

From the Archive of Our Black Lives: How to Write and Tell Black (Hi)stories Across Genre and Form

*The Alliance to Advance Liberal Arts Colleges
Workshop Proposal (Summer 2019)*

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Dr. Kimberly Love (Williams College)
Dr. Heidi R. Lewis (Colorado College)

This workshop will allow participants to discuss current oral history and ethnographic projects and to collaborate with artists as they think through innovative ways of sharing narratives. Each day will feature three sessions designed to examine Oral History, Dynamic Performance and Mixed Media Storytelling, followed by sessions during which participants will work on their projects.

Black histories are fraught with violence and silences. As a result, this workshop intervenes in historical lacunas by assembling Black histories using various interdisciplinary forms, such as Black feminism and Black Studies. The former is critical, because Black feminism has always been concerned with mobilizing technologies of healing, a concept Dr. Alexis Pauline Gumbs coined to recognize Black feminist commitments to organizing and building consciousness. Further, since we recognize that history is a product of various power relations, we rely on Black Studies' commitment to creating space for a more livable but un-predetermined Black future.

The first day will begin with a session led by **Dr. Love**, who will present work from her current oral history project that examines Black land ownership and community sustainability in the South. The second session will be led by **Dr. Green**, who will share work from their forthcoming manuscript and film *Into the Darkness: Trans* Readings of Black LGBT Los Angeles*, which draws on ethnographic interviews from his fieldwork in Los Angeles and archives from community collectors. The final session will be led by **Dr. E. Patrick Johnson**, who will discuss his experiences as the Founder of the Black Arts Initiative and as an artist with Project&, an arts organization engaged committed to social change. The second day will begin with a session led by workshop leader **Dr. Lewis**, who will present work from her current project *In Audre's Footsteps: The FemGeniuses in Berlin*, which examines the experiences of women of color educators, artists, activists, and scholars in Berlin and features interviews, critical essays, poetry, and photographs and accompanied by a series of podcasts and documentary footage online. The day will commence with a session led by **Texas Isaiah**, who will share his experiences constructing collaborative visual dialogues about legacy, emotional justice, protection, and topophilia, and **Chaunesti Webb**, who will discuss her use of theater, movement, sound and video to create original performance. The day will conclude with a session led by **Aishah Shahidah Simmons**, who will present on her work creating her film *NO! The Rape Documentary* and her multimedia project, *Love WITH Accountability*, which examines child sexual abuse. The above guest (beside the AALAC organizers) are outside of the AALAC and we'd like to bring them in as experts in their

fields, particularly those who are working to translate oral history projects into other genres like documentary film, plays, and digital databases. These sessions will be open to the public, but there will also be closed sessions that allow AALAC participants to meet more informally to discuss individual projects and have consultation with our invited experts.

Regarding impact, participants will gain knowledge that will help them complete their own projects and bring digital storytelling methods into their classrooms. We will also submit roundtable proposals for various conferences, such as those hosted by the American Studies Association and National Council of Black Studies, allowing us to share our knowledges across disciplines. Similarly, we imagine developing a special edition of a scholarly journal that focuses on the importance of Black (his)stories, allowing us to make an even broader impact on our fields.

As professors working in smaller liberal arts institutions, we are excited about the opportunity to invite the following AALAC scholars who work across the fields of Black Studies, Gender & Sexuality Studies and who research and teach oral history and ethnography. We believe this cross-campus workshop will not only enhance our research endeavours, but our pedagogical ones as well.

We have a list of participants that we'd like to invite as participants in the workshop. We have gotten confirmation from half of the participants and believe that we will be able to get the other participants confirmed well before our summer 2019 seminar. Besides the list of invited participants, we would like the sessions to be open to all AALAC members, particularly Black and other faculty of color who might find this to be a dynamic and unique intellectual opportunity to build with other Black and People Of Color faculty across the AALAC. In order to make sure our workshop is well attended, we will share flyers with Africana Studies, Gender Studies, and other relevant departments across the AALAC.

Workshop Liaison

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