SOF@50

ANNUAL REPORT 2025–2026

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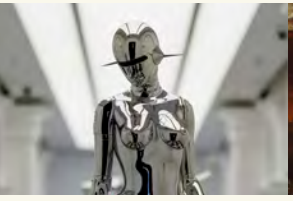
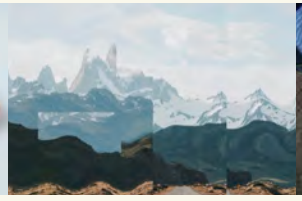
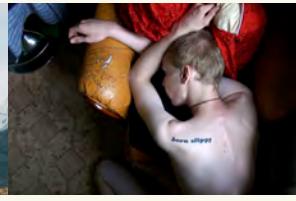
THE SOCIETY OF FELLOWS AND
HEYMAN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY





THE SOCIETY OF FELLOWS AND
HEYMAN CENTER FOR THE HUMANITIES
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

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Jennifer Wenzel

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

In the hallways and stairwells of the Heyman Center, framed event posters lining the walls offer reminders of lively conversations from years and decades past. But for two days in April 2026, it was as if those silent posters had come to life when former Fellows returned to the Heyman Center to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Society of Fellows (SOF). Our anniversary conference, "SOF@50: Humanities in the World," invited former SOF postdoctoral Fellows to consider how their time in residence at the Society shaped their work as they left Columbia and went out into the world. But "Humanities in the World" also names our commitment to the indispensability of humanistic thinking to speak to challenges and problems in the world at large—something like what Lee Bollinger called the "fourth purpose" of the University. Panels at the conference considered the Society's longtime emphasis on humanistic thinking about science and technology, the problem of attention, thinking through the crises of the 2020s, and climate humanities. In two lightning rounds, Fellows from across the generations offered a round-robin of quick takes on each other's recent books.

As part of this commemoration, we also created an exhibit on the third floor of Butler Library and a **website** that features a historical timeline, a bookshelf of SOF Fellows' publications, and a still-expanding archive of oral histories where former Fellows reflect on their experience. At the reception that kicked off the conference, Fellows from the late

1970s through 2026 mingled with current and incoming Fellows in a celebration of interdisciplinary fellowship across generations.

In telling the story of our first half century, we have found continuing inspiration in the vision that led to the founding of the Society of Fellows. In a 1975 letter to John Sawyer at the Mellon Foundation, Columbia's then-president William McGill sought a $2 million endowment for a program that would create a "cross-fertilization" among recent postdocs in the humanities with Columbia's distinguished faculty in the humanities, the social and natural sciences, and the professional schools. This program would "demonstrate the interdependence of disciplinary knowledge" in addressing "human problems" and "human concerns," particularly in the realms of law, health, and environment. The prescience and ongoing relevance of this vision is remarkable: in 1975—that is, in the wake of 1968, the first oil shock, intensifying stagflation, challenging economic headwinds, and a marginalization of humanities within the university—President McGill turned the now-familiar narrative of a "crisis in the humanities" upside down, recognizing how a capacious, interdisciplinary approach to the humanities can strengthen the university, not just for Columbia but for the public good. Anyone thinking about the role of humanities in the university and in the world would do well to read this letter in full—and you can find it on the SOF@50 **website**.

Other highlights of the 2025–26 academic year demonstrate our ongoing commitment to this expansive and engaged vision of humanistic thinking. In Spring 2026, we launched a new series, "**Climate Change Conversations: Taking Action against Shock, Silence, and Stupidity**," which aimed to reenergize engaged climate concern at Columbia after years of institutional turmoil on campus and rollbacks on climate action at the federal level. These roundtables featured Columbia faculty and external speakers from a wide range of disciplines and professions, including the Journalism School, the Business School, Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, and the Climate School—climate change is an all-hands-on-deck moment, where every discipline has a role to play.

With support from the Columbia Society of Senior Scholars, we were honored to welcome Mary Louise Pratt, Professor Emerita and Silver Professor at NYU, as the **Spring 2026 Theodore Wm. de Bary Distinguished Visiting Fellow**. Professor Pratt gave a lecture on the past and possible futures of Area Studies at a moment of authoritarian resurgence and institutional retrenchment, and she joined several Columbia professors on a roundtable whose participants proposed concepts for thinking about nature now. Professor Pratt also led a lunchtime workshop for current Columbia PhD students where they discussed ways of framing and pursuing their dissertation projects.

The April 2026 alumni/ae conference was a precious opportunity to catch up with some of our former Fellows. We always welcome their news; among their many recent accomplishments, we would like to highlight that Hidetaka Hirota (SOF 2013–16) **was cited** in the recent Supreme Court majority opinion for *Trump v. Barbara*, which upheld birthright citizenship in the United States. Such urgent questions of profound social importance are precisely what President McGill had in mind for the Society of Fellows at Columbia.

Jennifer Wenzel
Director and
Chair of the Governing Board

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It took a village and more than two years of planning, but our April conference, **SOF@50: Humanities in the World**, proved a truly joyous opportunity to celebrate the work of the Society over the past fifty years—and counting. Scores of current and alumni Fellows and Board members attended the opening reception at Faculty House on the Friday evening, enthusiastically engaged in panel discussions all day Saturday, and continued the conversation that evening over dinner at Lido (remembered vividly, and mostly fondly, by many as the venue of pre-interview dinners). On the Sunday morning, we gathered for a closing panel on the power and politics of walking, before heading to view the Butler Library exhibit chronicling Society of Fellows activities over the past half century (pp. 40–43) and a walk through Riverside Park.



Eileen Gillooly

Curating that exhibit—at the kind invitation of University Librarian Ann Thornton—had sent us months earlier into the Columbia Presidential archives in search of founding documents. As Jennifer Wenzel points out in her **Letter from the Chair of the Governing Board** (pp. 2 –3), the Society of Fellows was conceived as a space for researchers of all ranks and disciplines throughout the University to come together to address issues of "human concern" that then, as now, press upon us forcefully. Reflecting on our history and on the obligations it implicitly places upon us, we took the occasion of our golden jubilee to launch three new cross-disciplinary partnerships, each led by current or former Board members: **Computational Humanities**, **Critical Data Studies Initiative**, and **Law and the Humanities**. Descriptions of these can be found on the SOF/Heyman website alongside such ongoing projects as the **Justice-in-**

Education Initiative, **Health and Medical Humanities**, and **Climate Programming**, which for more than a decade have been bringing the perspectives and values of the humanities to bear in addressing, with others across Columbia's campuses, some the most challenging problems we collectively face. We hope that many of you will be inspired by these projects to join us in advancing them. Do write to the **Society of Fellows Alumni Council** at any time to share ideas or express interest in participating.

In January 2025, the Society of Fellows selection committee interviewed thirteen candidates, two of whom were awarded fellowships. **Aamer Ibraheem** (Columbia, PhD) is a sociocultural anthropologist of the modern Middle East whose work focuses on the traditions, experiences, and religious beliefs of the Druze community in the Golan Heights and vicinity—a community that has historically been treated by a series of reigning colonial powers as an external population and an object of anthropological knowledge. A former professional dancer and choreographer, **Alexis Stanley** (UC Berkeley, PhD) is a literary and performance studies scholar investigating the ways in which Enlightenment discourse shaped both theatrical techniques and literary accounts of bodily gesture and expression in eighteenth-century France. Together with Buell Fellow **Chelsea Spencer** (MIT, PhD)—whose work on the rise of general contracting in the US reveals how contemporary views on freedom, risk, and value shaped nineteenth-century architectural design—and returning Fellows **Eli Cumings** (English), **Sonali Dhanpal** (Buell Fellow 2024–26), **Iheb Guermazi** (Art History and MESAAS), **Irina Kalinka** (English and ICLS), **Chris Cañete Rodriguez Kelly** (English), **Anastasia Kostina** (Film and Slavic), and **Daniela Moraes Traldi** (History), these scholars comprised the 2025–26 cohort of the Society of Fellows.

As they do every year, the Fellows presented their own research during the fall semester in the lunchtime **Thursday Lecture Series** and, collaborating with the directors of the Society, created the spring semester's theme and roster of guest speakers. Keenly eyeing the moment, the Spring 2026 series, **Pedagogy of the Deed** (see pp. 26–27), invited scholars to reflect upon the implicitly political nature of pedagogy and the pedagogic force of political actions. How, especially in times of political crisis, might the humanities classroom—designed as a space where strongly held viewpoints and positions may be deliberated upon and debated—offer the opportunity to engage in the sort of mutually humanizing learning that Paolo Freire imagined?

Since 2018, when the Society of Fellows became the primary funder of "Heyman Center" programming, Fellows have often taken the lead in organizing our events, routinely partnering with individuals, units, and schools across the Columbia campus in doing so. The Fellows were particularly active this past year, producing events on topics ranging from the recent emergence of Dalit Studies as a distinct scholarly field (**Sonali Dhanpal**) to contemporary Russian documentaries challenging

the status quo (**Anastasia Kostina**) to the political convergence of far-right ideologies and digital technologies (**Irina Kalinka** and **Daniela Traldi**) to the role of architecture in the making and unmaking of property (**Sonali Dhanpal** and **Chelsea Spencer**) to how examining Syro-Palestine through a variety of disciplinary lenses can reveal paths of inquiry generally occluded in narratives of the region (**Iheb Guermazi** and **Aamer Ibraheem**). Details of these events can be found in the "Event Highlights" section of this report (pp. 30–33), as well as on our **website**, together with all eighty-nine events we sponsored or cosponsored this year, including the ever-popular **New Books in the Arts and Sciences** series. Take a look!

As I wrote in last year's annual report, fostering initiatives that bring faculty and students from across the University together with engaged community members to address urgent questions has become an increasingly important aspect of our work as both a postdoctoral society and a humanities center. Ongoing projects such as **Justice Forum** (pp. 36–37), affiliated with our **Justice-in-Education Initiative**, and **Climate Programming** (pp. 34–35), to which Jennifer Wenzel draws our attention in her Letter from the Chair (pp. 2–3), are prime examples of our "humanities in the world" efforts. This year, both the **Heyman Fellows** (pp. 44–48) and the **Society of Senior Scholars** joined us in these efforts, contributing programming that addressed the history and ongoing politics of partition in India and Palestine in the first instance (p. 31) and AI and higher education in the second (pp. 32–33). The Senior Scholars also supported, in whole or part, events featuring de Bary Distinguished Visiting Fellow Mary Louise Pratt (pp. 38–39) and Colm Tóibín, who conversed with Senior Scholar Andreas Huyssen about his recently published story collection, *The News from Dublin* (p. 33). Tóibín's themes of loss, longing, and exile echoed those sounded earlier in the semester by Senior Scholar Rashid Khalidi, whose Edward W. Said Memorial Lecture entitled "This Is Not War" (a quotation from Marina Carr's play *Hecuba*) evoked the Sack of Troy in its discussion of contemporary Gaza (p. 31).

Goings and Comings:

Our fiftieth anniversary celebration of the Society of Fellows in April did double-duty this year as a send-off party for the six Fellows whose time with us ended this summer. **Eli Cumings** returns to the UK as Lecturer in Early Modern Literature at King's College London; **Sonali Dhanpal** moves to Binghamton University as Assistant Professor of Art History; **Iheb Guermazi** joins the Department of Art History at the University of Southern California as Assistant Professor; **Aamer Ibraheem** takes up his appointment as Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis; **Irina Kalinka** begins as Lecturer at the Digital Studies Institute at the University of Michigan; and **Chris Cañete Rodriguez Kelly** moves to the English Literature Department at Swarthmore College as an Assistant Professor of Asian American Literature.

In September, **Anastasia Kostina**, **Alexis Stanley**, **Daniela Moraes Traldi**, and **Chelsea Spencer** (Buell Fellow) will be joined by **Jacob Bessen**, **Elsa Lora**, **Siga Maguiraga**, **Hannah Pivo**, **Arnau Sala Sallent**, and **Frederik Braüner** (Buell Fellow). **Jacob Bessen** (University of Toronto, PhD) is an anthropologist studying how ambivalent understandings of sacrifice have shaped Sicilians' responses to resource extraction and its environmental fallout. **Elsa Lora** (Harvard, PhD), a legal and African American Studies scholar, considers the ways that incarcerated people build lives of care and community within US prisons. **Siga Maguiraga** (European University Institute, PhD), a historian of West Africa, examines Islamic intellectual mobility from the Sahel to Cairo in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, while design historian **Hannah Pivo** (Columbia, PhD) investigates in the same time period the rise of the data-representing graph as an analytic and administrative tool in the US and Western Europe. **Arnau Sala Sallent** (Columbia, PhD) is a literary and cultural historian focusing on how colonial war, dictatorship, and anticolonial revolt forged solidarity between Spanish avant-garde writers and the Riffian resistance. And Buell Fellow **Frederik Braüner** (UC Berkeley, PhD) explores how the Modernist architecture built in Arctic welfare states in the twentieth century shaped colonial and postcolonial modernity across the broader Global High North.

One of the unanticipated pleasures of the SOF alumni gathering was witnessing friendships sparked between Fellows from various cohorts. While the panel on Attention (p. 43), whose Fellows' years in residence spanned from 1979 to 2018, was especially notable in this regard, other Fellows, meeting for the first time, discovered shared intellectual and ethical commitments and ways to work together on future SOF/Heyman activities. Since April, several alums have joined the **Society of Senior Scholars**, and we invite all who are approaching retirement to consider doing the same. We look forward to celebrating recent work by Teresa Bejan (SOF 2013–14) and Whitney Laemmli (SOF 2016–19) in the **New Books in the Society of Fellows** series this autumn and encourage those of you with monographs published in 2026 or 2027 to be in touch with the **SOF Alumni Council** so that we might include them in that series as well. Please send all your news updates to the Alumni Council or by filling out **this form**. And finally, if you have not already done so, please do say yes to the Columbia graduate students conducting the SOF Fellows oral history project when they email you to participate. What began as a highlight section of the **SOF@50 commemorative website** has become a significant archival project and a testament to the work of our Fellows in promoting humanities in the world.

Eileen Gillooly
Executive Director

MEMBERS OF THE 2025–2026 GOVERNING BOARD

Manan Ahmed
History

Lucia Allais
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

Zeynep Çelik Alexander
Art History and Archaeology

Amy Chazkel
History

Nicholas Dames*
Chair, Literature Humanities
English and Comparative Literature

Eileen Gillooly*
Executive Director
English and Comparative Literature

Frank Guridy
African American and African Diaspora Studies
History

Eleanor B. Johnson
English and Comparative Literature

Jeremy Kessler
Columbia Law School

Brian Larkin
Anthropology
Barnard College

Eugenia Lean*
East Asian Languages and Cultures

Karuna Mantena
Political Science

Naeem Mohaiemen
Visual Arts
School of the Arts

Paul Scolieri
Dance
Barnard College

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Columbia Journalism School

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Music

Jennifer Wenzel
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Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies

Gareth Williams*
Director, Friends of the Heyman Center
Classics

Gisele Winckler
Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory
Columbia Climate School

**Ex officio*



Still from the film *How to Save a Dead Friend* (2022),
part of the New Russian Documentary series

FIFTY-FIRST ANNUAL SOCIETY OF FELLOWS COMPETITION

The fifty-first Society of Fellows in the Humanities fellowship competition closed on 29 September 2025, with 965 applicants from 157 universities around the world vying for the five fellowships available in 2026–27. Representatives from twenty-two departments, institutes, and centers conducted the first round of vetting. Each application recommended for advancement received three readings: two by members of the Governing Board and one by a current Fellow.

The 2026–27 fellowships were awarded to the following five scholars: anthropologist Jacob Bessen, who explores the role of theology in the responses of the inhabitants of Central Sicily to exploitation and ecological devastation; Elsa Lora, an African American Studies scholar, whose history of carceral life reveals the intimate and social as tactics of resistance; historian Siga Maguiraga, who studies how Muslim students from the Central Sahel respond to shifting regimes of Islamic and colonial authority; Hannah Pivo, a historian of design, who discloses how the use of graphic methods disguise how much intuition undergirds statistical analysis; and Arnau Sala Sallent, a philologist and historian, whose project examines cultural responses in North Africa to Spain's imperial presence there from 1898 to 1975. Joining this group will be incoming Buell Fellow Frederik Braüner, whose research focuses on the overlapping histories of colonialism, welfare ideologies, and high-modernist spatial practices, particularly in the Arctic.

New Fellows for 2026–2027

Jacob Bessen, PhD in Anthropology, University of Toronto

Frederik Braüner, PhD in Architecture, University of California, Berkeley

Elsa Lora, PhD in African and African American Studies, Harvard University

Siga Maguiraga, PhD in History, European University Institute

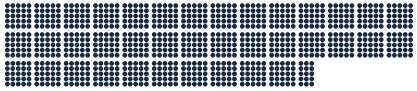
Hannah Pivo, PhD in Art History and Archaeology, Columbia University

Arnau Sala Sallent, PhD in Latin American and Iberian Cultures, Columbia University

SOCIETY OF FELLOWS COMPETITION NUMBERS

Fellowships Starting in 2026–2027

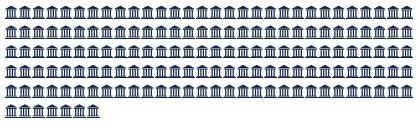
965 Applicants



22 Departments Reviewing



157 Universities Represented



30 Countries Represented



DEPARTMENT/CENTER		
African American and African Diaspora Studies	37	3.83
Anthropology	106	10.98
Art History and Archaeology	58	6.01
Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race	20	2.07
Classics	33	3.42
East Asian Languages and Cultures	59	6.11
English and Comparative Literature	97	10.05
Film Studies	19	1.97
French	14	1.45
Germanic Languages	14	1.45
History	125	12.95
Institute for Comparative Literature and Society	48	4.97
Institute for the Study of Sexuality and Gender	29	3.01
Italian	13	1.35
Latin American and Iberian Cultures	51	5.28
Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies	47	4.87
Music	37	3.83
Philosophy	41	4.25
Political Science	42	4.35
Religion	32	3.32
Slavic Languages	16	1.66
Sociology	27	2.80
TOTAL	**965**	**100**

FELLOWS IN RESIDENCE
2025–2026



Eli Cumings, 2024–2026

University of Cambridge, Department of English and Comparative Literature, PhD 2023

Project: *Race and the English Reformation: Providence, Allegory and the "Monstrous"*

This academic year, **Eli Cumings** continued to develop her book project "Race and the English Reformation: Providence, Allegory, and the 'Monstrous.'" She published an article deriving from the book, previously workshopped at the Friday Writing Workshop, in *Renaissance Studies* under the title "Divine Providence, Human 'Monstrosity' and the English Reformation." This article sits in a special issue edited and introduced by Dr. Cumings, which explores the intersection of theology and race-making in early modernity.

Over the course of the year, Dr. Cumings gave invited talks on her book project and related topics at the annual meeting of the Renaissance Society of America (February), in Columbia's Department of Religion (March), and at symposia organized by the International Spenser Seminar (December), the Columbia Shakespeare Seminar (April), and the Folger Institute (June). She also co-convened an international, interdisciplinary work-in-progress seminar on race and early modernity, which was supported by the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Centre for Early Modern Studies (CEMS) at King's College London.

Alongside her core research, Dr. Cumings has continued developing her project on colonial Shakespeares. In February, she gave an invited talk on this material at the Columbia Shakespeare Seminar, entitled "These Our Actors: Performing *Macbeth* in Colonial Zimbabwe." Dr. Cumings has contributed related writing to an edited volume on Shakespearean acting, forthcoming with Arden, and to the catalogue for the Folger exhibition *To Hear Her Speak: Black Women and Shakespeare*, opening in October 2026.

In September, Dr. Cumings will be joining the English Department at King's College London as a Lecturer in Early Modern Literature.



Sonali Dhanpal, Buell Fellow 2024–2026

Newcastle University, Department of Architectural History and Theory, PhD 2023

Project: *Empire Comes Home: Housing Race Relations in Britain*

Over the past year, **Sonali Dhanpal** has made significant progress on two ongoing projects. The first, her monograph-in-progress, "Rule of the Property Form: Caste, Capital, and the Making of Colonial Bangalore," was selected for the American Institute of Indian Studies Dissertation-to-Book Workshop at the Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. It also received a Large Author Grant from the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art at Yale University; Dr. Dhanpal will present research from this project at the Paul Mellon Centre in London in Fall 2026. She is also editing a special issue for *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, featuring contributions from historians, anthropologists, planners, and geographers on South Asia's transition to capitalism, which is a primary focus of her work. Her second project, "Welfare Architecture and Aesthetics: Building Consent and Countering Dissent in Britain after Empire," was awarded the 2026 Research Fellowship by the Canadian Centre for Architecture and a 2026–2027 Rockefeller Archive Center research stipend. Research from this project was published as an article entitled "Housing Empire's Subjects" in *Grey Room*, Vol. 101, as part of a special Issue on State Effects, edited by SOF/Heyman Board members Lucia Allais and Zeynep Çelik Alexander.

At the SOF/Heyman, Dr. Dhanpal organized Dalit Journeys for Dignity, a panel featuring Ramnarayan Rawat (University of Delaware), Kusuma Satyanarayana (EFL-U), and Anupama Rao (Columbia University) on the radical, ground-shifting field of Dalit Studies. Along with her Buell colleague Chelsea Spencer, Dr. Dhanpal convened scholars of racial capitalism, colonialism, and law, alongside architectural historians, for the public symposium entitled "Making and Unmaking Property," supported by the Buell Center and the SOF/Heyman. This coming academic year, Dr. Dhanpal will join the Department of Art History at Binghamton University as Assistant Professor.



Iheb Guermazi, 2023–2026

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Architecture, PhD 2022

Project: *The Eyes That Saw the Prophet: A Braided History of Art*

During the 2025–26 academic year, **Iheb Guermazi** continued work on his book manuscript "The Eyes That Saw the Prophet." Building on research conducted during a summer 2025 archival visit to Leiden University, he reworked the first two chapters of the manuscript and further developed the book proposal. Drawing on the same archival materials, Dr. Guermazi completed an article on the role of mystical movements in challenging colonial imaginaries in early twentieth-century Cairo, which he submitted to the *Journal of Sufi Studies*. He also published a review of a recent book on medieval architecture in Morocco in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* (March 2026). In April 2026, together with Fellow Aamer Ibraheem and colleagues Adrien Zakar and Esmat Elhalaby, he co-organized the symposium entitled "Contours of Thought: The Humanities and the Possibilities of Anti-Discipline" and presented a paper based on his recent research.

Beyond his scholarly work, Dr. Guermazi pursued several collaborative projects at the intersection of art, architecture, and public history. He worked with curator Mariam Eskandary on an exhibition dedicated to the work of the Swedish Sufi painter Ivan Aguéli, opening in Stockholm in December 2026. He collaborated with architect Ziad Jamaleddine on an award-winning design competition for a public space in Amman, and they were also selected, together with the Mecca Art Collective, to participate in the 2026 Sharjah Architecture Triennial. Dr. Guermazi additionally served as a historical consultant for a feature film on Emir Abdelkader. Throughout the year, Dr. Guermazi presented his research at conferences and invited lectures, including a festschrift conference honoring Nasser Rabbat at MIT. A revised version of his paper there will appear in the forthcoming volume *Critical Historiography as Method*. In Fall 2026, Dr. Guermazi will join the Department of Art History at the University of Southern California as Assistant Professor.



Aamer Ibraheem, 2025–2026

Columbia University,
Department of Anthropology,
PhD 2025

Project: *Present Interruptus: Reincarnation and Sovereignty in the Golan Heights*

Over the past year, **Aamer Ibraheem** presented his research at invited workshops and conferences in the fields of anthropology, Middle East studies, and political theory. At Brown University, he delivered a talk entitled "Events of Political Fidelity" in the Department of Judaic Studies workshop "The Filiation and Affiliation of Jews, Muslims, and Others." At Princeton University, he participated in the conference "History After the Fall of Assad," presenting "The Syrian State of Injury." At Yale University, he contributed to the workshop "Technologies of Violence in Palestine and Beyond" a paper entitled "A New Criminal Type in Syria."

At Columbia, Dr. Ibraheem co-organized with Iheb Guermazi (SOF 2023–26) and other colleagues the symposium "Contours of Thought: The Humanities and the Possibilities of Anti-Discipline," bringing together eighteen scholars across Middle East and North Africa studies to explore how discursive fields are constituted across disciplinary and regional boundaries. Throughout the year, he co-convened the monthly Department of Anthropology reading seminar "Will Without Ends" and served as discussant for book talks, including Nasser Abourahme's *The Time Beneath the Concrete: Palestine Between Camp and Colony* and Julia Elyachar's *On the Semicivilized: Coloniality, Finance, and Embodied Sovereignty in Cairo*. He also joined a public conversation with Elyachar at the School for Advanced Research (Santa Fe, NM).

Research and writing this past year included the essay "State of Injury: Colonial Sin and the Syrian Age of Persecution," forthcoming in *Cultural Anthropology*, and a roundtable issue for the *International Journal of Middle East Studies* entitled "Arabs & Jews," to which he contributed a co-authored introduction and a solo essay, "Taqammus, Gilgul, and the State's Impossible Faith." His invited commentary on Khaled Furani's "What If Anthropology Were a Spiritual Exercise?" was published in *Current Anthropology* (February 2026).

In Fall 2026, Dr. Ibraheem takes up his appointment as Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis.



Irina Kalinka, 2023–2026

Brown University,
Department of Modern
Culture and Media,
PhD 2023

Project: *Tech-Corporate Power and the Remaking of Democracy*

In 2025–26, **Irina Kalinka** completed two sample chapters and a proposal for her first book project, "Tech-Corporate Power and the Remaking of Democracy," and submitted them to academic presses for review.

She continued to disseminate her research through various engagements. Her work on tech-corporate governance was featured at the Science and Democracy Network's 24th Meeting at Harvard's Kennedy School; the Navigating Digital Democracy conference at Bournemouth University; and in a talk, "User Democracy and Tech-Corporate Governmentality," at the University of Michigan's School of Information. Dr. Kalinka also served as an expert witness for the Working Group on Disinformation and Digital Publics of the Green Party parliamentary group in the German *Bundestag*.

Her presentations further included "The Digital Aesthetics of Gated Communities" at the Northeast Modern Language Association Annual Convention and "From Artificial Intelligence to Artificial Intimacy" at the Society of Fellows Lecture Series and the University of Pennsylvania's Center on Digital Culture and Society symposium "Good Vibes Only? How Affects and Emotions Are Mediated for Justice in Digital Culture." An article based on this project will be included in a special issue of the same name in the *International Journal of Communication*.

Together with Fellow Daniela Traldi (SOF 2024–27), Dr. Kalinka co-organized the conference "Techno-Fascism: Past and Present" at Columbia University, which drew two hundred registrants and received support from six cosponsoring units across the University. She also organized the panel "System, Space, Market, Subject: Mediating Neo(il)liberalism" for the Society for Cinema and Media Studies annual conference.

Further professional activities included participation in two workshops organized by the Digital Sovereignty Research Network in Germany and serving as a member of the Program Committee of the SOF/Heyman. In 2026–27, she will begin a position as Lecturer at the Digital Studies Institute at the University of Michigan.



Chris Cañete Rodriguez Kelly, 2024–2026

University of Wisconsin–Madison, Department of English, PhD 2024

Project: *Mutually Unintelligible: Language and Labor in the Making of the Philippine Novel*

During the Fall 2025 semester, **Chris Cañete Rodriguez Kelly** drafted and revised their book proposal "Mutually Unintelligible: Language and Labor in the Making of the Philippine Novel" and undertook archival research in Manila at both the University of the Philippines Diliman and the National Library of the Philippines. Dr. Cañete Rodriguez Kelly's article "'Life with a cut': Historical Time and the Mediation of Coloniality in Francisco Balagtas's *Florante at Laura* and Lope K. Santos's *Banaag at Sikat*" appeared in *PMLA* (May 2025), the journal of the Modern Language Association. Dr. Kelly traveled to Toronto to deliver two invited papers at the annual MLA conference: the first on the enduring relevance of the term "diaspora" for postcolonial studies and the second on the process of being published as a junior scholar in *PMLA*. During the Spring 2026 semester, Dr. Kelly taught a section of the course Contemporary Civilization in the Columbia undergraduate Core Curriculum program, served as a peer reviewer for the journal *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints*, and participated as a respondent on a book release panel for Adrian de Leon's monograph *Balikbayan: A Revenant History of the Filipino Homeland* (University of Washington Press, 2025). In Fall 2026, Dr. Kelly will join the Department of English Literature at Swarthmore College as Assistant Professor in Asian American Literature.



Anastasia Kostina, 2024–2027

Yale University,
Slavic Languages and Literatures and Film and Media Studies, PhD 2022

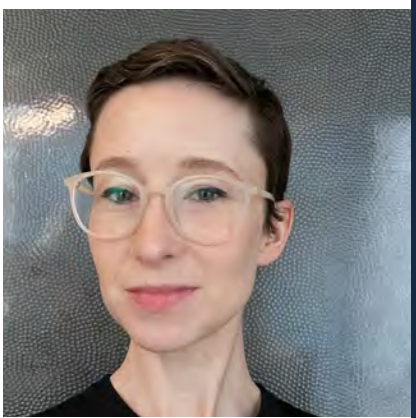
Project: *Between Theory and Practice: Esfir Shub and the Engendering of Soviet Documentary*

In 2025–26, **Anastasia Kostina** continued work on her book project "Between Theory and Practice: Esfir Shub and the Engendering of Soviet Documentary." Along with the book proposal, she finalized chapters on Shub's transition from found-footage compilations to shooting her own films and on Shub's unfinished and unrealized projects of the 1930s, preparing these for submission to the University of California Press. Dr. Kostina also completed the article "Found Footage, Lost Film: Esfir Shub, Compilation Film, and the Question of Authorship" for the collected volume *Feminist Film Histories Handbook*, edited by Shelley Stamp.

In addition to presenting work drawn from her research in the Fall 2025 Thursday Lecture Series, Dr. Kostina continued programming the New Russian Documentary film series at the SOF/Heyman, which launched in Spring 2025. This year's screenings included three significant works by contemporary Russian documentary filmmakers: *How to Save a Dead Friend* (2022), *Children 404* (2014), and *Holidays* (2022). The series has drawn large audiences and generated vigorous post-screening discussions.

Dr. Kostina also presented her work at the two principal conferences in the field of Slavic Languages and Literatures: ASEEES 2025, where she took part in the roundtable "Cinemas in Crisis Post-2022," and AATSEEL 2026, where she presented the paper "Soviets in Turkey: Esfir Shub, Sergei Iutkevich, and Soviet Cinema Collaborations with Republican Turkey." In addition, she was invited to moderate a discussion panel at Columbia's *The Momentum* conference. And in February 2026, Dr. Kostina delivered a guest lecture on early Soviet documentary cinema at Wesleyan University.

Finally, at the end of the spring semester, Dr. Kostina recorded a podcast episode for klassiki.online, a major web portal dedicated to Eastern European cinema, about her co-edited volume *The New Russian Documentary: Reclaiming Reality in the Age of Authoritarianism* (Edinburgh University Press). The episode aired 29 June 2026.



Chelsea Spencer, Buell Fellow 2025–2027

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Department of Architecture, PhD 2024

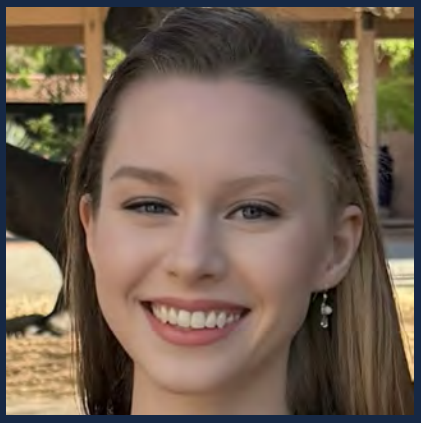
Project: *The Contract, the Contractor, and the Capitalization of American Building*

This past year, her first as a Buell Fellow in the Society of Fellows, **Chelsea Spencer** taught the course Questions in Architectural History I and continued work on her book manuscript, focusing on a revised theoretical framing for the project. She also advanced two new research directions: an article on the role of building artisans in the political economy of real estate speculation in nineteenth-century United States, and a second book project conceived as an architectural history of corruption.

The year saw three publications come to fruition. Two programmatic essays appear as "entries" for the terms *theft* and *contract* in *Provenance in Architecture: A Dictionary of Terms* (Hatje Cantz, 2025), and her article "Trust Buildings: Builders' Exchanges and the Consolidation of the US Building Industry" was published in *Real Estate: Histories of Architecture and Capital* (gta Verlag, 2026). She participated in the volume's launch at the European Architectural History Network conference in Aarhus, Denmark (June 2026).

Dr. Spencer gave an invited lecture at the École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL) in April and served as a respondent for the Buell Center's Abundance Talks. She organized sessions at two conferences: on property claims and legal fictions in architectural history at the Architectural Humanities Research Association meeting, in Liverpool (November 2025); and on building and contracting in the Americas at the Business History Conference, in London (March 2026). Dr. Spencer is on the planning committee for the inaugural conference of the Costs of Architecture Network, an international forum for new scholarly work on architecture and political economy that she helped establish in 2025.

The year's most generative collaboration was "Making and Unmaking Property," a symposium co-organized at the Buell Center with fellow Buell Fellow Sonali Dhanpal (2024–26), with whom Dr. Spencer is now co-writing an article.



Alexis Stanley, 2025–2028

University of California, Berkeley, Department of French, PhD 2025

Project: *Gestures of Enlightenment: Theatricality and Embodiment in Eighteenth-Century France*

In 2025–26, her first year in the Society of Fellows, **Alexis Stanley** made significant progress on her research agenda and teaching, as well as on scholarly collaborations in eighteenth-century French studies, performance studies, and dance history. After workshopping her project in the Society's work-in-progress seminar, she completed the book proposal for her first monograph, to be entitled "Gestures of Enlightenment: Theatricality and Embodiment in 18th-Century France."

Her recent publications also advanced these lines of inquiry. She published "Theatricality, Performativity, and the *Fête révolutionnaire*: The Paradoxes of French Revolutionary Festivals as Performed Assembly" in *Theatre, Performance, and Revolution*, co-edited by Logan Connors, Lillian Manzor, and Emily Sahakian. Her article "Sculptural Bodies, Signifying Gestures: Recasting Pantomime and *Chorégraphie* in the Age of Noverre" was accepted for publication in an issue of *H-France Salon* devoted to dance and sculpture.

Dr. Stanley taught Literature Humanities, participated in Core Curriculum pedagogy initiatives, and organized thematic class visits to the Rare Book & Manuscript Library and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She also contributed to working groups, University Seminars, and Maison Française programming at Columbia and NYU.

Her conference activity reflected an expanding interest in performance, mediation, and the politics of embodiment across the Francophone world. She delivered a talk on "The *Neveu*'s Enigma: Alienation, Embodiment, and the Theatricality of Everyday Life in Diderot" in the Society's Thursday Lecture Series and another on "Placing Minette: Contextualizing the Mediatized Legacy of Saint-Domingue's Theatrical Trailblazer" at PAMLA. She also conducted archival work for an upcoming Dance Studies Association conference paper on Revolutionary ballet and institutional constraint. Additionally, Dr. Stanley helped organize conference panels for presentation in Fall 2026 and, with Eli Cumings (SOF 2024–26), the SOF/Heyman symposium "Perplexities of the Flesh: The Body in Early Modern Literature" (Spring 2027). Finally, she began discussions with the New York Baroque Dance Company regarding future research-performance collaborations bridging academic scholarship and historical dance practice.



Daniela Moraes Traldi, 2024–2027

CUNY Graduate Center, Department of History, PhD 2024

Project: *Fascist Pasts, Gendered Memories: How Women Shaped Far-Right Legacies in Twentieth-Century Brazil*

This past year, **Daniela Moraes Traldi** pursued a range of activities in teaching, research, and scholarly collaboration that focused on gender and the far right in Latin America.

In Fall 2025, Dr. Traldi developed and taught a seminar entitled Women, Gender, and the Political Right in Latin America, as an offering in the History Department curriculum. In Spring 2026, she advised a master's student in the Columbia-LSE dual-degree program and served on a doctoral dissertation committee at the Federal University of Juiz de Fora, Brazil, expanding her engagement with mentorship in the field.

Research activities this past year included archival work in Brazil in support of her project on women's political activism and far-right movements in twentieth-century Latin America. In Spring 2026, Dr. Traldi joined a scientific committee hosted by the University of Valencia dedicated to transnational approaches to gender and the far right. As part of this collaboration, she began developing a conference and edited-volume project, scheduled for Spring 2027. She also remained active in scholarly exchange and conference organization, presenting research at the American Historical Association (AHA) Annual Meeting in Chicago (January 2026) and organizing two sessions there on gender, fascism, antifascism, and far-right movements. In April 2026, with her colleague Irina Kalinka (SOF 2023–26), she organized the interdisciplinary symposium entitled "Techno-Fascism: Past and Present," which explored the relationships between authoritarian politics, digital technologies, and the far right.

Dr. Traldi is scheduled to present her research at the Brazilian Studies Association (BRASA) Conference in Salvador, Bahia (July 2026) and at the AHA Annual Meeting in New Orleans (January 2027). She has two journal articles forthcoming—one in *Estudos Históricos* (2026) and a second in *The Americas* (2027)—and her review of Daniel Gunnar Kressel's *Hispanic Technocracy* will appear in the *Hispanic American Historical Review* (HAHR) in 2027.



Photograph by Jared Poelman

THURSDAY LECTURE SERIES

FALL 2025: FELLOWS' TALKS

Every fall semester in the Society's longstanding lunchtime lecture series, Fellows present work drawn from their research that is designed to engage a cross-disciplinary audience. These lectures are chaired by SOF/Heyman Board members and are open to the Columbia community and guests.

18 September 2025
"'Life with a cut': Historical Time and the Mediation of Coloniality in Philippine Tagalog Literature"
Chris Cañete Rodriguez Kelly, Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature

25 September 2025
"The Convert, the Missionary, and the State: Jurisdictional Limits to Christianity in Princely and Colonial India"
Sonali Dhanpal, Lecturer in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

2 October 2025
"Spenser's Anatomies: Allegory, Violence, and Pity"
Eli Cumings, Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature

9 October 2025
"The Neveu's Enigma: Alienation, Embodiment, and the Theatricality of Everyday Life in Diderot"
Alexis Stanley, Lecturer in French

16 October 2025
"Urban Futility: Monuments, Memory, and the End of Politics in 20th-Century Tunis"
Iheb Guermazi, Lecturer in Art History and Archaeology and in Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies

23 October 2025
"Service Chatbots and Machine Lovers: From Artificial Intelligence to Artificial Intimacy"
Irina Kalinka, Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature and in the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society

6 November 2025
"The Part Which Has Two Parts: Reincarnation, Sovereignty, and Implicated Subjects in the Golan Heights"
Aamer Ibraheem, Lecturer in Anthropology





13 November 2025
"'I Want to Make a Film About Women': The Story of One Unrealized Feminist Manifesto"
Anastasia Kostina, Lecturer in Film Studies and in Slavic Languages

20 November 2025
"Tradwives and Fascist Legacies in Brazil"
Daniela Traldi, Lecturer in History

4 December 2025
"General Contracting in the Age of Contract: The Transformation of American Building"
Chelsea Spencer, Lecturer in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation

Every spring, the Fellows, in consultation with the Society's Directors, organize the Thursday Lecture Series around a single topic capacious enough to accommodate a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Fellows work together to determine speakers and to host their talks.

With a nod to both Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1968) and the anarchist principle of "propaganda by the deed," the 2026 Thursday Lecture Series invited reflections on the relationship between education and action. Two theoretical paradigms undergird this theme. The first of these draws attention to the inherently political nature of pedagogy, as manifest in Freire's vision of the co-intentional and mutually humanizing act of reality formation enacted together by students and teachers. The second is the pedagogic and affective force of deeds themselves, especially those that announce their intention to inform, to educate, and to inspire.

Bearing these paradigms in mind, "Pedagogy of the Deed" aimed to think through theory and praxis concurrently and to broaden the sites of education and analysis beyond the academy. Speakers considered how political actions (seek to) educate and how we, as humanities scholars and teachers, are implicated in their narration. How does the humanities classroom operate as a site for acts of interpretation attuned to contradicting viewpoints, positions, and modes of being? How do students and teachers—as well as activists and academics—enact the sorts of collaborative processes of mutually humanizing learning that Freire envisioned? In short, Pedagogy of the Deed aimed to interrogate the pedagogic valences of action and the political value of pedagogy—not merely as topics for abstract reflection, but as modes through which humanities education might be reconstituted in the context of political crisis.



SOF
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5 February 2026
"Elizabeth Key and the Slippery Slope of Indenture: Slavery and Servitude in 17th C. Virginia"
Jennifer L. Morgan, Silver Family Professor of History in the Department of Social and Cultural Analysis, New York University

12 February 2026
"Pedagogy of the Desert: Architecture, Action, and Critical Scholarship amid Ecological Crisis"
Pamela Karimi, Associate Professor of Architecture, Cornell University

19 February 2026
"Lines of Flight: François Truffaut, Fernand Deligny, and the Pedagogy of the Deed"
Anne-Gaëlle Saliot, Associate Professor of Romance Studies, Duke University

5 March 2026
"Academics and Activists: The International Defense of Brazilian Democracy and the Presidential Elections of 2026"
James N. Green, Professor Emeritus of Brazilian History, Brown University

12 March 2026
"When Action Teaches: Documentary Practice and the Pedagogy of the Deed"
Angela J. Aguayo, Associate Professor of Media and Cinema Studies, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

26 March 2026
"Toward a Negative Zoology: More-than-Secular, More-than-Human Worlds"
Mayanthi Fernando, Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Santa Cruz

2 April 2026
"Technofeudal Fever Dreams: Silicon Fiefdoms, Doom Loop Dystopics, and the Urban Anxieties of Empire"
Erin McElroy, Associate Professor, Department of Geography, University of Washington

9 April 2026
"The Tale of the Chocolate Man: Friendship, Xenophilia, and the Consumption of Race"
Lilith Mahmud, Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of California, Irvine

16 April 2026
"How To Conduct a Didactic Dismantlement: A Catalogue of Pedagogic Deeds"
Shannon Mattern, Director of Creative Research, Metropolitan New York Library Council

30 April 2026
"Activist Readings of Capital"
Colleen Lye, Associate Professor of English and Chair of Asian American Research Center, University of California, Berkeley

YEAR IN REVIEW

89 Total Events

54 Events Led by the SOF/Heyman



35 Cosponsored Events



PROGRAMMING PARTNERS IN 2025–2026

African American and African Diaspora Studies

Alliance Program

Ambedkar Initiative

Anthropology

Art History and Archaeology

Barnard College: Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Cultures and the Office of the Provost

Brown Institute for Media Innovation

Casa Hispanica

Center for Comparative Media

Center for Contemporary Critical Thought

Center for Palestine Studies

Center for Science and Society

Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race

Columbia Climate School

Committee on Global Thought

Dean's Office at the Columbia School of Journalism

East Asian Languages and Cultures

English and Comparative Literature

Film and Media Studies

French

Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation

Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Harriman Institute

History

Ifriqyya Colloquium

Institute for Comparative Literature and Society

Institute for Research in African-American Studies

Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy

Institute for the Study of Sexuality and Gender

Institute of Latin American Studies

Italian

Latin American and Iberian Cultures

Law School

Maison Française

Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Middle East Institute

Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies

Music

Office for Postdoctoral Affairs and Early Career Research

Office of the Divisional Deans in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences

Philosophy

Political Science

Sakip Sabanci Center

School of Professional Studies

School of the Arts

Sing Sing Prison Museum

Slavic Languages

Society of Senior Scholars

Tamer Center for Social Enterprise and Climate Change

University Seminars

Weatherhead East Asian Institute

EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

The SOF/Heyman works with faculty, postdoctoral scholars, students, artists, and practitioners to create programming that encourages cross-disciplinary inquiry and promotes the public good. We produce workshops, conferences, lectures, seminars, performances, and public humanities collaborations both independently and in collaboration with colleagues across Columbia and the greater community. For a complete list of events, please visit our website: sofheyman.org.

6 October–1 December 2025

The New Russian Documentary: Reclaiming Reality in the Age of Authoritarianism

Organized by Anastasia Kostina (SOF 2024–27), a film and media scholar in Slavic Studies, and inspired by the eponymous collection of essays that she co-edited, the New Russian Documentary series, now in its second year, presents a selection of essential films that challenge the status quo and offer rare insights into contemporary Russia. This year's films included *How to Save a Dead Friend* (October 6), *Children 404* (November 10), and *Holidays* (December 1). Each screening was followed by discussion with the directors or disciplinary experts, including Cynthia Madanksy, whose experimental film *Esfir* (2020), a contemporary interpretation of Esfir Shub's unrealized script *Women* (1933), examines the current status of feminism in Russia by focusing on the stories of four present-day women (see "Visions of Feminism in Contemporary Russia" on our website). Cosponsors included Film and Media Studies at Columbia University School of the Arts, the Department of Slavic Languages, and the Harriman Institute.

20 October 2025

Dalit Journeys for Dignity

Sonali Dhanpal (SOF Buell Fellow 2024–26), Anupama Rao (Barnard College), Ramnarayan Rawat (University of Delaware), Kusuma Satyanarayana (English and Foreign Languages University)



Celebrating the publication of *Dalit Studies, Volume Two* (2025), this event reflected upon the development of Dalit Studies as a distinct subfield within South Asian Studies—a subfield inaugurated by Ramnarayan Rawat and Kusuma Satyanarayana with their book *Dalit Studies* (2016). Volume Two explores affinities between Dalit Studies and other emerging interdisciplinary subfields such as Critical Caste Studies, Gender and Caste, and the more established field of Black Studies. Cosponsors included the Ambedkar Initiative; the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race; the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society; and the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies.

27 October 2025

The Edward W. Said Memorial Lecture: This Is Not War

Edward W. Said (1935–2023) was University Professor in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia and one of the most influential intellectuals of his time. His probing examination of the relationship between culture and politics is the hallmark of his work, which continues to inform fields of inquiry as diverse as postcolonial studies, music theory, world literature, cultural theory, and international relations.

Given annually in his honor, the Edward W. Said Memorial Lecture pays tribute to Said by hosting a celebrated speaker whose own work demonstrates Said's intellectual interests and ethical commitments. This year's speaker was Rashid Khalidi, the Edward Said Professor Emeritus of Modern Arab Studies and Literature, whose lecture "This Is Not War" (a quotation from Marina Carr's play *Hecuba*) drew parallels between the destruction of ancient Troy and contemporary Gaza.

29 October 2025

Partitions & Decolonization

Esmet Elhalaby (University of Toronto), Marissa J. Moorman (University of Wisconsin, Madison), and Jessica Namakkal (Duke University)

Despite notable anticolonial victories won in the Global South during the post-WWII era, political independence for many people remains an elusive goal in a world where authoritarianism and neocolonial exploitation are on the rise, especially for those in spaces remade by settler colonialism and native dispossession. The divide between the well-fed and the hungry has only sharpened in recent decades, and naked forms of colonial violence—such as the ongoing genocide in Palestine—continue to shape our political horizons. Drawing upon their recent work, panelists Esmat Elhalaby, author of *Parting Gifts of Empire: Palestine and India at the Dawn of Decolonization*, and *Radical History Review* editors Manan Ahmed Asif, Marissa Moorman, and Jessica Namakkal discussed the history and politics of our ongoing partitions and dispossessions. Organized by Manan Ahmed, on behalf of the Heyman Fellows Seminar.



13 March 2026

Making and Unmaking Property: A Public Symposium

Heba Alnajada (Boston University), Bench Ansfield (Temple University), Lisa Haber-Thomson (Mount Holyoke College), R. H. Lossin (Harvard University/Brooklyn Institute for Social Research), Bryan E. Norwood (University of Texas-Austin), Bhavani Raman (University of Toronto), and Kalyani Ramnath

Organized by SOF Buell Fellows Sonali Dhanpal (2024–26) and Chelsea Spencer (2025–2027), this public symposium examined how property is made and unmade through architectural objects, practices, and processes. Bringing together architectural historians and scholars of racial capitalism, colonialism, and law, the event explored the co-constitution of architecture and property across symbolic, social, spatial, and material registers. Presentations addressed property's formation through actuarial assessment, hereditary compacts, domicile law, and the sedimentation of legal claims, while also considering its destruction through sabotage, arson, and other acts of unmaking.

3 April 2026

Techno-Fascism: Past and Present: An Interdisciplinary Symposium

Andreina Torres Angarita (Barnard College), Kathleen Blee (University of Pittsburgh), Paula Chakravartty (New York University), Elizabeth Leake, Becca Lewis (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Lydia H. Liu, Adrienne Massanari (American University), Arvind Rajagopal (New York University), Mary Roldán (CUNY Graduate Center), Nathan Schneider (University of Colorado Boulder), Rianka Singh (York University), Quinn Slobodian (Boston University), Marc Steinberg (Concordia University), Olivier Sylvain (Fordham University), and Ilia Venyavkin (Kronika—Russian Independent Media Archive). Keynote by Fred Turner (Stanford University)

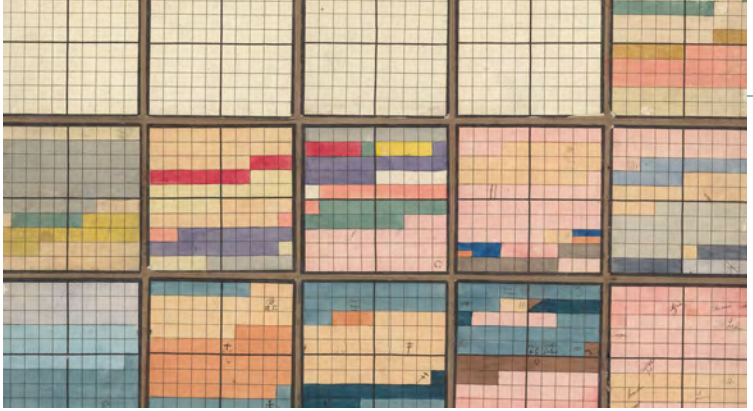
Organized and moderated by Irina Kalinka (SOF 2023–26) and Daniela Moraes Traldi (SOF 2024–2027), this one-day symposium, which gathered together scholars and practitioners from across disciplines and institutions, examined the convergence of far-right ideologies, authoritarian politics, and digital technologies. Speakers explained how algorithmic governance, social media influencers, and AI-driven propaganda are reshaping our understanding of political power and our experience of everyday life and how digital tools are used to reinforce exclusionary nationalisms, gender and racial hierarchies, and anti-democratic regimes. Participants also reflected upon historical precedents, contemporary resistance, and the future of media, technology, and political struggle.

9 April 2026

Higher Education in the Age of AI

Manan Ahmed, Hua Hsu (Staff Writer at *The New Yorker*), Mario Khreiche (Teachers College), Preston Parker, Shea Vance (Barnard College), and Madisson Whitman

Engaging ongoing conversations on the use of generative AI and its role in reshaping how students read, write, and



think, this panel of faculty, students, and practitioners drew on their experiences within and beyond the classroom to consider the impact of AI on the mission of the university. Among the questions considered were the following: How does AI augment learning and how does it diminish it? How does it reconfigure the social dimensions of education—and what do such shifts reveal about the aims of undergraduate study? What does it mean to teach when the tools that structure thinking are embedded in corporate infrastructures? What are the potential gains—including expanded access to analytical resources, new modes of engagement with complex material, and alternative pathways into academic inquiry—that generative AI offers? Organized by Sarah Browne ('26 GS/TCD) on behalf of the Society of Senior Scholars and cosponsored by the SOF/Heyman.

16–17 April 2026

Contours of Thought: The Humanities and the Possibilities of Anti-Discipline

Esmat Elhalaby (University of Toronto), Iheb Guermazi (SOF 2023–26), Aamer Ibraheem (SOF 2025–26), and Adrien Zakar (University of Toronto)

This two-day symposium brought together scholars working across and beyond Middle East and North Africa studies to examine how discursive fields are constituted and to explore the possibilities that emerge when scholarship moves across and against established disciplinary and regional boundaries. Building on conversations around Syro-Palestine and reflecting on how regional fields have been positioned in relation to the question of Palestine, participants focused on how such positionings can often constrain inquiry and foreclose other narratives and questions. Through a keynote panel and three invited discussions, this symposium developed conceptual vocabularies that resist colonial inheritances and disciplinary segmentation and that reimagine scholarly methods through new forms of relation.

5 May 2026

***The News from Dublin*: A Reading and Discussion with Colm Tóibín**

Jean Howard, Andreas Huyssen, and Colm Tóibín

Colm Tóibín—the multiple-award-winning author of numerous novels, stories, poems, libretti, and essays—read selectively from his new short story collection, *The News from Dublin*. He was joined by Andreas Huyssen, Villard Professor of German and Comparative Literature Emeritus, to discuss some of the ideas raised in his new book, including family, loss, longing, love, and exile across Ireland, Spain, and the United States. Organized and sponsored by Columbia Society of Senior Scholars, the event was cosponsored by the University Seminars on Cultural Memory and Irish Studies, the Department of English and Comparative Literature, and the SOF/Heyman.

CLIMATE PROGRAMMING

Building upon the interdisciplinary series "Climate Futures/Climate Justice," launched in 2023 by Leah Aronowsky (SOF 2020–23) and Joerg Schaefer (SOF/Heyman Board 2021–24), Climate Programming at the SOF/Heyman encompasses talks, workshops, film screenings, collaborations, and conversations that bring scholars from across the disciplines and schools of the University together with artists, filmmakers, activists, policy makers, educators, and community members to engage with the pressing climate questions of our time. In addition to these events, a recent edited collection, *Climate Justice Now: Crossing Disciplines to Combat Our Planetary Crisis* (Columbia UP, 2026), is the tangible result of such cross-school collaboration. The book emerged from the Decarbonization, Resilience, and Climate Justice Earth Network at the Columbia Climate School, and the SOF/Heyman sponsored and hosted a manuscript workshop that helped to bring this book to fruition. Under the aegis of a Columbia Alliance Trilateral Initiatives in Emerging Regions (T.I.E.R.) grant, we have also created an international collaboration with colleagues in Paris, Guadalajara, and Lagos for a series of events on "Petroleum in (and out of) the Visual Arts."



24 February–21 April 2026

Climate Change Conversations: Taking Action against Shock, Silence, and Stupidity

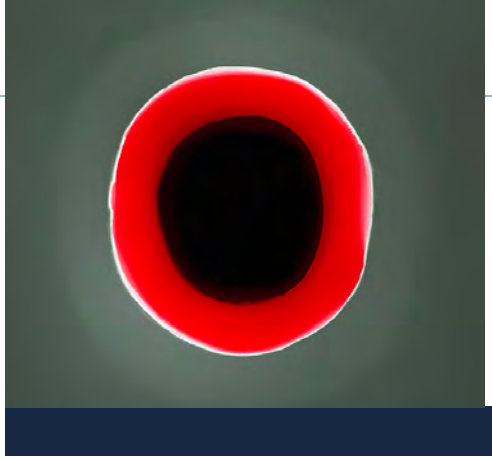
Spring 2026 saw the launch of a new series designed to reinvigorate interdisciplinary conversations at Columbia about climate emergency, at a moment when confronting the urgent and ever-growing challenges posed by global warming feels extraordinarily difficult. Organized by Jennifer Wenzel (Director and Board Chair) and Joerg Schaefer, these panels brought scholars in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences together with activists and artists to debate possible approaches to climate action. Cosponsors included the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society and the Tamer Institute for Social Enterprise and Climate Change.

24 February 2026

Climate and the Economy

Matt Huber (Syracuse University), Gernot Wagner, and David Wallace-Wells (*The New York Times*). Moderated by Jennifer Wenzel.





Left: "Black sun" image by Tony Vazquez

5 March 2026

Climate Justice Now Roundtable

Michael Brownstein (John Jay College and The Graduate Center, CUNY), Emily Cooperdock (Brown University), Karenna Gore (Union Theological Seminary), and Jennifer Hadden (Brown University). Organized and moderated by Nikhar Gaikwad, Rebecca Marwege (American University in Paris), and Joerg Schaefer.

31 March 2026

Climate Re-Imaginaries

Genevieve Guenther (End Climate Silence), Barbara Leckie (Carleton University), and Lydia Dean Pilcher. Moderated by Jennifer Wenzel.

21 April 2026

Climate Impacts of AI: Alternatives to Techno-Utopianism and Doom

Holly Alpine (Enabled Emissions), Ashley Dawson (The Graduate Center, CUNY), Lisa Sachs, and Marco Tedesco. Moderated by Jennifer Wenzel.

3 March 2026

Petroleum in (and out of) the Visual Arts

Siobhan Angus (Carleton University), Iheb Guermazi, Brian Jacobson (California Institute of Technology), Kate Orff, Avinoam Shalem, Jessica Varner (University of Pennsylvania), and Tony Vazquez-Figueroa (artist). Organized and moderated by Jennifer Wenzel and Sarah Gould (Paris 1-Panthéon Sorbonne University).

With funding from Columbia Alliance, an international team of scholars in Paris, Guadalajara, Lagos, and New York organized a series of events to consider oil's entanglement with the visual arts—whether in petroleum derivatives found in materials for creation and conservation, the money that underwrites museum philanthropy and the art market, or the ways that art shapes cultural imaginaries that make oil dependence feel like freedom. In an era of climate collapse, how is the imperative of a transition away from fossil fuels changing the art world? How are artists, curators, critics, conservators, and restorers working toward a world without oil? The event at Columbia featured panels discussing multiple photographic and other artistic projects that were sponsored by oil and petrochemical companies or used petroleum as material. The innovative format of this project—a multi-sited series of hybrid events linked by Zoom—sought to maximize the benefits of in-person conversation among regional participants while minimizing air travel.

29 April 2026

'Naked Rock': Self, Creatures and Environment in Garth Greenwell's *Small Rain*

Patricia Dailey, Garth Greenwell (author) Subhashini Kaligotla, and Lynnette Widder

Garth Greenwell read from his novel *Small Rain*, the winner of multiple awards. The reading was followed by a discussion that touched on the novel's handling of the perspectives of self and non-human nature, as well as on how Greenwell injects poetic, visual, metaphysical, and ecological ways of thinking into its narrative framework. Organized and moderated by Lynnette Widder (Heyman Fellow, 2025–26). Cosponsored by the Heyman Fellows, the School of Professional Studies, and the Climate School Earth Networks.



JUSTICE FORUM

Organized and moderated by Neni Panourgiá, Justice Forum showcases ideas about education, the arts, and other practices that resist racism and structural inequalities more broadly. Cosponsors included the Departments of Latin American and Iberian Cultures, History, African American and African Diaspora Studies, and English and Comparative Literature; the Institutes for Comparative Literature and Society and for Research in African American Studies; Tamer Center for Social Enterprise and Climate Change; Center for Contemporary Critical Thought; and Columbia Journalism School.

1 October 2025

"La Cárcel del Sing Sing": Music and Incarceration

The song "La Cárcel del Sing Sing" tells a story that has resonated for more than eighty years throughout Latin America. From the original version by Bienvenido Brens to the very different and differently emblematic performances by José Feliciano and Alci Acosta, this song marks Dominica, Puerto Rico, and Colombia: three nations that remain heavily represented in the US carceral system. Recently the song is seeing a resurgence in popularity, but for its form rather than its content—as simply a bolero rather than a song of incarceration. Panelists Audrey Amsellem, Carlos Ivan Calaff, and Christopher Washburne discussed the social dimensions of music production and reception as well as the song's landscape, its content, and its musical components.

12 November 2025

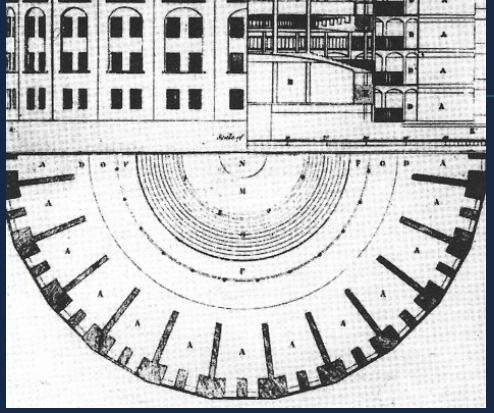
The Future Moment

Building on a Justice Forum conversation begun in Spring 2025, this panel discussion considered the impact of current US government policies on the university as an institution; on academic practice and research more broadly; and on the political, human, environmental, and social rights of citizens. Panelists delivered five-minute provocations on the experience of living under such conditions, on what we might learn from the past, and on how best to meet the existential challenges of the present and future moment. The ensuing discussion, which Bruno Bosteels moderated, invited the audience to participate fully in deliberating on these critical issues. Panelists included Imami Jacqueline Brown, Bernard Harcourt, Nikolas Kakkoufa, Wilfredo Laracurente, and Graciela Montaldo.

4 February 2026

Ghosts of Urbicide: The Specter of Blackness in the Haunting of Oakland

Drawing from recent work, Brandi Summers delineated the historical and contemporary destruction and disinvestment of Black Oakland as a form of Black urbicide—the forcible and intentional unmaking of Black urban spaces that enables the state and private capital to slowly but methodically chip away at the Black



city through multiple and varied sets of processes and practices. In conversation with the art historian and critic Rosalyn Deutsche, Summers argued that the intended death of the Black city produces ghosts that haunt its cultural and material landscapes, leaving only traces of a past Black presence. These ghosts reveal the power dynamics that contribute to social transformation and what has been hidden by those who engage in repressive tactics.

9 February 2026

Humanitarian Aid on Trial: The Harboring Law, the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, and the Undocumented Migration in the US-Mexico Borderlands

In 2018, Dr. Scott Warren was arrested by the U.S. Border Patrol for providing "food, water, clean clothes, and beds" to two men from Central America in the Sonoran Desert region of the US-Mexico borderland. His acquittal the following year of having criminally "harbored" undocumented migrants affirmed humanitarian aid as a moral imperative. Warren spoke about his experiences as a geographer and humanitarian aid organizer with No More Deaths and shared updates on the current state of humanitarian aid work in the area. This "pop-up" Justice Forum event was guest-organized by the Justice-in-Education Student Volunteers.

4 March 2026

Supply Side Harm Reduction: Public Health Interventions in Drug Markets

Despite their commitment to evidence-based policies and interventions, both scholars and health service providers have generally failed to notice that the most significant restriction narrowing the scope of research and intervention in the field of harm reduction is a reluctance to engage with people who sell drugs. Focusing almost exclusively on people who use drugs has meant that questions of political and public health significance concerning the key role played by narcotics supply chains have been relinquished to law enforcement agencies and the criminal justice system. Fernando Montero (SOF 2019–22) and Adriana Maria Garriga López (Florida Atlantic University) discussed the challenges of incorporating people who sell drugs into harm reduction research and intervention.

15 April 2026

Carceral Pedagogies

Although research evidence proves that education reduces recidivism, the struggle to provide college education to incarcerated individuals is perennial, every advance meeting with systemic resistance and setbacks. Education benefits communities within and beyond prison walls: Why is it, then, that so many governments consider education a privilege rather than as an effective means "to prevent transgressing; to save punishing," as Bentham put it? Participants on this panel—dedicated to the late Kathy Boudin, who strove for decades to build robust prison education programs—discussed the various pedagogical challenges they routinely face in their work: from sudden cancellation of classes and censored syllabi to teaching students whose preparation, aptitude, and motivation for higher education vary drastically. Panelists included William Ayers (University of Illinois at Chicago, emeritus), Julie Stone Peters, Noah Remnick, and Sherika Stewart (Petey Greene Program).

MARY LOUISE PRATT: SPRING 2026 WM. THEODORE DE BARY DISTINGUISHED VISITING FELLOW

The **Society of Senior Scholars at the Heyman Center for the Humanities** comprises a community of academics from Columbia and, by invitation, from other institutions who wish to remain engaged in a scholarly life post-retirement. Among the projects and programs supported by the Senior Scholars is the Wm. Theodore de Bary Distinguished Visiting Fellowship, which brings renowned emeriti scholars to the Columbia community for a weeklong set of interactions with students and faculty, including the delivery of a public lecture.



Mary Louise Pratt, a Silver Professor and Professor Emerita of Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Literature at New York University, was the Spring 2026 Wm. Theodore de Bary Distinguished Visiting Fellow. In addition to a seminar, attended by graduate students from humanities and social science departments across the University, Professor Pratt delivered the lecture "Planetary Knowledge Making: The Arc of Area Studies" (April 6), with responses by Timothy Mitchell and Gauri Viswanathan, and participated in "Thinking Nature Now: Concepts | A Roundtable with Mary Louise Pratt" (April 13). In her book *Planetary Longings* (2022), Pratt invokes Elizabeth Grosz's understanding of concepts as dynamic tools for intervening in the present and imagining possible futures. Vanessa Agard-Jones (SOF 2013–14), Rosalind C. Morris, Elizabeth Povinelli, Rhiannon Stephens, and Jennifer Wenzel (who organized and moderated this roundtable) each proposed a concept for reimagining more-than-human nature and reimagining environmental thought amid the overlapping and intensifying crises that we inhabit.



SOF@50: Humanities in the World. Photograph by Alex Liu



SOF@50: HUMANITIES IN THE WORLD







SOF
HCH

For the past 50 years, the Columbia Society of Fellows has welcomed early-career researchers into a community of scholars whose research projects and teaching open new avenues of inquiry both within and across disciplines. We celebrated this milestone in April when we gathered to honor what we have accomplished and to collaborate in finding new ways to apply the critical, reflective, and interpretive practices of the humanities to address real-world challenges.

Friday, April 24

Opening Reception

Saturday, April 25

Science, Technology, and the Human(ities Center)
Panelists: William Deringer, Arden Hegele, Whitney Laemmli, and Grant Wythoff

New Books in the Society of Fellows—Part I
Authors: Maggie Cao, Maria Farland William Sharpe, and April Shelford

Responding to Crisis
Panelists: Hidetaka Hirota, Dan-el Padilla Peralta, and Suzanne Thorpe

Attention
Panelists: D. Graham Burnett, Lorraine Daston, Carmel Raz, and John Tresch

Climate Humanities
Panelists: Renzo Aroni Sulca, Leah Aronowsky, Emma Shaw Crane, Joerg Schaefer, and Jennifer Wenzel

New Books in the Society of Fellows—Part II
Authors: Joshua Fogel, Hagar Kotef, Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Martha Selby, and Miriam Ticktin

Sunday, April 26
Walking in Cities
Panelists: Manan Ahmed and Iheb Guermazi

Closing Event: Viewing of the Butler Library Exhibit "SOF@50: Humanities in the World"



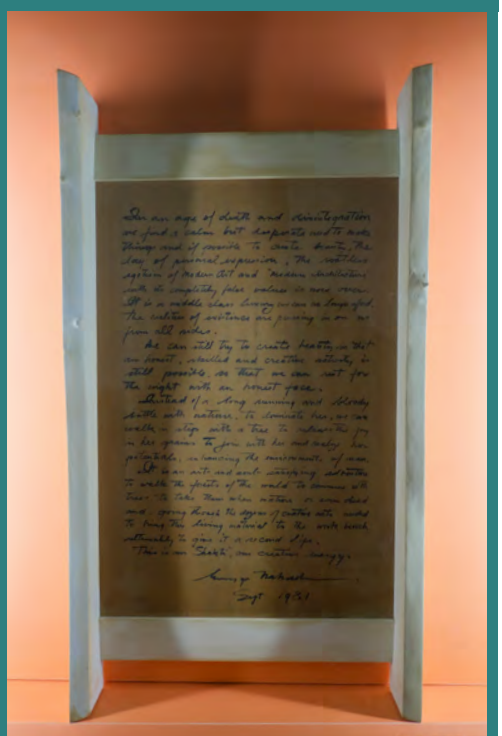














Timeline

1975: Letter from Columbia President William McGill to Mellon Foundation President John Sawyer—Founding Document of the Society of Fellows in the Humanities

1981: Heyman Center for the Humanities Built as a Permanent Home for the Society of Fellows

1990: Fellows Thursday Lecture Series (TLS) Formalized

2005: Heyman Center Programming Begins

2012: New York State Humanities Centers Initiative Formed

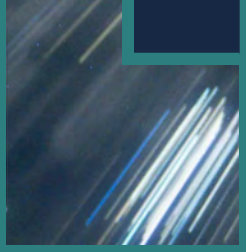
2014: Public Humanities and Health and Medical Humanities Initiatives Founded

2015: Justice-in-Education Initiative Established with $1M Grant from the Mellon Foundation

2018: Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities Amalgamate

2023: Climate Humanities Programming Commences

2026: 50th Anniversary of the Society of Fellows: Launch of SOF@50 Butler Library Exhibit; Commemorative Website; Fellows Oral History Project; New Partnerships in Law and the Humanities, in Critical Data Studies, and in Computational Humanities

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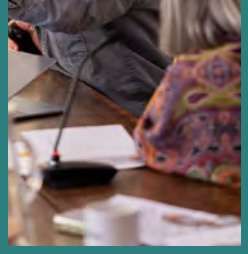

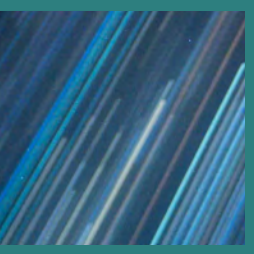









HEYMAN CENTER
FELLOWS 2025–2026

Funded by the Office of the Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences, the Heyman Center Fellowships provided four junior and four senior Columbia faculty with course relief during the academic year. These fellowships allowed faculty to reduce their teaching loads to a minimum of one course per semester in order to make progress on research projects and to participate in a regular weekly seminar, chaired by seminar director Manan Ahmed. Four post-MPhil graduate students were also appointed as Heyman Fellows and received a $5,000 research allowance for their participation. In addition to providing the opportunity to present works in progress, the seminar fostered discussion across disciplines and fields, creating opportunities for collaborative research and teaching in future semesters.



Photograph by Jared Poelman



Knar Abrahamyan, an assistant professor of music theory specializing in the historical and political entanglements of cultural production, made progress on her book manuscript "Opera as Statecraft in Soviet Armenia and Kazakhstan." The project reenvisions Soviet music history by framing cultural modernization in the USSR as a product not only of communism but also of imperial domination. Beyond examining opera's role in homogenizing cultural particularity, the monograph reverses the imperial gaze and listening ear to ask how Armenian and Kazakh cultural workers negotiated competing agendas of national identity throughout the long twentieth century—and to consider how the legacies of Soviet opera continue to shape Armenian and Kazakh cultural and national identity in the wake of Russia's renewed imperial aggression. She workshopped her chapter about the role of the atheist campaign in Armenian operas, receiving feedback that helped her frame her project for an interdisciplinary readership.



Amy Barenboim, a doctoral student in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, completed her dissertation chapter entitled "An Ambivalent Zionism: Walter White, Liberal Internationalism, and the Politics of Partition." This chapter focuses on Walter White, the long-standing Executive Secretary of the NAACP, and his role in the partition of Palestine. Although he was a towering figure of the Civil Rights movement and an anticommunist and liberal reformer, White's views toward Jewish nationhood, which emerged from his liberal anticolonialism, were far more critical of Zionism than were those of his more radical contemporaries W.E.B. Du Bois and James Baldwin. The chapter, which argues for a new periodization in Black anti-Zionism that begins prior to 1967, is at the heart of Barenboim's book project, which examines the ways in which the Zionist movement, from the 1940s to the present, has used Black artistic social capital.



Antara Chakrabarti worked on two chapters of her dissertation in Anthropology, entitled "Fixing the Environment: Anxious Engineering Along a River-Border in the Bengal Delta." She refined the chapter "How To Train a River: The Anxieties of Engineering a 'Fix'" and developed another that explores the production of erosion as a man-made disaster and the subsequent engineering efforts to combat it. The overall project focuses on the massively engineered, partitioned, and catastrophically eroding Ganga-Padma river-system at the border between India and Bangladesh, examining how national desires, border regimes, and environmental crises shape the region as engineers try to carry out the "impossible" task of training a capricious delta river. In doing so, it also exposes the deep anxieties that state-led engineering endeavors produce.



Patricia Dailey is a literary scholar specializing in Medieval Studies and critical theory. As a Heyman Faculty Fellow, she worked on her book project "Planting Sublimity," which explores the formation of a Christian consciousness in early medieval English literature (ca. 900) arising from both ties to the figure of the arboreal and to an experience of sublimity evoked by identification with the wooden cross. Owing to its associations with non-Christian cosmologies, the rooted tree posed a threat to Christian spirituality: felling a tree, then, became the logical response to that threat, a trope for cutting down pride and instilling a spirit of Christ-like humility in its place. This study considers the political, social, religious, aesthetic, and ecological ramifications of tree-felling as well as its significance for the cultivation of Christian consciousness.



Joyeeta G. Dastidar, a practicing internist with training in narrative medicine and bioethics, worked on her project about the importance of patient narratives in the delivery of quality health care. Despite the ethical obligation to reduce harm, respect patient autonomy, and disclose medical errors to patients in a candid and timely manner, both institutions and individual clinicians are often reluctant to inform patients of medical errors for defensive reasons, including "second victim effect"—or the negative impact on the clinician responsible for the error, which can include difficulty concentrating, increased risk of burnout, PTSD, depression, and suicidality. Yet the impact of medical errors extends beyond physical injury for patients as well. The most comprehensive way to understand the patient experience of medical errors is through exposure to patient narratives, which not only serve to balance the medical-record version of events but also play a crucial role in promoting patient safety advocacy and quality improvement.



Jenny Davidson worked on two distinct projects during her time as a Heyman Fellow. A specialist in eighteenth-century English literature by training, she drafted the introduction to a book on Edward Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (under contract to Harvard University Press) and revised it in response to feedback from her fellow seminar participants. She also composed detailed outlines for three of ten projected chapters. For her second project, on the Tanzanian research assistants who undertook much of the observational work at Jane Goodall's Gombe chimpanzee research station, she completed background readings, the curriculum of intermediate Swahili, and planning for oral history interviews with those assistants. In May 2026, she traveled to Kigoma, Tanzania, and with her collaborator Rama X recorded thirteen interviews with former Goodall research assistants.



Claire Dwyer is a historian of medieval Iberia whose dissertation explores how queens, countesses, abbesses, and untitled women worked together, often across regional and linguistic boundaries, to establish economic communities that facilitated the movement of property and the achievement of political goals. Unlike their peers in the male monarchical or monastic worlds, women leaders of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries faced gender-specific challenges that made economic and political connections with other women particularly advantageous. During her fellowship year, Dwyer wrote a chapter on the four facets of governance exercised by abbesses (official, seigneurial, personal, and religious) as a way to understand the political and economic activity of religious women, particularly in constructing women's property-based communities immediately adjacent to convents.

Ralph Ghoche, an architectural historian of the nineteenth century, completed an essay investigating the 1853 exhumation in French Algiers of the seventeenth-century martyr Geronimo, in which he argues that the Catholic Church, operating under the constraints of a secularizing colonial state, used the recovered remains and their negative plaster cast as instruments of urban and spiritual conquest. The Geronimo affair became a centralizing myth for the diocese, providing the rationale for a public campaign to promote Muslim conversion. The essay traces how the relics led directly to the construction of the Basilica of Notre Dame d'Afrique—a syncretic, Byzantine-Islamic structure designed to literalize the Church's claim that Christianity was the foundational truth to which Islam must return. In so doing, it challenges secularization narratives in colonial history, demonstrating how religious actors subtly shaped the built environment and territory of Algiers.





Subhashini Kaligotla is an art historian of ancient and medieval South Asia and a specialist in the Deccan Plateau region of southern India. The Heyman Fellowship supported research and writing on her second monograph, *Seeing Ghosts: Death and the Afterlife in the Art of Premodern India*, which is under contract with Yale University Press. She completed a chapter on late medieval stone memorials for Jaina and Hindu women who gave up their lives ritually, the former undertaking the rite of *sallekhana* and the latter in acts of devotion to the god Shiva, and made progress on a chapter examining Hindu and Jaina cosmological imaginaries in the early modern and colonial periods. She also published an article drawn from this book project in *The Art Bulletin*; completed a second article slated for *West 86th: A Journal of Decorative Arts, Design History, and Material Culture*; and lectured in the Rutgers Program in Global Medieval Studies.



Yuyuan (Victoria) Liu is a sixth-year doctoral candidate on the History-East Asia track, focusing on Tibetan and Chinese visual culture. Her dissertation examines the role of visual media, particularly photographic technology during the transitional twentieth century across the Tibetan plateau, amid social changes, paradigm shifts, and nation-building. Through the analysis of newspapers, biographies, archival materials, and images, the project traces Tibetan cultures of image-making, explores Tibetan engagements with photographic practices, and historicizes photography within Buddhist visual conventions and Chinese media cultures. During the fellowship period, Liu developed new chapters focused on photographic practices and networks across the Tibetan Plateau, while refining earlier chapter drafts and expanding research on archival photographs and moving image materials related to Tibet.



Avinoam Shalem, Riggio Professor of the History of the Arts of Islam, made progress on his current book project, "When Nature Becomes Ideology (The Topography of Palestine Rural Landscape after 1948)." The project focuses on how the modern period introduced an agenda for restructuring the landscape of the Levant—an agenda that required forgetfulness of the history of the region and the landscapes of the Palestinian Arab village before the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine in 1948. Taking a forensic approach to the countryside, one chapter pinpoints the "discovery of the Negev"—namely, the desert and the aesthetic of wilderness—which occurred a decade or more before the 1967 War, as the turning point in the concept of landscape in Israel/Palestine. Another chapter discusses the "thorn-mania" in Israel during this period—especially for the prickly pear cactus (known in Arabic as "sabbar" or in Hebrew as "sabres")—and investigates the current artistic trend in Palestine that depicts this plant as a national symbol as well.



Lynnette Widder, an architectural historian and professor of sustainability management, advanced her study of how plants and soils become the materials by which architecture, literature, film, and other disciplines come to terms with the destruction of human settlement. "The Metabolism of Destruction: Rogue Plants and Native Soils in Cities under Duress" considers how, under adverse conditions, plant life, wilded and willed, flourishes. It draws attention to the ways in which "rogue" plants are culturally understood to be both signs of continuity with a lost past and harbingers of a milder future—as evidence of the persistence of place and as proof of geography's instability—while the soil in which plants grow is presumed to be immutable and immobile even after destruction transforms subsoils through hauling, excavation, and rebuilding. The project focuses on three cases: post-1945 Germany in the sectors occupied by the Western allies, 1970s Manhattan, and contemporary instances of climate change response.

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