

Kelundra Smith
Award-winning Playwright



Kelundra Smith is a theatre critic, arts journalist, and playwright whose mission is to connect people to cultural experiences and each other. She likes to write stories about people with lofty ambitions. Her work has been published in: The New York Times, ESPN's Andscape, Food & Wine, The Home Edit, Garden & Gun, Bitter Southerner, Atlanta Magazine, and many other publications. She is currently the director of publications at Theatre Communications Group where she guides content and revenue strategy for American Theatre magazine, ARTSEARCH, and TCG Books.

Her love of writing emerged when her second grade teacher assigned the class "story starters," which were incomplete sentences that the students were challenged to finish and weave into a story. From then on, Kelundra was hooked on the power of her imagination and knew she wanted to spend the rest of her life telling stories. Around the same time, she discovered the incredible collaboration and catharsis that can come from the performing arts by participating in school plays and skits throughout grade school. She went on to earn her bachelor's degrees in magazine journalism and theatre from the University of Georgia and her master's degree from the Goldring Arts Journalism program at Syracuse University.

She started her career working in arts administration and project management, doing marketing and community engagement for regional theatres and universities. But, the love of reviewing plays and art exhibitions that she developed in graduate school took over, and she "defected" to arts journalism. Today, she still writes articles about artistic works created by women and people of color. She also serves as a panelist, moderator

and workshop facilitator and speaks to students and community groups about the performing arts.

In addition to arts journalism, Kelundra started writing plays in 2018. Most of her scripts are inspired by headlines and history. South African photographer Zanele Muholi once said “we must attach images to freedom.” Her play *Monarchs*, which is currently being developed through the Alliance Theatre’s Reiser Lab, is a family drama set during The Great Migration and Great Depression. The Reconstruction Trilogy (*The Knot*, *The Vote* and *The Wash*) highlights the achievements of Black Georgians after the Civil War. And her play *Other Paths to God*, commissioned by Horizon Theatre, goes into the world of nurses caught in a scandal during a pandemic. Her artistic mission is to restore Black people’s place in the American theatrical canon and carry their stories around the world.

Her play *The Wash* received a 2024 National New Play Network Rolling World Premiere, and has been produced in Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Houston, New York, St. Louis, and Tampa. The Atlanta production took home four statues at the Suzi Bass Awards; and the New York production won four Audelco Awards, including best play and best playwright.

Kelundra is a member of the Dramatists Guild and the American Theatre Critics Association, where she previously served on the executive committee and the belonging, equity, inclusion & diversity committee as well as co-founded the Edward Medina Prize for Excellence in Cultural Criticism. She has been a fellow at the Eugene O’Neill Theatre Center’s National Critics Institute, guest critic at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and a resident artist at both the Hambidge Arts Center and Crosstown Arts Center. She is currently the director of publications at Theatre Communications Group, which publishes American Theatre magazine and is also the nation’s largest independent publisher of dramatic literature. Her long-term goals are to land on The New York Times bestseller list, open a late-night dessert restaurant and have her plays adapted into a hit television series. Dozens of ink-stained notebooks later, she still enjoys nothing more than a well-told story.