in America's backyard. Theatre, Engagement, and Action (TE'A), the organization she founded in 2008, has recently expanded from its birthplace in New York City to Washington D.C. TE'A is the product of a creative partnership between Radha Productions and Intersections International. Its mission is "to build peace by using interactive theatre to cross the barriers of race, class, culture, and religion that separate and divide Americans from each other." Through TE'A, Kramer uses art to explore social conflicts. Using either a university-based model or a community-based model, TE'A uses interactive theatre and cutting edge conflict transformation techniques to study relevant issues and create material for theatrical performance. Her passion for the project is evident as she talks about it. Often the focus is on topics that the public finds hard to talk about. "When people fear something that means they care about it," Kramer says. "That's why it is important to talk about those fears." Her experience at ICAR has enabled her to be an effective facilitator as she engages audiences in the expression of identity through discussion.

On November 19th, TE'A performed "Under the Veil: Being Muslim (and Non-Muslim) in America Post 9/11" at the Arlington campus. As the title indicates, the short play explored the complexity of the human experience of Americans, particularly Muslim Americans, after the towers fell. The script, written by the troupe, was an artistic interpretation of lived experience gathered from interviews and observations leaving the audience with a sense of having experienced "the really real" and a space in which to consider their own experience. That space was expanded through a facilitated

debriefing with the audience. TE'A purposefully structures projects to stimulate honest and meaningful conversation. According to Kramer, "There is no conflict resolution but there is conflict transformation." Her experience traveling and studying

conflicts with a Masters in public policy and in conflict resolution from ICAR, with the Peace Corps in the South Pacific, and a GMU study abroad trip to Israel, has provided her with an important scope on the dynamics of community. Kramer hopes

to take TE'A throughout the country and continue her focus on transformation surrounding current conflict laden issues in America.

At the conclusion of the performance on Thursday evening Kramer announced that TE'A will begin the formation of a new troupe, incorporating the ICAR community in exploring new topics and tensions from human experience. Anyone interested in participating in the project should contact Rhada Kramer at [radha@teaproject.com](mailto:radha@teaproject.com).

Everyone in the ICAR community should treat themselves to a visit to the TE'A website ([teaproject.com](http://teaproject.com)) for clips of performances and background on the Under the Veil project as well as webcasts on various issues. TE'A's most recent video on headscarves has already inspired many viewers to express their opinions on Facebook. ■



TE'A founder and ICAR Alumna, Radha Kramer. Photo: TE'A.

### Upcoming ICAR Community Events

**Thursday, December 3, 2009**

**GSCS Townhall Meeting**

7:30 am - 9:00 pm, Trueland Building, 555

Contact: Melanie Smith, [msmir@gmu.edu](mailto:msmir@gmu.edu)

**Thursday, December 17, 2009**

**ICAR Holiday Party**

6:00 pm - 10:00 pm, Point of View

Contact: Erin Martz, [emartz@gmu.edu](mailto:emartz@gmu.edu)

<http://icar.gmu.edu/events.htm>



TE'A Players Left to Right: Christa Quallo, Christian De Gre', Chuck Obasa, Ashley Williams, Felipe Aguilar IV. Photo: TE'A.