July 2021-

June 2022

RENÉE ALEXANDER CRAFT

Department of Communication | Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill | CB# 3285 | Chapel Hill, NC 27599

Personal Website: http://reneealexandercraft.net/ Project Website: https://digitalportobelo.org/ E-mail: renee.alexander.craft@unc.edu Fax:(919) 962-3305

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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 EXPER	IENCES:	
Director, Southern O University of Nor	ral History Program th Carolina at Chapel Hill	2024-
Acting Director, Southern Oral History Program University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill		Spring 2024 2015-2016
Professor, Department of Communication Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill		July1 2022-
African American	epartment of African, n, and Diaspora Studies th Carolina at Chapel Hill	July1 2022-
• •	artment of Communication th Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2022- 2020-2021

Faculty Director of Research (SLATE) Oct 2020-

Student Learning to Advance Truth and Equity

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Interim Chair, Department of Communication

Sonja Haynes Stone Center for Research in Black Culture and History

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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- June 2022
Acting Director, Southern Oral History Program University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Aug. 2015- Aug. 2016
Assistant Professor, Department of Communication Studies and Curriculum in Global Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2007-2015
Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2005-2007
HONORS:	
Bowman & Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professor University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2025-2030
Tanner Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	2022
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

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. Patacones and Pepsi

Patacones and Pepsi is a women-centered transnational family saga inspired by my experiences growing up in a Black funeral home family in North Carolina and twenty-five years of ethnographic research in a community of Afro-Latin carnival devils in Panamá. The novel is complete at 124,000 words and is represented by Beth Marshea, Ladderbird Literary Agency

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" is a multi-model project that 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 1995-2015. The project includes an art exhibit that will open at the African Diaspora Museum of Atlanta in September 2025, a digital exhibition that will be curated on Digital Portobelo, an edited manuscript, and a podcast.

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, Mshaï 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, Engaged, Digital Scholarship:

Arte Congo: Artists' Journey on the Congo Coast of Panamá

—Documentary by Spelman College Professor Emeritus Dr. Arturo Lindsay Collaborated with Dr. Lindsay as part of a research and creative team to conceptualize and develop a documentary film focused on the Congo community of Portobelo, Panama. The documentary engages the development and nature of the "Congo aesthetic," unique markers of visual Congo cultural performance in Panama, alongside the story of Lindsay's migration from Panama to the US as a child and return in the wake of the 1989 US invasion to use "art as a weapon" for community self-efficacy, resilience, storytelling, and empowerment. A first draft of the film premiered in Atlanta, GA on December 14, 2022 supported by a grant from the Fulton County Board of Commissions. The film premiered at the Bronzelens Festival in Altanta, GA on August 26, 2023. The documentary was produced in association with *Digital Portobelo* and the long-form interviews will be housed on the *Digital Portobelo* platform. My role on the project was as a team-member, interviewer, interviewee, and research consultant.

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

"Toshi Reagon: Meet You At The Crossroads II"

UNC Process Series Performance

March 9, 2023

Current Artspace + Studio

Collaborated with internationally renowned singer, songwriter, and musician Toshi Reagon to curate and moderate two-hour event featuring film and poetry by local artists. The event included a debut of 7 short films by Durham-based filmmaker Katina Parker, featuring UNC professors Sarah Long, Todd BenDor, Danielle Spurlock, Courtney Woods, Danielle Purifoy, Linda Beeber, and Mashallah Salam, and a Sonic Poetry Flow featuring poets Mariah M., Destiny Hemphill, Cortland Gilliam, Dasan Ahanu, and Howard Craft.

"Comm. 665: Performance, Politics, and Culture

May 2, 2020

UNC Process Series Performance (Virtual)"

Using *The Water Dancer* by Ta-Nehisi Coates as an anchoring text, Department of Communication Professors Renée A. Craft and Joseph Megel team-taught a spring 2020 course with Andrew W. Mellon Creative Futures Fellow Toshi Reagon, which culminated in a public Process Series performance. The performance, which they directed and curated, featured excerpts from students' classroom performances, student-led inter-generational interviews that represented their reckonings with race and belonging, and music by Toshi Reagon.

"Meet You At The Crossroads: A Call and Response Song Circle" June 7, 2019
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

"El Museo Congo"

Summer 2003

San Jeronimo Fort Portobelo, Panama

"Ferias de Portobelo XXI:

Summer 2003

An Evening of Bilingual and Bicultural Poetry" Spelman College Summer Art Colony Casa Góngora Panama City, Panama

"Mojonga: A Performative Altar to Former Congo Queens" Spelman College Summer Art Colony Taller Portobelo, Summer 2003

Portobelo, Panama

"Dancing with the devil at the crossroads:

Spring 2002

La historia de los Congos de Portobelo" Department of Performance Studies

Northwestern University

Evanston, IL

"Making the Sign of the Cross" Taller Portobelo

Summer 2001

Portobelo, Panama in conjunction with Spelman College

"La historia de los Congos de Portobelo:

Spring 2001

Translating History Through the Body"

Northwestern University Department of Performance Studies

Refereed Unpublished Oral Presentations and/or abstracts:

"Lovecraft Country and Black Imagination

April 6, 2021

as a Tool for Liberation"

90-min Presentation and Workshop

Student Diversity Programs

Georgia Institute of Technology

Atlanta, GA

"A Performance Studies Approach to Meeting the Movement

Feb. 19-20, 2021

and Holding a space for light"

The Patti Pace Performance Festival Presents:

Meeting the Movement

A Virtual Performance Festival

University of Northern Iowa

"Afrofuturism, Ethical World Traveling, and

Nov. 5-6, 2020

Holding a Space for Difference"

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:

Aug. 23, 2019

On Embracing Mourning, Loss, and Reinvention

As Part of Digital Humanities Projects' Life-Cycle"

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:

June 3-7, 2019

Lecture and Facilitated Talk by Renée Alexander Craft and Gabrielle Bendiner-Viani"

University of New Hampshire Summer Institute in Public Humanities Portsmouth, NH

"Afro-Futurism and the 2018 Global Spontaneous #BlackJoy

Nov 8-11, 2018

#WakandaForever Carnival"

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

Feb. 9-11, 2017

July 8, 2016

Holding a Space for Light"

Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference Washington, DC

"Portobelo Digital: Arte + Investigación + Conservación Cultural"
A public presentation and demonstration of portobelodigital.org
With an inaugural local viewing of the documentaries
"When Devils Could Fly" and "Comparsa Bario Fino"
Accompanied by music from Barrio Fino
El rancho de la iglesia de San Felipe de Portobelo
Portobelo, Panama

"Digital Portobelo: Mapping Hemispheric Blackness" Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Annual *Encuentro* July 18-23, 2016

"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

Santiago, Chili

"The Devil is in the Details: Digital Humanities Scholarship, May 27-30, 2015 Cultural Preservation, and Radical Collaboration"

HASTAC 2015: The Art and Science of Digital Humanities Michigan State University

"Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Jan 5-11, 2015 A "Sankofa" reflection on the Panama Canal's relationship to 20th Century Race and Ethnicity in the Republic" Performance Studies (i)nternational: Interoceánico: Istmo | Zone | Canal Panama City, Panama "Digital Portobelo: On Critical/Performance Ethnography and Nov. 20-23, 2014 a Decolonial Approach to the Digital Humanities" National Communication Association Chicago, IL "The Devil is in the Details: Spring 2014 Engaged Qualitative Research and the Digital Humanities" 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 Oct. 30-"The Portobelo Digital Oral History Project: Resistance as Intervention, Collaboration, Friction, and Dynamism" 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, Spring 2013 New Media, and the Unfinished Business of Co-performative Witnessing" Department of Performance Studies Northwestern University "Zora's Daughters: Quilting Toward Power, May 16-19, 2012 Possibility, and Community" International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign "Blessing the Devil: Dualism, Parody, and Play in the May 23-26, 2012 Congo Tradition of Portobelo, Panama" Thirtieth International Congress of Latin American Studies,

San Franciso

"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: May 14-17, 2008 Dwight Conquergood and the Politics of Radical Presence," 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 Oct 9-12, 2007 "Afropanameño," 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 Oct 11-14, 2007 White Racism (A Survival Guide)" American Studies Association, Philadelphia "The Quilt: Toward a Twenty-first Century Black Feminist Nov 15-19, 2006 Ethnography," Collaboratively-presented with Meida McNeal, and Mshaï S. Mwangola, National Communication Association Conference San Antonio, Texas "Performing Race, Gender, and Operation Just Cause in June 15-18, 2006 Portobelo, Panama," Performance Studies International Conference London, England "When the Devil Rides the Bus: Toward a Black Diaspora Spring 2006 Circum-Local Paradigm" Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill "Expressing black subjectivities: Mapping the politics of nation, June 15-18, 2006 culture and ethnic identity in Afro-diasporic performance practices," Performance Studies International Conference, London, England "Between the Devil and the Deep Blues Sea: Twentieth Century March15-19, 2006 Panamanian 'Blackness,' Identity and Belonging," Latin American Studies Association | San Juan, Puerto Rico "';Los gringos vienen!'/ 'The gringos are coming!': Fall 2005 Female Respectability and the Politics of Congo Tourist

Presentations in Portobelo, Panama,"

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

Field Methods Practicum

Oral History and Performance

Performance, Politics, and Culture

Race, Ethnicity and Performance

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 Jessica Noe Defended Spring 2023

Title: Baked In – Women's Role in Curating and Creating

Family Memory Through Culinary Performance

PhD Kiara Childs Defended Spring 2023

Title: Black Women's Digital Feminism and Self-Advocacy:

A Cross-Platform Analysis of Black Women's Beauty Culture

PhD Elizabeth Melton Defended Spring 2020

Title: Stages Of (De)Segregation: Performing Stories of

Public School Desegregation in Longview, Texas

PhD Sonny Kelly Defended Spring 2020

Title: Pipelines To Pathways: Reframing And Reclaiming

Black Youth Identities Through Performance

PhD Kashif Powell, Defended Spring 2014

Title: Specters And Spooks:

Developing A Hauntology Of The Black Body

MA Ariel Gratch, Defended Spring 2007

Title: Haunting Stories of Abuse: Revealing Ghosts

Through Critical Performance Ethnography

Director (Matriculating)

PhD Leah Woehr Exams and Prospectus Defense 2025 PhD Chandler Classen Entered into Candidacy Spring 2022

Title: Toxic Encounters / Radioactive Afterlives:

Nuclear Protest, Sovereignty, and Environmental Kinship

Graduate Committee Member (Completed)

PhD Kevin Pasbst	Defended Spr. 2023
PhD Amrut Mishra	Defended Spr. 2023
PhD Dan Dilliplane	Defended Spr. 2023
MA Shyra Peyton (Folklore)	Defended Fall 2020
PhD Marie Garlock	Defended Fall 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)

Kayla Corbin Dissertation Prospectus Defense Scheduled, Spring 2024

Dissertation Prospectus Defense, Fall 2023 Stephanie Kaczynski Megan Foster Dissertation Prospectus Defense, Fall 2023

Meli Kimathi Entered into Candidacy Spring 2020

Undergraduate Honors Theses Director Rashmi Iyer, Title: Homeboy Industries: Breaking Down the Barriers to Reentry	Defended Spr. 2013
Undergraduate Honors Theses Committee Member Jalen McCoy Imani Williams Jessie Casimir Korde Tuttle Elizabeth Anderson Aja Barratto Marie Garlock	Defended Spr. 2023 Defended Spr. 2022 Defended Spr. 2020 Defended Spr. 2013 Defended Spr. 2010 Defended Spr. 2009 Defended Spr. 2007
GRANTS:	
Whiting Public Engagement Grant Primary Researcher *This project grant accompanied the Whiting Public Engagement Fellowship Total Direct Grant Amount: \$10,000, Percentage of Effort:100	2016
University Research Council Research Grant 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	Fall 2014
Institute of African American Research Small Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Primary Researcher Total Direct Grant Amount: \$500, Percentage of Effort: 100	2014
Digital Innovations Lab/ Institute for the Arts and Humanities Project Grant University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Primary Researcher	2013
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,	2013

Total Direct Grant Amount: \$1,500, Percentage of Effort: 70

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE:

Faculty of Color and Indigenous Faculty Working Group Steering Committee Institute for Arts and Humanities University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2024-
Search Committee, Chair Department of Communication University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2024- Spring 2025
Search Committee Member Department of Women and Gender Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2023- Spring 2024
Advisory Board Member Department of Women and Gender Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	July 2023- June 2024
Faculty of Color and Indigenous Faculty Working Group Steering Committee Chair Institute for Arts and Humanities University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2022- Spring 2024
Community Outreach and Public Engagement Committee Chair Department of Communication University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2022-
Advisory Board Member, Institute of African American Research University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2018- Spring 2019
Executive Committee, Chair Department of Communication University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Fall 2017- Spring 2020
Fall 2016- Carolina Seminar, "Racial Literacies" University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill	Spring 2018
Board of Trustees Member (elected) North Carolina Humanities Council Charlotte, NC	Oct 2013- Oct 2019
Graduate Studies Committee	Fall 2011

Department of Communication Studies University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill -Spring 2016