

# [Damali Abrams Shares Self-Healing Strategies as a Radical Act of Resistance](#)

*Hope-Lian Vinson speaks to Damali Abrams The Glitter Priestess about creating spaces for healing and transcendence as site for liberation.*

Damali Abrams is a Guyanese-American artist whose work engages with self-help as a radical means towards self-healing in response to the sociopolitical forces that undermine Black wellness and preservation today. Using performance as a vehicle for herbal remedies, Abrams promotes self-care as a ritualistic act, bringing together Afro-Caribbean mythologies and Black American pop idols to inspire sites of joy, celebration, and collective healing. Abrams' role as the Glitter Princess challenges audiences to take part in alternative and even transcendent realities where the threshold between realism and idealism blur. In a community where tragedy takes precedent, the use of the Black imaginary functions as a tool for liberation for the Black community and its survival today.



And She Lived Happily Ever After by Damali Abrams image courtesy of the artist.

**HOPE-LIAN VINSON: In the oversaturation of violent media depicting police shootings, what has been your process in promoting self-healing as a response to social ills in your artistic practice?**

**DAMALI ABRAMS:** In addition to offering healing remedies through [GlitterPriestess.com](http://GlitterPriestess.com), I am also offering workshops at community organizations and I have created a performance piece where I share herbal remedies to soothe anger and anxiety, which was performed at the opening of *¿Qué Pasa, USA?*. My approach is to share what works for me in my own self-care and healing practice. All of my art is about healing as well.



Glitter Priestess Mad Tea Party by Damali Abrams image courtesy of the artist

**HLV:** Since its popularity in the late 20th century, self-help is criticized as an industry which survives off the ineffective methods and misleading claims of self-sufficient practices. As an artist whose works revolve around self-help, what role do you see your performances having in relationship to the global movements of today, specifically with black empowerment, liberation, and healing?

**DA:** I see my work as a contribution to those contemporary global movements. My work incorporates a critical eye towards mainstream self-help while simultaneously acknowledging its revolutionary possibilities. When I was in grad school, performance artist and faculty advisor, Faith Wilding, guided my research towards the roots of contemporary self-help culture; going back to movements in the 1970s like the Black Panther Party and feminist consciousness-raising groups.

Any political movement can only go as far as the individuals involved in it. If we have low self-esteem or low self-worth and feel undeserving of progress due to internalized oppression, it is very difficult to move forward individually or collectively. Similarly, if we are afraid to be vulnerable or have unresolved emotional issues, it becomes difficult to work with others. That is why I focus so much on self-healing. Being healthy is a radical act for groups of people who have to fight for the right to exist, now and historically as well.



transcend tragedy and injustice in order to begin imagining alternative futures, then manifest them!