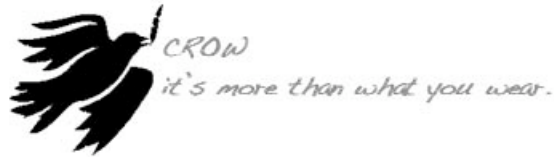


For Immediate Release  
contact: Elisabeth Malzahn  
elisabeth@crow-clothing.com  
ph: 720-220-7702



## More about damali ayo, “MamaBird,” Founder and CEO, CROW Clothing, LLC

damali ayo has a finely tuned eye for all things visual and energetic. As an artist, ayo engaged social issues by creating accessible, interactive “Now Art,” that involved viewers as participants in the art-making process while generating dialogue. ayo’s award-winning work has been shown at galleries across the world. She has spoken to colleges, high schools, non-profits and communities in 30 U.S.



Photo credits: Pete Springer Photography

states and Canada, and her work has been featured in over 100 publications and programs worldwide including *Bust*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Harper’s*, Salon.com, *The Seattle Times*, *The Village Voice*, *The Washington Post* and CSPAN2’s “Book TV.”

ayo has worked as a professional diversity trainer, prison activities director, team leader, program developer and camp director. In 2003, she created the internationally acclaimed web-art-performance rent-a-negro.com, which explores the commodification of race and the interactions between blacks and whites in society.

Her book, *How to Rent a Negro*, was celebrated as “one of the most trenchant and amusing commentaries on contemporary race relations.” It was granted a 2005 Honorable Mention in the Outstanding Book Awards from the Gustavus Meyers Center for the Study of Bigotry and Human Rights. Her radio work “Living Flag: Panhandling for Reparations” won a Silver Reel Award from the National Federation of Community Broadcasters. *How to Rent a Negro* is currently in film development with Coalition Films (NY) in partnership with Saturn Films (LA) and Participant Productions (LA).

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In 2006, ayo left traditional art gallery representation and named her particular approach to art “Now Art.” She describes Now Art as being immediate, accessible and engaging social issues. Much of ayo's Now Art is participatory and free. ayo believes that “art should make you think and feel.” She eschews art that is primarily for decoration or profit and believes that artists’ true place is at the forefront of social change movements. In 2007, ayo created Now Art Grants, a program that combines small donations from a large number of individuals, then grants that money to artists engaged in social change.

ayo has also been sewing and designing clothes since she could thread a needle. A ten-year practitioner of yoga, she lives an eco-lovely life in which she composts, sheet mulches, saves rainwater and grows her own food and medicinal herbs. ayo is committed to health and fitness and finding natural paths to healing. Her life demonstrates her belief that “all things are connected.”

In 2008, ayo folded her work fighting racism into a broader vision for holistic change and healing with her creation of **CROW Clothing**, a new kind of clothing company that uses sustainable fibers, supports social change and helps to inspire its customer base through educational tools and resources.

ayo says, “I have seen that change starts with people, relationships and courage. **CROW Clothing** is the expression of my passion for connecting people with resources and information to help them be all they can be.”

ayo has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brown University in a dual concentration of public policy and American civilization. She also holds a Master of Fine Arts from Portland State University in studio arts. ayo is an avid gardener and herbalist who strives to live a life in harmony with principles of sustainability. damali ayo’s name means “beautiful vision of joy.” She lives in Portland, Oregon, with her blind adopted dog, Stevie.

For more information about **CROW Clothing** or to speak with  
**CROW Founder and CEO damali ayo**,  
please contact Elisabeth Malzahn, Vice President of Marketing,  
elisabeth@crow-clothing.com or phone 720-220-7702.