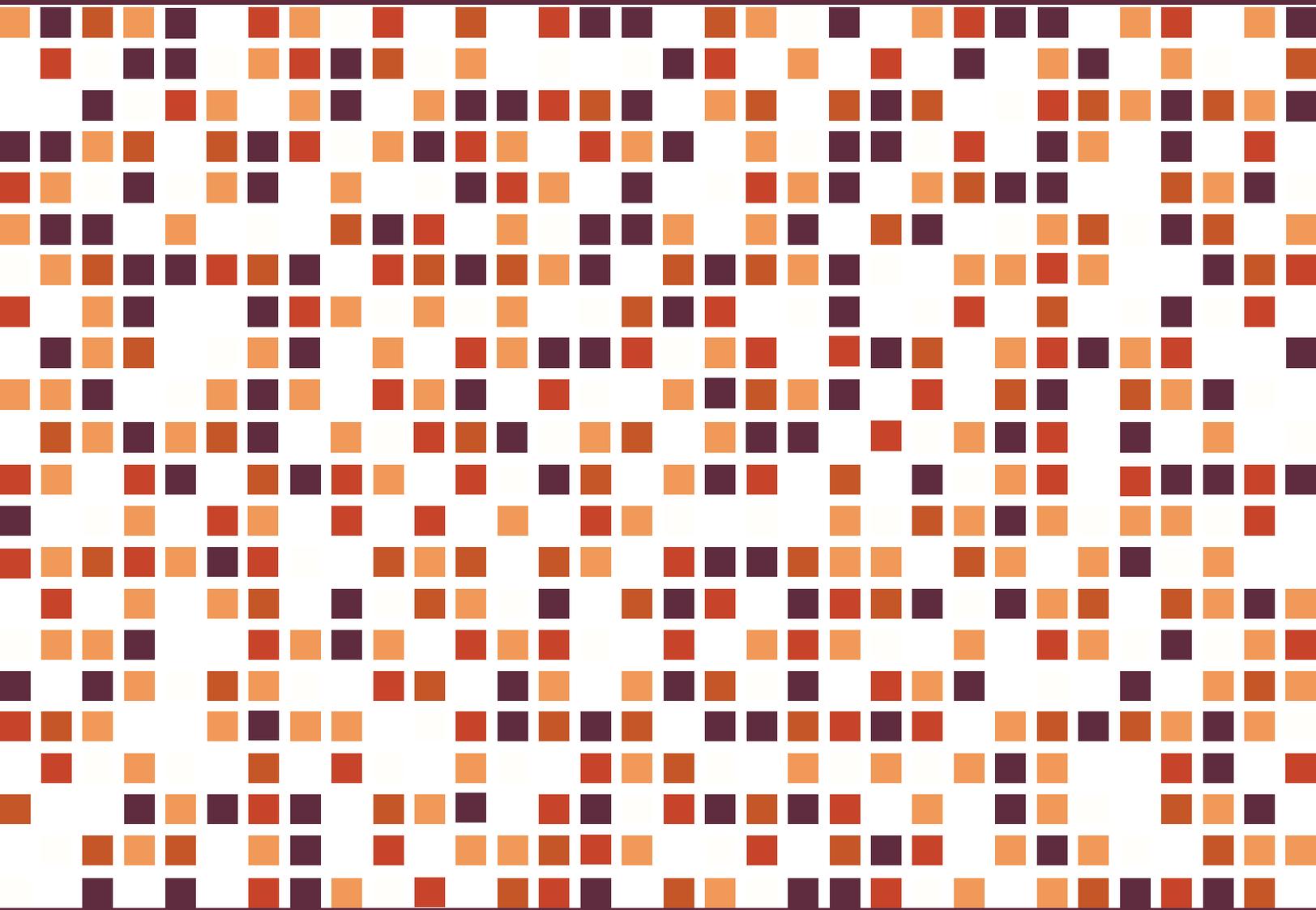


*Our Year:  
Center for the Study of Social Difference*



*2015-16 Annual Report*



# CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE ANNUAL REPORT



Rachel Adams  
*Director*



Laura Ciolkowski  
*Associate Director*



Terry Roethlein  
*Communications  
& Finance Manager*

Over the course of the year our working groups have promoted CSSD's mission by engaging in innovative interdisciplinary scholarship on gender, sexuality, ethnicity and race in the context of global dynamics of power and inequality.

## 2015-2016 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

RACHEL ADAMS  
TINA CAMPT  
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NEFERTI TADIAR  
PAIGE WEST

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# DIRECTOR'S NOTE

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My first year as director of CSSD has been a whirlwind of activity: film screenings, public lectures, conferences and symposia, an art exhibition, a walking tour, and numerous publications by members of our working groups. As the convener of a working group called **The Future of Disability Studies**, I had experienced the personally and intellectually transformative experience of participating in a CSSD-sponsored collaborative research project. Still, it was an exhilarating sensation to take the birds' eye view of CSSD activities afforded from my position as director.

From here, I've observed my colleagues using projects to address such urgent challenges as climate change, neocolonialism, violence against women, the legacies of slavery, gender, and poverty. I've seen inspired collaborations among scholars, activists, artists, writers, and filmmakers. I've been gratified to watch working groups on **Women Mobilizing Memory** and **The Future of Disability Studies** go out on a high note with conferences, publications, art exhibits, and more, and I'm excited to welcome in four new projects on **Precision Medicine: Ethics, Culture, and Politics**; **Unpayable Debt: Capital, Violence, and the New Global Economy**; **Religion and the Global Framing of Violence against Women and Gender based Violence**; and **Reframing Violence against Women**. This year our projects have been successful in securing funds from the Luce Foundation, the National Science Foundation, and the Columbia Center for Science and Society. In short, I've been struck by the tremendous things my colleagues can do when they work together, supported by the time and money offered by the CSSD.

Led by world-class faculty from Columbia University and Barnard College, our projects are truly global in scope. Current projects include fellows from at least five continents. In 2015-16, meetings were held in New York, Shanghai, and New Delhi, with plans for workshops in China, Ghana, and Nairobi in the upcoming year. Our six active projects address timely and important topics in the social sciences, the arts and humanities, and the digital future. **Pacific Climate Circuits**, devoted to studying political, economic, and cultural impacts of climate change in the Pacific Region, used its first year to engage in collaborative study of the local perspectives and knowledge missing from current analyses of climate change. **The Digital Black Atlantic** project, in its final year, completed its plan to develop multimedia explorations of the Black Atlantic world with the launch of new digital platforms and a public event on the Caribbean in digital space.

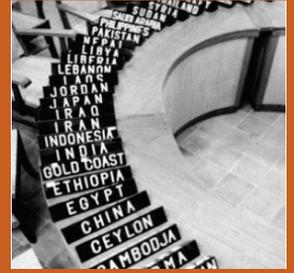
Vibrant activity continues under the banner of **Women Creating Change**, our Center's global initiative. **Gender and the Global Slum**, which studies gender in relation to poverty and social segregation, made use of Columbia's Global Centers to convene workshops in Shanghai and New Delhi. Our second new project, **The Rural-Urban Interface: Gender and Poverty in Ghana and Kenya, Statistics and Stories**, plans to gather local life experience narratives in order to understand the feminization of poverty in migrant populations. This year the working group's collaborators in Ghana and Kenya began to collect narratives that will be studied in relation to statistical knowledge. **Social Justice after the Welfare State**, which explores the implications of the declining welfare state on politics, race, and gender in the United States, hosted workshops as well as a daylong symposium. A volume of essays and oral interviews is forthcoming in 2017. As I look back over what we've done this year, I am proud of what we've accomplished and excited about the future.

None of this would be possible without financial resources. Columbia University President Lee Bollinger generously provided funds to launch the Center; the University is committed to systematic fundraising to endow the Center with donor support; Project Directors actively seek funding from outside foundations and granting agencies. Nonetheless, our expanding work requires further support. To find out how you can become a friend of CSSD, or to make a financial contribution to our work, please contact Associate Director Laura Ciolkowski at [socialdifference@columbia.edu](mailto:socialdifference@columbia.edu). We welcome your interest.

Rachel Adams  
Director, CSSD  
Professor of English and Comparative Literature

# BANDUNG HUMANISMS

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## DIRECTORS

**Stathis Gourgouris**

*Professor of Classics, Columbia University*

**Lydia Liu**

*Professor of East Asian Languages,  
Columbia University*

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT

**Sneha Desai**

*English and Comparative Literature,  
Columbia University*

## FELLOWS

**Anupama Rao**, *Professor of History and  
South Asian Studies, Barnard College*

**Lila Abu-Lughod**, *Professor of  
Anthropology and Women's, Gender, and  
Sexuality Studies, Columbia University*

**Mamadou Diouf**, *Professor of African  
Studies, Columbia University*

**Souleymane Bachir Diagne**, *Professor of  
French and Philosophy,  
Columbia University*

**Mahmood Mamdani**, *Professor of  
Government and Anthropology,  
Columbia University*

**Gauri Viswanathan**, *Professor of English  
and Comparative Literature,  
Columbia University*

**Aamir Mufti**, *Professor of Comparative  
Literature, University of California,  
Los Angeles*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Legacy of Bandung Humanisms revisits the lost legacy of Bandung — the vast global landscape of political, social, and cultural thinking and creative elaboration during the Cold War period that highlighted disaggregated struggles against imperialism and racism across the world, from Hanoi to Oakland. Named after the Indonesian city which hosted the 1955 Congress of Afro-Asian Nations, the Bandung envisioned forms of internationalism and humanism that took as a starting point the life worlds of those peoples and societies forcibly pushed to the margins of the world economic and political system.



Image from "The Textures of Loss" by Pankaj Butalia

## ACTIVITIES

The focus of this project is on "Bandung humanism," a defining feature of the culture of Bandung that opposes the dehumanizing tendencies of colonialism. Bandung humanism opens up questions about the ways a humanist thinking that is unencumbered by "Western" commands (both traditionally humanist and anti-humanist) can serve as a new cauldron of radical configurations of thought and action against the rampant dehumanization of societies by the economic and political forces of capitalism in its neoliberal globalized phase.



Image from "The Textures of Loss" by Pankaj Butalia

In fall 2016, the group will organize the workshop "China and Africa at a Crossroads: Revisiting the Legacy of Bandung Humanism," which will build on and develop work leading to an international symposium to be held in summer 2017 at the Columbia Global Center in Beijing.

## PUBLIC EVENTS

- Screening and discussion of "The Textures of Loss," a documentary tracing two decades of violent conflict in Kashmir, with filmmaker Pankaj Butalia.

# THE FUTURE OF DISABILITY STUDIES

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## DIRECTOR

**Rachel Adams**

*Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University*

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT

**Elizabeth Bowen**

*English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University*

## FELLOWS

**Margaret Araneo-Reddy**, *Adjunct Assistant Professor of Theater, Brooklyn College*

**Christopher Baswell**, *Professor of English, Barnard College*

**James Berger**, *Senior Lecturer, American Studies and English, Yale University*

**Nikki Berger**, *Graduate Student, Oral History, Columbia University*

**Raymond Budelman**, *Graduate Student, Human Rights Studies, Columbia University*

**William Burton**, *Graduate Student, French and Romance Philology, Columbia University*

**Sara Chinn**, *Associate Professor of English, Hunter College*

**G. Thomas Couser**, *Professor Emeritus of English, Hofstra University*

**Elizabeth Donaldson**, *Associate Professor of English, New York Institute of Technology*

**Faye Ginsburg**, *Professor of Anthropology, New York University*

**Amy Hughes**, *Associate Professor of Theater, City University of New York*

**Stephanie Jensen-Moulton**, *Associate Professor of Musicology, Brooklyn College*

**Stephanie Kerschbaum**, *Associate Professor of English, University of Delaware*

**Ynestra King**, *Independent Scholar*

**Laura Mauldin**, *Assistant Professor of Human Development and Family Studies, University of Connecticut*

**Ariel Merkel**, *Graduate Student, Sociology, New School*

**Ittai Orr**, *Graduate Student, American Studies, Yale University*

**Julia Rodas**, *Associate Professor of English, City University of New York*

**Rebecca Sanchez**, *Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University*

**Irina (Lotti) Silber**, *Associate Professor of Anthropology, City University of New York*

**Joseph Straus**, *Distinguished Professor of Music, City University of New York*

**Emmanuel von Schack**, *Graduate Student, Art History, Hunter College*

**Dennis Tyler**, *Assistant Professor of English, Fordham University*

**Sarah Wilcox**, *Professor of Sociology, Sarah Lawrence College*



All photos by Dorian Cambi, 2015

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The study of disability engages some of the most pressing debates of our time: questions about the beginning and end of life; prenatal testing; abortion; euthanasia; eugenics; accommodation in schools; public transportation and the workplace; technologies for the medical correction and “cure” of the non-normative body; disease; wartime injuries; post-traumatic stress; and healthcare. The Future of Disability Studies interrogates charged ethical and political questions about the meaning of aesthetics and cultural representation, bodily identity, and dynamics of social inclusion and/or exclusion. This interdisciplinary working group explores some of the key debates within disability studies and identifies new directions for the future of the field.

## PUBLIC EVENTS

The two-day symposium “Keywords/Key Questions for Disability Studies” brought together disability scholars, artists, activists, and students to discuss the next chapter of disability studies. The symposium marked the conclusion of the CSSD Future of Disability Studies project and addressed a wide range of issues in disability studies, including: the representation of people with disabilities in visual art; the discursive divides between disability scholarship and activism; the implications of modern technology and medicine for disability studies; the politics of kinship surrounding disability; law and justice in relation to disability; and the ways that disability rights protesting has been mythologized in historical accounts of the ADA. The event explored the major theoretical and political questions facing disability studies and featured many of the contributors to the volume *Keywords for Disability Studies* (NYU, 2015), co-edited by Project Director Rachel Adams, Benjamin Reiss, and David Serlin.

# PACIFIC CLIMATE CIRCUITS

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Image from "Warm Waters" by Vlad Sokhin

## DIRECTORS

**Paige West**, *Professor of Anthropology, Barnard College and Columbia University*

**J.C. Salyer**, *Assistant Professor of Practice, Sociology, Barnard College*

**Kevin Fellezs**, *Assistant Professor of Music, Columbia University*

## FELLOWS

**Barbara Andersen**, *Visiting Scholar of Anthropology, New York University*

**Jane Anderson**, *Assistant Professor of Anthropology, New York University*

**Joshua Bell**, *Curator, Ethnology Division, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History*

**Joshua Fisher**, *Earth Institute, Columbia University*

**Aaron Fox**, *Associate Professor of Music, Columbia University*

**Jacqueline Hazen**, *Graduate Student, Linguistic Anthropology, New York University*

**H'i'ilei Julia Hobart**, *Postdoctoral Fellow, Food Studies, Northwestern University*

**Sergio Jarillo de la Torre**, *Postdoctoral Fellow, Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History*

**Martha Kaplin**, *Professor of Anthropology, Vassar College*

**John D. Kelly**, *Professor of Anthropology, University of Chicago*

**Laurel Kendall**, *Professor of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History*

**Monica Kim**, *Assistant Professor of History, New York University*

**Sarah Knuckey**, *Associate Clinical Professor, Columbia University School of Law*

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT

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**Paul Kreitman**, *Assistant Professor, Columbia University*

**Jackie Lacey**, *Curatorial Assistant, American Museum of Natural History*

**Sharon Heijin Lee**, *Assistant Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis, New York University*

**Miki Makihara**, *Assistant Professor of Linguistics, City University of New York*

**Patrick Nason**, *Graduate Student, Anthropology, Columbia University*

**Jenny Newell**, *Assistant Curator and Assistant Professor of Anthropology, American Museum of Natural History*

**Gary Y. Okihiro**, *Professor of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University*

**Dean Saranillio**, *Assistant Professor of Asian and Pacific Studies, New York University*

**Sarah Smith**, *Assistant Professor of Public Health, State University of New York*

**Mark Stege**, *United Nations*

**Tina Stege**, *Marshalllese Educational Initiative*

**Neferti Tadiar**, *Professor of Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Barnard College*

**Anne-Marie Tupuola-Plunkett**, *American Museum of Natural History*

**Dawn Wells**, *Graduate Student, Anthropology, Rutgers University*



David Darfon Jones, "Ocean Side of Funafuti"

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pacific Climate Circuits seeks to reframe the conversation about the Pacific Region, Pacific Islanders, and climate change, examining the political-economic systems culpable for climate change in the region, and linking them to its histories of colonialism and neoliberalism. The working group looks for solutions to the problem of climate change outside the typical hard sciences, attempting to bring questions about the circulation of non-material forms, such as ideology, art, music and the circulation of human bodies

through migration and immigration, to the forefront of analysis, and applying the lenses of race, class, gender, sexuality, and inequality to the analyses of climate change in the Pacific Region.

## ACTIVITIES

While the Pacific Islands have taken center stage in Western foreign policy agendas on climate change, the region is routinely misunderstood by politicians and policy makers who continue to represent the Pacific Islands and its people through colonial-era frames such as smallness, remoteness, and insularity. In meetings throughout the year, the working group explored the conceptual, methodological, and regional themes around climate change with a view toward opening up the ways climate change is studied and the modes in which solutions to the problem are imagined. The group agreed that local perspectives, epistemologies, and knowledges are missing from the current analysis of climate change and argued for the importance of connecting questions of migration, sovereignty, indigenous rights movements, and current political actions to any study of climate change in the region. Other working group meetings featured visiting faculty, including: Dr. Kyle Powys Whyte, Professor of Philosophy at Michigan State University and a member of the Potawatomi Nation; Lisa Kahaleole Hall, Associate Professor of Women's Studies at Wells College; and Judy Rohrer, Assistant Professor in Diversity and Community Studies at Western Kentucky University, both prominent scholars in the field of Indigenous politics and Indigenous-Settler relations in Hawaii. The group will continue to grapple with larger questions about the politics of climate change research in the Pacific Islands region, such as: How can Pacific Islanders become more than simply a "them"? What are the implications of writing about Pacific Islanders always as suffering or endangered subjects? How can Pacific Islander knowledge be more adequately acknowledged, especially within the complicated institutional environments that make such work difficult, if not impossible?



Sonja Pieper, "Fale on Monono Island"

# THE DIGITAL BLACK ATLANTIC

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## DIRECTORS

### **Kaiama L. Glover**

*Associate Professor of French and Africana Studies, Barnard College*

### **David Scott**

*Professor of Anthropology, Columbia University*

## FELLOWS

**Yarimar Bonilla**, *Associate Professor of Anthropology and Caribbean Studies, Rutgers University*

**Nijah Cunningham**, *Assistant Professor of English, Hunter College*

**Brent Edwards**, *Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University*

**Alex Gil**, *Digital Scholarship Coordinator for History and Humanities, Columbia University Libraries*

**Kim Hall**, *Lucyle Hook Professor of English, Barnard College*

## GRADUATE ASSISTANTS

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### **Carina Schorske**

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**Maja Horn**, *Associate Professor of Spanish and Latin American Cultures, Barnard College*

**Kelly Josephs**, *Associate Professor of English, York College*

**Natasha Lightfoot**, *Associate Professor of History, Columbia University*

**Jennifer Morgan**, *Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis, New York University*

**Celia Naylor**, *Associate Professor of History and Africana Studies, Barnard College*

**Didier Sylvain**, *Graduate Student, Music, Columbia University*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Digital Black Atlantic Project (DBAP) is a multi-institutional and interdisciplinary working group that has come together to invent a scholarly resource and digital platform for multimedia explorations and documentations of literary texts, visual documents, sites, moments, rituals and ceremonies, monuments and memorials, performances, and material objects emerging out of and concerning the Black Atlantic world. From the epic prose-poems of Aimé Césaire and Derek Walcott, to the city of New Orleans as Atlantic capital, to the explosive moment of historical convergence that was the year 1968, the literary, performative, historical, geographical, and other dimensions of the Black Atlantic demand to be approached from as many informed disciplinary perspectives as possible. DBAP seeks to place these perspectives in sustained dialogue with one another, building “deep texts”— experiences of carefully curated content that will allow for enriched engagements with regional cultural productions. Current work focuses on the Caribbean and its diaspora, analyzing the intersection of information technologies with fields such as American studies, gender and sexuality studies, queer studies, black studies, ethnomusicology, and communications.



Joella Adia Jones, 2015

## ACTIVITIES

DBAP provides a unique opportunity for sustained interdisciplinary discussion of the scholarly possibilities of “the digital” through the spaces of the “Atlantic hemisphere.” It is part of a broader inter-institutional consortium that includes Vincent Brown (Harvard University), Laurent Dubois (Duke University), Ian Baucom (Duke University), and Kelly Baker Josephs (York College, CUNY).

This group engages with the digital humanities in many ways, including: 1) as an opportunity for discussion of the transatlantic and interdisciplinary possibilities offered by digital technologies; 2) as a space for the development of specific digital humanities projects – archival, interactive, collaborative; 3) as a space for thinking the digital metaphorically; 4) as a point of departure for the enactment of connections that have been idealized by scholars across nation-language borders; 5) as an opportunity for participants to consult with digital humanists and/or technologists via guest lectures and commonly read texts; and 6) as a space within which to consider the ways the digital might facilitate access to and opportunities for knowledge production in nations of the Global South or, instead, replicate existing relations of power.

In July 2016, DBAP launched the new Small Axe digital platforms: *sx: salon*; *sx: archipelagos*; *sx: visualities*. The mission of these digital platforms is to enhance and transform our comprehension of the regional and diasporic Caribbean via scholarly essays, digital scholarship projects, and digital project reviews.

## PUBLIC EVENT

- “The Caribbean Digital II: Histories, Cartographies, Narratives” – a two-day public event that offered a platform for working group members and the broader scholarly public to present work concerning the intellectual, ethical, political, and logistical dimensions of representing and engaging the Caribbean in digital space.



Joella Adia Jones, 2015

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Developed a specifically Caribbean-focused research and pedagogical module, led by Kaiama Glover and Maja Horn, taught as an upper level seminar at Barnard College in spring 2015. The course, “Transnational Hispaniola: Haiti and the Dominican Republic,” generated an online resource for thinking and teaching across the physical and linguistic border of Hispaniola. The digital platform draws attention to the networked relationships that emerge out of common geo-cultural histories and shared contemporary concerns and encourages students to approach this globalizing world in ways that challenge the colonial legacies of regional balkanization.
- Launched *sx: archipelagos*, a peer-reviewed publication platform devoted to creative exploration, debate, and critical thinking about and through digital practices in contemporary scholarly and artistic work in and on the Caribbean.
- Working Group member Yarimar Bonilla co-published, with Max Hantel, “Visualizing Sovereignty: Cartographic Queries for the Digital Age” in *Small Axe*, *sx: archipelagos*.
- Completed the alpha stage of “In the Same Boats: Toward an Afro-Atlantic Intellectual Cartography,” a series of interactive bio-bibliographical and content-rich maps that trace the movement of seminal intellectuals of Africa, the Caribbean, and the wider Americas throughout the Atlantic world. The objective of this project is to chart the extent to which Afro-Caribbean, Afro-American, Afro-Latino, and African cultural actors have been in conversation with one another: attending the same conferences, publishing with the same journals and presses, active in the same political groups, elbow-to-elbow in the same Parisian cafés and on the same planes – literally and metaphorically in the same boats – as they circulate throughout the diverse spaces of the Americas, Africa, and Europe.
- Working Group member Yarimar Bonilla was awarded a “Scholars Grant” from the National Science Foundation to spend a semester learning new techniques in digital scholarship.

# WOMEN CREATING CHANGE

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Women Creating Change is the Center's global initiative, engaging distinguished feminist scholars across Columbia's many schools to focus on how contemporary global problems affect women and the role women play in addressing those problems.

Each working group uses the resources of Columbia's Global Centers to develop international networks of scholars and activists working on pressing problems of gendered inequity.



# WOMEN MOBILIZING MEMORY

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[www.lorienovak.com](http://www.lorienovak.com)

## DIRECTORS

### **Marianne Hirsch**

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

### **Jean Howard**

*Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University*

### **Diana Taylor**

*University Professor, New York University*

## FELLOWS

**Bürge Abiral**, Graduate Student, Anthropology, Johns Hopkins University

**Hülya Adak**, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature, Sabanci University

**Meltem Ahiska**, Assistant Professor of Sociology, Boğaziçi University

**Ayşe Gul Altınay**, Professor of Anthropology, Sabanci University

**Rustem Ertug Altınay**, Graduate Student, Performance Studies, New York University

**Carol Becker**, Professor of the Arts, Columbia University

**Dilara Çalışkan**, Graduate Student, Cultural Studies, Sabanci University

**Henry Castillo**, Graduate Student, Performance Studies, New York University

**Maria José Contreras**, Assistant Professor of Theatre, Universidad Católica

**Constanza Ambiado Cortes**, Historian, Universidad de Chile

**Diamela Eltit**, Novelist

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**Nicole Gervasio**, Graduate Student, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

**Marcial Godoy**, Associate Director, Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics, New York University

**Ximena Goecke**, Graduate Student, History and English, Universidad de Chile

**Milena Grass**, Professor of Theatre, Universidad Católica

**Alyssa Greene**, Graduate Student, Germanic Languages and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

**Asena Günal**, Director, Institute for the Study of Human Rights, DEPO

**Mariana Hausdorf**, Graduate Student, Latin American Studies, Universidad de Chile

**Andreas Huysen**, Professor of German and Comparative Literature, Columbia University

**Manuela Infante**, Theater Director

## FELLOWS

**Sibel Irzik**, *Professor of Comparative Literature, Sabanci University*

**Banu Karaca**, *Visiting Scholar of Arts and Sciences, Sabanci University*

**Ozlem Kaya**, *Director, Hafiza Merkezi*

**Nancy Kricorian**, *Writer*

**Bernardita Llanos**, *Professor of Spanish Language and Literature, Loyola University*

**Kena Lorenzini**, *Photographer*

**Amanda Lotspike**, *Researcher, ESE:O*

**Silvina der Meguerditchian**, *Artist*

**Susan Meiselas**, *Photographer*

**Yael Navaro-Yashin**, *Reader, Social Anthropology, Cambridge University*

**Lorie Novak**, *Professor of Photography, New York University*

**Isin Onol**, *Curator*

**Leticia Robles-Moreno**, *Graduate Student, Performance Studies, New York University*

**Gözde Emin Sevim**, *Photographer*

**Iván Smirnow**, *Graduate Student, Gender and Culture Studies, Universidad de Chile*

**Alisa Solomon**, *Associate Professor of Journalism, Columbia University*

**Leo Spitzer**, *Professor of History Emeritus, Dartmouth College*

**Marita Sturken**, *Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication, New York University*

**Aylin Tekiner**, *Artist*

**Kate Trebuss**, *Graduate Student, English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University*

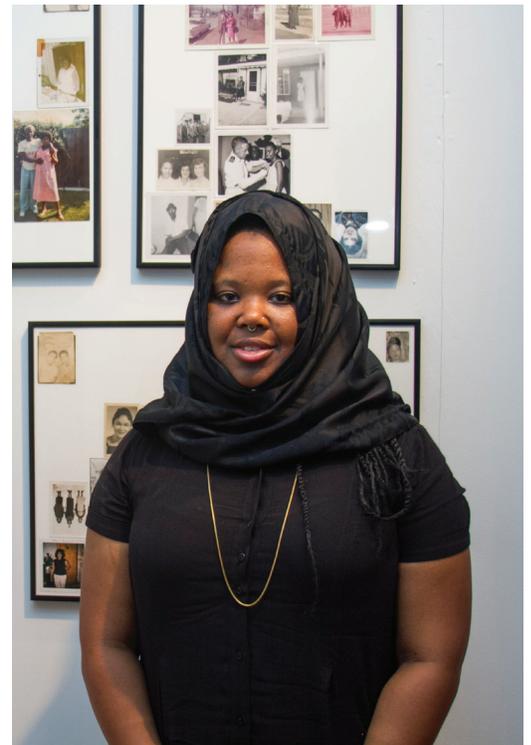
**Zeynep Türkyilmaz**, *Assistant Professor of History, Dartmouth College*

**Armanc Yildiz**, *Anthropology, Harvard University*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

What are the strategies by which the memory of political violence can be mobilized for progressive social change? *Women Mobilizing Memory* explores the politics of memory in the aftermath of the atrocities of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, in comparative global perspective and with unique attention to the effects of social difference.

Emerging from feminist ways of thinking and working, *Women Mobilizing Memory* represents a series of commitments: to combine theory and analysis with practice and action; to think about the material effects of memory work for the future; to envision inclusive memory institutions; to disrupt patriarchal, racist, nationalist, ethno-centric, and militaristic forms of memory; and to memorialize resistance and hope instead of violence and oppression. Based in the Humanities and the Arts, the group looks closely at the political efficacy of various media of memory, ranging from visual art, literature, journalism, and performance to museums, memorials, and street actions. What role do these various media play in combatting the erasure of past violence from current memory and in creating new visions and new histories for future generations? The collaborations among participants in the working group, their face-to-face as well as virtual meetings, and their constructive conversations and disagreements, aim to create a space of solidarity that can lay the groundwork for a more hopeful future.



Dorian Cambi, 2015

## ACTIVITIES



All photos by Dorian Cambi, 2015

The activities of the working group culminated in fall 2015 with the international conference “Women Mobilizing Memory: Collaboration and Co-resistance”. The conference, which was open to the public, analyzed strategies by which artists, scholars, and activists have succeeded in mobilizing the memory of political and social violence to promote redress, social justice, and a democratic future. Building on working group discussions generated in previous workshops in Chile and Turkey, conference roundtables addressed protest actions and their efficacy, ranging from the “Saturday Mothers” to “Black Lives Matter;” strategies for mobilizing political action around memory sites in Istanbul, Santiago, and New York; and the ways in which lives touched by political violence and social death can be reanimated through writing and art. Exploring resonances and connections among divergent histories of violence, the conference also explored the limits of such comparative work, while attempting to forge a feminist practice of solidarity and co-resistance. As part of the conference, the group mounted an art exhibition, co-curated by Isin Önel and Katherine Cohn and featuring New York artists Susan Meiselas, Lorie Novak, Simone Leigh, and Kameelah Janan Rasheed; Berlin-based Armenian artist Silvina der Meguerditchian; Santiago-based artist Paz Errázuriz; and Istanbul artists Aylin Tekiner and the Truth Justice Memory Center. The exhibition Catalogue was published under the title *Collaborative Archives: Connective Histories*.

The conference also included a campus and community-wide Wishing Tree Commemorative Public Event, memorializing and honoring the victims of violent histories, as well as a walking tour and booklet entitled *A Walk Through Harlem*, collaboratively created by the New York-based graduate student members of the Women Mobilizing Memory working group. *A Walk Through Harlem* continues to be used by Columbia instructors to help their students understand the deeper history of Harlem.

In 2015, graduate student members of the working group also organized “Keywords,” a Columbia Cultural Memory roundtable in which participants addressed a variety of the keywords at the center of the work of Women Mobilizing Memory, including: “heritage”; “privilege”; “reaction”; “utopia” and “vulnerability.”

The working group is currently planning the publication of two volumes – *Women Mobilizing Memory: Performances of Protest* and *Women Mobilizing Memory: Arts of Intervention*. Both volumes specifically address questions of memory and political violence in the context of transnational feminism.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- “Women Mobilizing Memory: Collaboration and Co-resistance,” an international conference, open to the public, which examined the politics of cultural memory from the perspective of social difference.
- Art Exhibition: “Collaborative Archives: Connective Histories,” featuring New York artists Susan Meiselas, Lorie Novak, Simone Leigh, and Kameelah Janan Rasheed; Berlin-based Armenian artist Silvina der Meguerditchian; Santiago-based artist Paz Errázuriz; and Istanbul artists Aylin Tekiner and the Truth Justice Memory Center. Co-curators were Isin Önel and Katherine Cohn.
- Roundtable discussion: “Intimate Archives: Connective Histories” moderated by Carol Becker, Dean of the School of the Arts.
- *A Walk Through Harlem* Booklet and Walking Tour collaboratively created by the New York-based graduate student members of the Women Mobilizing Memory working group.
- Wishing Tree Commemorative Public Event, memorializing and honoring the victims of violent histories.
- Art Exhibition: “Mobilizing Memory: Women Witnessing,” held at DEPO, Istanbul and Kunsthalle Exnergasse, Vienna was originally mounted in spring 2014 as part of the Women Mobilizing Memory workshop “Mobilizing Memory for Action.” The artworks included in the exhibit ask how our acts of witness can motivate social change. What do images and accounts of past and present violence demand of spectators, listeners, and readers? How can we modulate proximity with distance, empathy with solidarity?



Top three photos by Dorian Cambi, 2015  
Bottom photo by Laura Blüer, Hemispheric Institute, 2015

# GENDER AND THE GLOBAL SLUM

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## DIRECTORS

**Anupama Rao**

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**Neferti Tadiar**

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

**Saidiya Hartman**

*Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University*

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

How are gender relations impacted by material impoverishment and social segregation? Why do women suffer disproportionately from the social hazards of urban informality? This working group addresses the global slum as the product of a complex interplay between the political economy of urban space, and the spatialization of social difference, especially gender/sexuality. Gender and the Global Slum queries new aspirations around gender and consumption, the gender of poverty, new formations of informal labor and sex work, and emergent sites of violent conflict as these are remaking gendered relations of power. The goal for work in 2015-16 was to outline a theory of slum and subaltern urbanism by engaging with historical, ethnographic, and literary studies. The group aimed to make a distinctive set of interventions in thinking about concepts like precarity, subalternity, remaindered life, and fugitivity.



## ACTIVITIES

In October, the third and final Asian Spatialities workshop was held in Shanghai. This workshop followed two earlier programs in the Asian Spatialities series: “Public Cities, Private Cities” on the future of urban planning (New York, August 2014); and “Urban Democracy: Informality, Precarity and Modes of Survival” on the persistence of urban poverty and slums and the theories and policies relating to the subaltern city (Mumbai, December 2014). The Shanghai workshop focused on research approaches, theories, curricula, and urban studies literature specifically addressing cities in Asia. Conference attendees explored some of the ways in which urban expertise might be reframed to integrate social sciences and humanities-based knowledge.



In December, the working group convened a closed workshop at the India International Centre in New Delhi on “The Difference of Caste.” The workshop served as preparation for the forthcoming publication of a volume of the same title concerning the intersections of caste, gender, sex, and social difference. *The Difference of Caste* will be edited by Anupama Rao and published by Women Unlimited. In the coming year, the group will organize a workshop on “Concept Histories of the Urban.” This workshop will focus on those regions of the Global South where accelerated processes of urbanization are transforming ideas about the city and social change, while also straining the environment and natural resources.



## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Anupama Rao received a grant to participate in “Mapping the Urban Humanities,” run by the Center for Spatial Research. The program prepared faculty to introduce data visualization and spatial mapping into their undergraduate teaching.
- Anupama Rao received a seed grant from the Center for Science and Society. The grant will support “Object Histories,” a workshop drawing together faculty with an interest in urban studies from the Columbia School of Engineering and Applied Science, the Columbia Business School, and the Data Sciences Institute.

# RURAL-URBAN INTERFACE: GENDER AND POVERTY IN GHANA AND KENYA, STATISTICS AND STORIES

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## DIRECTORS

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## GRADUATE ASSISTANT

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**Mamadou Diouf**, *Professor of  
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**Brent Edwards**, *Professor of  
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**Jennifer Wenzel**, *Associate Professor of  
English and Comparative Literature,  
Columbia University*

**Helen Yitah**, *Associate Professor of English,  
University of Ghana*



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Rural-Urban Interface project represents the workshop phase of an interdisciplinary, regional, consortial, Africa-led research endeavor, focusing on the experience of women, youth, and men who inhabit the social and physical space of the rural-urban interface. The working group pays particular attention to the feminization of poverty in migrant populations and looks at ways to combine qualitative knowledge with quantitative knowledge in order to highlight the real, impactful capacity of situated stories, narratives, and oral histories articulated by actual participants in these large-scale transformations. Bringing together humanities and social sciences colleagues at the Universities of Ghana-Legon and Nairobi as well as at Columbia and other New York-area institutions, the working group creates productive collaborations among disciplines, combining the study of statistics with language-sensitive learning techniques and

addressing the role of translation in interpretive social-scientific work.

## ACTIVITIES

To produce statistical averages for policy is a necessity, but it is widely known that such techniques are existentially impoverished and must therefore be modified by a more personalized approach. In the long term, the Rural-Urban Interface project seeks to further this sort of modification by listening to life experience narratives in the local mother tongues and to study the nuanced translations produced by humanities-trained research assistants drawn from University of Ghana-Legon and University of Nairobi. The working group's collaborators in Ghana and Kenya have been running a pilot phase of the research gathering the actual narratives and empirical detail which will enable the larger group to attend to the interplay of stories and statistics in knowledge making. Ultimately, this project will generate research that will open channels by which policymakers and other actors may access regional rural power and gain an understanding of the specific consequences of urbanization by exploring the stories of those most directly affected by development.



# SOCIAL JUSTICE AFTER THE WELFARE STATE

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## DIRECTORS

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**Premilla Nadasen**

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Barnard College*

## GRADUATE ASSISTANT

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*History, Columbia University*

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**Volker Berghahn**, *Professor of History,  
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**Sandy Schram**, *Professor of Social Work,  
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**Wilson Sherwin**, *Graduate Student, Sociology,  
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**Bert Silverman**, *Professor Emeritus of  
Economics, Hostra University*

**Kirsten Swinth**, *Associate Professor of History,  
Fordham University*



Kena Betancur

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Social Justice after the Welfare State is an interdisciplinary working group that explores the implications of the rise of neoliberalism and the declining welfare state for American politics, gender and race relations. The group studies the impact of inequality on the future of American democracy, focusing on a series of key questions, including: Is the idea of government social responsibility at a dead end? Are democratic values threatened by limits on social rights? Will we see an increased emphasis on marriage, family, and

individual responsibility as the source of economic support? How have the struggles for women's equality and racial diversity contributed to progressive social change, but also masked other forms of inequality? How do we think about citizenship and rights in relation to labor migration, incarceration, education, and new reproductive technologies such as surrogacy? Will expanded benefits such as "family-friendly" policies exacerbate divisions among workers and simply create a larger pool of poorly paid labor? Or will such strategies contribute to a rethinking of the meaning of workplace justice?

## ACTIVITIES

In 2015-16, the group hosted workshops on a range of topics, including the economic foundations of social justice, the problem of labor and union activism in the context of a declining welfare state, broader visions of social justice, and questions of social justice and education.

In spring 2016, the group hosted a daylong symposium, "Beyond Neoliberalism: Social Justice after the Welfare State," addressing the transformation of the welfare state and social movements in the face of neoliberal challenges. Putting scholars in conversation with activists who confront the fallout of neoliberalism on the ground, the symposium assessed the past, present, and future of government social responsibility and paid special attention to social rights and social justice, and the implications of a declining welfare state for the political economy of class, gender, racism, and migration.

## NOTABLE ACHIEVEMENTS

- Awarded a Columbia University History Department grant in support of "Beyond Neoliberalism: Social Justice after the Welfare State."
- Publication of a volume of essays and oral interviews, forthcoming from Columbia University Press in 2017. Tentatively titled *The Transformation of the Welfare State: Comparative Perspectives*, the volume expands on conversations started in the working group and continued at the summer 2014 international workshop at Reid Hall, Paris and sponsored by Columbia's Blinken European Institute.

# PUBLIC EVENTS, CONFERENCES, AND PUBLICATIONS



## Women Mobilizing Memory IV: Collaboration and Co-Resistance *Columbia University, September 8-12, 2015*

A group of forty scholars, artists, and activists from Chile, Turkey, and the United States explored how the legacies of violent political histories might offer fodder for a more progressive and hopeful future. With a focus on action, rather than mere commemoration, roundtable discussions examined women's strategies for political protest; memory sites in Santiago, Istanbul, and New York; and the intimate archives of political violence. The group also workshopped papers that will be used in future group publications. A memory walk featuring visits to sites of art and protest in Harlem along with a wishing tree commemorative community event and a group art exhibit were also part of the four-day event.

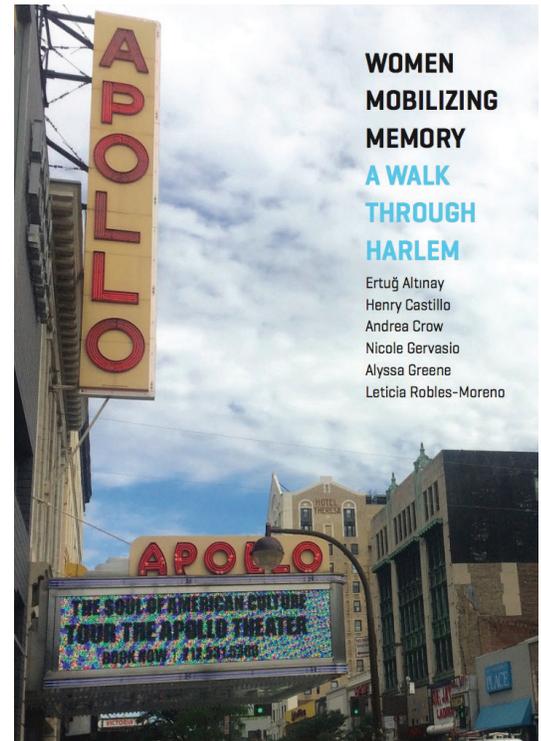
## WOMEN MOBILIZING MEMORY COLLABORATIVE ARCHIVES: CONNECTIVE HISTORIES

## Collaborative Archives: Connective Histories Exhibition Catalogue

A group art exhibition at Columbia's Leroy Neiman Gallery accompanied the "Collaboration and Co-Resistance" conference. The exhibition showcased artworks that demonstrate how intimate objects and stories animate larger painful histories and also resist their violent force. The show featured New York artists Susan Meiselas, Lorie Novak, Simone Leigh, and Kameelah Janan Rasheed; Berlin-based Armenian artist Silvina der Meguerditchian; Santiago-based artist Paz Errázuriz; and Istanbul artists Aylin Tekiner and the Truth Justice Memory Center. Co-curators were Isin Önoel and Katherine Cohn. The diverse collective of artists in the exhibition offered images through which to imagine and reimagine histories of slavery, war, genocide, and political repression.

## Women Mobilizing Memory: A Walk Through Harlem

The booklet accompanying the September 8, 2015 memory walk through Harlem points out both known and forgotten sites of art and protest. These sites reveal the vibrant artistic and intellectual legacies of African American and some Anglo American institutions and individuals in the famous neighborhood. Created by the New York-based graduate student members of Women Mobilizing Memory, the walk spotlights conflicts over race, class, gender, and sexuality, all of which defined the communities and the arts of Harlem. Although many of the sites described in the booklet no longer exist, *A Walk Through Harlem* challenges visitors to consider how the politics of urban space and gentrification affect the construction, preservation, and transmission of memory in the present.



## Keywords Interdisciplinary Roundtable Conversation: Choice

Columbia University, March 31, 2016

Inaugurated in 2010, Keywords: Interdisciplinary Roundtable Conversations was inspired by the innovative interdisciplinary scholarship promoted by CSSD. Currently a collaborative effort of CSSD and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Council, the Keywords series draws participants from a wide range of interdisciplinary homes in order to explore fundamental critical/theoretical ideas and to generate new vocabularies and methodologies. Keywords:Choice featured Rachel Adams, CSSD Director and Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University; Ester Fuchs, Director, Urban and Social Policy Concentration and Professor of International and Public Affairs and Political Science, SIPA, Columbia University; Maya Sabatello, Assistant Professor of Clinical Bioethics, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; Carol Sanger, Barbara Aronstein Black Professor of Law, Columbia Law School; and Josef Sorett, Associate Director, Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life and Assistant Professor of Religion and African-American Studies, Columbia University.

The image is a red event poster. At the top left, it says "COLUMBIA | SOCIAL DIFFERENCE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE". At the top right is the "WGSSC WOMEN'S GENDER &amp; SEXUALITY STUDIES COUNCIL" logo. Below the logos, it says "SPRING 2016 | Keywords: interdisciplinary roundtable conversations". The central text is "&lt;CHOICE&gt;" in large white letters. Below this, it lists "Featured Participants:" followed by: "RACHEL ADAMS, Director, CSSD and Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University"; "ESTER FUCHS, Director, Urban and Social Policy Concentration and Professor of International and Public Affairs and Political Science, SIPA, Columbia University"; "MAYA SABATELLO, Assistant Professor of Clinical Bioethics, Department of Psychiatry, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons"; "CAROL SANGER, Barbara Aronstein Black Professor of Law, Columbia Law School"; and "JOSEF SORETT, Associate Director, Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life and Assistant Professor of Religion and African-American Studies, Columbia University". The date and time are "THURSDAY, MARCH 31, 2016 4:30 - 6:30 PM" and the location is "Lehman Auditorium (202 Altschul Hall), Barnard College". At the bottom, the website "WGSSC.COLUMBIA.EDU" and "SOCIALDIFFERENCE.COLUMBIA.EDU" are listed.

# Keywords/Key Questions for Disability Studies

A symposium to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Future of Disability Studies Project, and the publication of *Keywords for Disability Studies*

**October 1, 2015**  
6:00pm - 8:30pm

**October 2, 2015**  
9:00am - 5:15pm

James Room  
Barnard College

Featuring

Rachel Adams	Elizabeth Emens	Michael Ralph
Christopher Baswell	Faye Ginsburg	Rayna Rapp
James Berger	Riva Lehrer	Benjamin Reiss
Leonard Cassuto	Heather Love	Julia Rodas
Sarah Chinn	Janet Lyon	Maya Sabatello
G. Thomas Couser	Park McArthur	David Serlin
Sayantani DasGupta	David Mitchell	Joseph Straus
Lennard Davis	Katherine Ott	Sunaura Taylor

Columbia University and Barnard College are committed to creating an environment that includes and welcomes people with disabilities. This event will include sign language interpreters. If you need further accommodations because of a disability, please email [elb2157@columbia.edu](mailto:elb2157@columbia.edu) at least one week in advance.

Sponsors: Columbia Center for the Study of Social Difference, Columbia Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality, Barnard Center for Research on Women

WGS BARNARD CENTER FOR RESEARCH ON WOMEN COLUMBIA SOCIAL DIFFERENCE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL DIFFERENCE

## Keywords/Key Questions for Disability Studies

Barnard College, October 1-2, 2015

At the conclusion of CSSD's Future of Disabilities Studies working group, the symposium marked the 25th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the publication of the volume *Keywords/Key Questions for Disability Studies*, co-edited by Rachel Adams, CSSD Director and Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University; Benjamin Reiss, Professor of English, Emory University; and David H. Serlin, Associate Professor of Communication, UCSD. Panels were devoted to disabilities and access issues as they connect to the arts, law and justice, technology and medicine, academia and activism.



## Caribbean Digital II: Histories, Cartographies, Narratives

Columbia University, December 4-5, 2015

Presenters at the two-day conference, organized by the Digital Black Atlantic Project, reflected on the challenges and opportunities presented by the media technologies currently reconfiguring the social, historical, and geo-political contours of the Caribbean and its diasporas. Participants discussed technological visualizations used to present slave genealogies; digital innovations used to decipher historical documents like music notation; and multimedia platforms used to visualize diasporic migrations.

### A Small Axe Event #SXCD2015

# THE CARIBBEAN DIGITAL II: Histories, Cartographies, Narratives

4 December 2015 1-6:30 PM  
Maison Française • Columbia University

[www.caribbeandigitalnyc.net](http://www.caribbeandigitalnyc.net)

**Participants**  
Robert Antoni  
Ian Baucom  
Vincent Brown  
Laurent Dubois  
Alex Gil  
Kaïama L. Glover  
Kelly Baker Josephs  
Oronya Kempadoo  
Mary Caton Lingold  
Jennifer Morgan

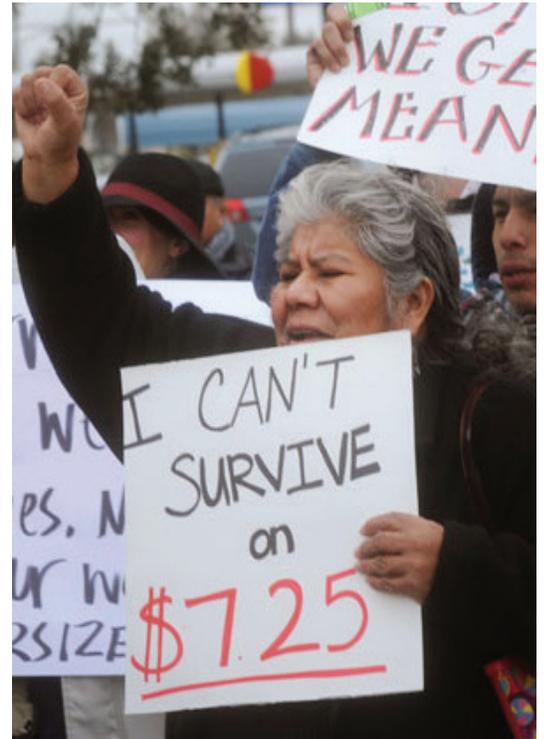
**Co-Sponsors**  
Small Axe Project  
Columbia Center for the Study of Social Difference  
Barnard College African Studies Department  
Institute for Research in African-American Studies  
Maison Française  
Center for the Greater Caribbean  
Forum on Migration  
Digital Humanities Center



## Beyond Neoliberalism: Social Justice After the Welfare State

*Columbia University, April 2, 2016*

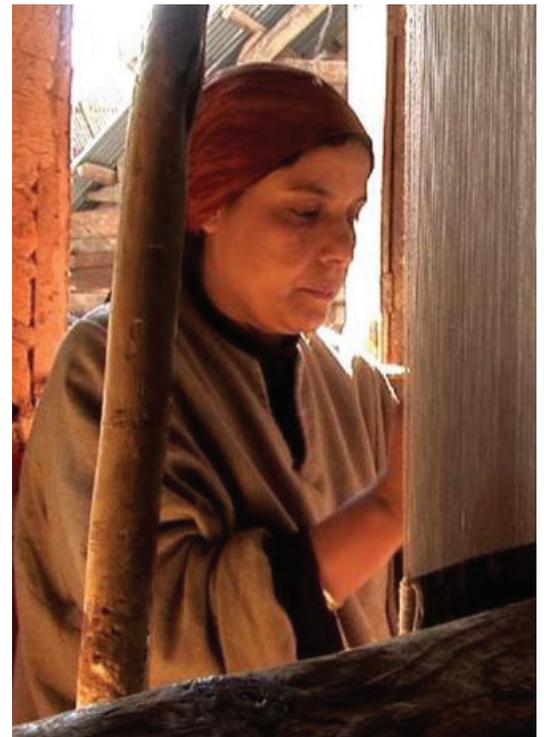
Organized by CSSD's Social Justice after the Welfare State working group, this daylong symposium explored the neoliberal challenges to the welfare state and the implications of these challenges for the political economy of class, gender, racism, and migration. Putting scholars in conversation with activists who address the fallout of neoliberalism on the ground, the symposium assessed the past, present, and future of government social responsibility and paid special attention to social rights and social justice.



## Textures of Loss: Screening and Discussion with Pankaj Butalia

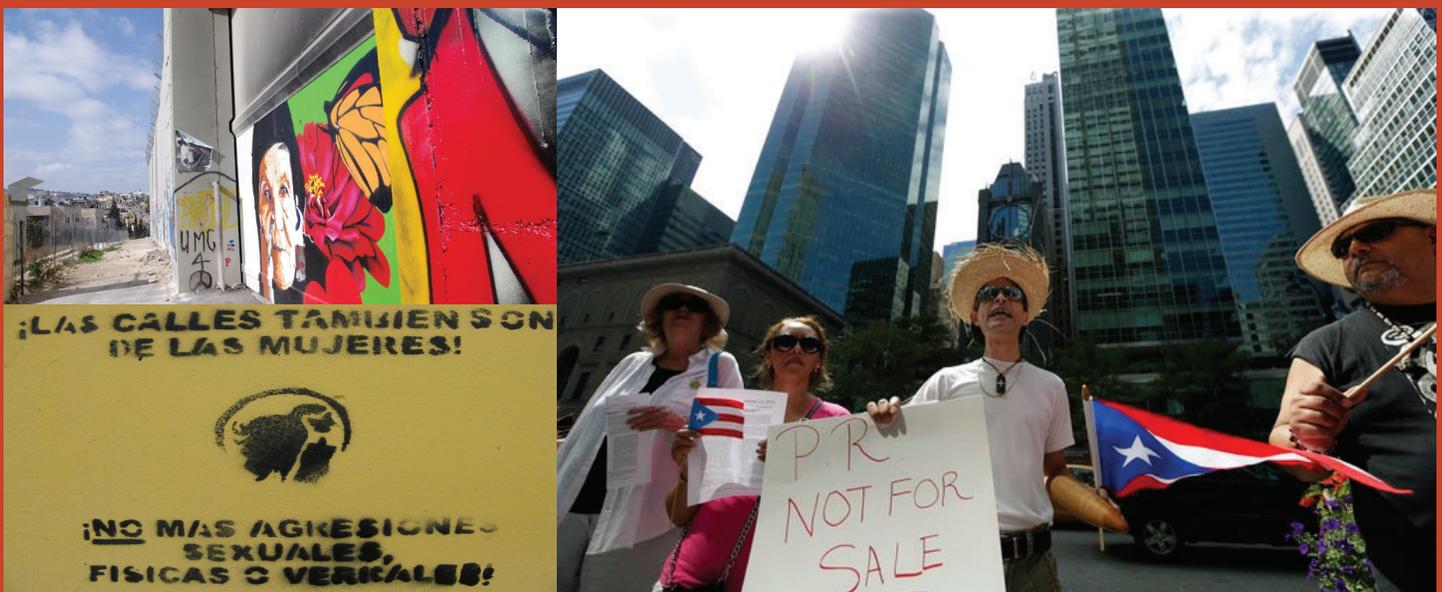
*Columbia University, March 1, 2016*

CSSD's Bandung Humanisms working group, in conjunction with the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society, sponsored a screening of Pankaj Butalia's "Textures of Loss." Butalia's 2012 documentary film chronicles two decades of conflict in Kashmir.



# NEW PROJECTS

- Frances Negrón-Muntaner, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University and Christina Duffy Ponsa, Professor of Legal History, Columbia Law School, are co-directing **Unpayable Debt: Capital, Violence, and the New Global Economy**. Unpayable Debt is a comparative research and public engagement project examining the emergence and impact of massive debt on vulnerable polities and populations.
- **Reframing Gendered Violence**, a new CSSD project with additional support from Columbia's Humanities Initiative, runs in collaboration with the Columbia Global Centers. It aims to open up a critical global conversation among scholars and practitioners in order to reframe the problem of violence against women as it is currently discussed in a wide range of fields, both academic and policy-oriented, including human rights, public health, journalism, law, feminist studies, literature, sociology, religious studies, anthropology, and history.
- Rachel Adams, Professor of English and Comparative Literature, Columbia University, director of The Future of Disabilities Studies and Director of CSSD, will co-direct **Precision Medicine: Ethics, Politics and Culture**. This project will bring together scholars in law, social sciences, and the humanities to explore questions raised by this emerging approach to disease treatment and prevention.
- Lila Abu-Lughod, Professor of Anthropology and Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Columbia University and co-director of Gender, Religion, and Law in Muslim Societies; Janet Jakobsen, Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Barnard; Rema Hammami, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Birzeit University; and Nadra Shalhoub- Kevorkian, Professor of Gender Studies, Mada al-Carmel, will co-direct **Religion and the Global Framing of Violence Against Women and Gender Based Violence**, a new CSSD project with additional support from the Henry Luce Foundation. The project examines the role of religion in framing the problems and solutions currently emerging as critical to transnational governance and local feminist activism.



# HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015-16 FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

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- **Precision Medicine: Ethics, Politics and Culture** was awarded a grant from the Columbia Humanities Initiative.
- CSSD received a two-year grant from the Columbia Humanities Initiative for the new project **Reframing Gendered Violence**.
- **Religion and the Global Framing of Violence Against Women and Gender Based Violence** was awarded a major grant from the Henry Luce Foundation.
- Yarimar Bonilla, Associate Professor of Anthropology and Caribbean Studies, Rutgers University, and member of the **Digital Black Atlantic Project**, was awarded a "Scholars Grant" from the National Science Foundation.
- Anupama Rao, Director of **Gender and the Global Slum**, received a grant to participate in "Mapping the Urban Humanities," run by the Center for Spatial Research.
- **Social Justice after the Welfare State** received a Columbia University History Department grant in support of the group's spring symposium, "Beyond Neoliberalism: Social Justice after the Welfare State."



Photo/art credits starting clockwise, left: Dorian Cambi, 2015; Dorian Cambi, 2015; Amelia Saul, 2016

# FUNDRAISING ACTIVITY

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- **Women Mobilizing Memory** received generous support from the following for its fall 2015 workshop “Women Mobilizing Memory: Collaboration and Co-Resistance:” Columbia University Seminars; School of the Arts; Graduate School of Arts and Sciences; Columbia Global Centers; Oral History Research Office; Heyman Center for the Humanities; Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality; Institute for Comparative Literature and Society; Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race; Department of English and Comparative Literature; Department of Iberian and Latin American Studies; Armenian Center; Office of the Vice Provost for Diversity and Inclusion; Institute for the Study of Human Rights; Barnard Center for Research on Women; The Hemispheric Institute for Performance and Politics; New York State Council for the Humanities; and Sabanci University.
- The Center for the Study of Social Difference Fund, a quasi-endowment, continued to yield income for ongoing support of CSSD and its projects.
- Women Creating Change received generous donations during Columbia Giving Day in October 2015.
- CSSD continued to receive generous funding from the office of President Lee Bollinger.



Photo credits starting clockwise, bottom left: Joella Adia Jones, Creative Commons; Dorian Cambi, 2015

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**2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT**