



HARRIET TUBMAN DEPARTMENT OF
WOMEN, GENDER, AND
SEXUALITY STUDIES

Fall 2023 Newsletter

3121 Susquehanna Hall

4200 Lehigh Road

wgss.umd.edu

(301) 405-6680

wgss@umd.edu

Table of Contents

- 3** Welcome from the Chair
- 5** Meet our New Faculty
- 7** Meet our New Graduate Students
- 9** Meet our New Staff
- 10** Introducing the Indigenous Futures Lab
- 14** **Feature** Taking Stock: Harriet Tubman Day 3 Years Later
- 21** Congratulations to our Graduates
- 23** Doctor of Philosophy Dissertations
- 27** Faculty Highlights
- 31** Graduate Student Highlights
- 32** Graduate Alumni Highlights
- 33** Upcoming Events
- 34** DC Queer Studies Symposium 2023



Welcome from the Chair

Dear WGSS Community,

I am excited to share our 2023 Newsletter with you!

As our colleagues working in critical race and women, gender and sexuality studies around the nation face serious attacks on their academic freedom and ability to teach their courses, the importance of the work that we do in and out of the classroom becomes ever more clear. I feel privileged to be working alongside colleagues who are not just leaders in their fields, but committed to social justice oriented research and pedagogy.

Last year, our faculty and graduate students were honored with a number of national and international awards and recognitions. Distinguished Professor Ruth Enid Zambrana was elected to the National Academy of Medicine and received a major grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for her study of underrepresented minority leaders in URM medicine, public health, nursing and STEM. Professor Neel Ahuja's new book on migration and climate change was recognized for its outstanding interdisciplinary scholarship by the Asian American Studies Association. Professor Sayan Bhattacharya's article received the prestigious 2022 Sylvia Rivera Award in Transgender Studies from the CLAGS Center for LGBTQ Studies, which recognizes the best book or article to appear in transgender studies in the past year. Professor Eva Hageman's video essay "Shiplap" was named as one of 2022's best video essays by Sight and Sound. These are just some of the major accomplishments and accolades received by WGSS faculty and graduate students. Please read more about our faculty and graduate students' publications and accomplishments starting on pages 20.

As we continue to grow, I am thrilled to welcome our newest Assistant Professor, Dr. Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner. Professor Meissner (Luiseño & Cupeño) is an Indigenous feminist philosopher whose research and teaching expertise includes Indigenous epistemologies, language reclamation, critical social work, and coalition building.

Welcome from the Chair

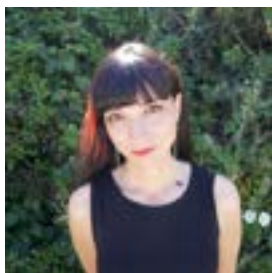
Not only is Professor Meissner developing important new courses in Native and Indigenous feminisms, but she is also the founding Director of the Indigenous Futures Lab. The Lab will be offering a range of programming for students, faculty, and the broader College Park community. You can learn more about the activities of the lab on page 6.

In this issue, I am excited to share a feature story by Professor Michelle Rowley, "Taking Stock: Harriet Tubman Day 3 Years Later." Professor Rowley's leadership and vision around the commemorative events that showcase ways in which our department has embraced Tubman's legacy following our renaming have been enlivening spaces of gathering for our broader WGSS community.

This semester, we have an exciting lineup of guest speakers and programming. DC Queer Studies, organized by Professors Will Mosley and Zenzele Isoke, is back for the first time in three years! Mark your calendars for October 25, 2023 and read more about the event on page 16. We are also hosting a series of public talks through our colloquium public talk series, as well as a number of social justice hangouts for WGSS students and community members. We hope to see many of you there.

Our fall gathering will take place in December. We look forward to welcoming new affiliates and reconnecting with longtime friends and supporters of WGSS. Please stay tuned for details.

I look forward to exciting year ahead!



Neda Atanasoski
Professor and Chair
Harriet Tubman Dept. Women, Gender, and
Sexuality Studies



Meet Our New Faculty



Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner

Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner (Luiseño & Cupeño) is an Indigenous feminist philosopher. Shelbi researches, teaches, and consults on Indigenous research and evaluation methods, cultural and language reclamation, Indigenous epistemologies, Indigenous feminist interventions in critical social work, and land-based feminist coalition-building.

Shelbi is fascinated by the intersections of Indigenous knowledge systems, caretaking, power, and trauma. Shelbi is a proud first-generation descendant of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, and is of both Luiseño (Payómkawichum) and Cupeño (Kupangaxwiche) descent. She is an assistant professor in the Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies at University of Maryland, College Park and the founding director of the Indigenous Futures Lab, a hub of Indigenous feminist research and evaluation.

Meet Our New Faculty



Damien Hagen

Dr. Damien Hagen is a Lecturer in the Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. He is a scholar of interdisciplinary gender, trans, and queer studies with a focus on media, affect, and culture. His scholarly work is grounded in a commitment to supporting the survival and flourishing of trans and nonbinary lives.

His current research projects examine the multiple ways that trans and nonbinary people have used speculative fiction as a survival strategy and worldbuilding tool. In his work, he emphasizes the important role of imagination and creativity in the material reality of trans and non-trans lives. His work has been published in *Transformative Works and Cultures*, the *International Journal of Transgender Health*, and *Feminism & Psychology*.

Meet Our New Graduate Students

Ann Alex



Ann Alex (She/Her) is a PhD Student at The Harriet Tubman Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department of the University of Maryland. She was born and raised in Kerala, India. She graduated with an MA English from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in 2020 and a BA English from The English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad in 2018. She is interested in how western digital technologies enable misogyny while structurally invisibilizing caste and class differences. She aims to problematize digital media studies' constrained treatment of the multiple modalities of race, gender, caste, and class which shape fan identities and their activities online. In her free time she likes playing platform-adventure games like Gris, taking walks in her new American neighbourhood and people-gazing at the farmers' markets



Chandrasekhar “Chand” Sepuri

Chand is a social researcher and development sector professional with two years of experience of working as Guest Faculty at a state government university in New Delhi, India, in the area of life skills. They have also been part of queer, trans, and anti-caste advocacy efforts over the years. Their MA dissertation deployed an autoethnographic approach to investigate queer collectivization in university spaces, through the affective lens of love and resistance. Their MPhil dissertation sought to bring together anti-caste worldviews and trans liberation by outlining a theory of transgender justice based on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's idea of 'Prabuddha Bharat'.

Their research interests lie at the intersection of queer theory, transgender studies, political economy of development, cultural studies, citizenship, anti-caste philosophy, South Asia, and engaged anthropology. Their research seeks to understand how marginalized communities' visions of justice interact with the neoliberal state's ideas of development. They are also a published poet and aspiring writer.

Meet Our New Graduate Students

Shameem Razack



Shameem Razack (She/Her) is a First year PhD Student at Harriet Tubman's Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Department of the University of Maryland. She grew up in Champaign, Illinois. She recently graduated with an MA Women's and Gender Studies from DePaul University, Chicago, Illinois. Her research is broadly interested in East African Muslim communities and approaches to building communal relationships through social media platforms.

Travis Haigler

Meet Our New Staff



Elece Smith

Program Administrative Specialist

Elece Smith was raised in Bowie, Maryland. She received two Bachelors of Arts in Japanese and Anthropology from the University of Maryland in 2020. While at UMD she was also a member of the Honors Humanities Living and Learning Program, a student employee at McKeldin Library, and a freelance entertainment writer for the Diamondback. Prior to joining the team at WGSS, she worked in two public library systems around the DC Metro area and most recently served as the Director of the National Japan Bowl -- a Japanese language and culture competition for high school students -- at the Japan-America Society of Washington DC.

Sydney Dailer

Student Assistant

My name is Sydney Dailer and I am a senior majoring in WGSS and Government and Politics with a minor in Law and Society. I was born and raised in Maryland, so when it came time to choose a school for my undergraduate degree I was so excited to pursue my passions for education, government, and social justice at UMD. After graduation, I hope to attend graduate school here at UMD for Government and Politics and to go on to work in the non-profit sector or as a lobbyist for reproductive justice in DC. I am looking forward to a great semester working for all of the WGSS staff and faculty!



The Indigenous Futures Lab is a hub of Indigenous research, evaluation, and relationship-building where we center Indigenous knowledges to build futures of co-flourishing. The mission of the Indigenous Futures Lab is to honor and serve local Indigenous communities in their struggles for justice, co-create Indigenous futures through Indigenous-led scholarship and activism, and build coalitions that center the land and all of our relations. Some of the projects on the horizon for the Indigenous Futures Lab include: Piscataway Pathways, an archival access project that centers the epistemic and linguistic sovereignty of local Indigenous communities; a faculty coalition around Black and Indigenous environmental futures; an Indigenous knowledges speaker series; the virtual Decolonizing Death Cafe, where practicing and aspiring care workers can co-create community around reclaiming Indigenous death and grieving practices; Bead, Weave, and Read, a series of workshops that combines art, theory, and visiting; and many other community feasts and events.



Míiyuyam! // Hello from the Director of the new Indigenous Futures Lab!



I hope this message finds you well and full of excitement for the fall season. It's been an incredible couple months as I've joined, met, and built new relationships with the UMD community. I'm thrilled to share some updates and news about the projects we have in store at the Indigenous Futures Lab. But first, a little about me and the mission of the Indigenous Futures Lab.

I am Luiseño and Cupeño, a first-generation descendant of the La Jolla Band of Luiseño Indians, whose ancestral territories span the warm desert landscapes of San Diego County, adorned with oak trees, acorns, and the artistry of traditional baskets. This year, I embarked on a journey to join the Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, here on Piscataway land. I'm deeply committed to learning how to be a respectful guest in Piscataway territory and to forge meaningful relationships with local communities. Maryland has already captured my

heart, and I'm thrilled to be teaching Indigenous Feminisms and a graduate seminar called Indigenous Aesthetics in the spring. The Indigenous Futures Lab is a dream come true for me, and I'm truly excited to establish it in such fertile soil for relationship-building here at UMD, College Park.

The Indigenous Futures Lab is a hub of Indigenous research, evaluation, and relationship-building, where we place Indigenous knowledges at the core of our mission to cultivate futures of co-flourishing. Our vision is rooted in three core principles: honoring and serving local Indigenous communities in their struggles for justice, co-creating Indigenous futures through Indigenous-led scholarship and activism, and building coalitions that center the land and all of our relations. . Below are some of our exciting projects!

Decolonizing Death Cafe: Starting Friday, October 13th, we'll be meeting twice a month. What's even more exciting is that I'll be co-facilitating with the brilliant Rye Purvis, founder of NAIDCA (Native American and Indigenous Death Care Autonomy). With Rye's leadership, we're bringing fresh perspectives and opportunities to connect to this important space. If you'd like to attend, find more info and RSVP here: <https://forms.gle/xbxBAF8Y39SBfNBC9>

Piscataway Pathways Project: Our quest for grant funding is in full swing. We're determined to ensure that local Indigenous communities have control over their linguistic resources and cultural heritage. Stay tuned for updates as this project unfolds.

Indigenizing Demographic Data Project: Another grant pursuit is underway. We're working to reshape how



demographic data is collected and represented, making sure Indigenous voices and identities are accurately reflected.

Bead, Weave, and Read: Get ready for a creative journey! Starting November 3rd, we'll meet every first Friday of the month. This is where art, theory, and cultural exchange collide, weaving past and present together into something beautiful. Reach out for more information if you'd like to participate! These workshops are open to all.

Black and Indigenous Climate Futures Fellowship: We're actively seeking grants to address pressing environmental challenges faced by Black and Indigenous communities. The wisdom of traditional ecological knowledge will guide us toward sustainable solutions.

Indigenous Knowledges Speaker Series: In the spring, we're kicking off with an Indigenous feminist roundtable focused on the Indian Child Welfare Act and Indigenous family resilience. Prepare to be inspired by the insightful voices of our speakers.

But that's not all! We're collaborating with MICA to celebrate Native Heritage Month this November. Our "Cultures Aren't Costumes" Halloween party on Friday, October 27th, is just the beginning. We invite everyone to visit the lab as we open our doors wide for our first communal gathering! (Costumes encouraged – my sister and I will be attending as Elsa and Anna from Frozen, at her insistence.)

Throughout the month, we have a fantastic lineup, including a special beading workshop, a pre-powwow ribbon skirt and regalia fashion show, Indigenous music and dancing lessons and demonstrations, a trip to Baltimore to help with the annual powwow, and a delightful fall feast.



We're going to be busy, but we've already met so many amazing people who want to collaborate, visit, and lend their support. Together, we're moving fearlessly forward toward Indigenous futures!

Stay tuned for more updates, and feel free to reach out if you have ideas, suggestions, or simply want to get involved. The Indigenous Futures Lab is a place of growth, community, and inspiration, and we're so glad you're part of this journey with us.

Nosúun pilek lóoviq, no'óonum// Thanks so much for your friendship,

Shelbi Nahwilet Meissner
Director, Indigenous Futures Lab

Upcoming Events

October 27 - Lab Grand Opening Halloween Party
November 1 - Dr. Schaeffer Colloquium Reception
November 3 - Bead, Weave, and Read Session 1
November 10 - Decolonizing Death Cafe
November 16 - Weaving Workshop
November 24 - Decolonizing Death Cafe
December 1 - Bead, Weave, and Read Session 2
December TBD - Community Feast
December 8 - Decolonizing Death Cafe
December 22 - Decolonizing Death Cafe





FEATURE STORY

TAKING STOCK:

HARRIET TUBMAN DAY 3 YEARS LATER

BY DR. MICHELLE ROWLEY

Name changes are always monumental, a moment where we can choose to take stock. I am predisposed, it is a flaw, to thinking of large things in small moments; and, this propensity to seek out the monumental means that I want to begin by making it impossible for us to think of naming without simultaneously contemplating histories where the act was not to celebrate the uniqueness of identity but to mark beings as property, an act of dehumanization, heralding the power to name beings, black bodies as “chattel of.” When we claim the right to name ourselves, we are saying yes to a proxy that stands in for who we imagine ourselves to be, for who we desire to be. Naming, then, is never inconsequential. It is never small.

We, in WGSS, renamed ourselves (over quiche). It was not an unfraught process. We rubbed against our disciplinary investments, we haggled over genealogies of “gender,” and there was an eye-roll or two (the party wear of all academic gatherings). Still, I seem to remember intermittent bursts of laughter and quiche.¹ At the end of that Friday morning meeting, quiche fully devoured (okay, alright, I confess, I baked the quiche) – we were, in aspiration, The Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies buoyed by the hope that this would serve as a constant reminder of our longstanding commitment to challenging anti-Black racism in our service/outreach, scholarship, and pedagogy. This aspirational proxy was approved by the University of Maryland’s Board of Regents on June 19, 2020, but not before our personal due diligence concerning our surrounding HBCUs, our colleagues in departments with similar disciplinary investments here at UMD, and meeting with the descendants of the Tubman line to secure their approval.² Significant to meeting with them was a promise on our part to Harriet Tubman’s descendants that the use of Harriet Tubman’s name would be more than an imprimatur, that we would think seriously about why we draw on her name and, by extension, her identity. Many of us have since taken up questions or crafted modules that broaden our students’ understanding of Tubman’s life, we have taken our

¹A quiche-less version of the process that informed our name change can be found at <https://wgss.umd.edu/about/harriet-tubman>

²A wide cross-section of our community participated in this first Harriet Tubman Byway Tour – students, affiliates, staff, and faculty, groggily set off on a 6:00 a.m. departure to the Eastern Shore. This trip was integral to the self-education trajectory that we had crafted for ourselves as we contemplated the stakes of drawing on Harriet Tubman’s identity as part of our name.

students on the Harriet Tubman Byway Tour and the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park to experience the landscape of Harriet Tubman's early life on the Eastern Shore. Our students have worked on annotated bibliographies, they have crafted pedagogy simulations that consider how they would teach non-college audiences about Tubman, and they have built digital platforms with civic outreach as their end goal. The inherent pedagogical and scholarly value notwithstanding, these are some of the ways that we have been working to honor promises made. Our Harriet Tubman Day, March 10, commemoration is another of the ways we do this.

We've now held three commemorative events; each has been recorded and can be found on the department's website. Our inaugural event, 2021, served to bring us together amid the pandemic. In this, and our subsequent events, we were joined by Ms. Ernestine "Tina" Wyatt, Harriet Tubman's great-great-grandniece. If you are ever interested in understanding the profound personal legacy, affection, and responsibility that Harriet Tubman's descendants feel about her name and legacy, then I offer these recordings as a destination point. If you are ever interested in Ms. Wyatt's lobby to ensure that Harriet Tubman's military service is nationally recognized and Harriet Tubman's induction into The Military Intelligence Corps Hall of Fame (June 2021), then these recordings offer invaluable archival materials. We can't thank Ms. Wyatt enough for her insight, ongoing support, and presence in our extended community.



Ernestine "Tina" Wyatt, attends the U.S. Army commemorative ceremony at the Washington, D.C. Hilton National Mall. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army; AFRO.com)

We have, in our commemoration's short life, aimed to open space for our students to participate in the day's events. This has resulted in the incorporation of student artwork, student presentations of their pedagogy projects, interview-based short films, and student moderators who are not at all afraid to say "TIME."³

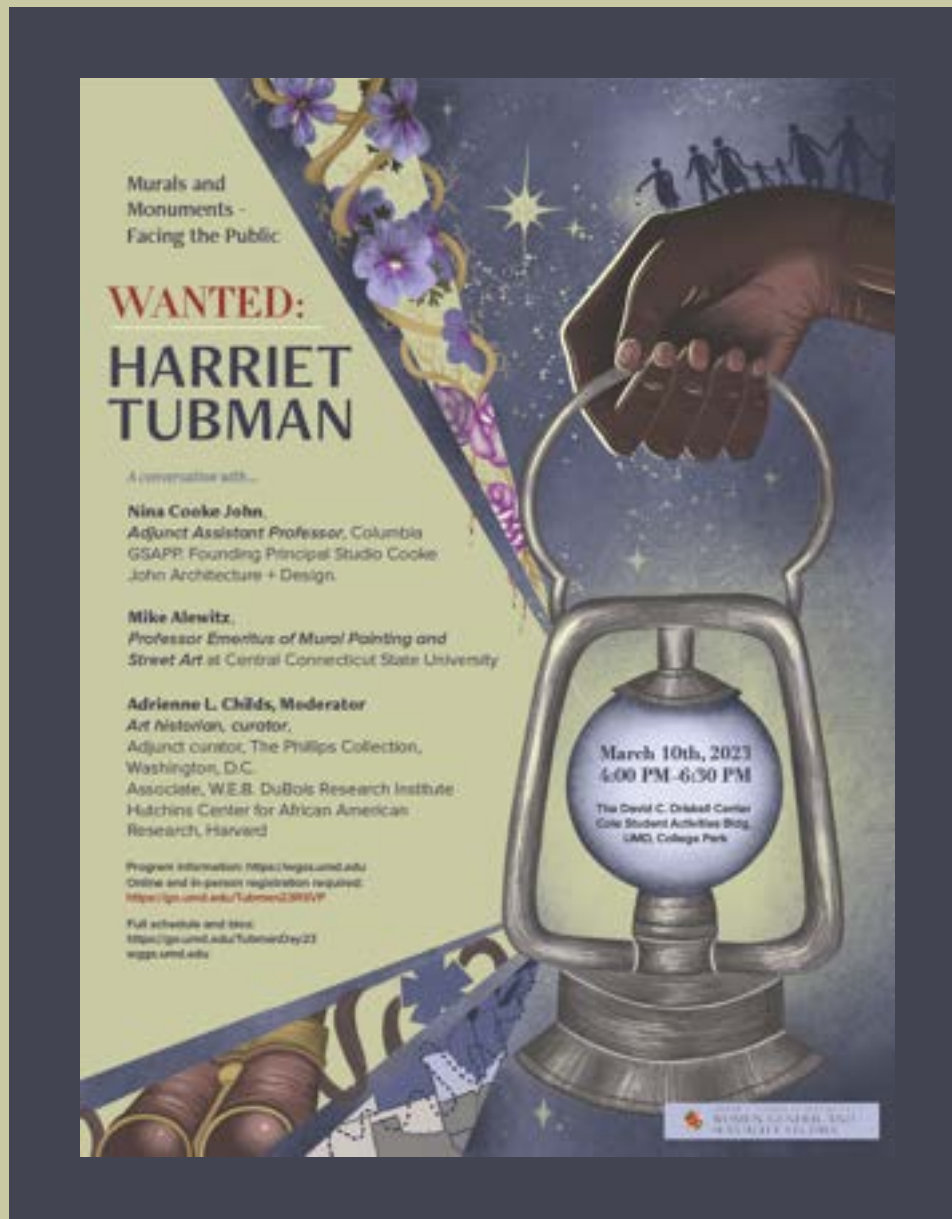
Thinking through the lens of Tubman's capacity to work with allies and build networks has prompted us as a department to think in terms of outreach and community building within and external to our UMD community. In 2022, we collaborated with our colleagues in the Department of Art, Antwon Key and Jessica Gatlin. This began with our 2022 Harriet Tubman Day Poster designed by one of their students, Taylor Avent.



Designer: Taylor Avent, Department of Art, '22

³The Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies thanks Brooke Mengistu, Janae Smith, Sydney Neal, Christina Wolfrey, and Lenora Knowles (Please insert list of names of students from 2021)

We have since formalized the relationship with the “Harriet Tubman Poster Design Award,” open to students in the art department as well as students who are enrolled in any one of the five programs that exist in WGSS. However, prioritizing our outreach to the Department of Art, we ask our WGSS students to think and work with a student from the Art Department. Winning recipients receive an award of \$500, and this year’s winning entry was designed by Ji Young Park, a studio arts major in the Graphic Design Program.



The 2023 Harriet Tubman Day Poste (Park, 2023)

I like to think of our Harriet Tubman Day commemorations as a placeholder, an annual appointment with our many communities—affiliates, faculty/staff – students, and other sojourners in Maryland writ large and farther afield. It is, in its fullness, a day of return for conversations and communion on issues of justice, liberation, and transformation. In 2022, to mark Harriet Tubman's bicentennial, we settled on “Reclaiming History | Creating Futures,” as our theme and gathered to think about questions of legacy and community. Ms. Wyatt was joined by her two daughters, Ashley Jackson, and Lauren J. Wyatt. Along with our student presenters, Dr. Marisela Gomez from The Village of Love and Resistance (VOLAR), calmed our spirits and activated our awareness of the work that VOLAR undertakes toward community change and transformation in East Baltimore, MD.



We ended the day with an archaeological consideration of legacy. Julie Schablitsky, Adjunct Professor in the Department and chief of the Cultural Resources Division at the Maryland Department of Transportation

walked us from coin to cabin -- carefully highlighting how her archaeological dig moved from an 1808 coin to the site on which Harriet Tubman's father Ben Ross' cabin once stood.

This year, our commemoration stridently entered the fray and debates about the racial histories and harms embedded in public monuments. Our theme “Wanted: Harriet Tubman (Monuments and Murals: Facing the Public)” found its conceptual beginnings in the 1849 poster that circulated after Harriet Tubman self-emancipated. The circulating poster, simply stamped “WANTED,” further noted that should she, Tubman, or her brothers be found, they should be lodged in “Baltimore, Easton or Cambridge jail in Maryland.” This idea of “wanted,” gave us an opportunity to gather to think (and self-interrogate) the exponential use of Harriet Tubman's name and likeness by a diverse and sometimes politically contradictory array of institutions and places. “Wanted: Harriet Tubman (Monuments and Murals: Facing the Public)” allowed us to think about Tubman as “wanted” as a fugitive from the law to “wanted” as a legacy and symbol. We grounded our planning in a consideration of the politics of invoking Tubman's identity; which Tubman do we expect to show up when we invoke her legacy, and what have been responses to artwork that reminds us, for example, Tubman's militancy?

We were in conversation with muralist, Mike Alewitz who in 2002 was commissioned to paint a series of murals throughout Baltimore, MD, commemorating Harriet Tubman. The first mural in the series “Dreams of Harriet” (25 x125 ft) depicted an armed Tubman and was subsequently decommissioned following Alewitz's refusal to disarm her. (See Milton C. Sernett, *Harriet Tubman: Myth, Memory, & History*). Alewitz brought us to this moment but moved us further to think about the economies and

politics of public art. We were also joined by architect Nina Cooke John, who at the time had unveiled what was then the country's most recent monument of Harriet Tubman, "Shadow of a Face" which replaced a statue of Christopher Columbus. Cooke discussed her process, the ensuing debates about the piece, the momentary refusal by the state panel to proceed with the piece, and the importance of community engagement to her work. This year's conversation would not have been possible without the skill and expertise of our moderator, Adrian L. Childs, David C. Driskell Prize winner (2022), and an adjunct curator at The Phillips, Washington DC. Childs brought it and in bringing it gave us the magic of a moderator who intuits the questions in the room and asks them even before we have fully consolidated them in our minds.



"Shadow of a Face" Nina Cooke John (Harriet Tubman Square, Newark NJ, 2023 ; photographs by Dr. Michelle Rowley)

We have been fortunate, in our three years, to have the support of our former dean, Dean Bonnie Thornton Dill, and more recently, Dean Stephanie Shonekan. This year's event also benefitted from the support of Arts For All, under the then leadership of Patrick Warfield, we hope for a continued relationship with the work that Arts For All facilitates. These events could not have occurred if our tech support – Nat Kuhn, Monica Milstead, Kathy Cavanaugh – were not walking alongside us, breathing life into all of our technical flights of fancy. Our students continue to be part of this journey collectively because the WGSS faculty my colleagues, continue to invest in the intellectual and pedagogical importance of this work. I owe Elsa Barkley Brown many dinners and missed hours of sleep for the way that she polices my margins and helps us be smarter about everything that happens on the day. Each Harriet Tubman Day requires teamwork, and over the last three years, the Day has relied on the careful work of Gwen Warman, Isata Mutu, Janelinid Baitwa Kyomuhendo, Julia Thompson, Robert Burgard, Karen Thompson, Natasha Hogston, and Stewart Williams. We, the faculty, staff, and students of the Harriet Tubman Department of Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies hope to see you at our fourth Harriet Tubman Day in 2024. Our theme, “Harmonies of Liberty,” will be a meditation on liberation as a reason for joy. Stay tuned. **Michelle V. Rowley**



Congratulations 2022-2023 Graduates!



Bachelor of Arts

Kennedy Simone Grimes
 Devin Rom Hill
 Megan Johnson
 Zainab Mahmud Kazaure
 Sarah Jane Runge
 Isabella Romeyne Scribner
 Raquel Yasmine Vazquez

Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Undergraduate Certificate

Zoe Davidson	Laine Alexandra Napoli
Isabelle Grace Ogden Falls	Bianca Chimoa Ralph
Hilda Althea Filke Jacobson	Mya Muhholland Smith
Amy Ying Er He	Amber Wang
Erin Elizabeath Lea	



Black Women's Studies Minor

Kaitlin Earlease White

Congratulations 2022-2023 Graduates!

LGBTQ Studies Undergraduate Certificate



Mary Rose Kay
Catherine Francis Overman
Nicole Isabella Radams

LGBTQ Studies Minor

Stefano Antonio Bell	Cecilia Joy Hough
Maggie Patricia Brooks	Rachael Anne Leonberger
Jared Michael Currie	Artashes Sahakyan
Luther Abraham Hahn	Holly Alyssa Stewart

Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies

Hazim Karim Abdullah-Smith
Lindsey R. Barr
Jennifer Elizabeth Schollaert
Britt Star



Doctor of Philosophy

Damien Hagen
Amira Naima Lundy-Harris
Clara Margaret Montague
Eva Peskin

Congratulations 2022-2023 Graduates!

Doctor of Philosophy



Damien Hagen

“Some of us are staring at the stars: Speculative Fiction, Fandom, and Trans Imagination”

Defense Committee: Lothian, Alexis (Chair, WGSS), Hageman, Eva (WGSS), Bruce, La Marr Jurelle (AMST), Ramos, Iván (Brown University), Keegan, Cael (Concordia University)

“Some of us are staring at the stars: Speculative Fiction, Fandom, and Trans Imagination” takes up the multiple ways that trans and nonbinary people have used speculative fiction as a survival strategy and worldbuilding tool. Through engagement with trans and nonbinary fans and creators of imaginative works, Hagen shows how speculative fiction has powerful material effects for trans lives. Primary attention is given to the possibilities contained in media that was not created to be explicitly “transgender,” but was experienced and read as such through a “trans imaginary.” Hagen’s research methods are interdisciplinary, incorporating the use of autoethnography, focus groups, close readings, and thematic analysis. Chapters include an analysis of regeneration as trans possibility in the TV series Doctor Who, an inquiry into shared experiences among trans and nonbinary fans deriving from focus group interviews, an examination of the ways the genre of “body horror” in film and television has been used as a tool for processing and dealing with experiences of body dysphoria, and an analysis of the trans world building possibilities in Blue Delliquanti’s *Oh Human Star* and Gretchen Felker-Martin’s *Manhunt*.

Congratulations 2022-2023 Graduates!

Doctor of Philosophy

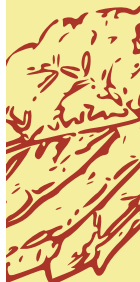


Amira Naima Lundy-Harris

“Like I’m Kin to Him: Black Trans Publics, Relational Bonds, and Collective Creation”

Defense Committee: Lothian, Alexis (Chair, WGSS), Parham, Melissa (ENGL), Steele, Catherine Knight (COMM), Avilez, GerShun (ENGL), Green, Marshall (Williams College)

“Like I’m Kin to Him: Black Trans Publics, Relational Bonds, and Collective Creation” traces a history of Black trans relationality in the United States since the 1970’s, investigating what possibilities these connections offer, examining what challenges they present, and exploring what they might mean for the making of the self. This dissertation utilizes a mixed-methods approach, bringing together archival readings, literary analysis, and interviews to theorize the creation and cultivation of Black trans kinship bonds. Taking up Black trans studies, digital studies, public spheres theory, and kinship studies across disparate yet interconnected media contexts, the project tracks how Black trans people meet each other (from support groups to parties to YouTube), how we come to see each other as family, and how these connections help shape who we understand ourselves to be. This dissertation looks to four different sites— a home built for trans youth, a memoir, a social media platform, and a contemporary movement—and explores what kind of shelter they may offer. To this end, the chapters of Like I’m Kin to Him weave together to elucidate a genealogy of Black trans community and life over the last 50 years.



Congratulations 2022-2023 Graduates!

Doctor of Philosophy

Clara Margaret Montague



*"Women's Studies Worldwide:
Cartographies of Transnational
Academic Feminism"*

Defense Committee: Tambe, Ashwini (Chair, WGSS), Rosenfelt, Deborah (Professor Emerita, WGSS), Rowley, Michelle V. (WGSS), O'Meara, KerryAnn (CHSE), Smith, Martha Nell (ENGL)

This dissertation retells the history of women's studies from a global perspective, challenging traditional U.S. and Eurocentric narratives about this emerging interdisciplinary field. Beginning with questions about why women's, gender, and sexuality studies has incited backlash across a range of geographic locations, this study draws on transnational feminist theory and higher education research to argue for a more broadly situated understanding of academic feminism. Chapter One describes the creation of a digital map featuring more than nine hundred women's studies degree programs and research centers in seventy countries, revealing how the field has grown and contracted as a result of shifting geopolitical trends. Chapter Two examines collaborative autobiographic writing by academic feminists to show how different political grammars are used to construct credentializing and contextualizing discourses in contrast with development and collegiality. Chapter Three offers a case study of three international institutes and a graduate consortium that grew out of the University of Maryland's Curriculum Transformation Project, using archival research and oral histories to explore the complexity of enacting women's studies across differences. This dissertation concludes with recommendations for how practitioners in the United States might better enact ethical collaborative relationships across diverse national, cultural, and linguistic contexts. Rather than viewing U.S. academic feminism as a blueprint that can be exported elsewhere, this dissertation argues for mutual accountability, centering connections throughout the Global South, and sharing resources as strategies for building effective coalitions that will nurture the field moving forward.

Congratulations 2022-2023 Graduates!

Doctor of Philosophy



Eva Peskin

“MAINTENANCE ART FOR OTHER POSSIBLE WORLDS: Rehearsing a Pedagogy for Care”

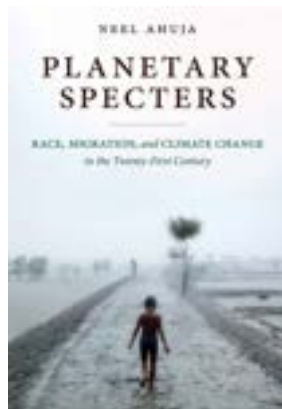
Defense Committee: Lothian, Alexis (Chair, WGSS), Ahuja, Neel (WGSS), Harding, James (TDPS), Montoya, Maria del Carmen (GWU), Williams, Justine (Yale University)

“MAINTENANCE ART FOR OTHER POSSIBLE WORLDS: Rehearsing a Pedagogy of Care” brings together stories, moves and activations for approaching access and difference as preconditions for belonging. Both a text and an enactment, the project offers a framework for interdependent creative practice and care-oriented collaboration, doing multiple things at once: it demonstrates an ethic and technique of play-based learning, offers a story about maintenance as the work it takes to keep caring together, and embraces lunacy as a method for creative resistance. Drawing on Mierle Laderman Ukeles’ premise that attention to maintenance can pause the perpetual motion machine of capitalist consumption/production and Ruth Wilson Gilmore’s insistence that freedom is a place we make together in the present, the dissertation stages a confrontation of the multiple trainings that have formed my ethical, aesthetic, and relational processes of learning – both within and beyond the academy, both amateurish and professional – in order to lean into the fissures and ruptures one might ignore that the other can see. This inquiry takes shape in a spiral geography of four repeating moves, a conceptual fractal which gives rise to the action of the work: Unsettling, Dwell, Meanwhile, Sensuousness. The project rehearses this repertoire of moves as a means to center consent, access, self-determination, deep listening, and joy – necessities for the creativity required to undo/step away from/dismantle the many intersecting projects of empire which conspire unendingly against life itself, and to collectively transform into a culture of care.

Faculty Highlights



Dr. Neda Atanasoski's book, *Postsocialist Politics and the Ends of Revolution*, co-edited with Kalindi Vora, was published in 2023 (Routledge). In October 2022, she led a weeklong seminar and delivered a public talk for the "Ecologies of War" series at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Miami's Art+Research initiative.



Dr. Neel Ahuja's book, *Planetary Specters: Race, Migration and Climate Change in the Twenty-First Century*, has been awarded an honorable mention for best book in the [Multidisciplinary/Interdisciplinary](#) category of the Association for Asian American Studies annual publication awards.



Dr. Sayan Bhattacharya has been awarded the Sylvia Rivera Award in Transgender Studies by the Centre for Studies in Gender and Sexuality. They also wrote an [opinion piece](#) in Down to Earth Magazine on marriage equality in India and a [creative nonfiction essay](#) in Qurbatein, a gender and sexuality bi-annual from Ashoka University.

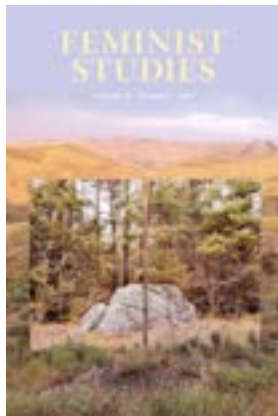
Faculty Highlights



Dr. Eva Hageman and Dr. Sayan Bhattacharya have received the ARHU Junior Faculty Summer Fellowship!



Dr. Eva Hageman's video essay "Shiplap" was recently named as one of 2022's best video essays by the British Film Institute (BFI).



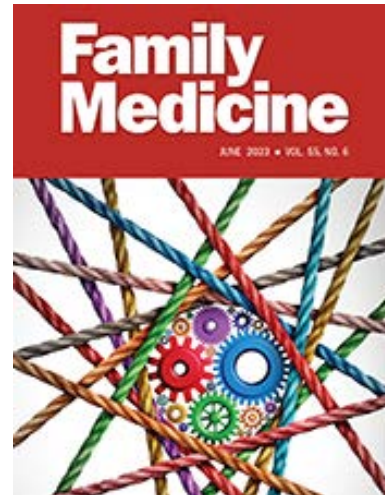
Dr. Jessica Mathiason published the essay, "Femtech: The 'Smart' Business of Menstruation, Hormone Tracking, and the Corporate Construction of Risk," which appears in volume 49.1 of *Feminist Studies* (issue 1 of 2023).

Dr. Mathiason also won an American Association of University Women short-term publication research grant for her project " 'It's even harder than giving birth!': Postpartum Body Failure and Rethinking the Feminist Possibilities of FemTech."



Dr. William Mosley published "On the Lateness of Pandemic Time" in *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies* from the University of Nebraska Press.

Faculty Highlights



Dr. Ruth Zambrana was an Honoree at the Maryland Research Excellence Celebration at the University of Maryland on March 28, 2023.

Dr. Zambrana delivered the 16th annual John P. McGovern Endowed Lecture on Family, Health and Human Values titled, “Revisiting the Role of Family and Community Health: Reducing Health Inequities” at the University of Houston on April 24, 2023. She also received the John P. Govern award for her outstanding contributions to the field.

Dr. Zambrana published the article [“URiMs and imposter syndrome: symptoms of inhospitable work environments?”](#) In *Family Medicine*, (20230418) and also received [Faculty Recognition](#), during a University of Maryland vs. University of Michigan Basketball Game in January 26, 2023.

Faculty Highlights



Dr. Shelbi Nawhilet Meissner was awarded an NEH grant for a summer institute called “Native American, Indigenous, and Land-Based Social and Political Philosophy.”

This summer, Shelbi also hosted the first annual gather of the Philosophy of Indigenous Education (PINE) Project this summer with funding from a grant from the American Philosophical Association. The gathering brought together 7 indigenous philosophers and allies.

Three of Shelbi’s articles will be available this coming fall and winter.

- “World Traveling in Tule Canoes: Indigenous Philosophies of Language & An Ethic of Incommensurability” will appear in *Hypatia: A Journal of Feminist Philosophy*
- "Indigenous Feminist Evaluation Methodologies: A Case Study in 'My Two Aunties,'" will appear in the *Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation*
- “Climate Crisis as Relational Crisis: Centering Indigenous Feminist Conceptions of Responsibility in Environmental Discourse,” co-authored with Andrew Smith (Drexel University) will appear in a forthcoming special issue of *Feminist Philosophy Quarterly*.

Graduate Student Highlights



Jocelyn Coates received the Snouffer Dissertation Fellowship.

Lenora Knowles and **Adreanna Nattiel** received the Wiley award!



Tapaswinee Mitra received the College of Arts and Humanities Graduate Student Summer Fellowship for 2023, University of Maryland-College Park. She will also Co-chair a panel titled “Reconceptualizing Colonialism in Postcolonial South Asia,” at the 2024 MLA Convention, Philadelphia, PA, USA and will present on her paper, "Trans-ing South Asia: The Question of Sovereignty," at the 2023 Midwest Conference on Asian Affairs (MCAA) at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, scheduled for September 29 – October 1, 2023.

Graduate Alumni Highlights



Dr. Red Washburn ('10) has been named Professor of English and Director of Women's Gender Studies at Queens College (CUNY). Congratulations Dr. Washburn!



Upcoming Events

Save the Date for these events! RSVPs are required for all events

2023 DC Queer Studies Symposium: The Queer Limit of Black Memory

A celebration of the Scholarship of Matt Richardson

Wednesday, October 25, 2023

9:30 am - 5:00 pm

Grand Ballroom Lounge

Adele. H Stamp Student Union

RSVP: go.umd.edu/DCQS2023

Unsettling Borders on Tohono O'odham Sacred Land

with Dr. Felicity Amaya Schaeffer

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

4:00 – 5:45pm

SQH 4116

RSVP: <https://go.umd.edu/Schaeffer>

Sex: What Does Cow Protection Protect?

with Dr. Naisargi Davé

Wednesday, November 29, 2023

4:00 – 5:45pm

SQH 4116

RSVP: <https://go.umd.edu/Dave>

Harriet Tubman Day

Sunday, March 10th, 2024

<https://go.umd.edu/Tubman2024>

DC QUEER STUDIES PRESENTS:

THE QUEER LIMIT OF BLACK MEMORY

A CELEBRATION OF
THE SCHOLARSHIP OF
MATT RICHARDSON

FEATURING DR. MATT RICHARDSON,
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF FEMINIST
STUDIES AT UCSB & AUTHOR OF *THE
QUEER LIMIT OF BLACK MEMORY*

10.25.2023

9:30 am - 5 pm

GRAND BALLROOM LOUNGE

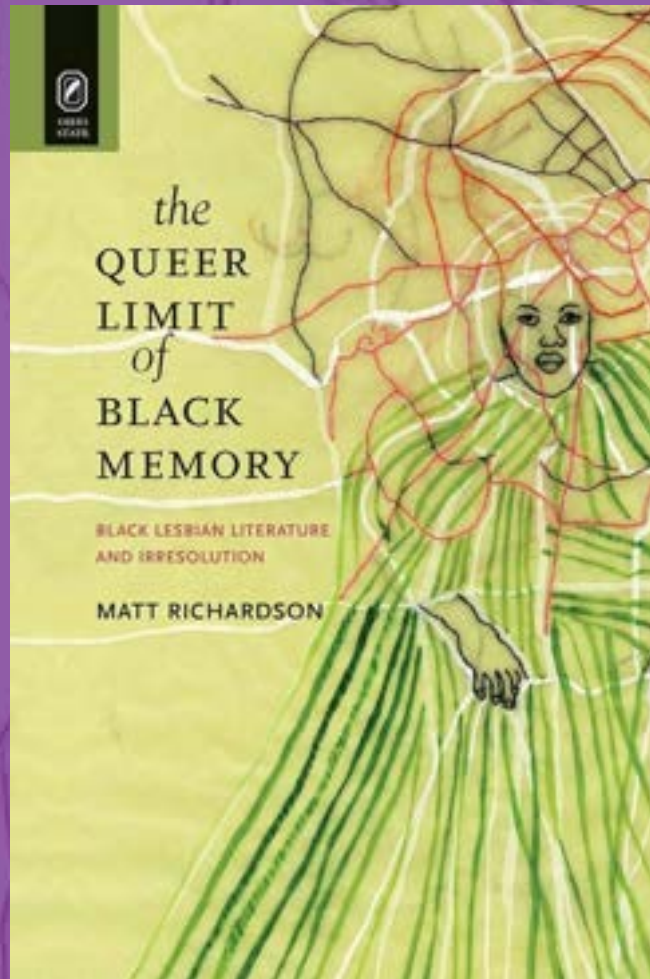
ADELE H. STAMP STUDENT UNION

3972 CAMPUS DR. COLLEGE PARK,

MD 20742



The DC Queer Studies Symposium returns with a hybrid event this year on October 25th. We hope that you will join us for "The Queer Limit of Black Memory, Ten Years Later: A Celebration of the Scholarship of Matt Richardson." In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the publication of Dr. Richardson's book, *The Queer Limit of Black Memory: Black Lesbian Literature and Irresolution*, scholars, authors, and artists come together for a day of panels and performances.



As the first monograph to explore Black lesbian literature, *The Queer Limit of Black Memory*'s interventions have reverberations across lesbian studies, performance studies, social justice, issues of racial equity, and trans studies. Ten years later, we return to *The Queer Limit* in a political climate where queer sexuality, gender expression, and trans bodies - in bathrooms, in entertainment, in our schools - are targeted as objects of American fear and right-wing legislation.



go.umd.edu/DCQS2023



HARRIET TUBMAN DEPARTMENT OF WOMEN, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY STUDIES



UMD WGSS



@wgssumd



@harriettubmanwgss



wgss@umd.edu