

Event Title: Native and Indigenous Structure and Dramaturgy in Playwriting

Event Description: This panel discussion will examine how Indigenous and Native dramatists use their unique storytelling structures to create work for the stage to illuminate their worlds. When non-Native theaters get to choose what plays speak for the Native experience, even when they're not coming from a Native perspective, how can this powerful community ensure they keep telling stories for the community they've written for? What are the non-negotiables when producing at non-Native theaters? And how can non-Native audiences engage when authentic Native perspectives are so rarely seen on stage?

This discussion is frank and moving, with revelations about work and attitudes that are rarely explored. As one of our panelists pointed out in a fundraising campaign: "Imagine we don't have to explain ourselves – we're just deep in the play, writing it from our perspective. What are things that are hallmarks of our aesthetic as Native writers? Let's take out the negative pressure that we've gotten so often from non-Native situations. What do our plays look like when we give birth to them and they live in their own fully realized way?"

Event Category: Playwriting and Screenwriting

Event Organizer: Tari Stratton; Director, Dramatists Guild Institute
(www.dginstitute.org)

Event Moderator: Rhiana Yazzie

Event Panelists:

Rhiana Yazzie (moderator) is a Navajo playwright and artistic director of New Native Theatre, a company devoted to producing new work by and for Native peoples. Rhiana's current projects include a book of short stories, a new children's musical among other plays, and producing a short film in September.

<http://rhianayazzie.com/> <https://newnativetheatre.org/>

Writer Laura Annawyn Shamas was born in Oklahoma. She's an enrolled member of the Chickasaw Nation. In 2021, she was a part of the Indigenous Writers Collaborative at Oregon Shakespeare Festival. In 2017, she won the Von Marie

Atchley Award from Native Voices at the Autry for SEEDS.

<https://www.laurashamas.com/>

Carolyn M. Dunn, PhD., is an indigenous poet, playwright, editor and publisher, and the author/editor of seven books, including three books of poetry. Her first collection, *Outfoxing Coyote*, was recognized as Book of the Year by the Native Writers Circle of the Americas in 2002.

<https://newplayexchange.org/users/57959/carolyn-dunn>

DeLanna Studi is a Cherokee actor/playwright. She retraced her family's footsteps along the Trail of Tears with her father and wrote her play "And So We Walked." She is the Chair of SAG-AFTRA's National Native Americans Committee and the Artistic Director of Native Voices at the Autry.

<https://theautry.org/events/signature-programs/native-voices/theatre-staff>

Tommi.b.Coyote (Zach), she/her, is a transfeminine playwright, television creator, actor, songstress, and artistic leader, born and based in Mohkinstsis (Calgary). A mixed raced adoptee with Filipinx, Settler and Mi'gmaq Ancestors, she creates and nurtures performances that honour her ancestors, and the communities she lives, walks and breaths alongside. She creates, performs and collaborates across Turtle Island, from Fringe to Film and everywhere in between.

<https://www.tarragontheatre.com/artists-in-residence/>