Remembrance and Renewal features numerous diverse, locally and nationally known storytellers.

Recognizing the power and potential of storytelling in its many forms at this pivotal moment in American culture and politics, this 5-day festival draws on the skills of some of the nation’s most prominent and diverse storytelling practitioners.

The Festival will feature both traditional and contemporary stories from nationally and locally known storytellers. The programming will focus on diverse voices, all addressing these ideas: How can storytelling illuminate the world as it exists now?; Can storytelling build community and create cultural and institutional change?; What can a community do to invite a diversity of voices to share personal and cultural stories that have shaped the way they live and the way we understand others?; Can Storytelling be an effective platform to battle systemic racism?

The international, national and local list of storytellers are an exciting collection of those artists who are currently defining the art form:

Andrew Ali Aghapour       Ashley Lumpkin
Charlotte Blake Alston     Senora Lynch
Brenda Wong Aoki           Daniel Reyes
Milbre Burch               Carlos Robson
Jasmin Cardenas            Simon Tam
Sam Gates                 Dovie Thomason
Jaki Shelton Green         And UNC Student Storytellers
Kaya Littleturtle

The Process Series Presents:

Remembrance & Renewal

STORYTELLING FESTIVAL

Streaming Live February 17th-21st, 2021

Presented by:
The Process Series
The Department of American Studies
The Department of Communication

with the co-sponsorship of

Carolina Performing Arts, The UNC Latina/o Studies Program (and the Teatro Latina/o Series), The Carolina Latinx Center, Asian American Center, Humanities for the Public Good Initiative, American Indian Center, Institute of Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Science, and the Orange County Arts Council.
ANDREW AGHAPOUR
Andrew Ali Aghapour is a locally grown talent who went to UNC and is still in the area. Born and raised in Charleston, South Carolina by immigrant parents: a Muslim, Iranian father and a Christian, British mother.

His story, Zara, is a story about Andrew Aghapour’s childhood struggle with masculinity and monotheism. The main events are an encounter with a gorilla and a middle school home run that shatters his faith.

CHARLOTTE BLAKE ALSTON
Charlotte Blake Alston is an African American storyteller, orchestral narrator and librettist. She breathes life into traditional and contemporary stories from African and African American oral and cultural traditions.

Pulpit C19 tells the story of how one church, its pastor and congregation responded in the time of COVID. Six Triple Eight, recalls the Women of the all African American 6888th” Central Postal Directory Battalion who defied racial stereotypes and low expectations to establish a system of communication critical to the morale of soldiers on the battlefield.

BRENDA WONG AOKI
Brenda Wong Aoki is an Asian American storyteller, solo performer and playwright. Trained in Noh theatre, Brenda tells Japanese ghost stories as well as family history stories, stories of the Japanese internment during WWII, and tales of growing up in a multi-ethnic neighborhood in LA.

Between Black & White is a compilation of personal tales told by America’s first Asian Pacific Storyteller. I AM SAN FRANCISCO focuses on a disgruntled mixed race tech worker and the spirits of his ancestors in Chinatown and Japantown.
Remembrance & Renewal

MILBRE BURCH
Milbre Burch is a Euro-American storyteller, a published writer, a produced playwright, an archivist, a storytelling studies scholar and a Grammy-nominated spoken word recording artist. She is currently a Research Collaborator with the American Studies Department.

Sometimes I Sing indicts the systems that still keep battered women in abusive environments, even today. This monodrama is intended as a sequel to Susan Glaspell’s 1916 one-act Trifles. Notes from a Pandemic Pothole is a report-out on news, nerves, nationalism, art-making, armchair activism and personal experience.

JASMIN CARDENAS
Jasmin Cardenas is a “next-generation teller.” An activist, actress, storyteller and Theatre of the Oppressed (TO) practitioner, she was born to Colombian immigrants, and is based in Chicago, IL.

People are NOT Disposable, Jasmin tells the stories of the frontline workers who bring you food, are making masks and on factory lines serving us as they struggle to survive. Her story From Legends to Personal Tales; Struggling with Societies Expectations of Women is accompanied by a personal tale of a 1st generation American struggling with old world expectations in the 21st Century.

JAKI SHELTON GREEN
Jaki Shelton Green (Festival Welcome) is the first Africa American and third woman to be appointed as the North Carolina Poet Laureate. When he appointed her in 2018, Governor Cooper stated that “Jaki Shelton Green brings a deep appreciation of our state’s diverse communities to her role as an ambassador of North Carolina literature.”

Jaki Shelton Green will start us off with a story called What We Keep Keeps Us. The story is based on an artifact that has been passed down and holds many narratives. It is a story of whispering ancestors who continue to guide, instruct, and direct.

The Storytellers and Their Stories

KAYA LITTLETURTLE
Kaya Littleturtle has been active in the Lumbee Tribe his entire life, and his family has been right there with him. Littleturtle has been learning about storytelling and native music traditions since he was a child.

A Creation Story of how Lumbee land was formed and made, accompanied by esganye songs that honor Lumbee women and their place in creation. In this work he also explores and brings continued awareness to the issue of missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW). In a second story, he explores burying our weapons of war over time and living a life of peace through song.

ASHLEY LUMPKIN
Ashley Lumpkin is an African American spoken word artist, Georgia-raised, Carolina-based writer, editor, actor, and educator. Her book I Hate You All Equally, is a collection of conversations from her years as a classroom teacher.

What Stays in This House is a show about navigating an often paradoxical family, and how moving forward together begins with unearthing secrets you've tried to leave behind.

SENORA LYNCH
Senora Lynch is the 2007 NC Heritage Award Winner, a culture-bearer and storyteller as well as a potter.

Lynch will be giving us a story and a tour of The Gift, the mosaic of colored bricks that form Native American symbols serves as a walkway between the two UNC Student Union buildings. Composed in a staggered pattern typical of beadwork but rendered in colored brick on a massive scale, the mosaic depicts traditional southeastern Native American life symbols such as turtles, eagle feathers, ears of corn, mountains, and water.

Visit www.processseries.unc.edu or call (919) 843-5666 for tickets and more information.
Carlos Robson is an award-winning spoken word poet, playwright, and teaching artist. As a “slam” poet, he’s competed in local, regional, national, and international competitions, winning the National Poetry Slam championship in 2007 and again in 2008 as a member of the North Carolina-based team, Slam-Charlotte. He has performed in all corners of the nation, including Broadway.

His work Retail Therapy is a one man show about how a full time performance poet became the least likely manager in the history of corporate retail, and how the lessons we need to learn most in life always present themselves whether or not we are ready for them.

Simon Tam is an American author, musician, activist, and entrepreneur. Tam is best known as the founder and bassist of The Slants, the world’s first and only all-Asian American dance rock band. Presented with musician Joe X. Jiang (guitar) of The Slants.

Joe X. Jiang is a filmmaker and musician who has called Portland home for nearly ten years. As a musician, Joe tours nationally and internationally in several bands and is a producer at Track Town Records in Eugene, OR.

Slanted is the story of an indomitable spirit who so believes in the idea of justice that he’s willing to risk everything along the way for the dignity of self-identity. Simon reveals a deeply personal account that will take you from prisons to the Supreme Court, all in the name of justice, and all while grappling with Asian American identity.

Dovie Thomason is a storyteller of Lakota, Apache and Scot Traveller descent and an advocate for Indigenous People and the woven from research, life experience and her relatives’ stories, “re-storying” the history and legacy of Indian boarding schools, the Wild West mythos of the 19th century, the Space Program and other moments of collision between the colonizing culture and the indigenous peoples of North America.

In How the Wild West Was Spun (excerpts), Thomason examines Buffalo Bill Cody’s 1880s traveling pageant he called “The Wild West: A History Lesson.”

Undocumented Indigenous (a work in progress) takes a deep look at the memoir: the reluctant, yet earliest, genre of Indigenous Literature. Based on personal anecdotes, Dovie Thomason grapples with never feeling “enough”, and taking on some of the challenges of identity and the memoir.

Samuel R. Gates teaches and performs standup comedy because he believes that laughter heals. As an art-form, it provides an unparalleled platform for self-expression that can be remarkably intimate, direct, and intensely personal. As an actor, he invests his talent, skills, and abilities in bringing a playwright and director’s dramatic vision to life. He strives to entertain, and his overarching intention is for it to be therapeutic for myself and the audience. He believes we may not be able to defeat our demons, but if we can make them laugh, that may be enough.

In his site specific work Tragedy + Time = Comedy (placed at the site of Silent Sam), Gates uses standup comedy to look at what spaces tell us about who and what belongs to them, and when.
Remembrance & Renewal
The Storytellers and Their Stories

Featured Student Storyteller

DANIEL REYES

Daniel Reyes, a UNC Master’s student in Folklore, is a filmmaker and writer with interests in documentary film, Latinx diaspora of the South, and the diverse traditional music genres of Texas and Mexico. As an emerging performance artist, Daniel frames his work through an auto-ethnographic lens, investigating and interviewing material culture, archives, and other personal artifacts.

Daniel will be reading an excerpt from Reprimand, a semi-autobiographical performance that uses storytelling, dance, and personal documentary archives to examine how time, space, and memory shape how we tell and retell traumatic narratives.

OPEN MIC NIGHT

We will be selecting from among a number of possible student storytellers for the festival, both grads and undergrads representing various departments including Theatre, Communication/Performance Studies, Department of American Studies, the School of Library Science and Information Science among them.

Festival Committee Members

Milbre E. Burch, Project Coordinator
Qua Lynch Adkins, American Indian Center
Patricia Sawin, American Studies
Glenn Hinson, American Studies
Berkley Hudson, University of Missouri
Christopher Massenburg, Creative Futures, CPA
Danny Bell, American and Indigenous Studies
Joseph Megel, Artistic Director, Process Series
Heather Tatreau, Producer, The Process Series

Festival Advisors

Ben Frey, American Studies
Sharon Holland, American Studies
Larry Chavis, Kenan-Flagler Business School

Festival Sponsors

Remembrance and Renewal is presented by The Process Series, the Department of American Studies, and The Department of Communication with the co-sponsorship of Carolina Performing Arts, The UNC Latina/o Studies Program (and the Teatro Latina/o Series), The Carolina Latina/x Center, Asian American Center, Humanities for the Public Good, American Indian Center, Institute of Arts and Humanities, College of Arts and Science, and the Orange County Arts Council.

The Storytelling Festival is the recipient of the Critical Issues Project Award by the Humanities for the Public Good Initiative.

Process Series Season Sponsors

College of Arts and Sciences, IAH, and Departments of Dramatic Art, Art and Art History, Music, Communication, and English and Comparative Literature, Orange County Arts Council.