

FOLKLIFE STORYTELLERS

A writing program at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Storytellers—researchers, educators, writers, and visual communicators—are vital to world conversations on culture and social justice. The Folklife Storytellers Workshop offers a professional skill-building and exchange experience for students and recent graduates interested in producing written feature stories, editorial illustrations, web comics, photo essays, and short audio and video documentary pieces for its online publication, Folklife Magazine.

Interns come from a variety of fields of study, degree levels, work backgrounds, and regions. This diversity enriches the work and creative experience as well as the magazine's content. Folklife Magazine publishes in creative nonfiction and documentary formats. That candidates have experience in these exact formats is less important than whether they can quickly pick up the techniques to succeed in them. Successful candidates are self-starters, expressive storytellers, and sensitive to issues of cultural representation. They will show demonstrated ability in their chosen storytelling genre. Although many articles are published in a bilingual format, the workshop is conducted in English and candidates should expect to write in English. Many participants arrive with a potential story in mind, often from their own research or community experience, but stories may be assigned as well.

Interns participate in one-on-one story meetings with editors and cultural experts and a weekly workshop to learn and share techniques of interviewing, creative nonfiction writing, and media production in a highly supportive atmosphere. Topics of workshop sessions have included scene-building, story structure, description, dialogue, narrative closeness, suspense-building, and subtext. Storytellers then put these concepts to good use through multiple drafts before completing their work for final consideration. Interns critique each other's work and receive the personal attention of editors.

Participants will learn to:

- Tailor their work to an international audience interested in culture
- Build cultural and/or issue-based content into compelling narratives
- Create written and/or visual stories that educate as well as intrigue and motivate
- Incorporate the Center's philosophies and methods of cultural presentation
- Give and receive criticism along with useful team-building skills

Internships are available year-round and remotely, usually lasting three to four months. Candidates should read our publication and mission statement before applying.

To apply online, visit solaa.si.edu and create an account. After selecting Internship, specify the Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage. You will be required to upload supporting materials, including an essay, résumé, transcripts, and letters of recommendation.