

*Telling Our Stories of Home: A Celebration of
African and African Diaspora Women Artists*

March 31 – April 2, April 6-8, 2016

*University of North Carolina
at Chapel Hill*

Guest Artists and Scholars

Chairs: Kathy A. Perkins (Dramatic Art)
Tanya Shields (Women's & Gender Studies)



Luciane Ramos-Silva - Brazil
dancer, choreographer, anthropologist,
cultural organizer

Luciane Ramos-Silva is a dancer, choreographer, anthropologist, cultural organizer in Brazil. Ramos-Silva holds a BA in Social Sciences from the University of São Paulo, an MA in Social Anthropology and African Studies from University of Campinas. Ramos-Silva is the 2003 recipient of the David C. Driskell Center (USA) for the Study of the African Diaspora Award, where she initiated and developed movement training focusing on blackness and the body in African and African diasporic communities. She leads regular dance training based on multi-corporealities of the Black diaspora and has trained a variety of Brazilian dance and theater companies. Through dance and dance workshops, she illustrates the connection between West Africans and the African American diaspora. For the conference, she will be one of the Artists in Residence during the first week to focus on dance, home, and embodiment through master classes and performance. .



Évelyne Trouillot - Haiti
novelist, poet , scholar,
playwright

Évelyne Trouillot lives in Port-au-Prince, Haiti and teaches in the French Department at the State University. She published her first book of short stories in 1996. In 2004, Trouillot received the Prix de la romancière francophone du Club Soroptimist de Grenoble for her first novel, *Rosalie l'infâme*. In 2005, her first piece for the theater, "Le bleu de l'île," received the Beaumarchais award from Contemporary Caribbean Theater Scripts (ETC Caraïbe). Trouillot also has published poetry in French and Creole. Her novel *La mémoire aux abois* (2010), presents a compelling view of the dictatorship in Haiti and received the prestigious award Le prix Carbet de la Caraïbe et du Tout-Monde in December 2010. Her latest novel, *Absences sans frontières* (2013), depicts a family in Brooklyn and Port-au-Prince separated by migration. For the conference, she will be speaking with creative writers and discussing notions of citizenship in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, a country in which people born of Haitian parents are denied citizenship and documentation.

Karnataka, India

Girija P. Siddi
actress, dancer, vocalist



Girija P. Siddi is an actress and Indian Classical Hindustani Vocalist settled in Bangalore but born and raised in North Karnataka district of Karnataka state. She belongs to Siddi tribal community of Karnataka and sings and dances Siddi tribal dance called 'Dhamami.' Siddi is an active trustee of the 'Siddi Trust,' which works with children's theatre. The Siddis represent a major element of the conference as they share their struggles for acceptance to an Indian home space for the last 500 years. For the conference, she, along with her sister, Geeta Siddi, will be doing Indian dance performances and storytelling on the Siddis' experience of national exclusion.

Geeta P. Siddi
actress, dancer, vocalist



Geeta P. Siddi completed her Masters in Performing Arts and applied research in Theatre at Bangalore University. She lives in North Karnataka district of Karnataka state. She has acted in and directed more than twenty-five plays. She belongs to Siddi tribal community of Karnataka and is a member of the 'Siddi Trust.' She sings and dances Siddi tribal dance called 'Dhamami.'

Channakeshava G.
director, designer, actor, musician



Channakeshava G is a theatre activist, based in Bangalore, Karnataka. He teaches acting, design and painting. He writes and directs for professional and amateur groups. He has directed more than 35 plays in 6 South Indian languages including English. He is trained as a painter and also in theatre arts. Channakeshava G. is founding trustee of 'Lokacharita Trust', a center of Theatre, Literacy, Music, Dance and Films. He runs community theatre activities under 'Siddi Trust.' For the conference, he will be translating for Geeta Siddi and Girija Siddi as well as functioning as one of their musicians.



Merle Collins – Grenada
scholar, poet, novelist

Merle Collins is a writer of fiction and poetry and Professor of Caribbean literature at the University of Maryland. She holds a B.A. from the University of the West Indies, an M.A. in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University, and a Ph.D. in Government from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her publications include novels *Angel* and *The Colour of Forgetting*, short story collections *Rain Darling* and *The Ladies are Upstairs*, and several poetry collections. Her most recent work is a biography of the first woman governor in the British Commonwealth, Dame Hilda Bynoe. Collins has also produced and directed the DVD, *Saracca and Nation*, which explores aspects of food culture and ritual in Grenada. She founded the Maryland-based Carivision Community Theatre in 2005 and Grenlib, an organization aimed at supporting repair and refurbishment of Grenada libraries, in 2013. For the conference, she will be discussing her novel *Angel* which deals with home and conflict, and her film, *Saccara and Nation*, which is about food, ritual, heritage and home.



Hope Azeda - Rwanda
director, writer, actor

Hope Azeda is the Founder and Artistic Director of Mashirika Performing Arts, a leading theatre company in Kigali, Rwanda. Mashirika Performing Arts mission is to convey that the arts are not only for entertainment but also a tool for social transformation and a source of employment. Azeda specializes in social issues theatre that focuses on the Rwandan Genocide as well as youth-focused issues such as peer pressure, sexuality, coping with trauma because of war, HIV, and ethnic differences. She is currently the President of ARTEJ/ASSITEJ Rwanda (International Association of Theaters for Children and Young People) Vice President of IRIZA CART (The Rwandan Association for Cineastes) Azeda is a graduate of Makerere University, Kampala-Uganda in Music, Dance and Drama. For this conference, she will be one of our Artists in Residence introducing students to her work and teaching them about social justice theater as a tool they could use to connect to their communities.



Belinda Deneen Wallace - USA
postcolonial scholar

Belinda Deneen Wallace is a postcolonial scholar who specializes in transatlantic and African diasporic literature and culture. Her publications and research focus on the role(s) of queer women in literary representations of Caribbean revolutionary movements and moments. Wallace is an Assistant Professor in the Department of English Language and Literature at the University of New Mexico. She teaches courses in contemporary black women's literature, 20th-century Caribbean literature, black diaspora poetry, and postcolonial studies. Wallace received her Ph.D. from the University of Maryland at College Park. Wallace will help audience members connect the ways in which literature is used as a gateway to national belonging for queer Caribbean women.

Malika Ndlovu - South Africa
poet, activist



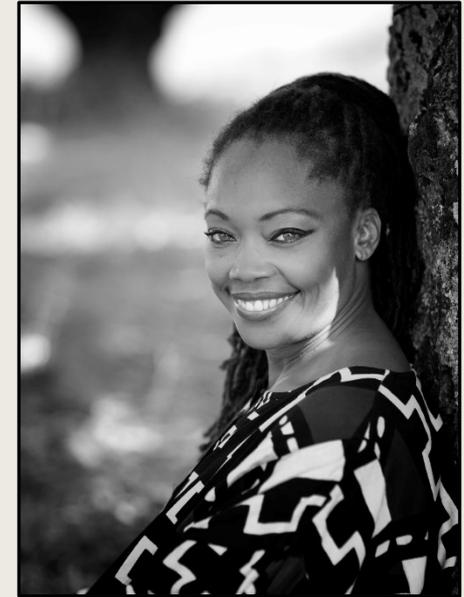
Malika Ndlovu is a poet, playwright, and activist whose words and productions have appeared all over South Africa and around the world. She has performed in Austria, USA, the UK, Holland, Germany, Ethiopia, and India to name a few. Until 2010 she was project manager for the Africa Centre's *Badilisha Poetry X-Change*, an international poetry festival, and is currently guest curator and presenter for *BadilishaPoetry.com*, a unique African poetry podcasting platform. Malika was a founder-member of Cape Town-based women writers' collective WEAVE, co-editor of their anthology *Ink @ Boiling Point: A selection of 21st Century Black Women's writing from the Southern Tip of Africa* (2000). Some of her poetry collections include *Born in Africa But* (1999) *Womb to World: A Labour of Love* (2001), *Truth is both Spirit and Flesh* (2008), and two published plays *A Coloured Place* (1998) and *Sister Breyani* (2010). In 2015 Malika was nominated in the Promotion of Language and Storytelling category for the Department of Arts and Culture's national *Mbokodo Awards*, in recognition of South African women's contribution to the arts. As an independent artist and in collaboration with artists of various disciplines, Malika offers applied arts facilitation and produces multi-media, site-specific works diverse under the company banner *ART on SITE* dedicated to "healing through creativity."



Mayra Santos Febres – Puerto Rico
writer, poet, literary critic

Mayra Santos-Febres is a writer, professor of literature, and literary critic. In 1991, she published her first two collections of poetry, *Anamu y manigua* and *El orden escapado*. In 1994, she won the “Letras de Oro” literary Prize, and in 1996, the Juan Rulfo Award for her short story, “Oso blanco”, which centers on the complicated relationships between sexual desire, race, identity, and status in modern Caribbean society. Her first novel is *Sirena Selena vestida de pena* (2000) which focuses on the life of a teenaged drag queen and his rise as a talented singer. Santos-Febres completed her undergraduate work at the University of Puerto Rico and holds an M.A. and Ph.D. from Cornell University. Her work has been translated into French, English, German, and Italian. Her other publications include such works as *Sobre piel y papel* (2005), a novel *Nuestra Señora de la Noche* (2006) which has been published in English under the title *Our Lady of the Night*, and *Fe en disfraz* (2009). Her most recent novel is, *La amante de Gardel*.

Shirley Campbell Barr – Costa Rica
writer, poet, critic



Shirley Campbell Barr has several collections of poetry, and has published dozens of articles in journals, anthologies and newspapers in several countries. Her works have been translated into English, French and Portuguese. A feminist, human rights advocate and activist who is engaged in the Afro-descendent cause in Latin America, she has been participating in conferences, workshops, poetry readings contributing to the processes of mobilization and awareness of black communities. A renowned Afro Costa Rican writer, Campbell Barr is best known for her poem, “Rotundamente negra” (Absolutely Black, 1994). Her work expresses 'black identity and Costa Rican nationality and exposes the points of discord between two cultural positions' her work moves through various oral registers and asserts a space for Afro-Costa Ricans in the nation.

Harlem KW Project – USA

Renaissance in the Belly of a Killer Whale

Together these ladies wrote the Audience Development Committee (AUDELCO)-winning play, *Renaissance in the Belly of a Killer Whale*, which is a growing theatrical production that focuses on preserving the rich culture and history of Harlem through the arts. Jaylene Clark Owens is the director. It is a look into the multifaceted issue of gentrification in Harlem through a fusion of spoken word poetry, theatre, song, and more! <http://www.harlemkwproject.com/>

Jaylene Clark Owens is an AUDELCO-winning and Barrymore-nominated actress, a spoken word poet, and a producer from Harlem, NY. Owens received her BFA in Acting from Ithaca College. Her most recent work includes Priscilla in “The Most Spectacularly Lamentable Trial of Miz Martha Washington” and Lydia in “Red Speedo.” Her use of both classic and hip-hop theatre has a unique appeal to viewers of all ages. She and cast members will perform “Renaissance in the Belly of the Killer Whale,” at the conference which addresses the marginalization of home through gentrification.

Hollis Heath is an AUDELCO award-winning actress, writer and educator from Harlem, NY. Heath received her BA in Creative Writing from The City College of New York with a minor in Theater. Heath has developed and facilitated drama programming for young people throughout NYC. She is a recipient of the Harlem YMCA Community Impact Award for “dedication to the enrichment of the Harlem Community.” For the conference, she will be part of the cast of “Renaissance in the Belly of the Killer Whale,” which is a play that deals with gentrification and its impact on home.



Hollis Heath, Jaylene Clark Owens and Janelle Heatley

Janelle Heatley is an AUDELCO award-winning actress, producer, and singer. Hinnant received her B.F.A. in Acting from SUNY Purchase. Her recent credits include “The Odyssey” (Circe) and “Intimate Apparel” (Mayme). For the conference, she will be part of the cast of “Renaissance in the Belly of the Killer Whale,” which is a play that deals with gentrification and its impact on home.



**Yaba Badoe – United Kingdom
filmmaker, creative writer**

Yaba Badoe is a graduate of King's College, Cambridge. She has worked as a producer and director making documentaries for British television. Among her credits are: *Black and White*, an investigation into race and racism in Bristol, using hidden video cameras for British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC1); *I Want Your Sex*, a documentary exploring images and myths surrounding black sexuality in Western art, literature, film and photography, for Channel 4; and the six-part series *Voluntary Service Overseas* for ITV. Badoe directed and co-produced (with Amina Mama) the prize-winning documentary, *The Witches of Gambaga*. In the film, Badoe explores how accusations of witchery have made women outcasts and the ways they have created home in an isolated area of Ghana.



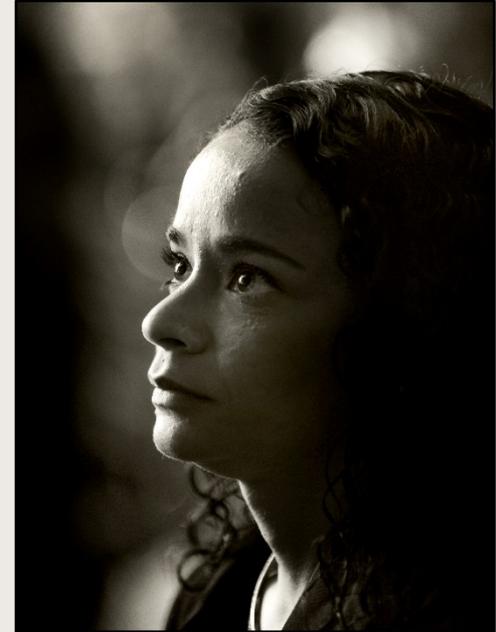
**Mica A. Walker – USA
criminal justice advocate**

Mica A. Walker, a graduate of North Carolina State University's Master of Social Work program, brings a wealth of knowledge regarding mass incarceration and the roadblocks that returning citizens face as they are released from prison. She works tirelessly in developing strategic partnerships with agencies to effectively bridge the gap in service delivery. Her passion as a social justice advocate is geared towards building authentic relationships between the church and those returning home by training church leaders on the power of mentorship. She is a training and reentry specialist with Jobs for Life, a non-profit organization that helps local churches address the impact of joblessness. Walker's vision is to amplify the voices of those directly impacted by the criminal justice system by creating awareness and challenging the status quo. Mica is a board member of Benevolence Farm, a transitional living program for women leaving North Carolina prisons.



Joanne Hershfield - USA
film maker, scholar

Joanne Hershfield is Professor Emerita of the Department Women's and Gender Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill. She is the author of *Imagining la chica moderna: Women, Nation, and Visual Culture in Mexico, 1917-1936* (2008); *The Invention of Dolores del Río* (2000); and *Mexico's Cinema: A Century of Film and Filmmakers*, edited with David R. Maciel (1999); and *Mexican Cinema / Mexican Woman, 1940-50* (1996). In addition to these publications, Prof. Hershfield is also a documentary film producer. Her nationally and internationally distributed films include *Mama C: Urban Warrior in the African Bush* (2012), the story of Charlotte O'Neal, a former member of the Kansas City Black Panther Party, a poet, musician, artist, and community activist, who has lived for over forty years as an "urban warrior in the African Bush" in the Tanzanian village of Imbaseni; *These Are Our Children* (2011), a one-hour documentary film that reveals how the devastating effects of poverty, HIV/AIDs, and violence on Kenyan children are successfully being reduced through local grassroots interventions; and *Men Are Human, Women are Buffalo* (2007), a film about violence against women in Thailand. A portion of her film on Benevolence Farm, a transitional housing program for formerly incarcerated women, will be screened at the conference.



Geeta Kapur - USA
civil rights attorney

Attorney **Geeta Kapur** is a proud native of Nakuru, Kenya. After graduating from the Kenan-Flagler Business School at UNC-Chapel Hill, she pursued a calling to study law at UNC-Chapel Hill. From her work at the Center for Death Penalty Litigation to Assistant Public Defender to private practice, she has devoted her entire thirteen-year legal career to being a criminal defense and civil rights lawyer for racial minorities and the poor. Kapur was the first woman of color to earn the distinction of being a Board Certified Specialist in Criminal Law - Juvenile Delinquency. She has argued several landmark constitutional law cases before the Court of Appeals and the North Carolina Supreme Court. In addition, she served as one of the lead pro bono lawyers for the North Carolina NAACP Moral Monday protests and was awarded the 2014 North Carolina NAACP Humanitarian of the Year Award. Kapur took her passion for mass incarceration into the classroom and has taught as an Adjunct Professor of Law at the University of North Carolina and at Campbell Law School in Raleigh. She has served on the boards of numerous non-profit organizations. She was recently recognized by the National Trial Lawyers as one of the top 100 criminal defense trial lawyers in North Carolina.



Carlos Schröder – USA
human rights activist, poet

Carlos Schröder is a poet and translator as well as a Professor of English at Northern Virginia Community College, Alexandria. Holds a B.A. from the University of the District of Columbia, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from the University of Maryland.

He has published a collection of poetry, has a play produced and has co-authored a number of books on pedagogy and human rights and coordinated workshops on the same topic with the Education Committee of the APDH (Permanent Assembly of Human Rights, Argentina) of which he has been a member since the mid '80s.

ni olvido ni perdón - juicio y castigo
<http://blogs.nvcc.edu/cschroder/>

Velma Pollard – Jamaica
poet, shorty story writer, scholar



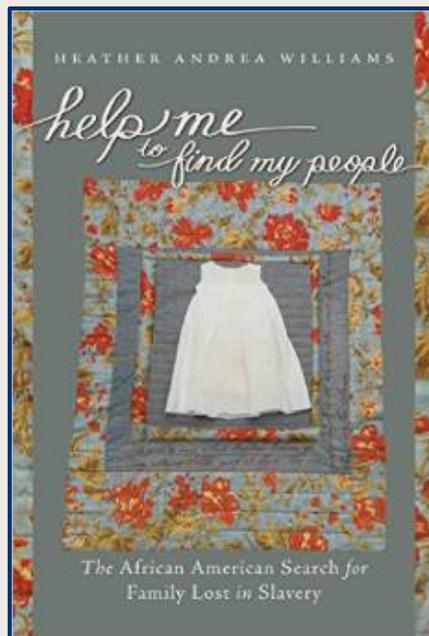
Velma Pollard is a writer and a retired Senior Lecturer from the University of the West Indies at Mona. She has published four books of poetry from Peepal Tree Press (*Crown Point and Other Poems* (1988), *Shame Trees Don't Grow Here* (1992), *Leaving Traces* (2008), *And Caret Bay Again: New and selected poems* (2013) and *The Best Philosophers I Know Can't Read and Write* (2001) from Mango Publishing.

Her prose publications include three collections of short fiction, a novel, *Homestretch* (Longman 1994) and a novella, *Karl* which won the Casa de las Americas prize in 1992. Her academic publications include several articles and two books on language in the Caribbean: *Dread Talk: The Language of Rastafari* and *From Jamaica Creole to Standard English*.

Nikkole Salter – USA
playwright, actress



Nikkole Salter is an award-winning actress and writer. She along with co-author and co-performer Danai Gurira, received an OBIE Award (2006), and the NY Outer Critics Circle's John Gassner Award for Best New American Play (2006) for "In the Continuum" (ITC). In addition to being nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, ITC was named one of the best plays of 2005 by the *New York Times*, *Newsday* and *New York Magazine*. Salter's deep sense of social responsibility led her to found and serve as Executive Director of The Continuum Project, Inc. a nonprofit organization that creates innovative artistic programming for community empowerment and enrichment. For the conference, she will be one of the Artists in Residence during the second week to feature her play, *Torn Asunder*, adapted from Heather Williams's history, *Help Me to Find My People*, which is about the quest to reunify African American families after the Civil War.



Heather Andrea Williams – USA
author, scholar



Heather Williams trained at Harvard and then pursued a successful legal career that included time in the U.S. Justice Department's Civil Rights Division, and as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of New York. She received her Ph.D. from Yale in 2002 and is currently a Presidential Term Professor of Africana Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Her book *Self-Taught: African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* has won numerous awards including the Lillian Smith Book Award 2006. Her 2012 book, *Help Me to Find My People: The African American Search for Family Lost in Slavery*, is an innovative history of the individual, familial, and communal pain that resulted from forced separations of black families. This book is the basis for Nikkole Salter's play, *Torn Asunder*. Williams's text deals with family reunification after war, specifically finding African American family members who were separated during slavery.

Tentative Schedule - Events presented at the Sonja Haynes Stone Center and Center for Dramatic Art

Artists in Residence – **March 29 – April 2**

Hope Azeda (Rwanda), Luciane Ramos-Silva (Brazil) , Girija Siddi, Geeta Siddi, Channakeshava G. (India) Malika Ndlovu (South Africa)

Thursday: March 31 Panels

9:30 – 11:30 Panel 1: “Imagining History and Understanding Theatrical Context”

Professor Merle Collins (Univ. of Maryland)

Professor Belinda Wallace (Univ. of New Mexico)

Professor Évelyne Trouillot (State University Haiti)

Mamyrah Prosper – (North Carolina State)

Professor April Shemak—(Sam Houston State University) moderator

1:00 – 3:00 Panel 2: “Creative Artists on Politics of Place and Access”

TBA – Moderator

Malika Ndlovu – (South Africa) – Poet/Playwright

Luciane Ramos Silva (Brazil) - Dancer/Anthropologist

Girija Siddi, Geeta Siddi & Channa G. (India) – Storytellers/dancers

Hope Azeda (Rwanda) – Playwright/Director

7:00pm Presentation with guest artists/students/scholars

Friday: April 1

10:00– 12:00 Panel: “Palabra/Word!” Mayra Santos-Febres (Puerto Rico) Shirley Campbell Barr (Costa Rica)

1:00 – 4:15 *The Witches of Gambaga* and *Daughters of the Dust*

4:30 – 6:00 Panel: “Filmmakers” Yaba Badoe (UK) and TBA and Moderator Professor Charlene Register UNC

7:30pm

- Performances: *Renaissance in the Belly of the Killer Whale*. (Harlem)
- Geeta Siddi, Girija Siddi & Channa G. (Story Tellers/dancers) (India)
- Luciane Ramos-Silva (Dance/Brazil)

Saturday: April 2

12:00 – 5:00 – Celebration open to community and campus (TBD)

7:30 Repeat of Friday night performance

Week Two

Weds: April 6 Round table discussion: Women and Mass incarceration. Miewa Walker, Attorney Geeta Kapur, Professors Joanne Hershfield

6:30pm and Genna Rae McNeil Film excerpt: *Planting the First Seed: Making a Home for Formerly Incarcerated Women*

Thurs/Friday April 7-8 7:30

7:30 The Process Series -Reading of *Torn Asunder* by Nikkole Salter based on *Help Me to Find My People* by Professor Heather Andrea Williams