

2nd Annual Women-In-Yoga Empowerment Conference

A Day of Inspiring Dialogue & Classes

Sunday, March 6, 2022

Bios of All Presenters

8 a.m. PST/ 11a.m. EST/ 4 p.m. GMT

Opening & Hosting Organizations Introduction (30 minutes)

Kayoko Mitsumatsu, Yoga Gives Back

<https://yogagivesback.org/our-story/>

As an avid yoga practitioner in Los Angeles, Kayoko founded Yoga Gives Back in 2007, a non-profit organization whose mission is to mobilize practitioners worldwide to channel their gratitude for yoga into empowering India's women and children to create sustainable lives. In its 15th year, YGB provides more than 2400 underserved mothers and children with micro loans and educational funds. YGB's global campaign has reached many US cities and thirty countries worldwide with its mantra, "For the cost of one yoga class, you can change a life."

Prior to moving to the USA in 1992, Kayoko was a producer/director for NHK Japan's National Public Broadcaster, working on primetime current affairs and documentary television programs, and serving as cultural attaché at the Embassy of Japan in London. Her passion for documentary filmmaking is rooted in the perspective gained from years of living abroad including Australia, Brazil, the United Kingdom and the USA. Kayoko now uses her experience and skills by filming YGB's fund recipients every year to share their stories with the global yoga community as [YGB Films](#).

For the last three decades while living in Los Angeles, Kayoko has continued her work for NHK's feature documentary programs as producer/director, but since 2016, Kayoko has been serving YGB full-time as its Executive Director.

Erica Barth, Exhale to Inhale

<https://www.exhaletoinhale.org/>

Erica is the Co-Owner and Director of Harlem Yoga Studio (HYS), founded in 2009 with the mission of making yoga accessible, welcoming and fun for Every Body living in Harlem. A thriving community, HYS offers a wide variety of classes for students of all ages, abilities, and body types. Erica holds a Bachelor's degree in Business from the Wharton School and a Masters degree in Organizational Psychology from Columbia University. She brings her experience in Marketing, Project Management, and Organizational Effectiveness to her role at ETI. Having viewed the world with a systemic lens for many years, Erica sees the internal connection between body, mind and spirit as a mirror (and magnifier) of our connection to one another, and incorporates her understanding of yoga and her background in social organizational theory to help teams engage more effectively. She is continually inspired to deepen her knowledge of the body, mind, and spirit, and is profoundly grateful to her teachers both on and off the mat.

Melanie Klein, Yoga and Body Image Coalition

<http://ybicoalition.com/>

Melanie C. Klein, M.A., is an empowerment coach, thought leader and influencer in the areas of radical self-acceptance, authentic empowerment, and super charged confidence. She is also a successful writer, speaker, and professor of Sociology and Women's Studies. Her areas of interest and specialty include media literacy education, body image, and the intersectional analysis of systems of power and privilege.

She is the co-editor of *Yoga and Body Image: 25 Personal Stories About Beauty, Bravery + Loving Your Body* (Llewellyn, 2014) with Anna Guest-Jelley,

a contributor in 21st Century Yoga: Culture, Politics and Practice (Horton & Harvey, 2012), is featured in Conversations with Modern Yogis (Shroff, 2014), a featured writer in Llewellyn's Complete Book of Mindful Living (Llewellyn, 2016), co-editor of Yoga, the Body and Embodied Social Change: An Intersectional Feminist Analysis with Dr. Beth Berila and Dr. Chelsea Jackson Roberts (Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), Yoga Rising: 30 Empowering Stories from Yoga Renegades for Every Body (Llewellyn, 2018) and the co-editor of the new anthology, Embodied Resilience through Yoga (Llewellyn, 2020).

She co-founded the [Yoga and Body Image Coalition](#) in 2014 and lives in Santa Monica, CA.

Monisha Raja, Yoga Aid

<http://www.yogaaid.org/>

Born and raised in India, **Monisha Raja** began her yoga practice at the age of four and has been teaching for over 20 years. After contracting COVID and recovering through the practice of Yoga, she now teaches COVID patients and all, to strengthen and maintain a healthy Pulmonary system. Monisha is the founder of YOGA AID, a non-profit organization dedicated to honoring the source culture of Yoga and amplifying Indian and South Asian voices in Yoga.

Monisha teaches and lives in New York City. You can learn more about YOGA AID at <https://www.yogaaid.org>

8:30 a.m. PST/ 11:30 a.m. EST/ 4:30 p.m. GMT

PANEL "YOGA & Activism" (45 minutes)

Melanie Klein (Moderator) <http://www.melaniecklein.com/>

(bio above)

Kallie Schut www.rebelyogatribe.co.uk

Kallie Schut is a Yoga and dharmic educator who is a lifelong social justice and anti-racist activist advocating for those without a voice or presence in places of power and privilege. Kallie is a Yoga Alliance certified ERYT-500 Yoga Teacher of Indian heritage, practicing intentional Hatha, Yin, Yoga nidra, meditation and gong for 35 years. Kallie is the founder of Rebel Yoga Tribe YouTube channel, Radical Yogi book club and delivers continual professional development trainings which delve deep into the legacy of colonialism in modern Yoga, as well as being co-founder of The Radical Darshan Yoga School. She is also one of the founding members of the U.K. Yoga Teachers Union.

Jammella Anderson <https://www.jammellaanderson.com/>

Jammella is a 500hr Registered Yoga Teacher and soon-to be Registered Prenatal Yoga Teacher in Albany, NY. Jammella began her yoga practice in 2012 and was immediately hooked. She began to see through the growth of her spiritual and physical health how trans-formative yoga is and how it is an integral part of the human experience. The deeper she dove into the yoga the more she learned – and the less she felt she knew. After encouragement from her teachers, she began her YTT and things have been different ever since.

Jamelle is 500 hour registered yoga teacher through Hot Warrior Yoga and Jai Yoga School both in Albany, NY and a certified doula through Ancient Song Doula Services in Brooklyn, NY. She is also the founder of Free Food Fridge Albany offering free food for local population with food insecurity.

Jocelyn Solomon <https://jocelynsolomonyoga.com/>

Founder of [Jocelyn Solomon Yoga](https://jocelynsolomonyoga.com/), based in Santa Monica, California, Jocelyn is also a senior teacher at YogaWorks. Jocelyn is on the Board of Yoga Gives Back to grow her commitment to inspire her students and community to expand their practice by taking their yoga off the mat and into activism.

Jocelyn is a 500hr Registered Yoga Teacher through YogaWorks. Her primary focus is on Yoga Works and her work on their ADEI (Anti-Racist Diversity Equity and Inclusion) Council, her own Sober Coaching and International Retreat business. Prior to her career teaching yoga, Jocelyn was a criminal and civil rights trial attorney for many years until she became a mother. Jocelyn brings the same passion, drive and commitment to her students as she did her clients. Jocelyn loves to equate fighting for the physical freedom of her law clients with the same liberation and freedom her students seek from yoga.

Julie Fernandez <https://www.exhaletoinhale.org/staff/#julie-fernandez>

Julie is the Lead Trainer at Exhale to Inhale and is the Primary Trauma Therapist with the Hope Integrative Psychiatry team where she helps clients feel safe in their bodies, comfortable in the world, and embodied, integrated and whole. Julie has experience working with at-risk teenage girls, disadvantaged youth in inner city schools, at eating disorder centers, as well as domestic violence shelters and rape-crisis centers. Julie discovered yoga after struggling with abuse that led to anxiety, depression, self-harm and disordered eating. Through yoga, she found strength to begin her journey toward healing her relationship with her body and her Self, and has been sharing yoga ever since. Using tools and techniques from yoga, breathwork, mindfulness, and Somatic Experiencing, Julie encourages students to access their inner guidance and natural wisdom to reclaim their bodies and cultivate healing.

9:30 a.m. PST/12:30p.m. EST/ 5:30 p.m. GMT

[Chanting \(30 minutes\)](#)

Kamini Natarajan www.KaminiMusic.com

Kamini Natarajan is a Kirtan and Indian Classical Singer based in LA area. She blends Mantras and Chants with Indian Ragas to create Kirtans that are traditional and extremely meditative. Her Kirtans are composed in specific

Ragas that leave the participants feeling serene. She is also the author of Kirtan eBook Indian Ragas for Kirtans. Kamini's Kirtans bring out her deep spiritual background. They are extremely mystical and magnificently divine. People are left mesmerized by her angelic voice, her intricate improvisations, her odd meter rhythms and most importantly her radiant warm smile. For more information and to stay in touch, visit her website www.KaminiMusic.com or her Facebook page KaminisMusic.

10 a.m. PST/ 1p.m. EST/ 6p.m. GMT

Trauma Healing Yoga (30 minutes)

Jenna Conner www.exhaletoinhale.org/staff/#jenna-conner

Jenna first discovered yoga in college to ease stress and back pain, and never turned back. She comes from a dance background of 18 years, and has always had a passion for movement. Jenna fully lives and breathes yoga and tries to find some act of yoga in her everyday life. She offers vinyasa, hatha, restorative, prenatal, and trauma informed classes all throughout NYC. In her classes, you can expect to see pranayama, asana alignment, meditation, philosophy, creativity, and the invitation to come as you are. Jenna especially encourages others to see that yoga is more than a physical practice. Forever a student of yoga, there's so much more she still aspires to learn. Jenna loves to travel and has learned and taught yoga in many parts of the world. In addition to yoga, Jenna is also a birth doula and Reiki Healer. She continues to work and spread her love of yoga and healing around NYC and the world, making it available to all types of people regardless of size, shape, color, culture, or ability.

Ailen Pedraza

Ailen is a bilingual trauma-informed teacher of color who has been practicing and harnessing the power of yoga for over ten years. Ailen completed their 200-hour Teacher Training in 2019 and was a 2020 Exhale to Inhale's

Trauma-Informed scholarship recipient, where they have been teaching ever since. Being part of Exhale to Inhale's diverse community of dedicated and inspiring individuals inspires and galvanizes them to support others forging along in the path of self-discovery, healing, and empowerment.

11a.m.PST/ 2p.m. EST/7p.m/ GMT

"The Yoga of Motherhood: dialogue & practice (1 hour)"

Pranidhi Varshney <http://yogashalawest.com/pranidhi/>

Pranidhi Varshney is the founder of Yoga Shala West, a community-supported ashtanga yoga studio in West Los Angeles. She is also mother to two courageous and wise little beings. The thread that runs through all her work is the desire to build community and live from the heart.

Holly Leever <https://rosebudwellness.com/>

Holly Leever is the owner of Rosebud Wellness, where she practices women's holistic health as a licensed Acupuncturist, Herbalist, Yoni Steam therapist, and Arvigo Abdominal Massage Therapist. Holly works with women at all stages of life, from menarche to menopause and is especially passionate about working with women in the perinatal time (prenatal, birth, and postpartum). Instagram: @rosebud_wellness, <http://rosebudwellness.com/shop>

Alexandra South www.connectingyoga.com

Alexandra is a certified Yoga teacher and mother of three. She passionately shares insight on how Yoga, breath and movement can encourage pelvic floor healing, helping mothers to feel empowered from their sacred root. She has been teaching Yoga since 2008 and has taught in London (UK), Sydney (Australia), and Los Angeles, CA. Alexandra currently resides in Dallas, Texas. Instagram: @connectingyoga

Meredith Fogg Liberos

Meredith has been teaching yoga for nearly a decade. Her experience spans traditions, including vinyasa, Iyengar and Ashtanga Yoga. Trained by Many Ezraty, Chuck Miller, Annie Carpenter and Paul Cabanis, she brings a unique understanding of anatomy, alignment and therapeutics to the Mysore room. A mother of three children under the age of five, Meredith views her own practice as a daily reminder of life's singular truth: everything changes. Instagram: @meredith_fogg_liebross

Alana Adye-Jones

Alana Adye-Jones has been practicing Ashtanga Yoga for ten years. She is a mother and is training to become a postpartum doula. Born in Australia and currently based in Los Angeles, Alana believes you never regret a swim, no matter how cold the water.

Noon PST/ 3p.m. EST/ 8 p.m. GMT
[Ayurveda Cooking Class \(40 minutes\)](#)

***Sandhiya Ramaswamy* www.alchemyayurveda.com**

Sandhiya Ramaswamy is an Ayurveda educator and mentor. For over a decade, she has had the privilege of helping hundreds of clients experience the transformative power of Ayurveda through one-on-one consultations, workshops, cooking classes, spiritual gatherings and retreats to India. An Ayurveda health and life coach, plant-based chef, spiritual mentor and India retreat guide, she offers her services under the platform of Alchemy Ayurveda www.alchemyayurveda.com

Sandhiya came back full circle to the roots of Ayurveda that she grew up with in India, after a serious hospitalization resulting from burnout after spending many years in the corporate world. Her Indian roots and deep knowledge of Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta and Tantra, along with her practical approach, make these great wisdom sciences accessible to everyone.

12:45 p.m. PST/ 3:45 p.m. EST/ 8:45 p.m. GMT

Guided Meditation (30 minutes)

Dr. Romie Mushtaq, MD www.drromie.com

Dr. Romie is a triple-board certified physician, award-winning speaker, and Chief Wellness Officer. As a Certified Mindfulness Expert, she brings over 20 years of authority in neurology and integrative medicine to her work. Dr. Romie is the Chief Wellness Officer for a company with over 7,000 employees, scaling mindfulness and wellness programs. She is a national media expert featured on TED Talks, NPR, NBC, Fox, and Forbes, and is the Founder of brainSHIFT at Work: Heal Stress & Restore Mental & Physical Well-Being. Numerous Fortune 500 companies, professional athletes, and global organizations have sought advice and counsel with Dr. Romie.

1:15 p.m. PST/ 4:15 p.m. EST/ 9:15 p.m. GMT

Panel 2 "Yoga & Sisterhood" (45 minutes)

Felicia Tomasko (Moderator))

Felicia is President at LA YOGA and on Yoga Gives Back's Board of Director as well as RN, E-RYT-500, C-IAYT, CAP. She combines her passions for the teachings of both Yoga and Ayurveda in her life's work. She integrates her training as a Registered Nurse and her background working in plant biochemistry and cognitive neuroscience into her practice and teaching. She has served on the Board of Directors of the National Ayurvedic Medical Association and the California Association of Ayurvedic Medicine. In 2002, Felicia was part of the founding team at LA YOGA Magazine, where she is Editor-in-Chief and President of Bliss Network. A longtime teacher, Felicia is a featured teacher on glo.com, and is on the Yoga Studies and Yoga Therapy faculty at Loyola Marymount University. Felicia maintains a private practice in

Santa Monica and teaches workshops worldwide. Her commitments include advocacy for community and highlighting social causes.

Nina Rao www.NinaRaoChant.com

Nina Rao learned traditional chants (bhajans) from her grandfather in a village in south India when she nine years old. The chants quietly stayed with her until she rediscovered chanting with Krishna Das in New York in 1996. For many years Nina has been Krishna Das' business manager and accompanies him musically as well. In 2007, she recorded the track 'Nina Chalisa' on Krishna Das' CD "Flow of Grace"; January 2013 she released her debut album, "Antarayaami-Knower of All Hearts"; August 2018 her second album "Anubhav" was released. Nina regularly leads kirtan, workshops, and retreats in her hometown of Brooklyn, New York and beyond. For more information visit NinaRaoChant.com. She is also chairwoman of non-profit Saving Wild Tigers (savingwildtigers.org) which supports conservation of wild tigers and all species in their natural habitat in India. In addition, she hosts a guest podcast series on the Be Here Now Network exploring spirituality, practice, and conservation of wilderness and Nature (<https://beherenownetwork.com/category/guest-podcasts/nina-rao/>)

Mirabelle D'Cunha www.mirabelledcunha.com

Mirabelle strives to be tenacious and trusting in the pursuit of uncovering her illusions through the practice of yoga. Her journey began in Mumbai India, with a University Diploma in Yoga and Yoga Philosophy and continued in the Sivananda lineage. Mirabelle has shared yoga around the world and is a guest teacher on international yoga teacher training on pranayama, bhakti yoga, and the deeper nuances of yoga as a living practice. She has been a speaker and panelist and teacher for Yoga Alliance Continuing Education Programs. Her Pranayama Breathing Summit in 2021, featuring 24 of the worlds most adept wisdom keepers and scientists was endorsed by the

Chopra Foundation and attended by thousands. Mirabelle D'Cunha supports committed yoga lovers to savor the luxury of inner experience and live purposefully, pleurably and joyfully through breath. Her signature offering is [Breathe into a Radiant You](#), a private mentoring program for allowing grace to heal through breath. Trust, compassion and intimacy with breath are at the heart of how Mirabelle approaches all of her work in this world.

Nadine MacNeil www.universalempress.com

Nadine is the founder of Universal Empress and a Yoga Gives Back Ambassador. Nadine coined two terms to encompass the main objectives of her work. First, her central message of Consciousness Rising – the act of stepping boldly into the fullest expression of self, thereby becoming a catalyst for collective change. And, her quest for the Democratization of Yoga – the removal of the illusion of elitism attached to the practice in modern times.

She presents at international conferences such as the BaliSpirit Festival and the Caribbean Yoga Conference, leads corporate workshops at companies such as the Caribbean's largest money market brokerage, JMMB, and teaches at yoga studios across the globe. She also implements a variety of programs, classes and workshops for underserved populations, with past projects in the United States, Jamaica, Haiti and Africa, contributing, for example, to organizations such as the Africa Yoga Project. Universal Empress was launched in 2010 as the brand representing Nadine McNeil, a [yoga teacher](#), [public speaker](#), [transformational coach](#) and humanitarian. Her mission involves igniting others to create and dwell in infinite possibility, and share the tenets of yoga within communities where it has been largely inaccessible.

Nubia Teixeira <https://www.nubiayoga.com/>

Author, yogini, teacher trainer, and Odissi dancer, Nubia Teixeira has devoted herself to teaching different aspects of yoga for almost 30 years. Perceiving yoga as a healing art, Nubia's refinement and unique style overflows with

sacred meaning and heartfelt inspiration. Nubia leads workshops, teacher trainings and retreats locally and around the world.

2 p.m. PST/ 5 p.m. EST/ 10 p.m. GMT

Chanting (30 minutes)

Nina Rao (bio above)

2:30 p.m. PST/ 5:30 p.m. EST/ 10:30 p.m. GMT

Closing

Kayoko Mitsumatsu, Monisha Raja (bios above)