

RENÉE ALEXANDER CRAFT

Department of Communication | Curriculum in Global Studies
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
205 Bingham Hall/ CB# 3285
Chapel Hill, NC 27599
Fax:(919) 962-3305
Website : <http://reneealexandercraft.net/>
E-mail: renee.alexander.craft@unc.edu

EDUCATION:

Ph.D.	Northwestern University Department of Performance Studies Dissertation: “Art as Survival: The Congo Tradition of Portobelo, Panama”	June 2005
M.A.	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of Communication Studies	June 1999
B.A.	University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Department of English	May 1995

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES:

Associate Chair, Department of Communication University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2020-
Faculty Director of Research Student Learning to Advance Truth and Equity Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Oct 2020-
Acting Director, Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2020
Interim Director, Faculty Fellows Program Institute for the Arts and Humanities University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2019- Spring 2020
Associate Professor, Department of Communication Studies and Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	July 2015-
Acting Director, Southern Oral History Program University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Aug. 2015- Aug. 2016
Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies and	2007-2015

Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2005-2007
Instructor, Department of Performance Studies Northwestern University	Fall 2002

HONORS:

Schwab Academic Excellence Award Institute of the Arts and Humanities, UNC	2019
Errol Hill Award American Society for Theatre Research	2017
Inaugural Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship The Whiting Foundation	2016
Inaugural Digital Innovations Lab/ Institute for the Arts and Humanities Fellowship University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2013
Junior Faculty Development Award University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2009
Fulbright Fellowship Panama	2002-2003

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND PRODUCTS OF SCHOLARSHIP:

Books:

Kathy A. Perkins, Sandra L. Richards, Renée Alexander Craft, and Thomas F. DeFrantz, eds. 2018. *The Routledge Companion to African American Theatre and Performance*. London; New York: Routledge.

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2015. *When the Devil Knocks: The Congo Tradition and the Politics of Blackness in 20th Century Panama*. Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press.

Book Chapters:

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2018. "Afrofuturism and the 2018 Wakanda Diaspora Carnival." In *The Routledge Companion to African American Theatre and Performance*. Edited by Kathy A. Perkins, Sandra L. Richards, Renée Alexander Craft, and Thomas F. DeFrantz, 385-394. London; New York: Routledge.

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2014. "How does it feel to be a problem?": Edris Cooper-Anifowoshe's *Adventures of a Black Girl in Search of Academic Clarity and Inclusion*" in *Solo/Black/Woman: Performing Global Traditions and Local Interventions*, edited by E. Patrick Johnson and Ramon H Rivera-Servera, 167-184. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press.

Books & Chapters (In Process):

Alexander Craft, Renée. *The Part of Me That's Mine*
The Part of Me That's Mine is a women-centered transnational family saga inspired by my experiences growing up in a Black funeral home family in North Carolina and twenty years of ethnographic research in a community of Afro-Latin carnival devils in Panamá. The novel is complete at 97,000 words.

Alexander Craft, Renée. *Patacones, Paint Brushes, and Power: Historicizing an African Diaspora Arts Collective at the Crossroads of the Americas*
 "Patacones, Paint Brushes, and Power: Historicizing An African Diaspora Arts Collective at the Crossroads of the Americas" builds on twenty years of research within the Afro-Latin community of Portobelo, Panama and represents my third major project related to the area. Reliant on oral history, ethnographic research, archival research, and curated public conversations, "Patacones, Paint Brushes, and Power" traces the relationship between a Portobelo-based artist cooperative and the US-based African American artists that it has impacted from its founding in 1994-2014.

Refereed Articles:

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2017. "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea." *Souls: A Critical Journal of Black Politics, Culture, and Society*. 19 (1): 91-107.

Alexander Craft, Renée and Pam Lach. 2016. "Staging *Digital Portobelo*: Humanities Scholarship, Digital Tools, and Collaboration as Acts of Persistent Translation." *Public: A Journal of Imagining America*. 3(2) <http://public.imaginingamerica.org>

Alexander Craft, Renée. 2008a. "'¡Los gringos vienen!' ('The Gringos Are Coming!'): Female Respectability and the Politics of Congo Tourist Presentations in Portobelo, Panama." *Transforming Anthropology: Journal of the Association of Black Anthropologists* 16 (1): 20–31.

_____. 2008b. "Una Raza, Dos Etnias': The Politics of Be(com)ing/Performing Afropanameño." *Latin American and Caribbean Ethnic Studies* 3 (2): 123–26.

Alexander Craft, Renée, Meida McNeal, Mshai S. Mwangola, and Queen Meccasia E. Zabriskie. 2007. "The Quilt: Towards a Twenty-First Century Black Feminist Ethnography." *Performing Research* 12 (3): 55–73.

Products of Interdisciplinary and Engaged Scholarship:

Digital Portobelo: Art + Scholarship + Cultural Preservation

digitalportobelo.org | portobelodigital.org

Initiated through an inaugural UNC Digital Innovations Lab/Institute for the Arts and Humanities Fellowship (2013-2014) and supported by an inaugural Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship (2016), “Digital Portobelo: Art + Scholarship + Cultural Preservation” is a collaborative, interdisciplinary, digital humanities initiative that focuses on the Afro-Latin community of Portobelo, Panama. It represents the second phase of Alexander Craft’s performance-centered critical ethnographic research that began in 2000.

Products of creative activity: Selected performances

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| <p>“Meet You At The Crossroads: A Call and Response Song Circle:”
Performance conceived and lead by Andrew W. Mellon
Creative Futures Arts Fellow Toshi Reagon and
Renée Alexander Craft featuring Howard L. Craft, Destiny Hemphill,
Brentton Harrison, Mariah Monsanto, and Shana Tucker
NorthStar Church of the Arts Durham, NC</p> | <p>June 7, 2019</p> |
| <p>“El Museo Congo”
San Jeronimo Fort
Portobelo, Panama</p> | <p>Summer 2003</p> |
| <p>“Ferias de Portobelo XXI:
An Evening of Bilingual and Bicultural Poetry”
Spelman College Summer Art Colony
Casa Góngora
Panama City, Panama</p> | <p>Summer 2003</p> |
| <p>“Mojonga: A Performative Altar to Former Congo Queens”
Spelman College Summer Art Colony
Taller Portobelo,
Portobelo, Panama</p> | <p>Summer 2003</p> |
| <p>“Dancing with the devil at the crossroads:
La historia de los Congos de Portobelo”
Department of Performance Studies
Northwestern University
Evanston, IL</p> | <p>Spring 2002</p> |
| <p>“Making the Sign of the Cross” Taller Portobelo
Portobelo, Panama in conjunction with Spelman College</p> | <p>Summer 2001</p> |
| <p>“La historia de los Congos de Portobelo:
Translating History Through the Body”
Northwestern University Department of Performance Studies</p> | <p>Spring 2001</p> |

Refereed Unpublished Oral Presentations and/or abstracts:

- “Lovecraft Country and Black Imagination
 as a Tool for Liberation” April 6, 2021
 90-min Presentation and Workshop
 Student Diversity Programs
 Georgia Institute of Technology
 Atlanta, GA
- “A Performance Studies Approach to Meeting the Movement
 and Holding a space for light” Feb. 19-20, 2021
 The Patti Pace Performance Festival Presents:
 Meeting the Movement
 A Virtual Performance Festival
 University of Northern Iowa
- “Afrofuturism, Ethical World Traveling, and
 Holding a Space for Difference” Nov. 5-6, 2020
 Environmentalism, fantasy, and intersectionality:
 A comparison between US and the EU
 Center for European Studies
 UNC-Chapel Hill | Chapel Hill, NC
- “Digital Portobelo Is Dead, Long Live Digital Portobelo:
 On Embracing Mourning, Loss, and Reinvention
 As Part of Digital Humanities Projects’ Life-Cycle” Aug. 23, 2019
 Keynote Address
 New England Humanities Consortium Digital Humanities
 Island Retreat | Shoals Marine Lab
 Appledore Island, Maine
- “Diversity and Social Justice in the Realm of Public Humanities:
 Lecture and Facilitated Talk by Renée Alexander Craft
 and Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani” June 3-7, 2019
 University of New Hampshire Summer Institute in Public Humanities
 Portsmouth, NH
- “Afro-Futurism and the 2018 Global Spontaneous #BlackJoy
 #WakandaForever Carnival” Nov 8-11, 2018
 National Communication Association Annual Convention
 Salt Lake City, Utah
- “What I Wish I’d Known: Public Engagement Beyond the Academy” Nov. 2-5, 2017
 Whiting Foundation Sponsored Panel
 National Humanities Conference, Boston
- “Congos, Carnival, and Critical Consciousness:” Oct. 26-27, 2017

- Using Digital Portobelo in the Classroom [K-12]”
World View’s Human Rights and Social Justice Symposium,
UNC-Chapel Hill | Chapel Hill, NC
- “Digital Portobelo, The Black Fantastic, and
Holding a Space for Light” Feb. 9-11, 2017
Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference
Washington, DC
- “Digital Portobelo: Mapping Hemispheric Blackness” July 18-23, 2016
Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics
Annual *Encuentro*
Santiago, Chili
- “Playing with the devil and *winning*: Carnival and the Alchemy of
Transmuting Misery Into Hope Through Performative Resistance” Oct 8-11, 2015
American Studies Association Conference
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
- “The Devil is in the Details: Digital Humanities Scholarship,
Cultural Preservation, and Radical Collaboration” May 27-30, 2015
HASTAC 2015: The Art and Science of Digital Humanities
Michigan State University
- “Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea:
A “Sankofa” reflection on the Panama Canal’s relationship to
20th Century Race and Ethnicity in the Republic” Jan 5-11, 2015
Performance Studies (i)nternational:
Interoceánico: Istmo | Zone | Canal
Panama City, Panama
- “Digital Portobelo: On Critical/Performance Ethnography and
a Decolonial Approach to the Digital Humanities” Nov. 20-23, 2014
National Communication Association
Chicago, IL
- “The Devil is in the Details:
Engaged Qualitative Research and the Digital Humanities” Spring 2014
Institute for the Arts and Humanities/Digital Innovations Lab
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- “Collaboration at & beyond the Digital Innovation Lab” Spring 2014
Presented with Stephanie Barnwell, Carolina Digital
Humanities Initiative and Sandra Davidson, MA
Department of American Studies
Collaborations in Humanities, Arts & Technology Festival

North Carolina State University

- “The Portobelo Digital Oral History Project: Resistance as Intervention, Collaboration, Friction, and Dynamism” Oct. 30-
Nov. 3, 2013
7th Biennial Association for the Study of the
Worldwide African Diaspora (ASWAD) Conference,
Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic
- “The Portobelo Digital Oral History Project: Critical Ethnography, New Media, and the Unfinished Business of Co-performative Witnessing” Spring 2013
Department of Performance Studies
Northwestern University
- “Zora's Daughters: Quilting Toward Power, Possibility, and Community ” May 16-19, 2012
International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- “Blessing the Devil: Dualism, Parody, and Play in the Congo Tradition of Portobelo, Panama” May 23-26, 2012
Thirtieth International Congress of Latin American Studies,
San Francisco
- “Remember Celedonio: El Diablo Mayor de Portobelo, Panama” May 26-29, 2010
Sixth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- “‘Food for Thought’ A Legacy in Four Courses: Dwight Conquergood and the Politics of Radical Presence,” May 14-17, 2008
Fourth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry,
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- “El Dia de la Etnia Negra: The Politics of Be(com)ing/Performing ‘Afropanameño,’” Oct 9-12, 2007
Association for the Study of the Worldwide African Diaspora
The University of the West Indies, Barbados
- “Adrian Piper: The Proper Etiquette of Black Rage and White Racism (A Survival Guide)” Oct 11-14, 2007
American Studies Association, Philadelphia
- “The Quilt: Toward a Twenty-first Century Black Feminist Ethnography,” Collaboratively-presented with Meida McNeal, and Mshai S. Mwangola, Nov 15-19, 2006
National Communication Association Conference

San Antonio, Texas

- “Performing Race, Gender, and Operation Just Cause in Portobelo, Panama,” June 15-18, 2006
Performance Studies International Conference
London, England
- “When the Devil Rides the Bus: Toward a Black Diaspora Circum-Local Paradigm” Spring 2006
Institute of African American Research
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- “Expressing black subjectivities: Mapping the politics of nation, culture and ethnic identity in Afro-diasporic performance practices,” June 15-18, 2006
Performance Studies International Conference,
London, England
- “Between the Devil and the Deep Blues Sea: Twentieth Century Panamanian ‘Blackness,’ Identity and Belonging,” March 15-19, 2006
Latin American Studies Association | San Juan, Puerto Rico
- “¡Los gringos vienen!’/ ‘The gringos are coming!’: Female Respectability and the Politics of Congo Tourist Presentations in Portobelo, Panama,” Fall 2005
Institute of Diaspora Studies | Northwestern, University

Book Reviews

- Alexander Craft, Renée. 2017. Review of *The Politics of Race in Panama: Afro-Hispanic and West Indian Literary Discourses of Contention*, by Sonja Stephenson Watson. *The West Indian Guide*. 91 (3-4): 364-366
- Alexander Craft, Renée. 2015. Review of *Cultural Struggles: Performance, Ethnography, Praxis*, by Dwight Conquergood. Edited by E. Patrick Johnson. *TDR*. 59 (1): 181-183

TEACHING ACTIVITIES:

Graduate Courses:

Critical/ Performance Ethnography
Decolonizing Methodologies

Bridge Undergraduate/Graduate Courses:

Black/African Diaspora and Performance
Race, Ethnicity and Performance
Field Methods Practicum

Upper-Division Undergraduate Courses:
 Performance of Women of Color (Honor's Course)
 US Black Culture and Performance
 Performance, Politics, and Culture

Introductory Undergraduate Courses:
 Introduction to the Performance Studies

First Year Seminar: Performance of African American Literature

DIRECTED RESEARCH:

Graduate Theses and Dissertations:

Director (Completed)

PhD Elizabeth Melton	Defended Spring 2020
Title: <i>Stages Of (De)Segregation: Performing Stories of Public School Desegregation in Longview, Texas</i>	
PhD Sonny Kelly	Defended Spring 2020
Title: <i>Pipelines To Pathways: Reframing And Reclaiming Black Youth Identities Through Performance</i>	
PhD Kashif Powell,	Defended Spring 2014
Title: <i>Specters And Spooks: Developing A Hauntology Of The Black Body</i>	
MA Ariel Gratch,	Defended Spring 2007
Title: <i>Haunting Stories of Abuse: Revealing Ghosts Through Critical Performance Ethnography</i>	

Director (Matriculating)

PhD Jessica Noe	Entered into Candidacy Spring 2021
Title: <i>Sticky Fingers and Flour Covered Aprons – Food as a Site of Female Embodied Memory</i>	
PhD Kiara Childs	Current
PhD Chandler Classen	Current

Graduate Committee Member (Completed)

MA Shyra Peyton (Folklore)	Defended FA 2020
PhD Marie Garlock	Defended FA 2019
PhD Helen Orr (Religion)	Defended Spr. 2019
PhD Sarah Beth Nelson (SILS)	Defended Spr. 2019
PhD Pavithra Kathanadhi (Geography)	Defended Spr. 2018
PhD Wayne Rysavy	Defended Spr. 2018
PhD Daniel Chavez	Defended Spr. 2017
PhD Shannon Wong Lerner	Defended Spr. 2017
PhD Chis Courtheyn	Defended Spr. 2016
PhD Deb Royals-Mizerk	Defended Spr. 2016

PhD Jade Davis	Defended Summer 2015
PhD Armond Towns	Defended Spr. 2015
PhD Alison Neff,	Defended Fall 2013
PhD Billye Rhodes,	Defended Spr. 2012
PhD Sam Szczur,	Defended Fall 2010
PhD Billie Murray,	Defended Spr. 2010
PhD Elizabeth Nelson,	Defended Fall 2009
MA Marjorie Hazeltine,	Defended Spr. 2010
Graduate Committee Member (Matriculating)	
Kevin Pasbst	Current
Amrut Mishra	Current
Meli Kimathi	Entered into Candidacy Spring 2020
Dan Dilliplane	Entered into Candidacy Spring 2019
Undergraduate Honors Theses	
Director	
Rashmi Iyer,	Defended Spr. 2013
Title: <i>Homeboy Industries: Breaking Down the Barriers to Reentry</i>	
Undergraduate Honors Theses Committee Member	
Jessie Casimir	Defended Spr. 2020
Korde Tuttle	Defended Spr. 2013
Elizabeth Anderson	Defended Spr. 2010
Aja Barratto	Defended Spr. 2009
Marie Garlock	Defended Spr. 2007

GRANTS:

Whiting Public Engagement Grant	2016
Primary Researcher	
*This project grant accompanied the	
Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship	
Total Direct Grant Amount: \$10,000, Percentage of Effort: 100	
University Research Council Research Grant	Fall 2014
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	
Grant to pay for indexing of <i>When the Devil Knocks</i>	
Total Direct Grant Amount: \$1,017, Percentage of Effort: 20	
Institute of African American Research Small Grant	2014
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	
Primary Researcher	
Total Direct Grant Amount: \$500, Percentage of Effort: 100	
Digital Innovations Lab/	2013

Institute for the Arts and Humanities Project Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Primary Researcher Total Direct Grant Amount: \$15,000, Percentage of Effort: 65 *This project grant accompanied the DIL/IAH Fellowship	
University Research Council Research Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Primary Researcher Total Direct Grant Amount: \$1,500, Percentage of Effort: 100	Fall 2013
Ella Foundation Pratt Emerging Artists Grant Durham Arts Council, Total Direct Grant Amount: \$1,500, Percentage of Effort: 70	2013
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:	
Search Committee Chair, Department of Communication University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2020-Spring '21
Steering Committee, Humanities for the Public Good University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	July 2019- June 2020
Board of Directors, ManBites Dog Theatre Durham, NC	May 2019- Feb 2020
Search Committee Member, Institute for the Arts and Humanities, Director Search University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2018- Spring 2019
Advisory Board Member, Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2018-
Advisory Committee Member, Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2018-
Editorial Board Member, <i>Text and Performance Quarterly</i>	Spring 2018-
Executive Committee, Chair Department of Communication University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2017-

Graduate Admissions Committee Department of Communication University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2017- Spring 2018
Reviewer, Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2016
Dean's Faculty Diversity Advisory Group College of Arts and Sciences University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2016-
Co-Creator and Co-Convener Carolina Seminar, "Racial Literacies" University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2016- Spring 2018
Chancellor's Task Force on the Arts University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2015
Selection Committee Member 2014-2015 Digital Innovation Lab/ Institute for the Arts & Humanities Faculty Fellowship University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2014
Board of Trustees Member (elected) North Carolina Humanities Council Charlotte, NC	Oct 2013- Oct 2019
Season Grant Selection Committee Durham Arts Council Durham, NC	Spring 2013
Faculty Steering Committee Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2013
Search Committee Member Carolina Digital Humanities Initiative Programs Coordinator Sponsored by The Department of American Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2013
Search Committee Member Institute for African American Research, Director Search University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2012 Spring 2013
Graduate Studies Committee	Fall 2011

Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	-Spring 2016
Search Committee Member Department of Dramatic Arts University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2008
PhD Core Curriculum Committee (Ad-Hoc) Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-2009
Process Series Selection Committee Department of Communication Studies and Institute of Arts and Humanities University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-
Undergraduate Studies Committee Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-2008
UNC- liaison/Program Director Creative Currents: Art + Culture + Collaboration: Arts organization dedicated to creating mutually beneficial, transcultural collaborations among artists and scholars focused on Africa and the Black Diaspora (Formerly "Taller Portobelo Norte") Portobelo, Panama/Atlanta, Georgia	Fall 2005-