



 COLUMBIA | SOCIAL DIFFERENCE
CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE**ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE is an interdisciplinary research center supporting collaborative projects that address gender, race, sexuality, and other forms of inequality to foster ethical and progressive social change.

The Center's work has two overarching research themes, **Women Creating Change** and **Imagining Justice**.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

PAIGE WEST, CLAIRE TOW PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY



At the Columbia University Center for the Study of Social Difference, we work to understand and transform the world through scholarship, community engagement, and collaboration with activists, artists, and others. We do this by building a capacious and welcoming community here on our campus by bringing together faculty from the Arts and Sciences at Barnard and Columbia, the Law School, the School of the Arts, the Medical School, the Business School, the School of Social Work, Teachers College, and the Climate School. These scholars then extend our community by inviting their colleagues and collaborators from other universities, the Columbia Global Centers, their extended communities, and the communities with which they work to be a part of collectives that we call “Working Groups” and “Social Engagement Projects.” These collectives are clustered under our “Women Creating Change” and “Imagining Social Justice” themes.

This year we had fourteen active Working Groups and two Social Engagement Projects. Our Working Groups focused on migration and mobility in the United States, refugee life in global cities, resource extraction and climate change, women’s and girl’s health, queer rights, race and racism at home and abroad, the role of Black Feminist thought in pushing this world to more just futures, the ecological after-currents of the Black Atlantic, prison education, repair, recuperation, and recovery, and local and global women’s rights. Our Social Engagement Projects, “ZIP Code Memory Project: Practices of Justice and Repair” and “Queer Aqui,” extended the work of previous working groups to engage with in situ activists and scholars in New York City and Rio De Janeiro.

I want to highlight one of our Working Groups called “Prison Education and Social Justice” because it serves as an incredible example of what is possible at Columbia. The group, headed by Professor Jean Howard and administered by Ph.D. candidate Patrick Anson, brings together faculty and graduate students with alumni of Columbia’s prison education programs to develop new avenues for our faculty and students to teach in prisons and new curricular designs for this teaching practice. The project builds on Professor Howard’s long-standing work in New York state prisons. Still, through the relationships she has built over the years with students who have graduated from the in-prison programs and then from Columbia University, this undertaking does the kind of work often referred to as “co-production.” It is an application that builds on faculty scholarship (e.g., work on the carceral state and the prison industrial complex in the United States, race and social justice, and gender and dispossession) and brings that together with the lived experiences of people intertwined with these systems. With this project, we see the value of scholarly research and what can happen when academics have the support they need to work with community members dynamically.

Professor Howard co-founded the Center for the Study of Social Difference, and we feel privileged to host her project. Many of us associated with the Center were thrilled to participate in the May 5, 2023, retirement celebration that honored Professor Howard’s time here at Columbia. Luckily, she will continue her work with this project even in retirement. For me, personally, learning from her has been one of the great gifts of my time here at Columbia. Jean Howard is brilliant, kind, funny, and administratively astute in magnificent ways.

This year I have had the privilege of serving as Faculty Director of the Center, with Kasheba Marshall serving as the Center's Associate Director. Together we have navigated the complexities of administering all of these incredible Working Groups and Projects and their collaborations at home and abroad. I could not have done anything this year without her careful administrative skills, incredible budgetary analysis, and kind attention to our other staff. I want to thank Eve Taylor, Tomoki Fukui, Anna Kristine Schirrer, and Ashley Lopez. Kasheba and I could only have done any of what we have done this year with their assistance. We say goodbye to Dr. Tomoki Fukui, who successfully defended their dissertation in May, and wish them so much joy as they progress in their incredible career. I also want to thank all of our Graduate Fellows. These Ph.D. students work with our working groups as both administrative support and active members of the groups. Kasheba and I would also like to thank Tanique Dunkley and her Arts and Sciences Human Resources staff. They have been our partners this year in several administrative adventures, and they have been wonderful to work with.

Our work at the Center is supported in wonderful ways by Ann Kaplan and our Women Creating Change Leadership Council. These incredible people have stood by us through the multiple social and financial crises over the past four years, and we could not do any of our work without them. Together with President Lee Bollinger, they have created the financial conditions allowing us to do all of our work.

This brings me to President Bollinger more generally. Since the Center's inception, he has been an enthusiastic and vocal supporter. He has funded us, sung our praises at events and with potential donors, and, more generally, had our back at every turn. We will miss him tremendously as he retires this July. It has been an honor to work with him.

This leads me to another departure, my own. Being director of the Center for the Study of Social Difference for the past four years has been one of the true privileges of my time here at Columbia University. I am proud of my work as Faculty Director, and I cherish the colleagues I have met working with our staff, the Working Groups, and the Social Engagement Projects. The Center's mission, fostering ethical and progressive social change by bringing scholarship, advocacy, and in-the-world projects together, sits at the center of my own scholarly practice. As I step down on July 1, handing the Center over to Professor Lila Abu-Lughod as Interim Director, I will refocus on my scholarship more exclusively. It has been an honor.

PAIGE WEST

CLAIRE TOW PROFESSOR OF ANTHROPOLOGY

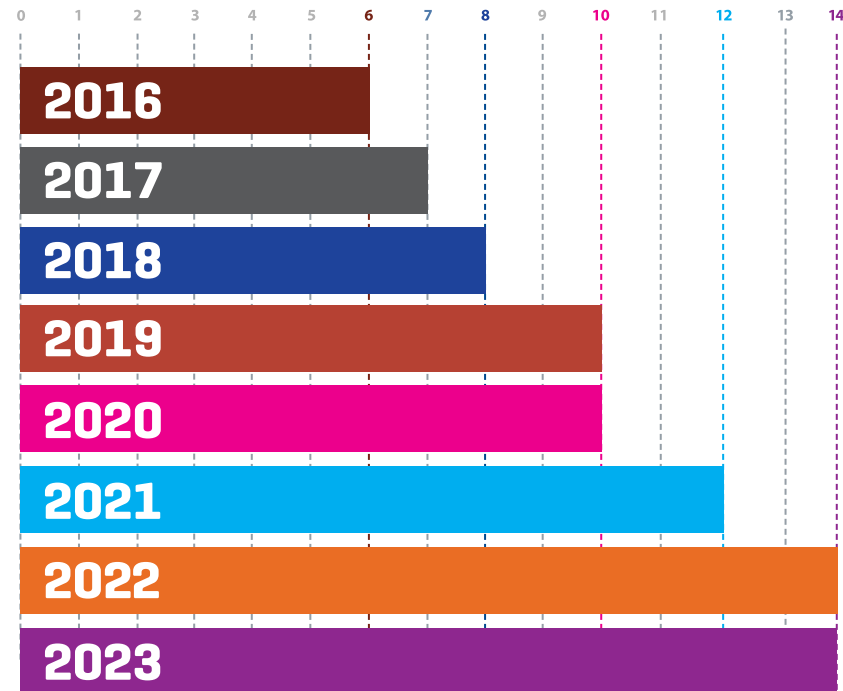
PHOTO NEXT PAGE: ALMA MATER

Alma Mater is a bronze sculpture by Daniel Chester French which is located on the steps of the Low Memorial Library on the campus of Columbia University, in Manhattan, New York City
PHOTO COURTESY OF EILEEN BARROSO



AT A GLANCE

NUMBER OF ACTIVE PROJECTS



CUTTING ACROSS DISCIPLINES

We're collaborating **across Columbia Schools and Units** on projects and content.



QUEER AQUI: TOGETHER IN HARD TIMES

- Columbia Law School
- School of Journalism
- Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
- Columbia University Libraries
- School of General Studies
- School of International and Public Affairs
- Columbia College
- Barnard College
- Mailman School of Public Health
- Columbia University Irving Medical Center
- School of the Arts
- Columbia Global Centers
- Teachers College
- Columbia Business School



PHOTO COURTESY OF EILEEN BARROSO

TURNING IDEAS INTO IMPACT: HOW WE DO IT



BOOKS AND PUBLICATIONS



PUBLIC EVENTS AND WORKING GROUPS



CREATING NEW ACADEMIC COURSES



INFLUENCING POLICY AND WORKING WITH COMMUNITIES

OUR WORK: BY THE NUMBERS

3 YEARS
DURATION OF OUR PROJECTS

\$50,000
AVERAGE PROJECT COST

40+
EVENTS EACH YEAR

46
PROJECTS & COUNTING



OUR WORK SPANS
8 WORLD REGIONS AND OVER
40 COUNTRIES

OUR MISSION

CSSD's mission is to support intellectual exchange and scholarly development at Columbia University through faculty-led collaborative working groups concerned with diverse questions related to the dynamics of social inequality and social justice. The impact of over a decade of support for the interdisciplinary and diverse scholars and practitioners included in these seminars and working groups is visible in the influential publications, novel ideas, curricular innovations, enduring international networks, and conferences and events for the broad public nurtured through our projects. Interdisciplinary scholars working in our two streams—Women Creating Change and Imagining Justice—have been transformed by this intellectual support.

The unique, faculty-directed working group structure at CSSD creates synergistic opportunities for intense intellectual engagement, individual and scholarly development, mentorship across ranks, publishing opportunities, intellectual development, and the conditions for building enduring international scholarly networks of exchange, all of which play central roles in supporting working group participants' development as distinguished scholars. Alongside junior and senior faculty, undergraduate and graduate students gain access to prominent distinguished scholars, as well as support for publishing opportunities and access to international scholarly networks of exchange. Because working group themes emerge organically from shared scholarly interests among faculty colleagues, CSSD has been able to sustain its status as a vibrant hub of collaborative study and thought.

CSSD supports those working on multiple aspects of the global dynamics of power and inequality and the ways that forms of social difference, including gender, race, sexuality, and ethnicity, organize these inequalities. Many faculty who lead the working groups and the scholars, artists, practitioners and community leaders who participate in them come from underrepresented groups whose research and teaching focus on topics also less represented in the traditional disciplines. Most have been minorities within the US academy, far outstripping their representation in the broader Columbia University community. As a university-based advanced study center dedicated to supporting faculty initiatives, CSSD recognizes that rigorous scholarship on subjects of deep social concern requires support for the diverse cadres who seek to understand, analyze and intervene on social issues.



GLOBAL REACH

“CSSD has given us a tremendous platform for this work. Between their funding and the extraordinary on-the-ground support that we had from the Rio Columbia Global Center, particularly Isabelle Pereira, we were able to plan, launch and enact an incredible event where we made lasting connections, shared urgent knowledge and planned future meetings.”

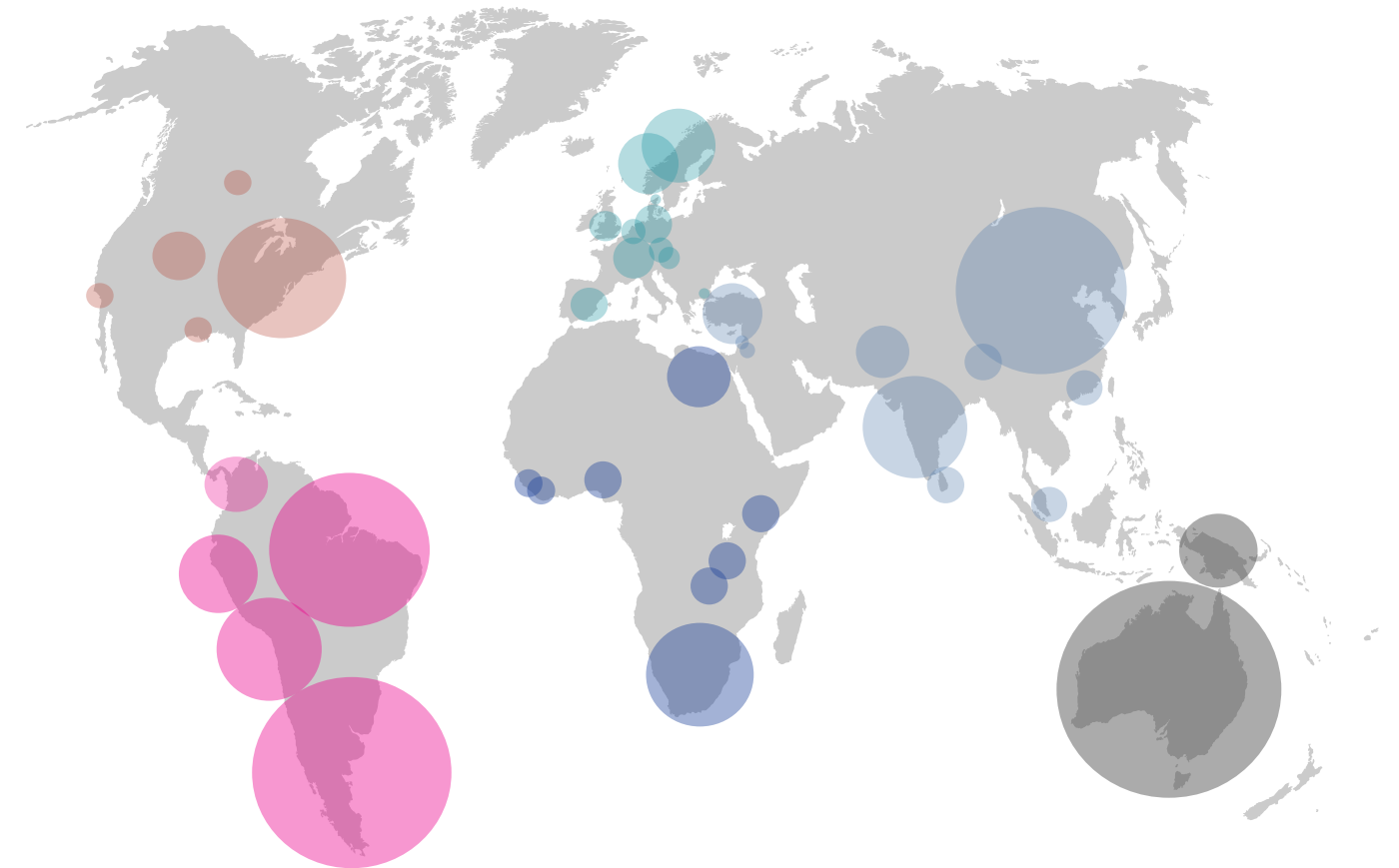
JACK HALBERSTAM, CO-DIRECTOR, QUEER AQUÍ



WOMEN CREATING CHANGE. GLOBAL CENTER | MIDDLE EAST, AMMAN

Since its inception in 2008, CSSD projects have included scholars and participants from forty countries and collaborated with 8 of Columbia University’s 12 Global Centers.¹ CSSD is distinguished by its global reach and the depth of relationships that its working groups cultivate with international colleagues and community members. This distinctive combination of breadth and depth makes the innovative outcomes of

CSSD’s projects possible. The collaborations that have emerged have made CSSD a cutting-edge center of informed regional and comparative research, contributing to Columbia University’s development as a global center of knowledge.



ASIA

Bangladesh
China
Hong Kong
India
Jordan
Lebanon
Pakistan

Palestine
Singapore
Sri Lanka
Turkey

AFRICA

Egypt
Ghana
Kenya
Liberia
Malawi
Sierra Leone
South Africa
Zambia

NORTH AMERICA

USA [New York, Detroit, Mississippi, Los Angeles, New Orleans, Colorado]
Mexico
Canada

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina
Brazil
Chile
Colombia
Ecuador

EUROPE

Austria
Denmark
France
Greece
Germany
Netherlands
Norway

Spain
Sweden
Switzerland
United Kingdom

OCEANIA

Papua New Guinea
Australia

¹ Beijing, China; Mumbai, India; Amman, Jordan; Paris, France; Nairobi, Kenya; Istanbul, Turkey; Santiago, Chile; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH



GLOBAL GOVERNANCE OF THE INTIMATE, RELIGION AND THE GLOBAL FRAMING OF GENDER VIOLENCE

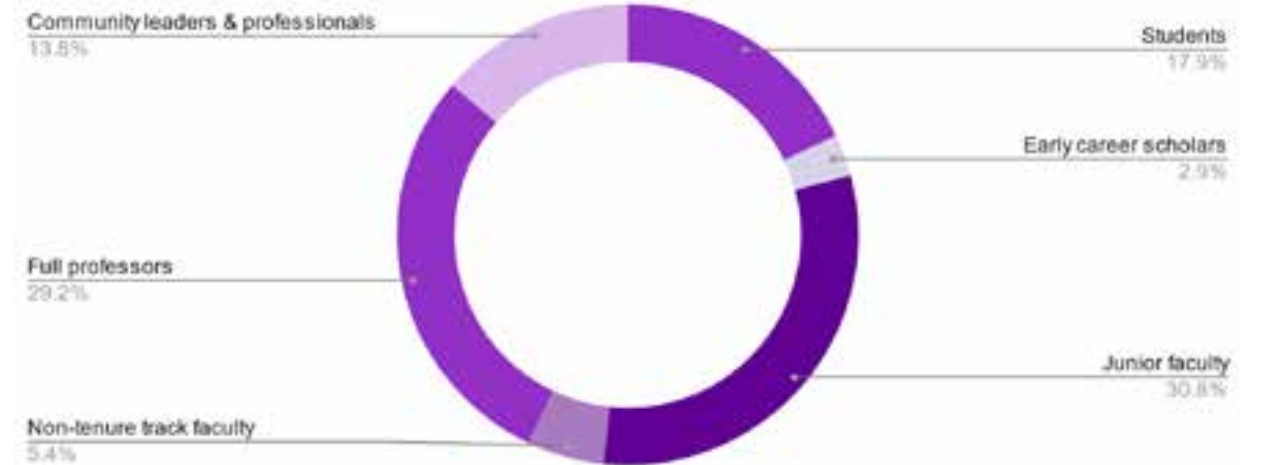
CSSD's working groups tackle some of the most urgent challenges of our times: climate change, migration and displacement, the rights of minority women, religious freedoms, the social impact of new technologies, LGBT+ politics, economic crises, and public health challenges. Working groups focus on how each issue can be better understood in terms of existing forms of social inequality to help lead global conversations on effectively addressing these pressing issues.

Since its founding as an interdisciplinary advanced research center based in Arts and Sciences, CSSD has evolved to encourage cross-disciplinary and cross-school collaborations. Our projects have connected the humanities, social sciences, the arts, law and human rights, public health, international relations, and architecture.

CSSD encourages inclusive engagements with others and openness to diverse methods in approaching topics. The long-term working group model cultivates depth of relationships and, through its international partners, sensitivity to contexts and perspectives.

BROAD INTELLECTUAL EXCHANGE

Working Group Members (AY 2022-2023)



Working groups provide opportunities for intellectual exchange among scholars located in diverse institutional settings across different stages of their careers. Approximately 20% of this year's working group participants were students; 36% were non-tenured faculty, 29% were tenured faculty or emerita, and 14% were professionals, community leaders, and administrators with a grounded knowledge of the subjects of discussion.



REFRAMING GENDERED VIOLENCE WORKSHOP PLANNING MEETING

FOURTH PURPOSE

Social Engagement Projects build on the work of former CSSD groups and align with Columbia University's Fourth Purpose "to extend Columbia's abilities to bring the extraordinary knowledge and capacities of the University in tandem with the wider academic community and actors beyond the campus to more effectively address pressing human problems."



ALEX FERRO, MEMÓRIAS E SABERES PODCAST LAUNCH



QUEER AQUI: TOGETHER IN HARD TIMES. IMAGE BY FABIO CORDEIRO

2022-2023 EVENTS

June 2022

27 Critical Menstruation Studies: Strengthening Interdisciplinary Research in India

July 2022

14 Menstruation, Health, and the Law

September 2022

21 Panel Discussion: "Sex Is As Sex Does" by Paisley Currah

27 Chronic Life: Can We Go the Distance With the Virus?

29 Insurgent Domesticities Writing Retreat

October 2022

14 Prison Education and Social Justice Curricula Workshop

25 The Queerness of Home

November 2022

9 Colloquium: On Learning to Heal, or What Medicine Doesn't Know

10 "Covid: What Now?"

16 Website as Archive for the Public Humanities: A Virtual Workshop

17 Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration launch

18 Educational Programs in Rikers

December 2022

1 Revisioning and Unsettling Colonial Enclosure, Elaine Combs-Schilling Memorial Lecture

2 Iberian Moments I: Race/Caste in India and the Americas

February 2023

10 Graduate Students in Prison Education

17 Lila Abu-Lughod, The Cunning of Gender Violence Webinar, Keynote Address

17 *Together, Not Alone* Premiere

March 2023

8 "What do we talk about when we talk about extractivism?"

10 Concept Histories of Settlement Workshop

18 *Together, Not Alone* screening and roundtable discussion

19 Screening: *Together, Not Alone* and other community-made COVID19 pandemic films

CSSD COSPONSOR

WOMEN CREATING CHANGE

IMAGINING JUSTICE

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

20 Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

24 An Afternoon with Judith Butler: On the Pandemic and Our Shared World

April 2023

5 "Searching for Words: Becoming Mixed-Race, Black, and Swedish"

5 "Scarcity" Colloquium

6 Gardens of Pleasure

7 Love in the Time of Hypercapitalism

11 Spatial Storytelling: Boats, Beaches, and Bairros

12 What We COULD Do: The Zip Code Memory Project in Conversation with Related Pandemic Initiatives

17 Resources for Research on Menstrual Health: Proposal Writing, Research Design, Funding Access

19 Unsilencing Slavery: A Celebration of Celia E. Naylor's New Book

21 Addressing Trauma in the Classroom

21-22 Iberian Moments II: Race/Caste in India and the Americas

27 Putting Race to Work: Neoliberal Development in the US Virgin Islands

27-28 Refugee Cities: A Symposium on the Urban Dimensions of Forced Displacement

27-28 Feminist Intersectional Science and Technology Studies [F/ISTS] Conference

May 2023

1 Cash as Technology of Motherhood: Findings from a Clinical Trial of Poverty Reduction

3 From Cynegetic Power to Cryopolitics: Hypotheses on the Biopolitics of Virus Hunters

8-9 Conception and Its Discontents Symposium


17 "Another Dream of a Common Language: Imagining Black Europe

23 Human Rights in the Menstrual Movement: Reductionism and Renewed Potential from Below

25 Queer Aqui: Together in Hard Times

SOCIAL MEDIA

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 @socialdifference.columbia

 @centerforthestudyofsociald2177

CSSD COSPONSOR

WOMEN CREATING CHANGE

IMAGINING JUSTICE

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

WOMEN CREATING CHANGE

Women Creating Change, celebrating its ninth year in 2022, engages distinguished feminist scholars from diverse fields throughout Columbia University. With project partnerships across departments and schools, WCC focuses on contemporary global problems affecting women and on the roles women play in addressing these problems.



ACTIVE WORKING GROUPS IN 2022-23:

- a) [Menstrual Health & Gender Justice](#)
- b) [Geographies of Injustice: Gender and the City](#)
- c) [Transnational Black Feminisms](#)
- d) [Motherhood and Technology](#)
- e) [Insurgent Domesticities](#)
- f) [Afro-Nordic Feminisms](#)



WOMEN CREATING CHANGE

a) MENSTRUAL HEALTH & GENDER JUSTICE



PHOTO COURTESY OF JEN LEWIS, "THE CRIMSON WAVE"

The [Menstrual Health and Gender Justice](#) working group seeks to further the nascent field of menstrual studies. This group puts particular emphasis on critically evaluating the current state of research, with an interest in examining whose voices are being represented in the field, which actors shape the dominant narrative, whose voices are marginalized, what the gaps are, and how interdisciplinary collaboration might help remedy some of these gaps.

The field is rich with questions: How do women and girls decide which menstrual care practices to adopt? How do girls experience menarche, how

do women experience menopause, and what shapes these experiences? How do social media, magazines, and social enterprises influence the discourse on menstruation? What are the implications of the recent case supported by the ACLU in which a woman claims to have been fired for leaking menstrual blood at work? Do recent policy developments address the needs of all menstruators, including the most marginalized? What is the role of development agencies and philanthropists in supporting menstrual hygiene management? What kind of interventions do they support, and with which results? To what extent does language –

menstrual health or menstrual hygiene management – matter? What cultural and religious practices exist around menstruation, and how do they relate to gender equality?

Attention to menstrual issues across the lifespan surfaces broader societal issues and tensions, including gender inequality, practices and discourses of embodiment, processes of radicalization and commodification, and emergent technologies. From the perspective of gender equality, menstruation is a fascinating subject of study as it combines various facets, including biological processes, deeply rooted stereotypes and social norms, and associated cultural and religious practices. Menstruation has become

a category of analysis as a multi-dimensional transdisciplinary subject of inquiry and advocacy. Against this background, this working group capitalizes on the presence of faculty across different departments interested in menstruation, and it provides a forum for encouraging individual and collaborative research that crosses disciplinary boundaries.

DIRECTORS



INGA WINKLER

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Susanne Prochazka, Human Rights, Columbia University

Kae Schipper, Human Rights, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

1. Critical Menstruation Studies: Strengthening Interdisciplinary Research in India

JUNE 27, 2022, COLUMBIA GLOBAL CENTERS | MUMBAI



CRITICAL MENSTRUATION STUDIES, AT MUMBAI GLOBAL CENTER

CGC | Mumbai organized a workshop on “Critical Menstruation Studies: Strengthening Interdisciplinary Research” in Mumbai, India, with faculty and scholars from Mumbai and CSSD Co-Director of Menstrual Health Professor Inga Winkler.

PRESENTERS: Inga Winkler, Central European University; Chris Bobel, University of Massachusetts Boston

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2022/6/27/columbia-global-center-in-mumbai-india-hosts-cssd-working-group-menstrual-health-and-gender-justice>

2. Menstruation, Health, and the Law

JULY 14, 2022, LAW AND SOCIETY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONFERENCE, LISBON



This panel discusses how menstruation is used in the law to subordinate individuals, and how similar subordination is reproduced in the public child welfare system. Papers address the relationship of menstrual surveillance and colonialism, structural racism, and structural regulation of reproduction, which have all included surveillance historically; the ways that menstrual discrimination claims are brought under existing international workplace, antitrust, discrimination, laws; and the potential for the menstrual movement of using human rights notions of dignity, agency, equality, and accountability; how the logic of incarceration and Kercheval spaces extends to the family regulation system.

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2022/7/14/menstruation-health-and-the-law>

3. Resources for Research on Menstrual Health: Proposal Writing, Research Design, Funding Access

APRIL 17, 2023, COLUMBIA GLOBAL CENTERS | MUMBAI

As part of its Period of Life: Improving Menstrual Health and Knowledge in India project, Columbia Global Centers | Mumbai is organizing a virtual workshop with researchers in the field of menstrual health to discuss strategies and best practices for strengthening research capacities and mitigating funding challenges. The workshop will provide insights on the funding landscape for menstrual research, and offer recommendations to bridge the gap between research, policy and programs.

PRESENTERS: Inga Winkler, Central European University; M. Sivakami, Tata Institute of Social Sciences; Suneeta Krishnan, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's India Country Office

MODERATOR: Dr. Ravina Aggarwal, Columbia Global Centers | Mumbai

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2023/4/17/resources-for-research-on-menstrual-health-proposal-writing-research-design-funding-access>

4. Human Rights in the Menstrual Movement: Reductionism and Renewed Potential from Below

MAY 23, 2023, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Menstruation matters, and it matters for the realization of human rights. Menstrual stigma has profound effects on the rights to health, education, work, and participation in public life, among others. As menstruation is gaining increasing attention, many organizations have adopted the framing of human rights, which holds the promise of addressing menstrual stigma. Dr Winkler's presentation critically assesses the menstrual movement and its employment of human rights, examining the promises, pitfalls, and renewed potential of human rights.

PRESENTERS: Inga Winkler, Central European University; Shreya Atrey, University of Oxford

DISCUSSANT: Chelsea Wallis, University of Oxford

<https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/content/event/human-rights-menstrual-movement-reductionism-and-renewed-potential-below>

PUBLICATIONS

MANstruation: A cyberethnography of linguistic strategies of trans and nonbinary menstruators.

Rowena Kosher, Lauren Houghton, Inga Winkler.

Social Science & Medicine, 2023, 115974

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2023.115974>

The persistent power of stigma: A critical review of policy initiatives to break the menstrual silence and advance menstrual literacy.

Olson MM, Alhelou N, Kavattur PS, Rountree L, Winkler IT.

PLOS Glob Public Health. 2022 Jul 14;2(7):e0000070. doi: 10.1371/journal.pgph.0000070.

eCollection 2022.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36962272/>

'We like things tangible:' A critical analysis of menstrual hygiene and health policy-making in India, Kenya, Senegal and the United States.

Alhelou N, Kavattur PS, Rountree L, Winkler IT.

Glob Public Health. 2022 Nov;17(11):2690-2703.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34882519/>

Menstruation, Myopia, and Marginalization: Advancing Menstrual Policies to "Keep Girls in School" at the Risk of Exacerbating Inequalities.

Alhelou N, Kavattur PS, Olson MM, Rountree L, Winkler IT.

Health Hum Rights. 2022 Dec;24(2):13-28.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36579303/>

The messiness of the menstruator: assessing personas and functionalities of menstrual tracking apps.

Pichon A, Jackman KB, Winkler IT, Bobel C, Elhadad N.

Journal of the American Medical Informatics Association 2022 Jan 12;29(2):385-399.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34613388/>

'You don't just do it because someone else said so': Menstrual practices and women's agency in the Hindu diaspora of Trinidad.

Maharaj, Trisha, and Inga T. Winkler.

Culture, Health & Sexuality 24, no. 6 (2022): 827-841.

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33666533/>

b) GEOGRAPHIES OF INJUSTICE: GENDER AND THE CITY

Geographies of Injustice: Gender and the City

is a working group committed to exploring the question of subaltern urbanism and aesthetics from an explicitly South-South perspective by bringing urban studies into conversation with studies of social difference, inequality, and cultural production. It specifically focuses on representation and decolonization as they relate to subaltern urban architectural and infrastructural forms. We are particularly keen to bring studies of planning and built form into conversation with concerns about the particular vulnerabilities that minority communities face in navigating situations of urban marginalization.

The "Reconstructing Memory in Rio de Janeiro's Favelas and Mumbai's Zhopdis" project seeks to develop a template for addressing spatial politics

through engagements with historical memory, music, performance, and creative survival strategies of subaltern communities. Our working group draws on the convergent yet distinct urban trajectories of Bombay/Mumbai and Rio de Janeiro, cities associated with the slum and the favela, respectively, as connected sites from which to better apprehend today's global housing crisis. We work with community museums and grassroots organizations to develop solutions that will influence policy and sustainable urban planning. We approach self-housing settlements in Rio de Janeiro and Mumbai through connected histories of the Global South, where cheap labor, urban conflict, and precarious living conditions define the social life of peripheral capitalism.

DIRECTORS



ANUPAMA RAO

Associate Professor of History, Barnard College, and Associate Director of the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, Columbia University



ANA PAULINA LEE

Assistant Professor of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Ana Luiza de Abreu Claudio, Ph.D. student, Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University

Isabella Maganda, Undergraduate student, Barnard College

1. Iberian Moments: Race/Caste in India and The Americas

DECEMBER 2, 2022, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

APRIL 21-22, 2023, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Iberian Moments, a workshop and symposium series organized by the Geographies of Injustice working group, brings together studies of the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean worlds in a distinctive comparative frame. Each convening explores (1) how Luso-Hispanic trade relations, settlements, and intimacies constituted a critical aspect of Spanish and Portuguese colonial expansion to the Americas, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and coastal Africa, (2) how these processes relate to the trade in human chattel and new extractive economies, and (3) how these relationships continue to shape identities, social distinctions, histories of capitalism, and aesthetic production today.

PRESENTERS: Nira Wikramasinghe, Leiden University; Shobana Shankar, Stony Brook University; Herman Bennett, CUNY Graduate Center; Chris Brown, Columbia University; Chinnaiah Jangam, Carleton University; Isadora Lins França, University of Campinas; Diana Kim, Georgetown University; Kenneth David Jackson, Yale University; Amy Chazkel, Columbia University; Henrique Espada, UFSC; Rochelle Pinto; Stuart McManus, Chinese University of Hong Kong; Ananya Chakravarti, Georgetown University; Isabella Dias, Columbia University

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2022/12/2/iberian-moments-racecaste-in-india-and-the-americas>



2. Spoken Cinema: Voices, Sounds & Image, Artist Talk and Workshop

APRIL 6-7, 2023

Gardens of Pleasure, April 6, 2023

Love in the Time of Hypercapitalism, April 7, 2023



Paromita Vohra is a filmmaker and writer who works with a range of forms, including film, comics, digital media, installation art, and writing to explore themes of feminism, desire, sexuality, and popular culture. Time Out Mumbai listed her as one of the 10 artists who changed the way Indians watch films. In 2015, she founded Agents of Ishq, a critically acclaimed digital platform that transformed conversations on sex, love, and desire for young Indians. Vohra elaborated on themes of feminism and desire present in her work in South Asia and hosted a workshop on Agents of Ishq.

SPEAKER: Paromita Vohra, filmmaker and writer

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2023/4/7/spoken-cinema-voices-sounds-amp-images-workshop>

c) TRANSNATIONAL BLACK FEMINISMS



PHOTO COURTESY OF MATT HARVEY

The [Transnational Black Feminisms](#) working group aims to think about how transnational Black feminisms can move us beyond survivability and demands for recognition and instead generate alternative frames and understandings around belonging, community, justice, and equity. Black feminism has, by necessity, emerged in tandem with political mobilizations: the struggle against slavery and colonialism; demands for government assistance or social services; and opposition to sexual or state violence, including Black Lives Matter. Such struggles have created the conditions of possibility for nurturing a politics of radical social transformation. They have also raised broader, foundational questions about the relationship between theory and praxis, lived experiences, and the articulation of expansive visions of social change.

We have named this initiative transnational Black feminisms—with transnationalism as a modifier—because it foregrounds the long history of Black feminist praxis and theorization, dating back to the 19th century. “Black feminisms” also reflects our understanding of the importance of racial politics in the development of capitalism and global politics—what Cedric Robinson called “racial capitalism”—as well as our goal of integrating a gendered analysis into the concept of racial capitalism. In an era of heightened anti-Black racism—which manifests as systematic police violence, webs of carcerality, discourses of cultural depravity, ghettoization, gentrification, and disposability—it is essential to center a politics of blackness through a feminist, queer, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperial lens, as an important vector for the political and social possibilities of imagining and working towards the realization of justice.

In addition, problematic historical and contemporary stagings of the history of feminism in the U.S. position Black women as marginal to a more significant, mainstream white feminist movement, circumscribe them to a limited time frame and continue the erasure of a long history of a Black feminist politic that was diasporic, imaginative, and radical in both theory and praxis. We hope to explore the historic and ongoing intellectual engagements between Black feminism, transnational feminism, queer politics, anti-imperialism, and anti-capitalism—all of which Black feminisms speak to through Black women's analyses of intersecting oppressions, the simultaneity of oppression, and strategies for reimagining freedom.

DIRECTORS



TAMI NAVARRO

Assistant Professor of Africana Studies, Drew University



PREMILLA NADASEN

Professor of History, Barnard College

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Anna Reumert](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology, Columbia University

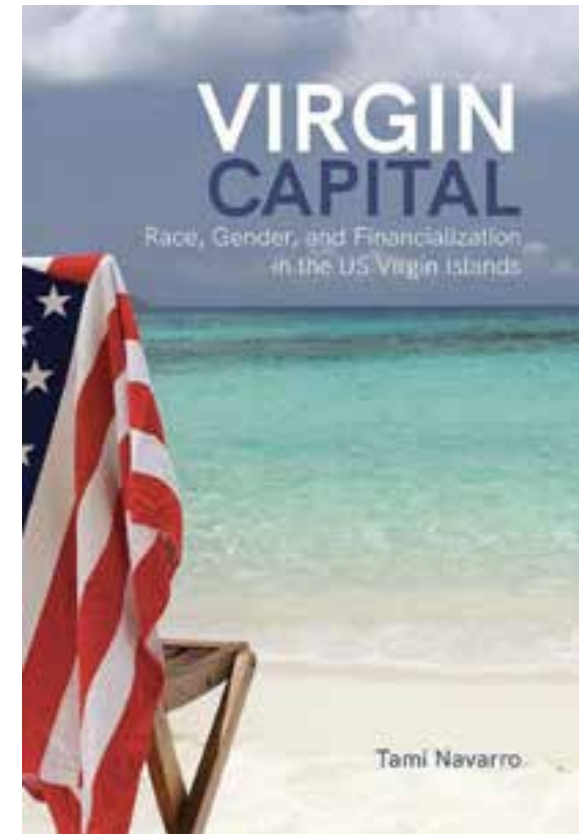
We are particularly interested in charting, exploring, and interrogating the nuances and intricacies of transnational Black feminisms across time and space. Black feminist theoretical lenses have evolved out of internationalist and oppositional engagements throughout the Caribbean, Africa, South America, and Europe. This expansive global view will enable us to assess the coherence and/or visibility of a transnational Black feminist politic, as well as the convergences and divergences, overlaps and contradictions, and synergistic associations among Black feminism, Indigenous feminism, Latinx feminism, and Asian feminism.

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

1. Putting Race to Work: Neoliberal Development in the US Virgin Islands

APRIL 27, 2023



An engaging conversation between Tami Navarro and Natasha Lightfoot on Navarro's book *Virgin Capital: Race, Gender, and Financialization in the US Virgin Islands*, which explores racial capitalism and the failures of neoliberal development in the Caribbean and beyond. With their shared intellectual engagement in the region, this conversation touched on the past, present, and possible futures of islands in the Caribbean.

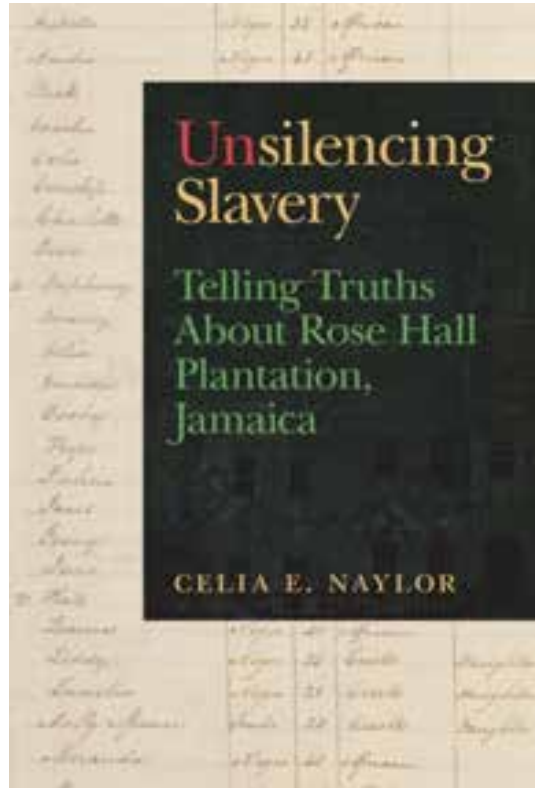
SPEAKER: Tami Navarro, Pan-African Studies, Drew University

DISCUSSANT: Natasha Lightfoot, History, Columbia University

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCoYMpMMYH8>

2. *Unsilencing Slavery:* A Celebration of Celia E. Naylor's New Book

APRIL 19, 2023



Celia E. Naylor (Professor of Africana Studies and History, Barnard College) joined by Natasha Lightfoot (Associate Professor of History, Columbia University) to discuss Naylor's new book, *Unsilencing Slavery: Telling Truths about Rose Hall Plantation, Jamaica*.

SPEAKER: Celia E. Naylor, Africana Studies and History, Barnard College

DISCUSSANT: Natasha Lightfoot, History, Columbia University

<https://bcw.barnard.edu/event/unsilencing-slavery-a-celebration-of-celia-e-naylors-new-book/>

PODCASTS

Transnational Black Feminisms

PUBLICATIONS

“Community Support Persons and Mitigating Obstetric Racism During Childbirth”

Dána-Ain Davis, Karen A. Scott, Elle Lett, Marie-Fatima Hyacinthe
Annals of Family Medicine, 2023 May-Jun; 21(3): 227–233.

<https://doi.org/10.1370%2Fafm.2958>

“The Unbearable Whiteness of Citational Practice in US Medical Anthropology”

Dána-Ain Davis, Sameena Mulla

Medical anthropology quarterly 04/17/2023

<https://doi.org/10.1111/maq.12761>

The Flame Within: Iranian Revolutionaries in the United States

Manijeh Moradian

Durham: Duke University Press, 2022.

“‘So Far to Leeward’: Eliza Moore’s Fugitive Cosmopolitan Routes to Freedom in the Nineteenth-Century Caribbean”

Natasha Lightfoot

The William and Mary Quarterly, vol. 79 no. 1, 2022, p. 61-88.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/wmq.2022.0012>

“The Labor of Love: Interview with Premilla Nadasen”

Throughline, NPR, June 22, 2023.

<https://www.npr.org/2023/06/21/1183467075/the-labor-of-love>

“Dobbs and the Politics of Reproduction”

Premilla Nadasen

Women's Studies Quarterly, vol. 50 no. 3, 2022, p. 325-331.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/wsqr.2022.0058>

“Hell, Yes, We Are Subversive”

Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor

New York Review of Books, September 22, 2022

<https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2022/09/22/hell-yes-we-are-subversive-angela-davis/>

“Epistemic Agitations and Pedagogies for Justice: A Conversation around Hungry Translations: Relearning the World through Radical Vulnerability”

Emek Ergun, Nida Sajid, Keisha-Khan Perry, Sirisha Naidu, AnaLouise Keating, Sangeeta Kamat, and Richa Nagar

Feminist Studies, vol. 48 no. 1, 2022, p. 146-175.

<https://doi.org/10.1353/fem.2022.0009>

d) MOTHERHOOD AND TECHNOLOGY



SKYE SAVAGE, "CONCEPTION AND ITS DISCONTENTS" SYMPOSIUM.

The [Motherhood and Technology](#) working group explores how technological innovations have radically transformed the biological and social experience of motherhood in recent decades. Advances in genomic and reproductive care, the circulation of novel kinship structures, the entrenchment of existing global networks of power and privilege, and the politics of contested bodily sites mark this emerging constellation. Technological progress and development are often seen as the driver of these changes, but the revolution in motherhood is as much a product of changes in other domains: ethics, social structures, aesthetics, and lived experiences. Our group is motivated to understand how medical technologies have changed—and have been changed by—the experience of motherhood in a global context.

The field is rich with paradoxes. Cryogenic technologies, such as egg freezing and embryo storage, have afforded women new freedoms in choosing when to become mothers, yet the

changing demographics of motherhood also raise troubling questions about the pressures of capitalism and the extension of work life. Surrogacy has become a mainstream technology that affords biological parenthood to couples who might not otherwise have a child, yet the technology operates in a financial market that creates sharp global inequalities, with the burden of surrogacy often taken on by women of color in the developing world. Laboratory and biotechnical developments have produced unprecedented means to edit genetic material, but the unexamined use of new technologies (such as CRISPR) has led to ethical violations around the world. Meanwhile, advanced reproductive technologies have created new social forms that effectively evolve cultural norms, including new social and legal categories of parent and family – yet such technologies also reproduce market pressures and heteronormative family structures, perhaps vitiating counter-cultural practices. These

and other dilemmas inform our group's work in exploring and informing scholarship around motherhood and technology.

Foremost to our exploration is our strong conviction that technology is not neutral. Rather, we believe (following Heidegger) that technology operates as a form of “un-concealment” that reveals the “forcing into being” of culture. Thus, we are particularly interested in how the production of and access to such first-world biomedical technologies of motherhood both index and create broader cultural trends across what Arlie Hochschild has called “global care chains,” in which the burden of care is borne disproportionately by women of color and women in the developing world. We are motivated, then, to consider how technologies of motherhood operate among poor and working-class women, both internationally and within the first world. While India has emerged as a global nexus of commercial surrogacy, in New York City and at the US southern border alike, technologies controlling motherhood, including monitoring technology, are used to regulate incarcerated and paroled

women. Fundamental to our exploration is our conviction that these very different forms of technological intervention are working together to produce a global reimagining of motherhood.

As we explore these questions, we are guided by the interdisciplinary approach of the medical humanities. Medical humanities offer both a set of methodological approaches to address such challenges and a broad umbrella under which to study the mutual influences of medico-scientific ideas and cultural/aesthetic practices. Medicine, from intimate care to public health policymaking, has much to contribute to a humanistic understanding of the social role of motherhood; meanwhile, approaches that emerge from a humanistic framework can enrich those coming from the physician's black bag. The expansive view of the medical humanities will allow the group to develop a scholarly intervention into debates around technology and motherhood while also producing a cultural artifact that narrativizes these dilemmas, and their solutions, for the public.

DIRECTORS



ARDEN A. HEGELE

Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature



RISHI K. GOYAL

Associate Professor, Emergency Medicine, and Director, Medical Humanities Major

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Skye Shannon Savage](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Germanic Languages, Columbia University

1. “Conception and its Discontents” Symposium

MAY 8-9, 2023, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

“Conception and Its Discontents,” a two-day conference organized by the Motherhood and Technology group, explored the cultural, philosophical, legal, and political stakes of conception in both historical and contemporary contexts. A critical intervention into the field of reproductive technologies and health, the conference featured 30 papers from experts in reproductive health, law, and ethics. Presenters discussed such topics as CRISPR and gene editing, ART, surrogacy laws, philosophical understandings of conception and motherhood, IUDs, abortion laws, ultrasonography, disability, pregnancy testing, and racialized discourses on conception.

ORGANIZERS: Arden Hegele and Rishi Goyal

SPONSORS: CSSD; Heyman Center for the Humanities

PRESENTERS: Wendy Chavkin, Mailman School of Public Health; Linda Kahn, NYU School of Medicine; Judy Norsigian, Our Bodies Ourselves Today; Alison Motluk, freelance journalist; Yasmine Ergas, Columbia University; Stefanie Carsley, University of Ottawa; Vanessa Gruben, University of Ottawa; Alana Cattapan, University of Waterloo; Stefanie Carsley, University of Ottawa; Alana Cattapan, University of Waterloo; Vanessa Gruben, University of Ottawa; Kathleen Hammond, Toronto Metropolitan University; Kathleen Hammond, Toronto Metropolitan University; Alana Cattapan, University of Waterloo; Chas Firestone East, Columbia University; Mansi Garneni, Columbia University; Niyati Shenoy, Columbia University; Lilith Todd, Columbia University; Rosemary O’Mahony, Columbia University; Jessica Gantt-Shafer, University of Missouri; Rose Rowson, Brown University; Stefanie Sobelle, Gettysburg College; Karen Weingarten, Queens College | CUNY; Shana Riethof, University of Liège; Megan Glassman, University of Utah; Sabina Dosani, University of East Anglia; Jess Gallagher, Columbia University; Diana Novaceanu, University of Bucharest; Laura Crook, UNC-Chapel Hill; George Estreich, Oregon State University; Hannah Zeavin, (Indiana University; Jennifer Luong, University of Toronto; Rachel Adams, Columbia University; Helen Zhao, Columbia University; Skye Savage, Columbia University; Katherine Bergevin, Columbia University; Aya Labanieh, Columbia University

PANEL CHAIRS/MODERATORS: Nancy Reame, Arden Hegele, and Rishi Goyal, Columbia University

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2023/5/8/two-day-conference-conception-and-its-discontents-public-humanities-explorations-in-the-medical-humanities>



2. Cash as Technology of Motherhood: Findings from a Clinical Trial of Poverty Reduction

MAY 1, 2023



IMAGE CREDIT: WWW.RAISIN.CO.UK

In her talk, "Baby's First Years: A Clinical Trial of Poverty Reduction," senior author of the study and neuroscientist Professor Kimberly Noble will discuss Baby's First Years' recent findings and their implications both for science and social policy. Professor Jane Waldfogel, Professor for the Prevention of Children's and Youth Problems at the Columbia University School of Social Work and co-Director of the Columbia Population Research Center, will give comments.

SPEAKER: Kimberly Noble, Columbia University; Jane Waldfogel, Columbia University School of Social Work and Columbia Population Research Center; Helen Zhao, PhD Candidate, Columbia University

<https://sofheyman.org/events/cash-as-technology-of-motherhood-findings-from-a-clinical-trial-of-poverty-reduction>

PUBLICATIONS

Culture and Medicine: Critical Readings in the Health and Medical Humanities

Rishi Goyal and Arden Hegele

Bloomsbury Press, 2022

<https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/culture-and-medicine-9781350248618/>

"Like today, 18th-century laws about pregnancy aimed to control women"

Katherine Bergevin

Washington Post Op. Ed, 5/17/23

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/made-by-history/2023/05/17/like-today-18th-century-laws-about-pregnancy-aimed-control-women/>

"Can the Subaltern Laugh? Humour, Translatability, and the Inequalities of World Literature"

Aya Labanieh

Journal of Postcolonial Writing, December 2022

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17449855.2022.2124882>

I Cannot Control Everything Forever: A Memoir of Motherhood, Science, and Art

Emily Bloom (Sarah Lawrence College)

St. Martin's Publishing Group, 2024

<https://www.emilycbloom.com/books>

e) INSURGENT DOMESTICITIES



PHOTO COURTESY OF ANOORADHA IYER SIDDIQI

These shelter prototypes were designed and built as part of an international humanitarian initiative to expand a refugee settlement. Before the camp was officially populated, they were among the structures the police used to enable clandestine dwelling and sex work. How do we understand the homemaking of coercion and collaboration? How do we think with the paradoxes of insurgent domesticities?

'Home' has been used as a boundary-forming device to identify, homogenize, normalize, and exclude. Composed of family and nation, and attendant notions of their sanctity, 'home' is no longer open to reinterpretation and reconfiguration; it is pressured as a lived space. [Insurgent Domesticities](#) brings into focus the insurgent environments, objects, and practices that make up the maintenance, creation, labor, and intimacies of home. Our collective investigates the more processual aspects of domesticity to

interrogate the politics of 'home' through histories of solidarity, disobedience, stealth, and militancy, from the scale of the clothesline to that of the state.

The Insurgent Domesticities working group is committed to liberatory historiographical approaches and scholarly caregiving, which are orientations that transcend ideological frames deploying 'domesticity' to organize, limit, or subjugate life, time, people, and places,

from the non-male figure to the non-capitalistic landscape. It draws on practices that emerge from and constitute interiority, which transform the figurations, materiality, and narrations of 'home' and 'domesticity' within the present worldwide protectionist climate, in which 'home' is still a fiercely pursued, maintained, and guarded space. Dissident domesticities, bound up in questions of governance, global economies, (geo)political borders, war, labor, and ecological crisis, call for emancipating, subversive, and collaborative research approaches that straddle or sit between territories, institutions, states, and national space. Through insurgent domesticities of laundry, gardens, cats, kitchens, the home office, the migrant camp, the kindergarten, the settlement, the housing block, the border wall, the reserve, or the reservation, we center histories of the active construction of home through occupancy, the making of new territories by transgressing boundaries, and the transcending or transforming of oppressive domestic structures.

Insurgent Domesticities indexes and reveals inequalities and injustices cohering social, cultural, and political aspects of domesticity. Because domesticity is involved in the production of identity, security, comfort, and belonging, as well as strategies necessary to maintain the status quo, it serves as a double-edged tool that can be confining or emancipatory in its different guises. To combat the pliancy of its shapeshifting between safeguarding and critiquing notions of family and nation, migration and home, our collective proposes the fundamental understanding that domesticity is a politicized field of many interdependencies, from the sociospatial to the material and aesthetic, which demand regular negotiation and theorization.

DIRECTORS



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NEFERTI X. M. TADIAR

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MANAGING DIRECTOR

[Aastha D.](#), Independent scholar, Founding Editor of [ProseTERITY](#)

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS

[Akira Drake Rodriguez](#), Assistant Professor, Stuart Weitzman School of Design and School of Social Policy and Practice, University of Pennsylvania

[Ana Gisele Ozaki](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Architecture and Urban Development, Cornell University

[Barbara Penner](#), Professor, Architecture, University College London

[Delia Duong Ba Wendel](#), Assistant Professor, Urban Studies, the School of Architecture and Planning, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

[Garnette Oluoch-Olunya](#), Adjunct Lecturer, Literature, St. Paul's University, Kenya

[Lilian Chee](#), Associate Professor, Architecture, the National University of Singapore

[S.E. Eisterer](#), Assistant Professor, Architectural History and Theory, University of Pennsylvania

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

1. Writing Retreat

SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

Beginning in September 2022, Insurgent Domesticities working group directors began meeting to finalize plans for an annual writing retreat dedicated to developing the manuscript for an edited volume on “insurgent domesticities.” Participants in Philadelphia, London, Nairobi, and Singapore collaborated over the two-day retreat. Graduate students, junior faculty, and senior faculty worked together to produce a co-written introduction and engaged in intensive discussion and revision of each other’s work. An editorial board of 15 faculty and students, in addition to managing editor Aastha Deshpande, has since shaped the collective manuscript for submission to a publisher in October 2023.

EDITORIAL BOARD: Lilian Chee; S.E. Eisterer; Annapurna Garimella; Hollyamber Kennedy; Lydia Muthuma; Garnette Oluoch-Olunya; Ana Ozaki; Barbara Penner; Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi; Iulia Statica; Neferti Tadiar; Madiha Tahir; Rishav Thakur; Delia Wendel; and Sarover Zaidi.



ANOORADHA IYER SIDDIQI, EPISTEMIC GARDENS

2. The Queerness of Home

OCTOBER 25, 2022

Drawing on research from his new book, *The Queerness of Home: Gender, Sexuality, and the Politics of Domesticity After World II* (University of Chicago Press, 2021), Vider will trace the history of two radical experiments of the 1970s—Phyllis Birkby’s lesbian architecture project and Survival House, an early group home for queer and trans homeless youth—to reconsider the place of domestic practices, spaces, and archives in LGBTQ history. While scholars in queer studies have largely emphasized public and commercial spaces as the primary sites of LGBTQ politics and community, Vider will argue that the intimacy of home space has been equally crucial to the history of postwar LGBTQ life.

SPEAKERS: S.E. Eisterer, Princeton University; Stephen Vider, Cornell University

ORGANIZER: Graduate Program in Media+ Modernity and Princeton University

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/news/2022/11/4/s63e4ouoo9bw13jjuo8l6gcwkl4bw>

3. Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration

NOVEMBER 17, 2022- Launch

MARCH 20, 2023

The editors and authors of *Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration* marked and celebrated the launch of this collection of articles in three open-access online journals: ABE Journal-Architecture beyond Europe, Canadian Centre for Architecture/CCA and Aggregate. *Feminist Architectural Histories of Migration* takes migration as a fundamental source of knowledge of the built environment, situating it as the central concept, historical event and method behind a set of feminist narratives of constructed environments and spatial and material practices. The initiators and editors of the project, members of the publishing teams, and some of its authors discussed co-creating the project and the prospects it offered, celebrating collaborations.

SPEAKERS: Rachel Lee, Delft University of Technology; Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Barnard College; Juan Du, University of Toronto; Alexandra Pereira-Edwards, Canadian Centre for Architecture; Armaghan Ziaee, California State University San Marcos; Pamela Karimi, University of Massachusetts Dartmouth; Meredith TenHoor, Pratt Institute

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/news/2022/10/17/anooradha-siddiqi-will-be-participating-in-a-launch-of-the-essay-collection-feminist-architectural-histories-of-migration>

4. Concept Histories of Settlement Workshop

MARCH 10, 2023, ETH ZÜRICH DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE



Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Hollyamber Kennedy, and S.E. Eisterer from the Insurgent Domesticities working group participated in the Concept Histories of Settlement workshop at ETH Zurich's Department of Architecture on March 10, 2023. The workshop examined how displacement and migration shaped settlement in modernity's constructed environments in the colonized world.

SPEAKERS: Hollyamber Kennedy, ETH Zurich; Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Barnard College; Debjani Bhattacharyya, University of Zurich; Manuel Schwartzberg Carrió, University of California San Diego; Nitin Bathla, ETH Zurich; Rafico Ruiz, Canadian Center for Architecture; S.E. Eisterer, Princeton University

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/news/2023/3/24/insurgent-domesticities-working-group-participated-in-the-concept-histories-of-settlement-workshop-in-switzerland>

5. Spatial Storytelling: Boats, Beaches, and Bairros

APRIL 11, 2023, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Black feminist scholar bell hooks (1952-2021) gave us innumerable conceptual tools to understand the complexities of race, gender, and place. Her critical essay "Homeplace: A Site of Resistance," first published in the 1990 *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*, illustrates how the homeplace can represent spaces of oppression as well as liberation. In this presentation, I narrate stories from coastal cities across the Americas to explore the neighborhoods where the cultural imagination and radical politics flourish even as poor and people of color experience the brutality of white supremacist violence and spatial displacement. In hooks' formulation, the oppressed make home in inhospitable places, resist the gendered racial domination of space, and demand a sense of cultural and political belonging. I tell the stories of how social movement activists fight to keep beachlands as Black homespaces, where they have forged communities and survived amidst the violence for generations.

SPEAKERS: Ana Ozaki, Princeton University; Keisha-Khan Perry, University of Pennsylvania

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/news/2023/4/4/ana-ozaki-in-conversation-at-princeton-spatial-storytelling-boats-beaches-and-bairros>

AWARDS AND HONORS

American Comparative Literature Association's 2022 René Wellek Book Award | Gil Z. Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future* (Duke University Press, 2021)

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

Neferti X.M. Tadiar, [New Books in Critical Theory](#), *Remaindered Life*

Neferti X.M. Tadiar, Joseph Keene Chadwick Lecture at the University of Hawaii

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, [International Womxn's Week Keynote Address](#), Harvard University

Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, Teetzel Lecture at University of Toronto

f) AFRO-NORDIC FEMINISMS



PEXELS, STEIN EGIL LILAND, "DRAMATIC SKY OVER MOUNTAINS"

[Afro-Nordic Feminisms](#) is a Black feminist research and pedagogical project that centers Afro-Nordic identity, culture, social movements, and social justice organizing. This initiative is called Afro/Nordic/Feminisms to reflect our interest in the areas of inquiry and methodologies named by the interplay between the three terms.

Afro-Nordic Studies is, at best, a nascent field and largely unsupported by Nordic universities and academic institutions. "Race" as a category of identity is contested in the region; governments do not collect statistics on racial identity and do not recognize "race" as a category from which to make legal claims for equity and against discrimination. "Ethnicity" often stands in for race, and racial difference is cathected to immigration; this results in the impossibility of Afro-Nordic identity. Vocabularies for discussing race and racialization have had to be borrowed from other languages and

geographies, and Nordic-specific terms are only just now emerging. This structural context has the effect of invisibilizing Afro-Nordic people, who are hypervisible minorities, due to the overwhelming homogeneity and whiteness of the Nordics. Their very presence questions national identity and reveals repressed colonial histories, eugenicist projects, and more contemporary global realities of migration and war. And yet, people of African descent in the Nordics, both native-born and immigrants, are living Black lives that are deeply emplaced in Nordic geographies and histories, as well as connected to other Black communities in Europe, Africa, the Americas, and around the world. Afro-Nordic people and communities are actively creating and assembling archives of their presence and possibility as Nordic citizens and Black people in the diaspora.

Members of the group work on scholarship from across the Nordic countries, are of different generations, have worked inside and outside the academy, and have different disciplinary orientations to the work. As mentioned above, the lack of recognition of race and insufficient vocabulary to talk about race has meant that many

of our Nordic colleagues working in this area have faced difficulties securing material and intellectual support and mentoring. Many live, study, and work in the US. One aim of this group is to create a community of practice and a set of resources for each other and the next generation interested in Afro/Nordic/Feminist studies.

DIRECTORS



MONICA L. MILLER

Ann Whitney Olin Professor of English and Africana Studies, Barnard College



NANA OSEI-KOFI

Professor of Women, Gender, & Sexuality Studies and Director of the Difference, Power, and Discrimination Program, Oregon State University

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

Ayesha Verma, Ph.D. Candidate, English, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

1. Reading and discussion of Anna Adeniji, “Searching for Words: Becoming Mixed-Race, Black, and Swedish”

APRIL 05, 2023, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

2. Reading and discussion of Gloria Wekker: “Another Dream of a Common Language: Imagining Black Europe...”

MAY 17, 2023, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

IMAGINING JUSTICE

IMAGINING JUSTICE brings together scholars, activists, and artists on projects that envision new ways of fighting inequality and promoting gender, racial, economic, and environmental justice in global and domestic contexts.

Active Working Groups in 2022-23:

- a) [Migrant Personhood and Rights: Crises of Recognition](#)
- b) [Black Atlantic Ecologies](#)
- c) [Prison Education and Social Justice](#)
- d) [Refugee Cities: Urban Dimensions of Forced Displacement](#)
- e) [Extractive Media: Infrastructures & Aesthetics of Depletion](#)
- f) [Recovery](#)

New Working Group Launching in 2024:

[Seeds of Diaspora](#)





IMAGINING JUSTICE

a) MIGRANT PERSONHOOD AND RIGHTS: CRISES OF RECOGNITION



PHOTO BY GREG BULLA ON UNSPLASH

How does a nation-state reach the point where it becomes national policy to remove thousands of children from their parents as a deterrent to seeking asylum? How does a nation-state reach the point where it prosecutes individuals for providing water to migrants in a desert? How does a nation-state reach the point that it bans people from entering the country based on their religion?

During his first week in office, Donald Trump issued an executive order that banned foreign nationals from seven majority-Muslim countries from entering the United States. In response, there were spontaneous protests around the country and broad condemnation of the sweeping anti-immigrant nature of the policies. This pattern repeated in the succeeding months, as the executive branch continued to focus on anti-immigrant initiatives, such as family separation on the border and policies limiting the receipt

of public benefits by immigrants. Despite this, large segments of the public remain favorable to immigrants and immigration, and perennial conflicts over immigration policy have increased, even resulting in a 35-day shutdown of the federal government. More than six years later, under different leadership, the political landscape remains fraught and contentious, while the rights of immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers are continually violated.

The [Migrant Personhood and Rights: Crises of Recognition](#) project addresses anti-immigrant sentiments and policies by engaging both academic research and the expertise of community-based migrant advocacy organizations to develop novel questions and approaches that address current

immigration issues. The project will culminate with a series of public interventions that allow academics, activists, artists, and advocates to communicate and cooperate in imagining justice and recognition for migrants.

DIRECTORS



THEA ABU EL-HAJ

Professor in Education and Education Program Director/
Chair, Barnard College



J.C. SALYER

Assistant Professor of Practice in Human Rights and
Anthropology, Barnard College

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Corinne Kentor](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology & Education, Teachers College, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

1) Organizing with and for Newly Arrived Venezuelan Refugees

Nara Milanich and Garnett Russell

2) Organizing Student support for the Internationals Network

Chandler Miranda

3) Youth Educational Experiences Research Project Development

Thea Abu El-Haj, J.C. Salyer, and the Arab American Family Support Center

B) BLACK ATLANTIC ECOLOGIES



PHOTO BY ALYSSA JAMES, MARTINIQUE, 2016

The waters are rising. The earth is warming. Species are perishing. The world is ending. Apocalyptic pronouncements about the refiguring of the Earth are everywhere around us. Now commonplace, predictions and pronouncements about the era that geologists have called the Anthropocene remind us that we are at the end of the world as we know it, and that global warming, rising sea levels, the acidification of the oceans, crisis-rates of species extinction and ever-escalating social disasters masked as natural ones are but some of the more visible markers of the imperilment of this planet. Though they have pretensions to inclusion, many of these emergent

narratives mobilize ideas about the human, the animal and the environment that universalize rather than particularize, occluding the fact that these categorizations have long been shot through with histories of normative violence.

The [Black Atlantic Ecologies](#) group supports and elaborates scholarship that centers the enduring effects of coloniality and the dynamic power of protest in African diasporic confrontations with environmental crisis. Taking as our provocation the refiguring of human and nonhuman ecologies occasioned by the transatlantic slave trade, we seek to understand what Nadia Ellis

has called, riffing on José Muñoz, “the queer work of raced survival” as we come to grips with contemporary dimensions of anthropogenic climate change. As inspiration for the work that we undertake together, we ask after visions for survival and justice that are grounded in Black queer, Black feminist, and antiracist responses to the subjugation of the earth as well as of our human and nonhuman cotravelers. And given the crossing of linguistic and imperial zones that the transatlantic slave trade occasioned, we pay

particular attention to the divergences and synergies among anglophone, francophone, hispanophone, and lusophone analyses of our predicament as we articulate our conditions as well as the political possibilities on our horizons. This group poses a single central question: How might Black Atlantic experience with peril, with perishment and with premature death offer a rubric for thinking futurity, including reproductive futurity, in a moment of environmental collapse?

DIRECTORS



VANESSA AGARD-JONES

Assistant Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University



MARISA SOLOMON

Assistant Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Barnard College

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Chazelle Rhoden](#), Ph.D. Candidate, Anthropology, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS

1. Marisa Solomon, [Waste, Race and Colonial Detritus Panel, inaugural Feminist Intersectional Science Studies Conference](#) at Barnard College
2. Marisa Solomon, [The Black Environmentalisms Symposium](#), Yale University
3. Marisa Solomon, [Keynote Lecture, Environmental and Racial Justice Network \(ERJN\) Fall Summit](#), NYU
4. Vanessa Agard-Jones, [“Racial Capital, Chemical Kin,” Distinguished Lecture Series](#), Anthropology Section New York Academy of Sciences
5. Vanessa Agard-Jones, [presentation at Loophole of Retreat: Venice](#)

PUBLICATIONS

“Ecologies Elsewhere: Flyness, fill and Black women’s fugitive matter[s]”

Marisa Solomon

GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies, 2022 (28)4: 567-587.

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/868632/summary>

The Elsewhere is Black: Ecological Improvisations of Discarded Living

Marisa Solomon

Durham: Duke University Press, forthcoming.

c) PRISON EDUCATION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



PHOTO BY ENFENG TSAO ON UNSPLASH

The aim of the [Prison Education and Social Justice](#) project is to bring together Barnard and Columbia faculty and graduate students with alums of Columbia's prison education programs to think together about how to strengthen the courses and other educational opportunities Columbia presently offers to incarcerated students;

to develop new courses and faculty training supports for those initiatives; and to think about and develop a more systematic set of classes to be offered to Columbia and Barnard undergraduates dealing with social justice and its relationship to carceral systems.

DIRECTOR



JEAN HOWARD

English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Patrick Anson](#), Ph.D. Candidate, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

PRISON EDUCATION COURSE DEVELOPMENT

- a) Oct. 14, 2022 Prison Education and Social Justice Curricula Workshop
- b) Nov. 18, 2022 Educational Programs in Rikers
- c) Feb. 10, 2023 Graduate Students in Prison Education
- d) Apr. 21, 2023 Addressing Trauma in the Classroom

GRANTS

OPEN SOCIETY GRANT: \$250,000 received to underwrite tuition costs for formerly incarcerated students matriculating at Columbia's School of General Studies

COURSES TAUGHT

- Mia Florin-Sefton** | Introduction to Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies | Queer Literature & Culture
- Jean Howard and Kate Suffern** | Global Shakespeare Adaptations
- Frances Negrón-Muntaner** | Latino Cultures, Global Cities
- Julie Peters and Patrick Anson** | Creative Nonfiction Writing: Narrative, Law, Society
- Jeremy Dodd and Nick Ide** | Physics for Poets

d) REFUGEE CITIES: URBAN DIMENSIONS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT



REFUGEE CITIES SYMPOSIUM ON THE URBAN DIMENSIONS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT. PHOTO BY JORGE RODRÍGUEZ SOLÓRZANO.

[Refugee Cities: Urban Dimensions of Forced Displacement](#) is a group of scholars from across disciplines and institutions interested in bringing together the increasingly interrelated fields of Refugee Studies and Urban Studies. While there are few scholars or institutions that explicitly and intentionally consider these fields together, the expanding number of internationally displaced people settling in cities and interacting with and in urban spaces across the globe merits sustained engagement and analysis. In this CSSD working group, our discussions and public programming will center on the social, political, and material interrelatedness of refugees and cities in varying geographical areas. The group's core members include researchers and educators who have come together to collaborate on various projects at the intersection of urban and refugee studies, including public symposia, and to engage in mutually enriching discussions and forge lasting intellectual and professional ties.

Cities are generally conceptualized as permanent (made of brick, mortar, and metal), modern, and planned. They are governed by nation-states and are part of complex networks of global capital and knowledge. In contrast, the spaces where refugees settle (or are settled) are generally considered temporary. However, this does not match the actual experience of refugees since many come from and inhabit cities. Indeed, refugee communities have become involved in urban housing movements in places like São Paulo, a city with a long history of urban occupations and informal settlements. Beginning in the aughts, “urban refugee” surfaced as a category of concern in policy (UNHCR 2009; 2012) and humanitarian discourses but remains under-explored in scholarly research, especially since the majority of the world's refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) live in cities. Conversely, refugees displaced by persecution, violence,

and war(s) often spend open-ended periods in sprawling settlements that are functionally urban places and actively take part in place-making processes generally associated with permanent municipalities. Domiz camp in northern Iraq (refugee republic) is a good example. It was initially designated as a temporary space to host Syrian refugees fleeing civil war and has become an increasingly permanent and elaborate urban space (see also Burj el-Barajneh in Beirut). A central aim of this interdisciplinary working group is to reflect collectively and critically about the different analytical levels at which to examine the lives of internationally displaced people and communities, who, while often stateless, are inhabitants of “city-states,” nation-states, and other complex, overlapping jurisdictions. We address such pressing issues of humanistic (and humanitarian) concern in the status and deep history of sanctuary cities, the extent of and limitations to national sovereignty, and struggles for the right to the city.

We are interested in examining these urban sites as spaces of reception, rejection, hypervisibility, and invisibility. The manner in which refugees manage and are managed in these sites is also often structured by social relations (community, labor, family, gender) and formal and informal economies. Moreover, a cursory look at the response in cities to provide refuge and shelter to Afghan refugees in late summer 2021 (or Syrian refugees in 2015) versus the response to Ukrainian refugees in the current crisis (and the distinction in treatment at border crossings toward white Ukrainians and African and South Asian students that had been in the country) recenters the racial hierarchies in these processes. As a group that includes scholars whose research has investigated cities both past and present, we are interested in thinking about the ways in which internationally displaced people settle in cities as part of a long history of the improvised, often dissident use of urban space, and the historical construction of social inequality across different geographic scales.

DIRECTORS



AMY CHAZKEL

Bernard Hirschhorn Associate Professor of Urban Studies, Department of History, Columbia University



BAHIA M. MUNEM

Lecturer, Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, Columbia University

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Jorge A. Rodriguez Solorzano](#), Ph.D. Student, Anthropology

Refugee Cities: A Symposium on the Urban Dimensions of Forced Displacement

APRIL 27-28, 2023

The Refugee Cities working group held a symposium exploring the impact of refugees on cities and urban processes, both in the present moment and as a historical phenomenon. Symposium participants explored the intersections of urban studies and the humanistic and social justice-oriented study of the mass movement of people fleeing violence, war, and forced removal.

KEYNOTE: Miriam Ticktin, CUNY Graduate Center

PRESENTERS: Liu Xuan, Columbia University; Amy Leia McLachlan, Field Museum; Subhasree Ghosh, University of Calcutta; Maureen Abi-Ghanem, Columbia University; Bailey Miller, Columbia University; Matthew DeMaio, The George Washington University; Nadia Latif, Columbia University; Amy Chazkel, Columbia University; Bahia Munem, Columbia University; Fanny García, Columbia University; Jorge Rodríguez Solórzano, Columbia University

DISCUSSANTS: A. George Bajalia, Wesleyan University; Nora Akawi, The Cooper Union

<https://history.columbia.edu/events/refugee-cities-symposium-on-the-urban-dimensions-of-forced-displacement/>



ZAATARI REFUGEE CAMP IN JORDAN FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES AS SEEN ON JULY 18, 2013. STATE DEPARTMENT PHOTO.

e) EXTRACTIVE MEDIA: INFRASTRUCTURES & AESTHETICS OF DEPLETION



"TROPICAL SUNSET," HAND-COLORED LANTERN SLIDE FROM THE J. EDWARD HOFFMEISTER COLLECTION, GEISEL LIBRARY, UCSD. PHOTOGRAPH BY DEBASHREE MUKHERJEE, 2023

Questions of resource extraction are now front and center in almost every academic discipline across the humanities and social sciences. Propelled by the urgency of the planetary climate crisis, scholars are reinventing their core research questions to ask how we came to this pass and where we go from here. The Extractive Media working group seeks to take this conversation beyond fossil fuels to track the ways in which energy economies span continents and oceans, differentially affect unequal bodies and lives, and bleed across disparate sites such as the coal mine and the computer screen. We begin with the question of how media forms (print, architecture, photography, cinema, or, more recently, computational media) have historically contributed to material and imaginative modes

of extraction and, further, how we might turn to these very forms to find new possibilities for equitable futures?

With [Extractive Media](#), we hope to intervene in the current state of the discipline of media studies while also contributing to a sustained conversation in the humanities on the historical and ongoing role of media in extractive regimes of racialized capitalism and colonialism. Over the course of this project, we will organize a mix of faculty reading groups, film screenings, co-taught seminars, and invited talks, often in collaboration with other groups on campus that are considering related topics.

DIRECTORS



ZEYNEP ÇELİK ALEXANDER

Associate Professor, Art History and Archaeology,
Columbia University



DEBASHREE MUKHERJEE

Associate Professor, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and
African Studies (MESAAS), Columbia University

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

Hannah Pivo, Ph.D. Student, Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

1) MARCH 8, 2023, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY “What do we talk about when we talk about extractivism?”

SPEAKER: Jennifer Wenzel

2) APRIL 5, 2023, BARNARD COLLEGE “Scarcity” Colloquium

SPEAKER: Carl Wennerlind

PUBLICATIONS

“Energy and Exhaustion in a Coal Melodrama: Kaala Patthar (1979)”

Debashree Mukherjee

Ecocinema: Theory & Practice II. Routledge, 2022.

<https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/oa-edit/10.4324/9781003246602/ecocinema-theory-practice-2->

“Nineteenth-Century Alchemy: Mineral Statistics circa 1850”

Zeynep Çelik Alexander

Perspecta 55 (Spring 2023), pp. 30-43.

f) RECOVERY



JACKIE ORR, SLOW DISASTER AT THE DIGITAL EDGE

What histories have given rise to the concept of “recovery,” and explain the apparent fungibility of this concept across such broad domains of social life? In accordance with the CSSD’s designated focus on Imagining Justice, our working group critically considers the circulations of “recovery” in arenas such as biomedicine, pandemic politics, climate change, economics, and other fields of governance. Aligned with current scholarly and activist efforts to think through the transformations in social relations required for meaningful versions of repair and recuperation, we are particularly interested in challenging presumptions of the feasibility/desirability of a return to a prior normative state. Instead, we aim to consider how a transformative justice approach might spur new imaginations of not only social

justice but also embodiment, health, individual well-being and collective dis-ease. Because the grounding metaphors for “recovery” in social and political life derive from biomedical discourse, and because technoscientific solutions are often deemed to be integral to modes of recuperation, our proposed method for addressing these questions is F/ISTS (feminist intersectional science and technology studies). Exploring notions of “recovery” through the dual lenses of transformative justice and feminist/intersectional STS, we will pay close attention to the reciprocal relations between technoscientific practices and knowledges, on the one hand, and multiple intersecting axes of power on the other.

DIRECTORS



ELIZABETH BERNSTEIN

Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies;
Sociology, Barnard College, Columbia University



REBECCA JORDAN-YOUNG

Professor and Chair of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality
Studies at Barnard College, Columbia University

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Salma Ismaiel](#), M.A. Program, American Studies

HIGHLIGHTS

EVENTS

1. Feminist Intersectional Science and Technology Studies (F/ISTS) Conference

APRIL 27-28, 2023, BARNARD COLLEGE



F/ISTS CONFERENCE, BARNARD COLLEGE

The inaugural Feminist/Intersectional Science and Technology Studies (F/ISTS) Conference homed in on the reciprocal relations between techno-scientific knowledge and practices, on the one hand, and gender, race, class, and other intersecting axes of power, on the other. The interplay among technical and social dimensions of science, technology, and medicine is central to addressing many of the most pressing problems of our times, such as climate justice and environmental racism, health in/justice, and digital surveillance.

KEYNOTE: M. Murphy, University of Toronto

PRESENTERS: Banu Subramaniam, University of Massachusetts; Deboleena Roy, Emory University; Kelsey Lewis, University of Buffalo; Amade M'charek, University of Amsterdam; Marisa Solomon, Barnard College; Pavritha Vasudevan, University of Texas | Austin

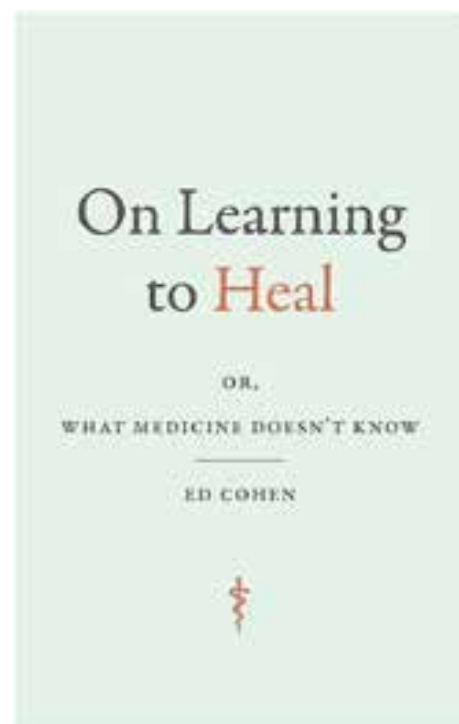
MODERATORS: Nedah Nemati, Columbia University; Miriam Ticktin, CUNY Graduate Center

PERFORMERS: Jackie Orr, Barnard College

<https://scienceandsociety.columbia.edu/events/feminist-intersectional-science-and-technology-studies-fists-conference>

2. Colloquium: *On Learning to Heal, or What Medicine Doesn't Know*

NOVEMBER 9, 2022, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY



At thirteen, Ed Cohen was diagnosed with Crohn's disease—a chronic, incurable condition that nearly killed him in his early twenties. At his diagnosis, his doctors told him that the best he could hope for would be periods of remission. Unfortunately, doctors never mentioned healing as a possibility.

In On Learning to Heal or, What Medicine Doesn't Know (Duke UP, 2022), Cohen draws on fifty years of living with Crohn's to consider how Western medicine's turn from an "art of healing" toward a "science of medicine" deeply affects both medical practitioners and their patients. He demonstrates that although medicine can now offer many seemingly miraculous therapies, medicine is not and has never been the only way to enhance healing. Exploring his own path to healing, he argues that learning to heal requires us to desire and value healing as a vital possibility. With this book, Cohen advocates reviving healing's role for all those whose lives are touched by illness.

SPEAKER: Ed Cohen, Rutgers University

<https://newbooksnetwork.com/on-learning-to-heal>

3. From Cynegetic Power to Cryopolitics: Hypotheses on the Biopolitics of Virus Hunters

MAY 3, 2023, NEW SCHOOL



For the last fifty years, following the paradigms of ecology of infectious diseases and «One Health», virologists have collected samples from non-human animals to anticipate spillover events causing pandemics among humans. This daily work of monitoring, moving between farms, markets, borders and laboratories, has introduced animals in human communities as sentinels perceiving early warning signals, by contrast with spectacular killings of suspicious animals which redraw the boundaries between humans and animals. This talk will ask what kind of biopolitics emerges from such a surveillance of animals for pandemic preparedness. Discussing authors such as Chamayou, Mbembe, Descola, Povinelli, Landecker and Caduff, it will test the hypothesis that modernity is a shift not only from sovereign power to biopolitics, but also from cynegetic power to cryopolitics.

SPEAKER: Frédéric Keck, École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales

PRESENTED BY: Department of Anthropology at The New School for Social Research, CUNY Graduate Center, and "Recovery" Working Group, CSSD, Columbia University

<https://event.newschool.edu/cynegeticpowertocryopolitics>

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT Projects build on the work of former CSSD groups and align with Columbia University's Fourth Purpose "to extend Columbia's abilities to bring the extraordinary knowledge and capacities of the University in tandem with the wider academic community and actors beyond the campus to more effectively address pressing human problems."

EVERYBODY
LOST SOMETHING
NOW

People should know that China is not to blame. Blame is

IN APRIL 13, 2020 I lost my father. I MISS MY FATHER. I MISS MY FATHER.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT WORKING GROUPS:
Active Working Groups in 2022-23:
a) [ZIP Code Memory Project: Practices of Justice and Repair](#)
b) [Queer Aqui](#)



SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

a) ZIP CODE MEMORY PROJECT: PRACTICES OF JUSTICE AND REPAIR



ZIP CODE MEMORY PROJECT PHOTO BY SYLVIA RIVEROS

The [ZIP Code Memory Project: Practices of Justice and Repair](#), a Social Engagement project at the Center for the Study of Social Difference, seeks to find reparative ways to memorialize the devastating losses resulting from the Coronavirus pandemic while also acknowledging its radically differential effects on different Upper New York City neighborhoods. In partnership with community, arts, and academic organizations, and working across the zip codes of Morningside Heights, Harlem, Washington Heights, and the South Bronx, we gathered a group of scholars, artists, and activists to develop a series of hands-on

artistic practices that can transform and enliven those spaces. Building on the networks of care that local communities have created, we tried to mobilize memory and repair a sense of trust that can help us all build responsibility and belonging in our neighborhoods. ZCMP consisted of group meetings and discussions, reparative memory workshops, public roundtables featuring the work of reparative memorial artists, the building of an interactive website, the creation and showings of a short film TOGETHER, NOT ALONE, an exhibition, and several memorial gatherings.

DIRECTORS



MARIANNE HIRSCH

Professor of English and Comparative Literature and Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Columbia University



DIANA TAYLOR

Professor, Performance Studies and Spanish and Founding Director, Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, New York University



SUSAN MEISELAS

Photographer



LORIE NOVAK

Artist & Professor of Photography & Imaging, New York University



LAURA WEXLER

Professor of American Studies and Women's and Gender Studies, Yale University

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANTS

Lee Xie, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Spanish & Portuguese, New York University

Meg Jianing Zhang, Public Humanities Fellow, Ph.D. student, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

HIGHLIGHTS

PUBLIC ARCHIVE



Zcmp.org: A Digital Archive of Mourning, Justice, and Repair

The Zip Code Memory Project was an invitation and an experiment. Their interactive website offers a glimpse into how a group of New Yorkers worked together to find ways to memorialize the devastating losses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic while also acknowledging its radically differential effects on Upper New York City neighborhoods. Centered in communities in Harlem, Washington Heights, and the South Bronx, the project organized workshops, exhibitions, performances, film screenings, and roundtables to generate senses of belonging and connection, along with shared embodied knowledge of the COVID-19 pandemic. The archive features videos, photos, descriptions, and downloadable toolkits of all Zip Code Memory project activities for free use by other communities undertaking the work of mourning, justice and repair.

FILMMAKERS

Judith Helfand

Gabriella Canal

EVENTS

1. Can We Go the Distance With the Virus?

SEPTEMBER 27, 2022, VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE



The pandemic is far from over; vaccination is imperfect, long-covid is a significant threat, politics plays hardball with our lives, we are underprepared for the horizon of other viruses, consequences are vastly unequally distributed, and we are likely to be anxious, in denial, and puzzled about how best to respond. In this Roundtable, four prominent artists and scholars will present art and organizing strategies drawn from lived experience with chronic illness, community activism, and the personal and political demands long-hauling presents.

SPEAKERS: Alexandra Juhasz, videomaker and scholar; Theodore Kerr, writer; Lorie Novak artist; Meghan O'Rourke, writer

MODERATED BY: Laura Wexler, Yale University; Charles H. Farnam, Yale University; Eilin Perez, Yale University

<https://sofheyman.org/events/chronic-life-can-we-go-the-distance-with-the-virus-2>

2. Covid: What Now?

NOVEMBER 10, 2022, FILM SCREENING, CITY COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

The Zip Code Memory Project co-organized "Covid: What Now?," a film screening and conversation about who is left behind by the current framing of the Covid pandemic and what is still owed to those who lost their lives. The event featured Dr. Sarah Senk, Director at [Marked by Covid](#); Dr. Marie Nazon, Counselor at [CCNY SEEK Department of Counseling and Support Services](#); and Judith Helfand, co-director of *Together, Not Alone*.

<https://therifkindcenter.squarespace.com/rifkind-center-events/2022/11/10/covid-what-now>

3. Website as Archive for the Public Humanities

NOVEMBER 16, 2022, VIRTUAL WORKSHOP



This workshop explores Zip Code Memory Project's current undertaking: creating an accessible, enduring website that collates, showcases, and sustains the highs and lows of the last three years. More often than not, sharing public humanities projects with larger audiences depends on the distribution and preservation of information online. And yet, when looking to memorialize these projects for future cohorts and community members, how should publics imagine the design and role of the website itself? In the Zip Code Memory Project's final active year, the objectives are not only to continue the larger, outstanding effort of remembering COVID-19, but to memorialize ZCMP itself.

WORKSHOP LEADERS: Meg Jianing Zhang, Ph.D. Student, Columbia University; Lex Taylor, ZCMP Web Design and Development

PROJECT: Zip Code Memory Project

<https://sofheyman.org/events/website-as-archive>

4. Premiere of the ZCMP Film, *Together, Not Alone*

FEBRUARY 17, 2023, MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Together, Not Alone captures the energy, connective possibilities and collective invitation to build community across Zip Codes divided by inequality and injustice. The film follows a group of strangers from across three New York City neighborhoods—different ages, races, socio-economic backgrounds, work and life experience—who came together after months of Covid-19 isolation to explore, map, paint, shape, recall and bear witness to each others' Zip Code-determined struggles and imagine justice and repair. After several in-progress showings, the short had its premiere at the Museum of the City of New York in February, 2023. In the Winter and Spring of 2023, when many New Yorkers were eager to forget about the hardships of the pandemic, film showings across several of New York's boroughs offered the opportunity to reflect on what we had learned from our Covid-19 experiences, what we did well, and how we could do better in the future. Film showings were accompanied by roundtables and conversations and by several community-made films and oral history projects with community partners in venues such as the Centro Civico Cultural Dominicano, the City University of New York, the Museum of the City of New York, DCTV Firehouse Cinema, the Queens World Film Festival and more.

DIRECTED BY: [Gabriella Canal](#) and [Judith Helfand](#)

<https://zcmp.org/together-not-alone-2/>

5. *Together, Not Alone* Screening and Roundtable Discussion

MARCH 18, 2023, DCTV Firehouse Cinema

6. Screening of *Together, Not Alone* and other short community made films about the COVID19 pandemic

MARCH 19, 2023, QUEENS WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, THE LOCAL NY



7. An Afternoon with Judith Butler: On the Pandemic and Our Shared World

MARCH 24, 2023, QUEENS WORLD FILM FESTIVAL, THE LOCAL NY



In What World Is This? A Pandemic Phenomenology, Judith Butler shows how COVID-19 and all its consequences—political, social, ecological, economic—have challenged us to reconsider the sense of the world that such disasters bring about. Drawing on the work of Max Scheler, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and critical feminist phenomenology, Butler illuminates the conditions in which we seek to make sense of our disorientation, precarity, and social bonds. *What World Is This?* offers a new account of interdependency in which touching and breathing, capacities that amid a viral outbreak can threaten life itself, challenge the boundaries of the body and selfhood. Criticizing notions of unlimited personal liberty and the killing forces of racism, sexism, and classism, this book suggests that the pandemic illuminates the potential of shared vulnerabilities as well as the injustice of pervasive inequalities.

SPEAKER: Judith Butler, Distinguished Professor in Comparative Literature, UC Berkeley

RESPONDENTS: Mia Florin-Sefton, PhD Candidate, Columbia University; Rishi K. Goyal, Associate Professor, Columbia University Medical Center; Marianne Hirsch, Professor, Columbia University

<https://youtu.be/h2ZyKDIQhOo>

8. What We COULD Do: The Zip Code Memory Project in Conversation with Related Pandemic Initiatives

APRIL 12, 2023, THE FORUM: 605 W. 125TH STREET



For the last two years the Zip Code Memory Project found ways to memorialize the devastating losses resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic while also acknowledging its radically differential effects on Upper New York City neighborhoods. Please join us on April 12th as we wrap up and reflect on our project and meet related New York City Pandemic Initiatives.

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2023/4/12/what-we-can-do-the-zip-code-memory-project-in-conversation-with-related-nyc-pandemic-initiatives>

MEDIA

[Broadway World](#)
Queens Chronicle

GRANTS RECEIVED

Henry Luce Foundation Grant

b) QUEER AQUI



QUEER AQUI: TOGETHER IN HARD TIMES. IMAGE BY FABIO CORDEIRO

[Queer Aqui](#) is a CSSD working group to discuss, debate, and investigate the politics of sexuality and gender in a global frame. This group builds upon the vast network of queer scholars here in the New York area. It also reaches out to groups in Beirut, Buenos Aires, Rio De Janeiro, Quito, and Istanbul in order to consider how best to resituate queer studies to respond to shifts in the meanings of family, sexual health, gendered embodiment, religion, sexual practices, gender variance, activism and sexual communities worldwide. This group's main focus is on considering the place of sexuality and gender in both the spread of global capitalism and right-wing populism and in the activist responses to these new forms of authoritarianism.

Scholars in this group have worked on neoliberalism, LGBT law, trans* issues, transnational imaginaries, queer diaspora, negative affects, art and politics, the queer decolonial, temporality and spatiality, phenomenology, and much more. This is a multidisciplinary group with many transnational contacts and contexts that is committed to asking questions about the future of queer politics, the future of queer culture, and the potential of new forms of solidarity, protest, and queer thought.

DIRECTORS



JACK HALBERSTAM

Professor of Gender Studies and English Literature, Columbia University



MACARENA GÓMEZ-BARRIS

Chairperson of Social Science and Cultural Studies and Director of the Global South Center, Pratt Institute



DANIEL DA SILVA

Assistant Professor of Portuguese, Rutgers University, New Brunswick

GRADUATE/UNDERGRADUATE ASSISTANT

[Levi C. R. Hord](#), PhD Student, Department of English & Comparative Literature, Columbia University

Together in Hard Times | Juntos em Tempos Difíceis

MAY 25, 2023, RIO DE JANEIRO

After five years of planning and a postponement due to COVID, *Queer Aqui* convened in Rio De Janeiro on May 23, 2023. *Queer Aqui: Together in Hard Times* (*Queer Aqui: Juntos em Tempos Difíceis*) was an all-day event in Rio that focused on questions about the reliance of new right-wing populist regimes on homophobic, transphobic, and misogynist ideologies. At the same time, we wanted to think about multiple forms of queer and trans life in Rio and the global south in general, which craft creative, powerful and impactful responses to these new forms of oppression. The combination of roundtables outlining the struggle, on the one hand, and others mounting various forms of aesthetic resistance, on the other, allowed audiences to both reckon with the reality of the hard times we are all in but not succumb to the idea that no response is possible.

The themes of the day emerged quickly. Participants discussed parallels between US and Brazilian policies endangering the lives of trans people and trans women and youth in particular. What are the relationships between anti-gender ideologies, evangelicalism, transphobia, authoritarian rule, and family discourses? How can right-wing Christians threaten to remove trans children from their homes if their parents support their transition but can still make the concept of “family” central to their ideological platforms? Scholars made connections between Puerto Rico and Brazil, Chile and Brazil and Singapore and Brazil. They found performance practices that appear in New York City and Rio and discussed strategies of resistance that stretch across the Americas.

In particular, participants heard from Brazilian colleagues about the struggles of queer and trans people under Bolsonaro, the impact of the pandemic on already precarious communities, the networks and organizations that were generating transformative scholarship and the ways to locate and hear political and intellectual activity coming from favela activists. Members of the Rocinha favela, travesty activists, joined us and spoke of their struggle against trans violence inside and outside of the favela. They invited participants to come and visit the favela the next day, and six of the presenters went. The ideas generated in the panels were picked up in conversations between events, and the study spilled out into rich moments of intellectual connection, continuing outside of its proscribed setting.

ORGANIZERS: Jack Halberstam, Columbia University; Daniel Da Silva, Rutgers University; Macarena Gomez-Barris, Brown University



QUEER AQUI: TOGETHER IN HARD TIMES. IMAGE BY FABIO CORDEIRO

PRESENTERS: Jack Halberstam, Columbia University; Macarena Gomez-Barris, Brown University; Arnaldo Cruz-Malave, Fordham University; Daniel Da Silva, Rutgers University; Licia Fiol-Matta, NYU; Gil Hochberg, Columbia University; Eng Beng Lim, Dartmouth College; Denilson Lopes, University of Rio; Tavia Nyong’o, Yale University; Leonardo Viera, independent scholar; Bruno Benavides, ANTRA; Fatinha Lima, favela activist; Jacqueline Gomes de Jesus, University of Brasilia; Leonardo Peçanha, Educação Física e Doutorando em Saúde Coletiva (IFF/FIOCRUZ); Maria Elvira Diaz-Benitez, PPGAS/Museu Nacional/UFRJ; Amanda Medeiros Oliveira, UFBA; Deizy França, favela activist; Sarita Panisset, favela activist

PANEL CHAIRS: Paul Amar, UC Santa Barbara; Moises Lino E Silva, Universidade Federal da Bahia

<https://www.socialdifference.columbia.edu/events-1/2023/5/25/queer-aqui-together-in-hard-times-rio-de-janeiro>

WOMEN CREATING CHANGE LEADERSHIP COUNCIL



"In our current global environment, it is extremely important that we understand the influence of women on the economic, political, and cultural forces that shape our surroundings. Our programs seek to incorporate academic research about women and other underrepresented groups in the classroom and to better inform global decision making.

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Columbia University's [Women Creating Change Leadership Council](#) comprises individuals committed to exploring issues that affect women and how women address global gender challenges. The mission of the Council is to promote interdisciplinary collaborative research and to sponsor events that publicize this vital work. Council members assist the faculty in framing how their academic endeavors can create a more significant impact. The WCC Leadership Council provides a critical link between the University's faculty-led projects and the global business, academic, and civil society community.

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IN HONOR OF JEAN HOWARD'S LEADERSHIP



JEAN HOWARD, TACONIC WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL FACILITY 2023 GRADUATION CEREMONY. SEVERAL WOMEN TAUGHT BY COLUMBIA FACULTY AND GRADUATE STUDENTS RECEIVED THEIR ASSOCIATES AND BA DEGREES AT THE CEREMONY (NOT PICTURED FOR PRIVACY REASONS).

As Jean E. Howard, George Delacorte Professor in the Humanities in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, transitions to faculty emerita at Columbia, we wish to acknowledge her enormous contributions to CSSD. Jean Howard was one of the visionary founders of CSSD and has provided intellectual leadership and sage advice throughout all its years. Her commitments to collegiality have kept our working group models of collaborative work and thought; her commitments to balancing scholarly excellence with principles of social justice and ethical practice have inspired us. A leading scholar of English Renaissance literature and theater and former President of the Shakespeare Association of America, she has wide interests including contemporary theater, Marxist and feminist theory, and critical race studies. Author of numerous books and articles and recipient of fellowships from Guggenheim, NEH, Mellon, and Folger, Huntington, and Newberry Libraries, she has also transformed Columbia through her institutional leadership, including as director of the Institute for Research on Women and Gender and first Vice Provost for Diversity Initiatives. She has directed vibrant working groups at CSSD, including Engendering the Archive; Women Mobilizing Memory; Reframing Gendered Violence; and Prison Education and Social Justice. It was no surprise that the May 5 conference celebrating Howard's career carried the title "Let's Make it Work." CSSD thanks Jean Howard for all that she has done to make things work. We look forward to her continuing involvement with the Center, even as she pursues her many scholarly and activist projects.

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