

Indigenous North American Archives

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From Foucault's "Archive Fever" to Marianne Hirsch's "Archives of Possibility," concepts of institutionalized memory, historiography, and knowledge conservation have been substantially redesigned and diversified over the past twenty-five years. Two of many areas of intervention are the inclusion of previously marginalized voices in existing archives, as well as the methodological contestation or archival practice in light of non-Western epistemologies. Following the investigation of "counter-archives that trouble the symbolic legitimization of the powerful" (Stein 2020), this workshop investigates Indigenous archives as the foundation of what we know as "America" today. Their extent ranges from rich oral traditions, visual and material designs (wampum belts, coded baskets, and ceremonial masks), astronomically refined architectural designs (the Cahokia mounds or Chaco Canyon), historical records (winter counts, birchbark scrolls, and ledger art, for instance) via all genres of literary production to contemporary storying, hip hop and other music, film, video games, and digital arts.

This panel specifically invites contributions that investigate the manifold relationships between Indigenous literary and cultural production, on the one hand, and American history, memory, and knowledge production, on the other. Archival practices produce as much as they conserve knowledge, and we are interested in bringing together perspectives on meaning-making, memorialization, and futurity. How do Indigenous archives contribute to notions of a common – or separate – heritage? What interventions into dominant political, legal, and historical archives do they contribute? In particular, what strategies do they use to navigate the complex terrains of historiography, ownership, education, and intercultural communication?

We particularly encourage interdisciplinary projects and invite papers on all aspects of Indigenous archiving, including (but not limited to) literatures, visual arts, performance, TV and film, museums, libraries, educational programs, and others.

Confirmed speakers:

Scott Manning Stevens (Syracuse University), "From Knowledge Keepers to Archivists: Researching Indigenous Histories" (abstract tba)

Jonah Winn-Lenetsky (Institute of American Indian Arts), "Performing the Archive: the circularity of Indigenous Temporality in *Here Now and Always*"

For Indigenous Nations, stories are sacred and offer the most power and medicine when spoken. They are also adaptable to the teller and the listener(s). Theatre and performance offer a contemporary example of storytelling as archive. In this essay I describe an embodied example of this in the *Here Now and Always* performance (2022) at the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture (MIAC) in Santa Fe New Mexico, a collaboration between the Performing Arts Department at the Institute of American Indian Arts (IAIA) and MIAC. The performance utilized giant puppets, traditional music and dance to tell important cultural and historical stories tied to the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico, the Navajo and Apache Nations. The summer of 2022 had begun with a desiccating brutal heat and the entire Southwestern US was clouded in smoke and plagued by wildfires. The story being told was about rain, harvest and "three-sisters" crops. The rains came with a furious vengeance just in time for opening night, disrupting the event, but forcing the cast and crew to ask important questions about the roles of temporality and adaptability in storytelling structures.

Please send an abstract of 250-300 words as well as a brief biographical sketch to karsten.fitz@uni-passau.de and birgit.daewes@uni-flensburg.de.