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Place-Based Storytelling Techniques and Technologies | Fall 2021 Colloquium

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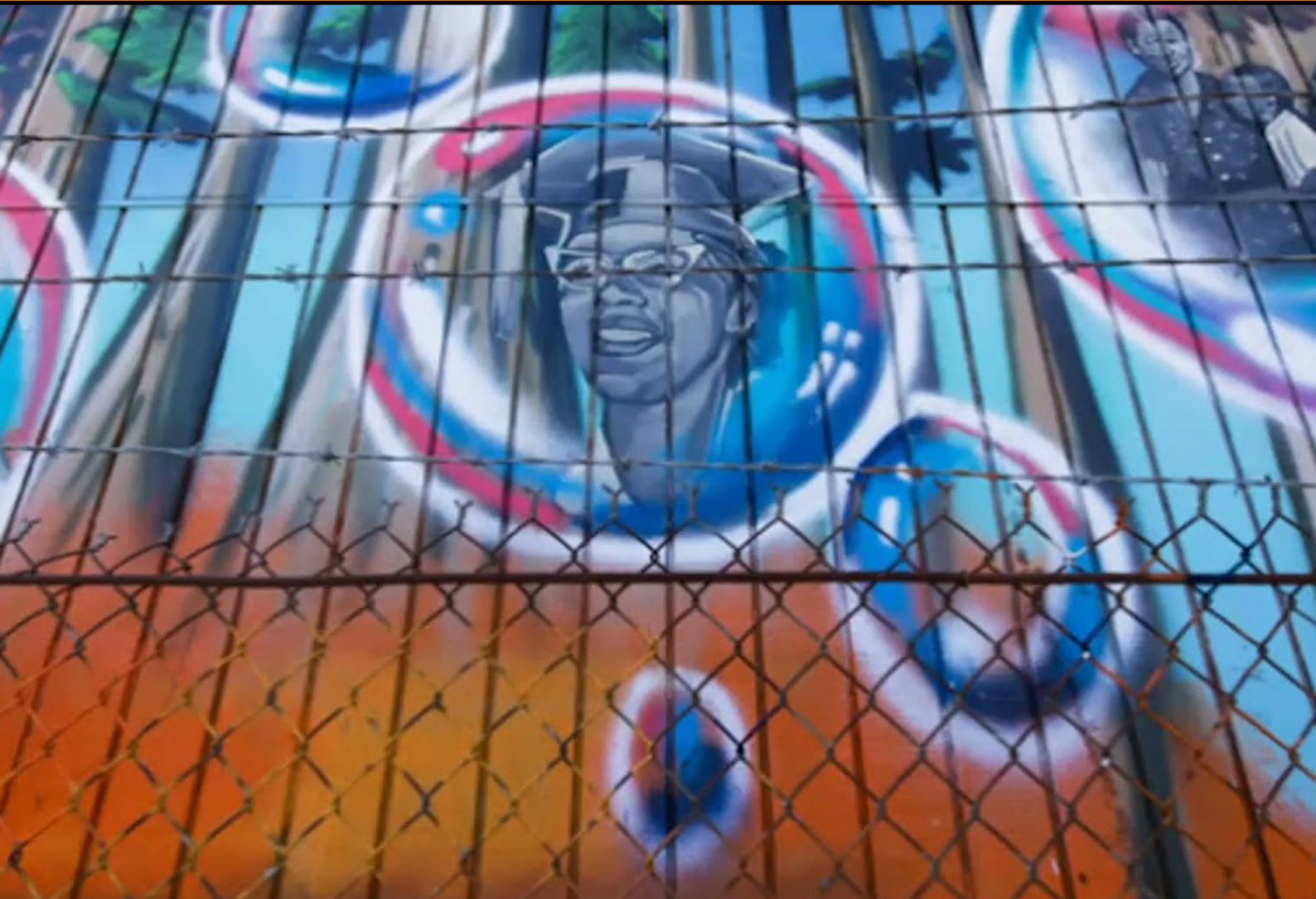
Publication Date

2021-10-01

PLACE-BASED STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGIES

A FUTURE HISTORIES LAB COLLOQUIUM

FALL 2021
COLLOQUIUM



COLLOQUIUM POSTER

FUTURE HISTORIES LAB

FALL 2021

PLACE-BASED STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES AND TECHNOLOGIES

Fall Colloquium Speaker Series
Mondays 11:00 - 12:29 pm
315A Bauer-Wurster Hall
Drop-in Visitors
Welcome on Zoom!

JOE LAMBERT
THE STORY CENTER
august 30

DAVID PETERS
BLACK LIBERATION
WALKING TOUR
september 13

SUSAN MOFFAT
FUTURE HISTORIES
LAB
september 20

SAVANNAH WOOD
AFRO CHARITIES
& RICK PRELINGER
PRELINGER ARCHIVES
september 27

SARAH SEITER
SF EXPLORATORIUM
october 4

KELLI ENGLISH
NATIONAL PARK
SERVICE
& BRIAN HOLT
EAST BAY REGIONAL
PARK DISTRICT
october 11

SUE MARK
MARKSEARCH
october 25

SETH EISEN
EYE ZEN PRESENTS
november 1

MICHAEL EPSTEIN
MUSEUM OF THE
HIDDEN CITY
november 8

WALTER HOOD
HOOD STUDIO
november 15

BARNALI GHOSH
BERKELEY
SOUTH ASIAN
RADICAL
WALKING
HISTORY
TOUR
november 22

A PROJECT OF THE GLOBAL URBAN HUMANITIES INITIATIVE

Instructor: Melody Chang
Instructor of Record: Jennifer Wolch
CYPLAN 198-002/290B
RHETORIC 198-001/295
Guest speakers from across the Bay will present their experiences in curating place-based experiences.

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Cover Image: Mural from the Black Liberation Walking Tour
in Oakland, CA lead by David Peters

COLLOQUIUM DESCRIPTION

PLACEBASED STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES & TECHNOLOGIES

A FUTURE HISTORIES LAB COLLOQUIUM

Fall 2021

City Planning 198 & 290 / Rhetoric 198 & 295, 2 Units

Instructor:

Melody Chang, City Planning

“Outside lies magic,” maintains the landscape historian John Stilgoe. Magic, for Stilgoe, is regaining a sense of history and awareness in everyday places, if only we can train our eyes to see beyond what we have taken for granted and train our bodies to explore the everyday.

In this colloquium we explored techniques of place-based storytelling through a series of guest speakers who are producers of place-based storytelling projects in the Bay area. What traditional and emerging technologies do they employ to create the experiences? What lessons can we learn from their efforts to point out local histories embedded in the landscape?

At a time when we are reconsidering how monuments and public spaces shape our understanding of history, recently developed projects tracing the sites of Black Panther history, queer activism, protest art, and environmental injustice attempt to be tools of activism by widening the “publics” who can know and champion one another’s experiences of place.

COLLOQUIUM SUMMARY

SPEAKER SCHEDULE-

08/30 The Story Center: Storytelling Techniques

- Joe Lambert StoryCenter
- Brooke Hessler Media Artist

09/13 Black Liberation Walking Tour: Live and Recorded Tours

- David Peters, Black Liberation Walking Tour

09/20 Future Histories Lab: Augmented Reality and Audio Tours

- Susan Moffat, Global Urban Humanities Initiative and Future Histories Lab

09/27 Afro Newspaper Archive and Prelinger Archive: Making and Using Archives

- Savannah Wood, Afro Charities
- Rick Prelinger, UC Santa Cruz

10/04 Exploratorium: Making Exhibitions

- Sarah Seiter, San Francisco Exploratorium

10/11 National Parks and Regional Parks: Telling History in Parks

- Kelli English, National Parks Service
- Brian W. Holt, East Bay Regional Park District

10/25 Marksearch: Social Practice Art

- Sue Mark, Marksearch

11/01 Eye Zen Presents: Performing Queer History

- Seth Eisen, Artist, Eye Zen Presents

11/08 Walking in Place: Using AR to Recover Fillmore's Redevelopment Histories

- Michael Epstein, Walking Cinema

11/15 Hood Studio: Landscape and Memory

- Walter Hood, UC Berkeley, Hood Studios

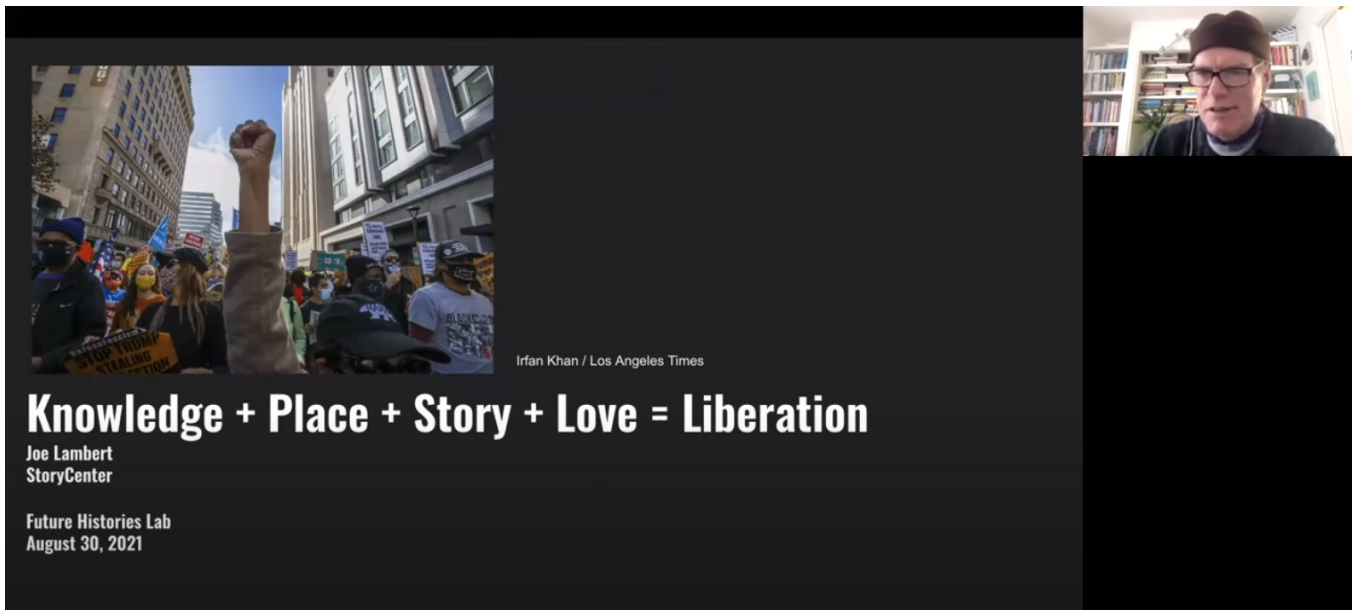
11/22 Berkeley South Asian Radical History Walking Tour: Performing the Unseen

- Barnali Ghosh, Berkeley South Asian Radical History Walking Tour
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COLLOQUIUM SESSIONS- VIDEOS

ARC OF THE SEMESTER

WEEK 1- THE STORY CENTER: STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES



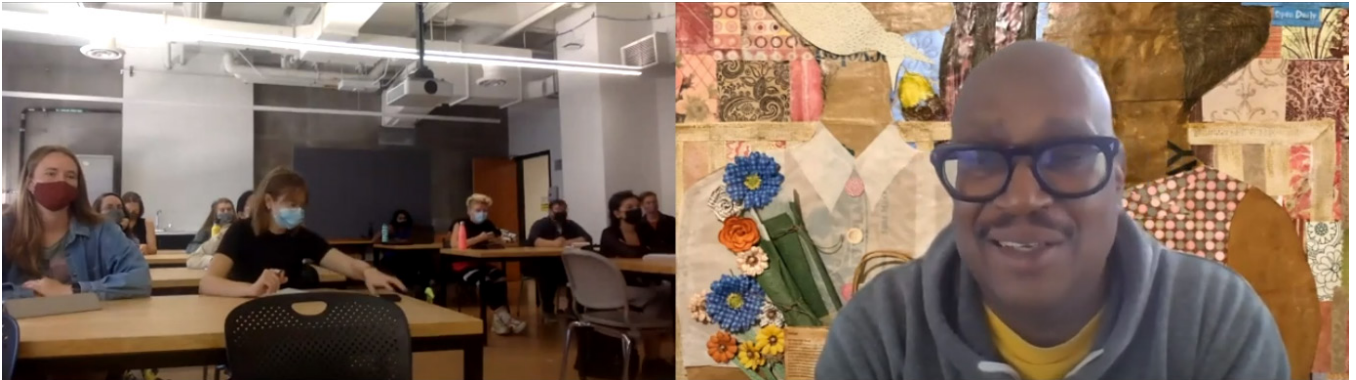
On Monday, August 30, StoryCenter Executive Director Joe Lambert and Media Artist Brooke Hessler joins Future Histories Lab to launch our fall 2021 Colloquium: Techniques and Technologies of Place-Based Storytelling. Brooke and Joe presents from their well of experience in teaching storytelling and creating space for others to articulate stories, as well as ground us in elements of story and authorship that will serve as a foundation for the rest of the semester.

About StoryCenter: Through programs and public workshops, StoryCenter provides individuals and organizations with skills and tools that support self-expression, creative practice, and community building. The founders of StoryCenter were influenced by the artistic movements of the 1970s and 80s that pluralized art and expression to be accessible to all, not just those gifted or professional. Their storytelling gave powerful voice to harm, healing, and hope during social and political upheaval. During the 1990s, a group of Bay Area artists came together to explore digital media tools and eventually evolved into StoryCenter in 2015. Since 1993, StoryCenter has worked with nearly a thousand organizations world-wide and helped over 20,000 individuals share their stories.

Born and raised in Texas, Joe has been active in the Bay Area arts community for the last 25 years as an arts activist, producer, administrator, teacher, writer, and director. In 1986, he co-founded Life On The Water, a successful nonprofit production company that served San Francisco's diverse communities. Almost ten years later, with then-wife Nina Mullen and colleague Dana Atchley, Joe founded StoryCenter (formerly the Center for Digital Storytelling). Joe has produced over 500 shows, ranging from theatrical runs and single performances, to citywide festivals and digital story screenings. Prior to his career in the arts, he was trained as a community organizer and assisted in numerous local, statewide, and national public policy campaigns on issues of social justice and economic equity. BA, Theater and Political Science, University of California at Berkeley.

Brooke Hessler, Ph.D. is Director of Learning Resources at California College of the Arts, where she teaches courses in writing and multimodal composition and learns more every day about verbal, nonverbal, and transverbal meaning-making. She collaborates with peer coaches, faculty, and staff to help students build and communicate their knowledge and creative vision—in and beyond their campus communities. For over 20 years Brooke has worked as a community literacy activist and educator, helping people tell their stories, finding more ways to listen.

WEEK 2- THE STORY CENTER: STORYTELLING TECHNIQUES



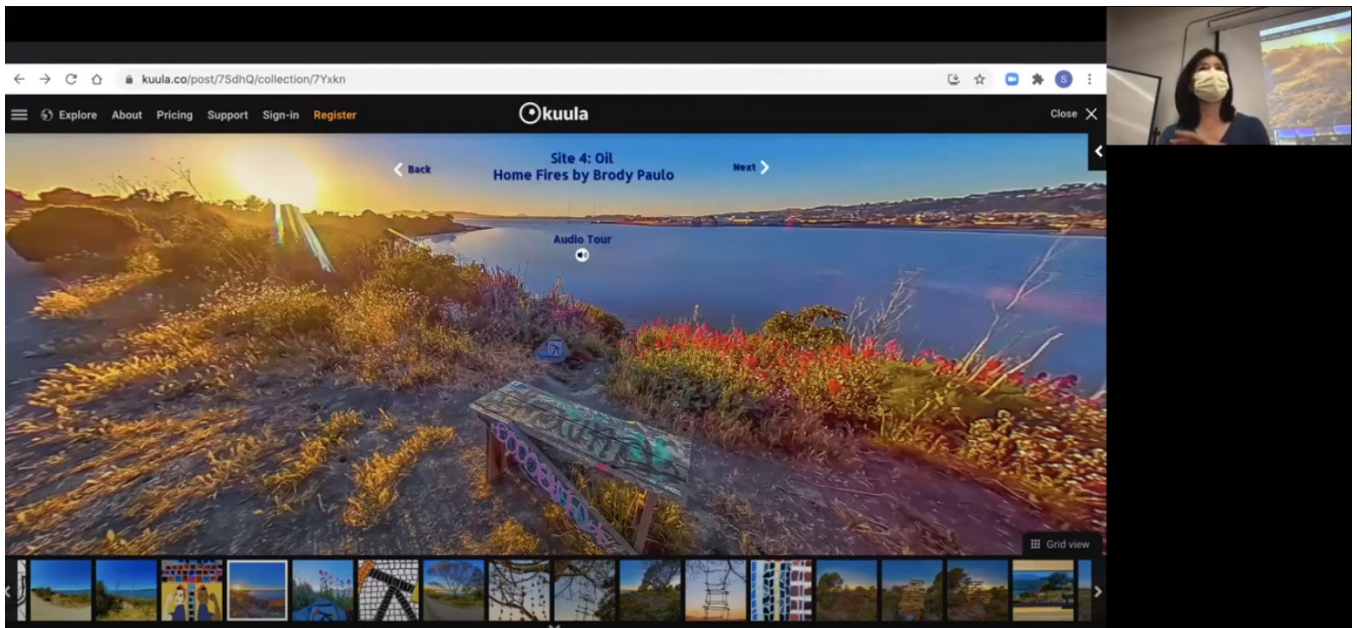
Can walking tours be an effective measure in countering the loss of historically and culturally significant spaces? How does the expansion of public awareness of the past feed into activism surrounding present day development? What are the benefits of transitioning a live neighborhood tour into a self-guided tour?

On Juneteenth of this year, the Black Liberation Walking Tour launched in West Oakland. The project is a new walking tour, or community-led cultural asset map, of the Hoover Durant neighborhood that celebrates its multi-generational Black history and culture. The tour is self-guided via mobile phone, has nine locations, incorporating QR codes, and takes about an hour. Visitors on the tour listen to a story at each location altogether experiencing a narrative that begins with the early West Coast civil rights movement through the second wave of the Great Migration to the Black Liberation actions of the present day. A project of the West Oakland Cultural Action Network (WOCAN), the BLWT uses oral history to capture the lives, art, and culture of long-time residents, historical figures, and rapidly disappearing former Black cultural spaces. David shares his experiences in curating and producing the tour and his current efforts to use the tour as part of a public mobilization strategy towards the reestablishment of the Hoover-Durant Public Library branch.

Find more information on how to take the Black Liberation Walking Tour [here](#).

David Peters grew up in the Hoover-Durant neighborhood of West Oakland. He's a master storyteller who created the Black Liberation Walking Tour to share the vibrant history of this neighborhood that was torn up by freeway construction, like so many other African American districts. He's on the steering committee negotiating community benefits around the proposed Oakland A's ballpark at Howard Terminal.

WEEK 3- FUTURE HISTORIES LAB: AUGMENTED REALITY AND AUDIO TOURS



What resources are necessary to assemble for strong storytelling? For example, what role does archival research play in composing a story about place? Outside of the archive, what other tools of the landscape are at our disposal when working on site to tell stories about a place? How should a producer handle temporality in a dynamically changing environment or capture the attention of visitors among pre-existing installations?

The Monument to Extraction tour takes place at the Albany Bulb – a vast pile of construction waste on the East Bay shore that extends a mile into San Francisco Bay. It is a good place to study the connections between extractive resources and our everyday lives. On a 1.5 mile walk across this giant unintentional monument to extraction, participants take a journey through history that uses art, narrative, and augmented reality to link the rubble and slag underfoot to the industrial and social history of the East Bay and mining histories throughout California. Future Histories Lab director, Susan Moffat, discusses the process of pulling all the pieces together to create the Monument to Extraction Tour at the Albany Bulb and implications for the regional park's future development.

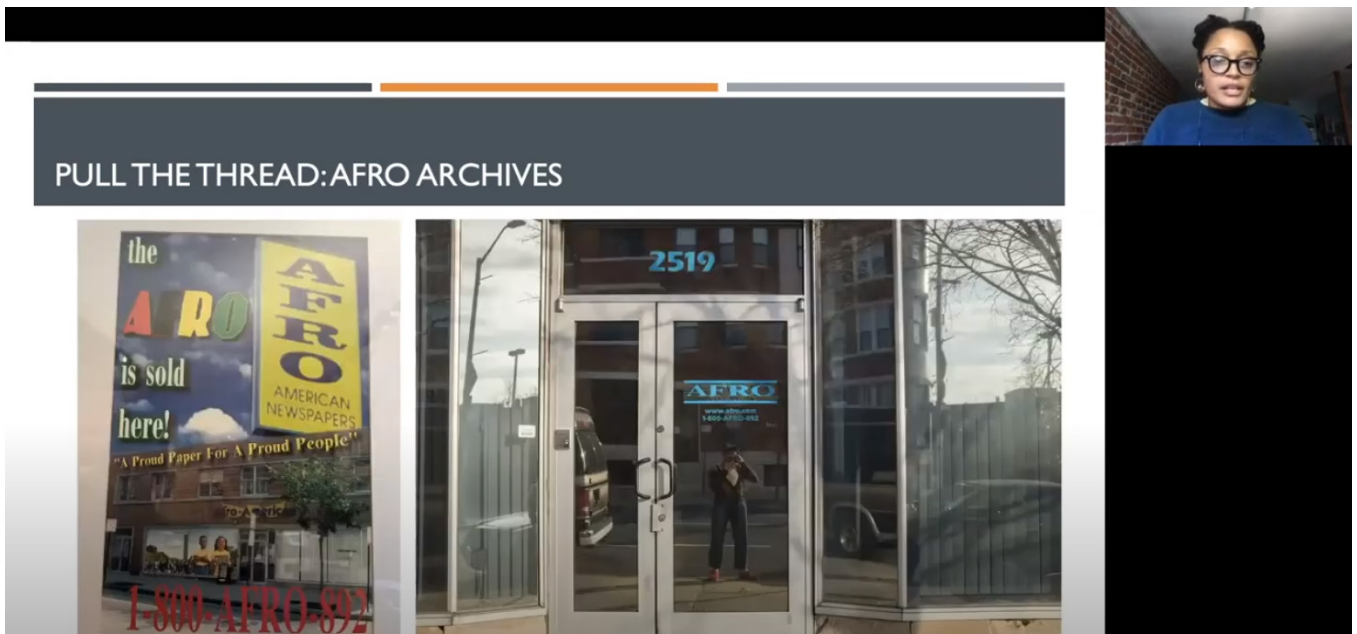
Find more information on how to take the Monument to Extraction tour [here](#).

Susan Moffat is the project director for the UC Berkeley Global Urban Humanities Initiative. She coordinates the academic program, organizes symposia, supports the development of publications, and conducts outreach across disciplines to faculty, graduate students, and the off-campus community.

Her research focuses on issues including perceptions of nature and culture in public space, parks, homelessness, and methods of spatial narratives. She has also taught planning and leadership development at San Jose State University and UC Berkeley's Center for Cities and Schools. As a curator, Susan has mounted exhibitions on cartography and on the San Francisco Bay shoreline. Her oral history and mapping project, Atlas of the Albany Bulb, collects place-based stories from users of wild space at the urban edge, including unhoused people and artists, and was part of the SOMArts Cultural Center exhibition Refuge in Refuse: Homesteading Art and Culture Project. She also served as a consultant on the Detour audio tour of the Albany Bulb.

Susan has worked in the fields of affordable housing, environmental planning, land conservation and regional planning advocacy, and journalism. Her writing on Asian cities, ethnicity and place, and environmental issues has been published in The Wall Street Journal, the Los Angeles Times, Fortune, Planning, and the edited collection The Misread City: New Literary Los Angeles.

WEEK 4- AFRO NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE AND PRELINGER ARCHIVE: MAKING AND USING ARCHIVES



Most of the projects highlighted this semester take place on-site, utilizing features of the landscape. What are other digital spaces and archives that facilitate our ability to tell stories about a particular geography?

This week, two speakers talk about their work based in community archives. UC Santa Cruz Professor of Film and Digital Media Rick Prelinger joins us to present on his [Lost Landscapes project](#), which comes out of the Prelinger film archives. In the Lost Landscapes series, Prelinger has compiled and edited footage from home movies to provide portraits of cities through the lenses of everyday people. Over the last two decades, Prelinger has presented films about San Francisco, Detroit, New York, Los Angeles, and, Oakland.

Artist and cultural organizer Savannah Wood shares her work helping to preserve the archives of the AFRO American Newspapers. Established in 1892, the AFRO is a weekly African-American newspaper published in Baltimore, Maryland and the longest-running African-American family-owned newspaper in the United States. Working closely with the collection, Savannah has created projects such as [To The Front: Black Women and the Vote](#) which utilized the archives to bring DC and Maryland's Black women suffragists into the national suffrage conversation. Savannah will also share her work in progress on a current project related to the founding of the AFRO American Newspaper Archives and the role that land played.

The speakers will discuss questions around access to documentation, collaboration with communities, and the positionalities of the archivist and presenter. We will think critically about common forms of storytelling seen in commercial media, museums, and other cultural organizations.

Rick Prelinger is an archivist, writer, filmmaker and outsider librarian. In 1982, he founded Prelinger Archives, a collection of industrial, advertising, educational and amateur films that was acquired by the Library of Congress in 2002. Prelinger has partnered with the Internet Archive (of which he is a board member) to make 2,100 films available online for free viewing, downloading and reuse. His archival feature Panorama Ephemera (2004) played in venues around the world. Prelinger has recently made several film programs that he categorizes as "historical interventions," called Lost Landscapes of San Francisco (7 annual parts) and Lost Landscapes of Detroit (3 annual parts). With Megan Prelinger, he is the co-founder of Prelinger Library, an appropriation-friendly private research library open to the public in downtown San Francisco. His archival work currently focuses on collecting, recontextualizing, and exhibiting home movies and amateur films.

Savannah Wood is an artist and cultural organizer with deep roots in Baltimore and Los Angeles. Wood works primarily in photography, text and installation to explore spirituality, domesticity, and identity-formation, often in relation to place. She combines new and old works with found objects and archival documents to create unique, accumulative installations that privilege non-linear notions of time. Major themes in her work include ancestral research, reframing land as a readable archive of historical activity, and reimagining humans as part of, rather than separate from, the natural world. Her projects reconnect people with the everyday beauty of our world and the histories that lie hidden just below its surface. She approaches this work with curiosity and reverence. As the Executive Director of Afro Charities, Wood is creating programming and infrastructure to increase access to the 129-year-old Afro-American Newspapers' extensive archives. Learn more at www.afrocharities.org. You can view Savannah's projects [here](#).

WEEK 5- EXPLORATORIUM: MAKING EXHIBITIONS

Collaboration: Altered State - Youth Youth As Clients



How are museum exhibitions made? What are the constraints and advantages to storytelling in an institutional environment? How does something go from a big idea to a multi-part exhibit that visitors can interact with and learn from together? This week we are very lucky to have Sarah Seiter join us to share her applied approaches in the curatorial process.

Sarah is a curator and technologist. She is currently the senior science writer at the San Francisco Exploratorium. She uses collaborative design and community engagement to create exhibitions and experiences that are personal, relevant, and social. She believes that science can be a force for optimism, equity and social change for communities everywhere.

Sarah was formerly the Associate Curator of Natural Sciences at the Oakland Museum of California. Her exhibition work there has included *Altered State: Marijuana in California*, *Bees: Tiny Insect, Big Impact*, and the upcoming *Take Root: Oakland Grows Food*. The exhibitions have been featured on NPR, in the San Francisco Chronicle, and The Guardian.

WEEK 6- NATIONAL PARKS AND REGIONAL PARKS: TELLING HISTORY IN PARKS

Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50

- Community recommendation supported by broad coalition;
- Celebrates a prominent leader who fought for civil rights for all;
- Provides immediate educational opportunities regarding our Nation's past and continued struggle for civil rights;
- Themes of social justice, protest, and resilience provide opportunity for deep story telling of the site's broad history



Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50: Converting a Former Military Base into Public Parkland and Celebrating African-American History

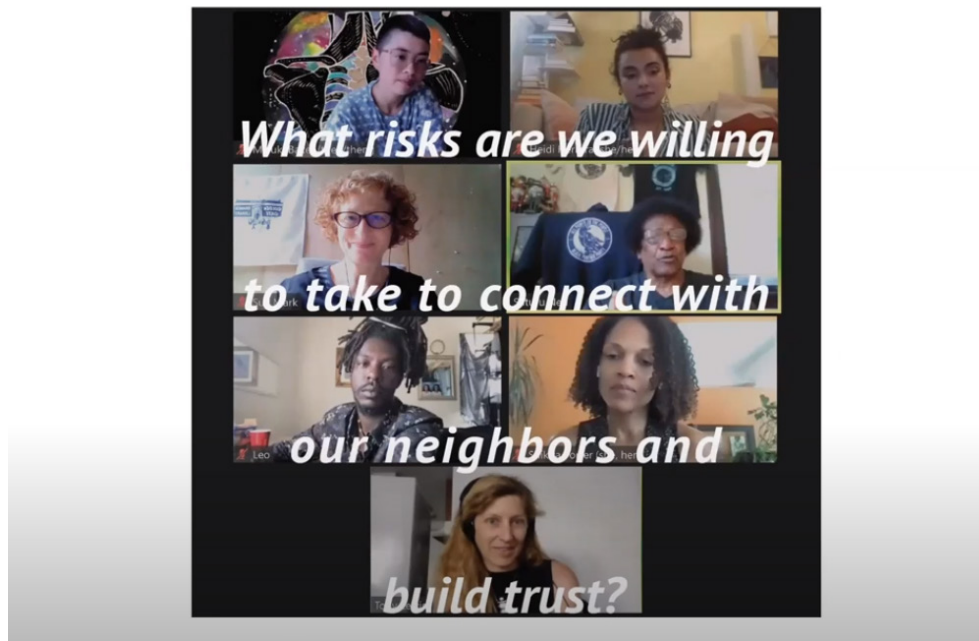
Brian W. Holt serves as the Chief of Planning, Trails, and GIS at the East Bay Regional Park District, the largest urban regional park district in the nation. Brian works at the intersection of parks, environmental protection, and urban development and has been part of a team that has protected nearly 30,000 acres. He has worked to expand park access for all users in Alameda and Contra Costa County, including leading the efforts to established the newly named “Thurgood Marshall Regional Park – Home of the Port Chicago 50” on the former Concord Naval Weapons Station. Brian has a degree in natural resource planning and management from Humboldt State University and a Master of Environmental Management from the Department of Environmental Leadership at Duke University.

Kelli English is the Chief of Interpretation for John Muir National Historic Site, Eugene O’Neill National Historic Site, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial, and Rosie the Riveter / World War II Home Front National Historical Park. In this capacity she oversees all visitor services, including visitor center operations, education programs, outreach efforts, and interpretive media for all four NPS sites in the East Bay.

Originally from the South Side of Chicago, Kelli grew up as a city kid who loved zoos as well as natural and cultural history museums, and dreamed of becoming a scientist. She began her interpretive career fifteen years ago at Indiana Dunes Environmental Learning Center, a residential environmental education facility where she implemented an urban youth stewardship program in heavily industrialized northwest Indiana. Kelli has served as a frontline interpretive ranger at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, a supervisory park ranger at Yellowstone National Park, and the community outreach specialist for Golden Gate National Recreation Area. She has delivered a wide variety of interpretive and place-based education programs, managed visitor center operations, trained new rangers in interpretive skills, and worked with community organizations and park partners to engage urban youth with national parklands and the outdoors.

Kelli holds a B.A. in Biological Anthropology from Harvard University and a M.S. in Natural Resources from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Her master’s thesis research involved identifying barriers to participation in Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore’s interpretive public programs by residents of Gary, IN. She is the 2003 recipient of the College of Natural Resources’ Outstanding Graduate Student award at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and the 2005 Outstanding New Interpreter national award winner for the National Association of Interpretation.

WEEK 7- MARKSEARCH: SOCIAL PRACTICE ART



“Commons Archive is a historical preservation program that re-thinks the archive as a place of privilege and de-colonizes our thinking about what’s worth preserving.”

–Susan D. Anderson, History Curator & Program Manager, California African American Museum

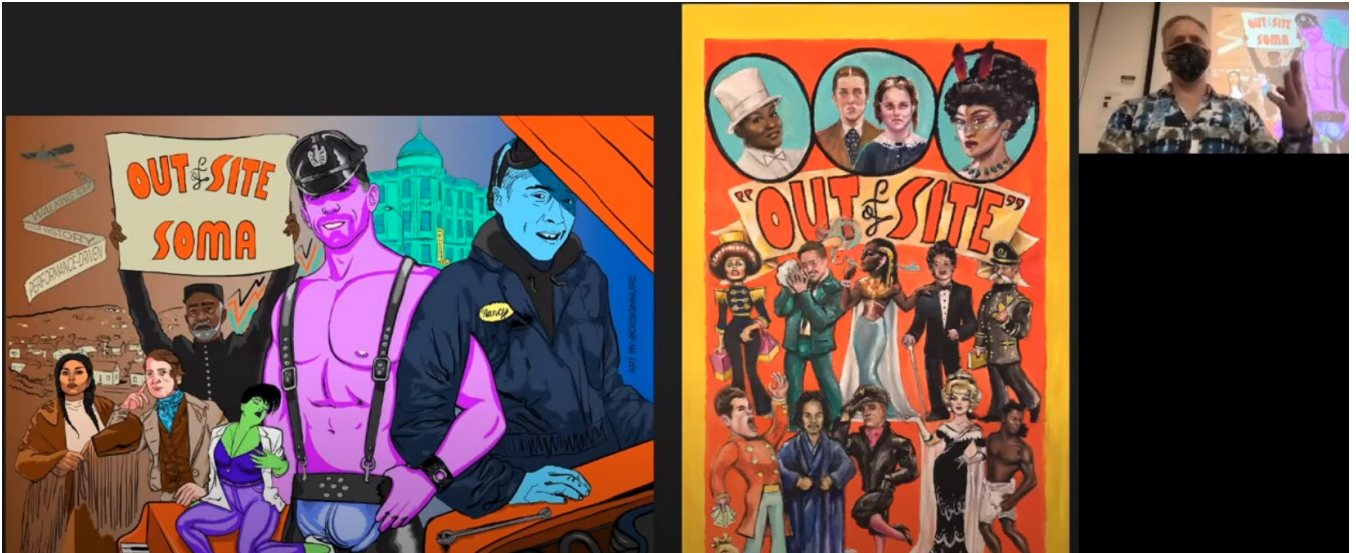
Oakland-based cultural researcher Sue Mark unpacks strategies and questions surrounding Commons Archive, a creative grassroots history project she launched in 2015. Centered at North Oakland’s Golden Gate Library, Commons Archive has been providing platforms for longtime and new neighbors to narrate, describe and share their many histories. In 2010, Black neighbors were just under half of North Oakland’s population; eight years later, only a quarter of residents were Black. Today, the numbers are even lower. Commons Archive’s interactive format preserves neighbor knowledge that, if undocumented, will disappear.

In collaboration with North Oakland groups and organizations Commons Archives connects neighbors through stories, shared resources and celebrations. Commons Archive invites neighbors from all walks of life to express, sing, dance, read and listen to the multilayered stories that continue to shape these neighborhoods. By embracing traditional block club hospitality, Commons Archive supports community resiliency.

Cultural researcher, literacy educator and artist Sue Mark, a long-time North Oakland neighbor, has a keen interest in over-looked stories. As part of the marksearch team, she designs ways for people to share their stories for empowerment and preservation. With conversation as her primary tool, she develops interactive projects that make space for social memory. Through strategies like neighbor-led walking discussions, community celebrations, skill-sharing workshops, interactive story-telling and published community scholarship, we center the voices and expertise of everyday people.

‘marksearch’ is honored to be fellows at Berkeley’s Kala Art Institute (2014-2022) and with the US Japan Friendship Commission (2019-2021). ‘marksearch’ has received generous support from many foundations including: The Fulbright Commission, National Endowment for the Arts, The Creative Work Fund, The Kenneth Rainin Foundation, Oakland’s Cultural Funding Program, and The California Humanities.

WEEK 8- EYE ZEN PRESENTS: PERFORMING QUEER HISTORY



Seth Eisen is a San Francisco-based artist creating a hybrid of live performance and visual media. He engages LGBTQ history as a living, breathing dialogue by researching lost legacies and reflecting his findings on stage. Central to his artistic vision is the combining of puppetry and object manipulation with visual art, writing and dance in a layered and unified aesthetic. He devises work through rigorous historical research and creative interviews revealing subversive histories. Eisen's work expands the dialogue between static and live art as a vehicle to broaden human perspectives and effect social change while honoring queer ancestors and evolving queer culture.

He performed as a member of the Butoh companies Harupin-Ha and Ink Boat from 1994-99. From 2000-2010 he toured with Keith Hennessy and Circo Zero across the US and Europe, developing his unique voice for performance, puppetry and object manipulation. His solo performances and installation projects have been featured in the San Francisco Bay Area at the Oakland Museum of California, Yerba Buena Center, as well as being presented in art spaces on both coasts. For the past 20 years, Eisen staged performance pieces, street spectacles and installations and has curated and appeared in a number of collaborative projects created with other Bay Area artists. In 2007, Eisen founded Eye Zen Presents, a theater company that promotes social change by linking Queer history and aesthetics to contemporary Queer culture.

Eisen has a four-year certificate in painting, printmaking and sculpture from The Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts; he holds a B.A. in Contemplative Performing Arts from Naropa University and an M.A. in Transformative Art from John F. Kennedy University. Puppetry has been an integral part of Eisen's work since 2004. He worked with puppet masters Annie Hallatt, Sha Sha Higby and K. Ruby (Wise Fool Puppet Intervention) in the Bay Area as well as training with Handspring Puppet Company. Eisen was a featured artist in San Francisco's annual Puppet Love Festival in 2007 for his work Hishi Musical. A cover story in the San Francisco Chronicle for the festival featured his puppets of the gay disco diva Sylvester and drag queen turned Zen priest Issan Dorsey, founder of the oldest Zen AIDS Hospice.

Eisen has taught visual arts, performance and puppetry for over 15 years to people from all walks of life, age groups and abilities. He ran a thriving art studio in the Tenderloin of San Francisco for 3 years and was a guest artist at many Bay Area Arts institutions, Art Centers and K-12 schools from 1995-2005. Since 2004 he has taught at New College of California, Berkeley City College and The College of San Mateo. Since 2005 he has taught in the B.F.A., M.A. and M.F.A. programs at John F. Kennedy University's Department of Arts and Consciousness, where he designed a specialization in Performance. Eisen has toured his LGBTQ historical performance (A Queer Vocal History) to high schools, universities and art centers since 2008 and has had the honor of performing his queer history related performances at the memorials and benefits of several queer ancestors who live on in the magic of his work.

WEEK 9- WALKING IN PLACE: USING AR TO RECOVER FILLMORE'S REDEVELOPMENT HISTORIES



Michael Epstein is a screenwriter, journalist and pioneer in interactive documentaries. He has a Master's degree in Comparative Media Studies from MIT where he focused on location-based storytelling applications. Through his studio, Walking Cinema, Michael has produced numerous immersive storytelling apps for broadcast clients including MTV, PBS, Audible, and Detour. His 2009 production for PBS was the first app to win an award in a film festival and was declared Best of Boston by the Boston Globe. His interactive production on marine climate change, "Blue Impact," for the New England Aquarium won the American Association of Museum's Silver Muse Award. He was also awarded the Gold Muse award for his early Augmented Reality maritime history project "Posts from Gloucester" and his featured project "Museum of the Hidden City" won the 2020 Gold Muse award.

Michael's documentary career started as a freelance reporter for NPR's "Morning Edition" and expanded to longform journalism, creating several original audio series for Audible on topics ranging from the geography of literature to the tension between art and technology in Silicon Valley. In 2021, Walking Cinema completed its first walking + driving experience: Free & Equal about an early experiment in African American freedom in Sea Islands, South Carolina. He and his team are currently in development on another story about housing history for the Smithsonian and an immersive podcast about religious sites in Boston.

Tianna Bratcher is a Black, queer, genderfluid poet, performance and teaching artist. As a slam poet, they placed 5th at the National Poetry Slam 2017 and 7th in the world at the Women of The World Poetry Slam. They have earned fellowships at The Watering Hole, Griot's Well and Tin House. Tianna is a 2021 Best of the Net Nominee and finalist for the Miss Sarah Fellowship. Their work appears or is forthcoming in Shade Literary Arts, Stellium Lit Magazine, Ink Well, December Magazine, Quiet Lightning and elsewhere. Tianna has a B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies from California Institute of Integral Studies. As a teaching artist she has worked with organizations such as Youth Speaks, Upward Bound, Bay Area Creative and more.

Website: www.walkingcinema.org

WEEK 10- HOOD STUDIO: LANDSCAPE AND MEMORY



Walter Hood is the creative director and founder of Hood Design Studio, a cultural practice working across art, fabrication, design, landscape, research, and urbanism, in Oakland. Hood is also the David K. Woo Chair and a professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at the University of California, Berkeley. He lectures on and exhibits professional and theoretical projects nationally and internationally. He was recently the spring 2020 Diana Balmori Visiting Professor at the Yale School of Architecture.

Hood creates urban spaces that resonate with and enrich the lives of current residents while also honoring communal histories. He melds architectural and fine arts expertise with a commitment to designing ecologically sustainable public spaces that empower marginalized communities. Over his career, he has transformed traffic islands, vacant lots, and freeway underpasses into spaces that challenge the legacy of neglect in urban neighborhoods. Through engagement with community members, he teases out natural and social histories as well as current residents' shared patterns and practices of use and aspirations for a place.

Hood Design Studio's award-winning work has been featured in publications including Dwell, Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, Fast Company, and Architectural Digest, among others. Hood is a recipient of the 2017 Academy of Arts and Letters Architecture Award, 2019 Knight Foundation Public Spaces Fellowship, 2019 MacArthur Fellowship, and 2019 Dorothy & Lillian Gish Prize.

Website: ww.hooddesignstudio.com

Note: This week's presentation was not recorded.

WEEK 11- BERKELEY SOUTH ASIAN RADICAL HISTORY WALKING TOUR: PERFORMING THE UNSEEN



Barnali Ghosh is a Berkeley based designer, community historian, artist, and walking/biking advocate.

Ghosh is the co-creator of the monthly Berkeley South Asian Radical History Walking Tour, one of the city's most popular community history projects, telling the secret history of four generations of immigrant activists. The tour is based on original archival research and oral history, and attracts participants from across California. Her work has been featured in National Geographic, was voted Best of the East Bay, and received a national award from Asian Pacific Islanders for Historical Preservation. She was a lead organizer for the campaign to name Shattuck Avenue East "Kala Bagai Way," the first downtown street named after a woman of color.

She currently serves as the chair of the Berkeley Transportation Commission, and as the mayor's appointee to the Planning Commission. A registered California Landscape architect, she's spent a decade designing public parks, schools, and streets across California and brings her Architect experience to her commission and is organizing work to develop local solutions to the global issue of climate change.

She is on the coordinating committee of Walk Bike Berkeley, which advocates for a healthy, equitable, and sustainable transportation system in Berkeley. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd, Ghosh combined her focus on transportation safety and racial justice, as one of the lead advocates for the Berkeley Department of Transportation, a planned city department that would bring together transportation engineers, designers and unarmed traffic enforcement in an effort to create safe streets for all, an idea that has received national media coverage. She also serves on the City's Reimagining Public Safety Task Force.

As a website designer Ghosh provides services to organizations that promote the health and well-being of our communities.

Ghosh's latest project is a series of photographic self portraits that highlight the beauty of the flowers of Berkeley, her home, and the fabrics of India, her homeland.

Website: www.berkeleysouthasian.org/

Note: This week's presentation was not recorded.

INSTRUCTOR REFLECTION

MAKING SENSE IN THESE TIMES: WHY I'M ORGANIZING A SERIES ON PLACE-BASED STORYTELLING

August 2021

By Melody Chang

This fall, I will be organizing a speaker series/ colloquium for Future Histories Lab on how people make sense of place. I'm bringing together creative researchers and community storytellers to discuss their techniques and notable technologies of place-based storytelling. Below I reflect on the extraordinary coincidence of the course's themes with questions we will all be experiencing as we return with physical presence to campus and begin to narrate our own stories to one another.



On Wednesday, we carefully return to campus after 2.5 semesters of liminal campus times. The university body will be together. What happened to us?

We will bring forward our jagged edges, grown wild and unfiled by regular social contact. On campus anew, what awaits? Variously we may feel an expansive excitement from so much stimulation (what is that aftertaste of being unmoored)? We may feel boxed in an invisible corner around other people – filled with trepidation but irreconcilably eager. Gathering

may be like watching from the outside an activity we used to know – bewildered in the forest, blasé in the crowd.

With these wrinkles, dressed in not-COVID-comfort-suits, we will each bring to campus our stories of the past year-and-a-half. They will be separate strands: the pandemic impacted us all but was nonetheless an individuated experience. We each had circumstances that uniquely unfolded: a latent relationship dynamic erupted into fissure, new beginnings timidly formed, family members on the margin weigh increasingly heavy on our minds. It's not over and still, this attempt to return to campus marks a point in time. How do we bring one another up to date on where we are?

So where were you? How was that? And how are you doing now? These basic questions turn to ash in my mouth like I'm trying to extrude something too callous for tender states of being. I care to know these answers but maybe the questions ask too much. Or too directly.

It's possible we are out of practice narrating to others at a scale so casual. We used to pass each other in a fleeting campus moment, sharing what articles or projects are on our mind before rushing off. These nodes functioned as a kind of peppered and cumulative meaning-making. We emergently made our collective narrative, criss-crossing like ants blazing a path. Now, except in small pockets, how many know our stories? On the other hand, the buoyancy of a casual-fast check-in belies an un-displaceable heaviness of experience in the response. Anyone who has been called upon by existential-birthday-reflections knows that it is ugly, frightening, and frantic business to make conclusive sense of something that is still very much in progress. Somewhere, someone lowers their gaze. I'll pass; next question, please.

This fall, we draw ourselves back together. How will we collectively make sense of what happened to us as we re-constitute an “us” on campus grounds?

My friend reminds me stories are good for showing, not telling – when telling is too tedious a task. And what a moment to contemplate place as we all return together to the experience of place after isolation and confinement indoors. How physical place features in people making sense of their stories matters to me. This fall, I will be organizing a colloquium for Future

Histories Lab focused on this and other questions. Every Monday, a creative researcher, producer, archivist, or community storyteller will join us on campus at Bauer-Wurster Hall to share their techniques and notable technologies of place-based storytelling. Their projects encompass performance, guided walking tours, physical installations, outdoor exhibitions, landscape interpretation, memorial design, and more.

Techniques and technologies of place-based storytelling. There is so much to that mouthful already. Storytelling. Based in place (or about place?) Techniques of and changing technologies. Is this a basic topic or complex? Familiar or innovative? I can't tell. I'm obsessed with all parts of this, partially because of that flickering, kaleidoscopic effect. The topic trains my gaze because I can't place it.

The act of storytelling has a timelessness to it. People have been doing it for as long as people have been people. Great masters before us passed down their polished traditions. Maybe I take for granted that we are generally familiar with its mechanics and formal qualities. At least I remember studying basic elements in grade school: setting, plot, characters and even stages in a narrative arc. Today leading storytellers dazzle us with new media projects – during lockdown how many of us reached for “content” (or was it connection?) on Netflix, podcasts, and social media. The prevalence of stories around us may betray that it's the higher levels of fine-tuning the craft which gives the experience of a story that easeful quality of being enveloped. Time feels effortless when we are cascading through a good story. Time feels endless when we are politely trapped by confusing or poor delivery.

With so much that has happened, it seems an uncanny paradox that base questions may pose a challenge for multitudes to speak their narrative into existence. I'm interested in that moment of speechlessness. It suggests two things to me. First, there is so much to express, and if that expression feels clumsy right now, it is hard and important to do precisely because expression is an act of underlying existence. We articulate will, we flex our desires. When are we more alive than when we permit ourselves to display grief or be captured by excitability? We perform, we express, we become. I think our lives depend on the practice of expression. Second, we need a societal role to speak what the collective cannot while in crisis. I heard a few years ago that a doula's task, among others, is to steward the birth story while the mother is laboring in birth. After, the doula gifts the story back to the mother. I wonder about this applying to loss and renewal in the built environment. To our invited creative storytellers this semester, we will look to understand their role and how they do what they do.

Beyond the foundations of storytelling, this

colloquium will also focus on place. Place features in the projects we will study in the sense that many of the stories focus on place and the transmission of the story also happens at a specific location – the place is the subject as well as the physical context. In a theater, powerful track lighting fades the rest of the world into darkness beyond the stage. In on-site work, the production unfolds in conversation with what is around it. The environment is a tool. What value is there to telling stories on-site? What do we gain by bringing people's bodies to a physical place and having their senses directly take in information? What additional challenges are borne by directing audience attention or planning in uncontrollable contexts?

Place is a hot topic. Gertrude Stein famously wrote after visiting the location where her childhood Oakland home had been razed and former farmland developed near 13th Avenue and East 25th Street, that “there is no there there.” Scholars writing about changes in scale borne by globalization, modernity, and technology speculate about the relevance of local place. How many places these days are containers for capital goods to circulate or for that matter, our bodies as workers or consumers? I don't have the answers. With more than a year of remote education under our belts calling into question the future and value of in-person instruction, I look forward to all of us blinking together in the light at what is the there there of place.

And finally, storytelling is innovating new technologies, bringing experiments in digital experiences into a tried-and-true well. These can include apps that track geo-location or augmented reality superimposed on existing landscapes. What applications of technology can deepen our connection to place and when does technology take us out of place? I don't think inventive storytelling is solely about new technologies, but applying the full slate of communicative and experiential tools with purpose and effect. That is, I'm excited about an experimental edge that focuses on new combinations of techniques that continue to serve the story (instead of losing the story to any one technology).

It seems that storytelling, place, and techniques can occur in endless choreography. I feel compelled to this aura of shape-shifting and mystery, like we are approaching on an ancient alchemical discipline. What new collaborations will create what chemistries? When does a project begin to speak for itself? In the midst of a production, a feeling of inevitability arises in the audience – as if things could have only ever unfolded that way. Good place-based storytelling camouflages the aches and pains of production. Like a magic trick, the technician has curated the container so our attention can rest, at their direction, on the wonder of experience. Place-based storytellers are the technicians who use landscape, history, oral testimony, photos, and

technology as ingredients to their magic show.

When it comes down to it, this process is about making meaning out of what surrounds us and then making decisions on how to transmit that information to others. It's less that any "it" already "matters." It's more that this process of storytelling, through sequencing and arranging information about underrepresented landscapes, is what generates and spreads meaning. These acts help to spread the feeling that anything matters at all.

As a city planning student, this exercise about public communications nests into what I consider to be a bigger challenge in public communications for the discipline's efforts toward equitable planning. As planners and designers sink into pockets of expertise (or researchers into academia), can we continue to relate what we see and learn to others around us and vice versa? What would be a positive feedback loop of information that leads us back to one another quickly, like a fiery superhighway – that is also fun? And since planning regards place, what a special charge and opportunity we have.

Last spring, Future Histories Lab director Susan Moffat and I led a group of intrepid students through a spring course, Ghosts & Visions, based at the Albany Bulb. Using lines of sight visible from standing at the Albany Bulb and looking toward 360 degree landscapes, students told stories about local extractive histories in the Bay. Walking along a path out into the Bay, visitors listened to audio narrative written, edited, and recorded by students and viewed "stations" dotting the path. Each station had a small monument to the local extractive history, for example, the Chevron refinery in Richmond, and some had an augmented reality component. We did it outdoors as COVID conditions unfolded. We did it in very windy shoreline conditions. We did it among wildflowers in the spring, and jubilant running dogs, and beautiful views of the watery horizon line. It was an ambitious survey of the storytelling production process and what the students created continues to give: today, the audio tour has been [downloaded](#) from Spotify 507 times. This fall, as speakers join us on campus to share about lessons learned from their production processes, we will sink deeper into our craft in place.



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FALL 2021 COLLOQUIUM