

The Autry Museum of the American West presents

14th Annual

# SHORT PLAY FESTIVAL



Who you callin' stoic?

**NATIVE  
VOICES**

Saturday, March 23, 1:30 p.m.

Sunday, March 24, 1:30 p.m.

[theautry.org/nativevoices](http://theautry.org/nativevoices)

# SHORT PLAY FESTIVAL

**There are many stereotypes that Native Americans—living and dead—have had to contend with.** One of the most pervasive in film, history, and wooden statues is the stoic, wise leader. He never smiles. He rarely speaks. He is always a he. But we know better, and for Native Voices 14th Annual Short Play Festival, you will, too!

## FEATURING

### ***The Elders & The Millennials***

by **Lara Annette** (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - White Earth and Red Lake Nation of Chippewa)  
“OK, Boomer!” We’ve all heard the phrase and are aware of the generation gap between Baby Boomers and Millennials. But at what age does one become an Elder?

### ***The Birth of the Crying Indian***

by **Montana Cypress** (Miccousukee Tribe)  
Who remembers the litter commercial with the Crying Indian? Now we get to learn how it all began...sorta.

***“Well to tell yah the truth Chief Grand Cherokee, I’m summoned by someone who reads the limerick and needs my help!”***

- Ha-Chacha from *Ha-Chacha*

### ***Stoic Indian***

by **Honokee Dunn** (Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians)

What if your perceived stoicism masks your social anxiety? That’s Shawn’s story, and his coworker Taleah knows it!

### ***Graveyard Shift***

by **Everett Ray George** (Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe)

No one wants to work, and it’s only a Tuesday. Sometimes you have to put on a stoic facade to show up for someone in need.

### ***He Never Smiled in Photos***

by **Desireé Leialoha** (Native Hawaiian)

When a loved one passes away, friends and neighbors offer condolences, casseroles, and anecdotes of shared experiences. But the Kekai family discovers that not everyone remembers their father like they do.

### ***Tennessee Rendezvous***

by **Ellen Shamas-Brandt** (Chickasaw)

It is 1890. Suzanne and Hattie are eager to meet the two “Indian Braves” who were selected to attend Vanderbilt University. Will they be able to help their new friends overcome culture shock or will they be in for a shock of their own?

### ***Ha-Chacha***

by **Kholan Studi** (Cherokee Nation)

Two cousins are tricked into examining their own prejudices when they meet the biggest stereotype of them all, a Cigar Store Indian.



**Lara Annette** is proud to be native to Northern Minnesota and a Northern Minnesota Native (Minnesota Chippewa Tribe - White Earth and Red Lake Nation of Chippewa). She is an educator, writer, dancer, and a lover of life to the fullest. Her plays have been staged by Native Voices and New Native Theatre in Minneapolis. She holds a BA from Harvard University and MFA from Boston University. This play is dedicated to her mom who always encouraged her to, "Write! Write! Write! Right?" Her spirit lives on.



**Montana Cypress** is a Los Angeles based writer/director. Originally from the Miccosukee Tribe located in the heart of the Everglades, South Florida, he has since immersed himself into all facets of storytelling. His full length comedy play *A Christmas In Ochopee* premiered in Minneapolis with New Native Theatre and his short film *Two Brothers* won Best Short Film at Phoenix Film Festival. He has appeared in *Noggin Knows* Season 2 and will star as Queho in the upcoming horror feature film *Hellorado* directed by Kansas Bowling. He has studied at the New York Film Academy, Groundlings, and is currently enrolled in UCLA's Professional Acting Program.



**Honokee Dunn** is also an actor in the Company. They are a member of the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians and an actor, writer, artist, and activist based in Oklahoma City. The Two-Spirit artist has been in productions such as *Round Dance* by Arigon Starr, *Chat Rats* by Mary Sue Price, and *Sovereignty* by Mary Kathryn Nagle. They are currently pursuing writing and art, focusing on Indigenous stories, history, and modern-day struggles. They will be moving to Los Angeles by the end of this year.



**Everett Ray George** is the son of Toni George and a member of the Fallon Paiute Shoshone Tribe. He's been writing since he was little, where he found inspiration in being homeschooled and in being allowed to watch whatever movies he wanted alongside his twin brother, Dwight. He used to work at a gas station and now works at a youth shelter for Native kids, where he wrote this play while working overnight.



**Desiree Leialoha** is a proud Kanaka O'iwi (Native Hawaiian) writer from the San Francisco Bay Area who focuses her craft on telling stories that reflect the communities she grew up around. She studied Creative Writing and Ethnic Studies at Saint Mary's College of CA and when she is not dreaming up new stories to tell or driving her son to soccer/band/karate practice, she is a public library worker committed to early literacy programming and fostering community engagement.



**Ellen Shamas-Brandt**, enrolled Chickasaw Nation member, was born in Oklahoma and resides in Colorado. A musician, actor, and director, she has been involved in 35+ productions. She earned a BM from the University of Colorado, an MEd from Vanderbilt University, and a PhD from the University of Colorado. She recently founded Celebration of Native Arts, a Denver organization to promote Native American performance arts. Her first play, *Searching for a Sign*, was performed at the Native Voices 8th Annual Short Play festival.



**Kholan Studi** is also an actor in the Company. He is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation. Credits include Eddy in *They Don't Talk Back* and Anthony in *Where The Summit Meets The Stars* by Frank Kaash Katasse, Edward in *Bingo Hall* by Dillon Chitto (Native Voices); Elias Boudinot in *Sovereignty* by Mary Kathryn Nagle (Marine Theater Company); taking the stage as an understudy in *Between Two Knees* by The 1491's as Pale Face/William (Yale Repertory Theatre), Isaiah/Eddie (Seattle Rep), and Ensemble (Perelman Performing Arts Center). Catch him as Milo in Blake Picken's short film *Ricky Killed a Guy*.

**"Are they the Indian Braves? They don't look anything like what I expected. I can't see even one feather, and they're fully clothed."**

- Hattie from *Tennessee Rendezvous*



**“Right?! Like I know we represent our people where ever we go but I also like the Whole Foods hot bar. So wastefull and over priced but so good.”**

- Jesse from *Ha-Chacha*



**Jennifer Bobiwash** is also the Artistic Associate for Native Voices. She is an Ojibway actor, playwright, and agent of chaos from the Mississauga First Nation. Her acting theatre credits include world premieres at Perseverance Theatre, Native Voices, and La Jolla Playhouse, as well as productions at Yale Rep and on tour in Northern Alaska. More recently she was honored to step into the role of Older Irma/Ensemble in *Between Two Knees* by the 1491s at Seattle Rep and McCarter Theater. TV credits include *Magnum P.I* and *Rutherford Falls*. As

a director, Bobiwash was invited to take part in the inaugural class of the National Institute for Directing and Ensemble Creation at Pangea World Theatre. As a playwright, she was a Season 21 Volt lab writer with Boston’s Company One Theatre and a past Artist in Residence at Thurgood Marshall College at the University of California, San Diego. She has participated in new play development programs with Blossoming at The Vagrancy Theater and MadLab at Moving Arts in Los Angeles.



**Lorna Bowen** is Seminole, Cherokee, and an enrolled member of the Muscogee Creek. She is a freelance costume creator and figure finishing artist for Animal Makers. She designed costumes for *Where the Summit Meets the Stars* and *Desert Stories for Lost Girls* and was the Wardrobe Supervisor for *Bingo Hall*, *Pure Native*, and *Lying with Badgers* (Native Voices). She was honored to read and sing Aunt Iris in the 2019 staged reading of *Missing Peace* as her first on stage performance. She is so grateful to Randy Reinholz, Jean Bruce Scott, and Elisa Blandford for their faith and trust, and for the lovely E.B. Brooks whose mentorship has been a blessed gift. MVTO!



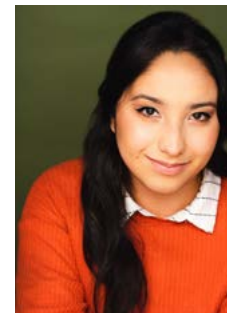
**Jason Grasl** is a Blackfeet actor, playwright, and director. Theatre: *Fairly Traceable* (Native Voices), *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* (Garry Marshall), *Cherokee* (Woolly Mammoth), *The Blame of Love*, *Sliver of a Full Moon*, *Urban Rez*. Film/TV: *Rutherford Falls*, *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *9-1-1*, *White Collar*, *Hot In Cleveland*, *Cassidy Red*, *Hurricane*. Playwright credits: *Lying With Badgers*, *Emergency Management*, *The Blame of Love*, *The Normal Force*. He is an adjunct faculty member in CSULA’s theatre department and is currently in the MFA Dramatic Writing program at USC.



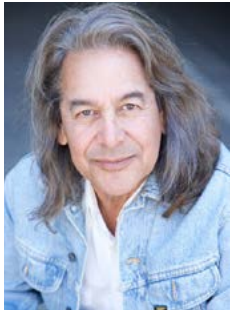
**Allison Hudson Hicks** is an enrolled member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation and is also of Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma descent. She can be seen in the TV series *Rutherford Falls* (NBC/Peacock) and *High Desert* (Apple+TV). Her theater credits include *Devilfish* by Vera Starbard, Mary Kathryn Nagle’s *Return to Niobrara*, and *Bingo Hall* by Dillon Chitto. Other credits include Long Wharf Theatre, Yale Indigenous Performing Arts Program Play Festival, and the Kennedy Center TYA Festival.



**Nikcoma Lee Mahkewa** is Hopi-Tewa/Mohave/Chemehuevi. Recent credits include *Lord of the Flies*, *Between Two Knees*, and the Discovery+ series *Book of Queer*.



**Alexa Paige** is an LA-based actress from the Blackfeet Nation. She discovered her love for acting in the 3rd grade when she saw a production of *Beauty and the Beast* and has had the acting bug ever since. Her recent work includes Helena in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* and film and TV roles in *Buffalo Daze* and *Royal Façade*. She is excited for what the future holds for Indigenous representation in film and on stage!



**Andrew Roa** is an award-winning Shasta/Azteca actor and has been a member of Native Voices from the beginning. Stage credits include *Sovereignty* (Arena Stage), *Black Elk Speaks* (Denver Center Theatre, *The Spirit of Pocahontas* (Disney Theatre), and *Please Do Not Touch the Indians* (Native Voices). Film and TV credits include *Picking Up the Pieces*, *Yellowrock*, *The Migration*, *Fame*, *Quantum Leap*, and *The Ellen Burstyn Show*. His recent film, *Somewhere in Montana*, is scheduled for release in October 2024.



**Madeline Sayet** is a Mohegan theater maker who has been honored as a Forbes 30 Under 30 in Hollywood & Entertainment, TED Fellow, Native American 40 Under 40, and recipient of the White House Champion of Change Award from President Obama. She previously performed with Native Voices in *The Adventures of Super Indian* as Young Hubert Logan and Amber Teeter. She just completed the national tour of her solo play, *Where We Belong* produced by Woolly Mammoth Theater in association with the Folger Shakespeare Library.



**Benny Wayne Sully** is delighted to be back at Native Voices. He is a Sicangu Lakota actor based in LA. He is represented by Gersh.

**“The only role Indians can get is falling off them horses, being a sidekick to the white man who’s playing the Indian, or getting cast to say things like, ‘my heart soars like a hawk.’”**

- Eugene from *The Birth of the Crying Indian*



**Robert Vestal** is of Cherokee descent and has been with Native Voices since 2002, appearing in numerous productions and countless stage readings. His many years as an actor have taken him from the University of Chicago to thousands of stage performances to a few TV and film appearances and even to the video game *Resident Evil 7: Biohazard*. Most recently he performed in *The Tempest* at Shakespeare Center LA. In 2014, he won the Von Marie Atchley Excellence in Playwriting Award at this very festival.



**Brian Wescott** is an enrolled Alaska Native (Koyukon/Yup’ik) where he grew up without running water and was then educated at Harvard and Yale. On TV, he plays the recurring character of Walt (and others) on *The Great North* (Fox/Hulu), and for a decade annually, he played Sidney in *The Winter Bear Project* (Perseverance Theatre and online). Other stage roles include *William, Inc.* and *Our Town* (Perseverance Theatre), and *They Don’t Talk Back* (Native Voices and La Jolla Playhouse). SAG-AFTRA, AEA, WGAW. KMR Talent.

**“You know what I saw? There was this guy on the outside of the thing. Hanging off way up there because the fire was just below him.”**

- White Man from *Graveyard Shift*



All actors are appearing through a special agreement between Native Voices and Actors’ Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors and Stage Managers in the United States.

## JUDGES

**Desireè Reneé Martinez** (Tongva)  
**Diane Levine**  
**Heidi Levine Gonzalez**  
**Jason Gavin** (Blackfeet)  
**Jim Beaver**  
**Timara Lotah Link** (Šmuwič Chumash)



**Marie-Claire Erdynast** is a passionate Cree Métis & Ojibwe dramaturg, puppeteer, and director and is thrilled to return to Native Voices after acting in the 2019 Short Play Festival. She has collaborated with Claude Jackson, Jr. to develop and produce his play *Cashed Out*, which won the Von Marie Atchley Excellence in Playwriting Award in the 2019 Short Play Festival. She is currently dramaturging two works with playwright Lee Cataluna including *Sons of Maui*, which began as the 10-minute play *Funeral Attire* in the 2020 Short Play Festival. [mcerdynast.com](http://mcerdynast.com)



**Sierra Rosetta** is an emerging Lac Courte Oreilles Chippewa theatre artist, actor, dramaturg, director, and playwright. She is currently a Theatre and Drama PhD student at Northwestern University studying Ojibwe performance. Recent credits include *The Clean House* and *Frida Libre* at the Wirtz Center, *The Matriarchs* at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, and an *Expand the Canon* reader/dramaturg at Hedgepig Theatre Ensemble and The Playwrights Realm.



**Bethany Hughes** is a member of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of American Culture at the University of Michigan. Trained as a theatre performer and dramaturg with professional experience as an actor, choreographer, director, and producer she researches and teaches on Native American/Indigenous performance and its interactions with mainstream American theatre. Her first book titled *Redface: Race, Performance, and Indigeneity* will be published by NYU Press this fall and explores the theatrical techniques of representing Native Americans and the political and racial stakes of the redface “Indian” on American stages.

***“He was such a protector. And always so serious when he’d pick you all up or visit the school for events. I don’t think I ever saw him crack into even a smirk. Must’ve been dealing with a lot of other stuff in life, huh?”***

- Mrs. Nelson from *He Never Smiled In Photos*

**“I’m just saying, anytime you start talking, the Native American flute begins playing softly, followed up by a single, lone eagle cry.”**

- Taleah from *Stoic Indian*



## ABOUT THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

**DeLanna Studi** is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation and has more than 25 years of experience as a performer, storyteller, educator, facilitator, advocate, and activist. Her theatre credits include the first national Broadway tour of the Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning play *August: Osage County*; off-Broadway’s *Gloria: A Life* (Daryl Roth Theatre); *Informed Consent* (the Duke on 42nd Street); and regional theatres (Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Portland Center Stage, Cornerstone, and Indiana Repertory Theatre). Studi originated roles in more than 18 world premieres, including 14 Native productions. A pivotal moment in her career was writing and performing *And So We Walked: An Artist’s Journey Along the Trail of Tears*, based on retracing her family’s footsteps along the Trail of Tears with her father. *And So We Walked* has been produced throughout the country and was the first American play chosen for the Journées Théâtrales de Carthage in Tunisia, Africa. Last year, it made its Off-Broadway debut at Minetta Lane where it was recorded for Audible. In film and television, Studi stars in the Peabody Award-winning *Edge of America*; *Hallmark’s Dreamkeeper*; *Goliath*; *Shameless*; and *General Hospital*. She is a 2022 USA Fellow, a recipient of the Butcher Scholar Award, a MAP Fund Grant, Cherokee Preservation Grant, and the Doris Duke Performing Artist Fund. Since 2007 she has served as chair of the SAG-AFTRA National Native Americans Committee.



## ABOUT THE MANAGING DIRECTOR

**Elisa Blandford** has been producing for Native Voices at the Autry since 2014, from world premieres and touring productions to Short Play Festivals, Playwrights Retreats, and Festivals of New Plays. She co-founded Vanguard Repertory Company and the Windmill Arts Center, a black box theatre and dance studio dedicated to fostering performance and visual arts. She has a BA in Theatre from Florida State University and MBA from the University of Redlands.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTIC ASSOCIATE

**Jennifer Bobiwash** see About the Company bio and headshot.



## ABOUT THE PRODUCTION COORDINATOR

**Sati Thyme** has been involved in theatre her entire life in many different aspects, from performing to tech to management and more. She received her Bachelor’s Degree in Stage Management from CSU Fullerton and has worked as a stage manager all over the LA/OC area for the last 7 years. This past year she spent touring around the United States until she came back to Los Angeles to manage the interactive horror production, *Delusion*.

## NATIVE VOICES

**ABOUT NATIVE VOICES**  
Native Voices places Native narratives at the center of the American story in order to facilitate a more inclusive dialogue on what it means to be American. Founded in 1994 by Randy Reinholz (Choctaw) and Jean Bruce Scott, Native Voices is dedicated to the development and production of new works for the stage written by American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and First Nations playwrights. The organization remains committed to emerging and established Native playwrights and theatre artists, to telling Native stories by and about Native people, and to providing the public access to these plays and playwrights—all with the goals of fostering greater understanding and respect of showcasing artistic voices that might otherwise not be heard.

## AUTRY MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN WEST

### ABOUT THE AUTRY MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN WEST

The Autry is a museum dedicated to exploring and sharing the stories, experiences, and perceptions of the diverse peoples of the American West, connecting the past to the present to inspire our shared future. The museum presents a wide range of exhibitions and public programs—including lectures, film, theatre, festivals, family events, and music—and performs scholarship, research, and educational outreach. The Autry’s collection of more than 500,000 pieces of art and artifacts includes the Southwest Museum of the American Indian Collection, one of the largest and most significant collections of Native American materials in the United States.



# SAVE THE DATE!

## Embers Young Native Playwrights Festival

**JUNE 8-9, 2024** | Autry

Storytelling is a way to preserve culture and language, which is why Native Voices is thrilled to bring back its Young Native Playwrights program! With the help of Zoom, Native youth from across the country will participate in an eight-week playwriting course that will nourish, elevate, and amplify their voices. Plays written will be performed live onstage at the Autry, as well as live streamed, so that these Young Playwrights, their families, and their communities can see that their voice is valid and their stories matter.

## 30th Festival of New Plays

**AUGUST 9, 2024** | Autry

Help us celebrate 30 years of Native Voices! A cornerstone of the American theatre, Native Voices continues to cultivate opportunities for Native playwrights. As part of a 10-day residency, two playwrights are partnered with an artistic team and company of actors to explore their scripts. The playwrights' retreat culminates with staged readings of both plays and a 30th Anniversary Party!

## World Premiere of Beth Piatote's *Antikoni*

**FALL 2024** | Southwest Campus

In this modern adaptation of Sophocles' *Antigone*, a Nez Perce/Cayuse family is torn apart over conflicting views of how to handle ancestral remains. Set in a politically unstable, not-so-distant future, Antikoni, and her uncle, Kreon, debate what responsibilities the living have to protect the dead. A chorus of Aunties advise the family by sharing comically profound traditional stories, but will Antikoni and Kreon heed their advice? Or will they continue to drive their family into conflict and each other farther off course?

## IN GRATITUDE

Your support is vital to the success of **Native Voices**, allowing us to create, develop, and produce Native theatre for a national audience. We would like to acknowledge our generous supporters:

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