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Images courtesy of designer Sean Boggs

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REPORT FROM THE CHAIR

After having served on the Board for three years, I took on the role of chair of the Board of Directors of SOF/Heyman in July 2020, at a moment when we were still hopeful we might be back in person by the beginning of the 2020–2021 academic year. As we all know, that hope proved to be wildly naïve. In September 2020, we began a year of remote instruction, hoping against hope we would be back in person by Spring 2021. That, of course, did not come to pass. The academic year was a challenging and exhausting one for us all, at Columbia and beyond, and yet, it was also a very productive year, with a lot of lessons learned. SOF/Heyman, and notably, our extraordinary cohort of Fellows, rose to the challenge.

We began the new academic year by welcoming an unusually large number of new postdoctoral Fellows, all of whom had to adapt to the “new normal” wrought by the pandemic. Some Fellows did not move to the city; others came to their offices in the nearly deserted Heyman Center in an effort to build some semblance of an in-person community. As they learned to teach online, they also delivered their talks at the Thursday Lecture Series (TLS) and held Friday workshops remotely. We also established a book manuscript workshop: In their final year, the Fellows will each share their manuscript with four scholars of their choosing, inviting them to a workshop at the Heyman Center during which the scholars will give feedback on revising the text for publication.
Throughout this unusual year, Fellows built a robust intellectual community among themselves and took advantage of the opportunity Zoom provided to invite scholars far and wide into the Common Room for the TLS discussions. And as is always the case, Fellows contributed to the intellectual work of the SOF/Heyman as a whole, organizing a Spring lecture series on “Ambivalence,” and holding a panel discussion about the two category 4 hurricanes that struck the Caribbean coast of Central America in November 2020, to name but two such contributions.

The value of SOF/Heyman programming was sharply apparent during this pandemic year. Thanks to the immense talent and energy of Eileen Gillooly and the entire SOF/Heyman staff, we managed to lead 48 events and to cosponsor another 92. Even more fundamentally, drawing on the commitments and energies of our diverse and committed members of the Board, SOF/Heyman pivoted quickly to sponsor events that speak to unfolding crises of our times: for example, the rise of conspiracy thinking, pandemic urbanisms, and questions of race and social justice. More generally, the SOF/Heyman continues to forge collaborative relationships not just within the University but also beyond it, as evidenced by our collaborative work in Public Humanities and Health and Medical Humanities initiatives.

At a time when we were all isolated in our own little pods, the programming held by SOF/Heyman provided an intellectual lifeline for us all. I especially want to note the New Books Series, now in its fifth year and the brainchild of Eileen Gillooly, that provides a rare opportunity for Columbia faculty to engage with their colleagues’ work—a moment of collegiality and conversation that felt even more essential this past year, even if only in a virtual room.

While we are all looking forward to a return to “normal”—that is, to the possibility of hosting in-person events once again—we also plan to build on the lessons and opportunities the pandemic offered, in particular, by continuing remote programming in some form or another. We have been able to reach audiences far larger than we had before the pandemic, and we have forged more robust working relationships with colleagues in other parts of the United States and throughout the world. While there is much about the pandemic we are happy to leave behind, we intend to build on the opportunity to think about outreach and public engagements in different and more creative ways.

Nadia Abu El-Haj
Chair of the Governing Board of the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities
In September 2020, six months deep into the COVID-19 pandemic, we were hopeful that by the winter holidays—and surely by spring break—we’d be back in the Heyman Center enjoying the opportunities for conversation and exchange that the Society has so amply provided since its founding 46 years ago. Instead, we found ourselves becoming adept at sourcing N95 masks, taking rapid antigen tests, and remembering (most of the time) to unmute. While upend and pivot remained buzzwords, the past year also brought us new understandings of inequality and privilege, loss and hope, resilience and perseverance.

The eight new Fellows who joined the Society in Fall 2020 did so virtually, though several found their offices to be congenial spaces from which to teach their classes as well as to make progress on their own research. Every Fellow also carries the title of Lecturer. Renzo Aroni (UC Davis PhD), whose work on Indigenous resistance to the Shining Path is the first of its kind undertaken by a native speaker of Quecha, was appointed Lecturer in the Department of History and the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race (CSER). Leah Aronowsky (Harvard PhD), a historian of science investigating the intersections of capitalism, politics, and the environment, joined the Department of History. Naeem Mohaiemen (Columbia PhD), an anthropologist and visual artist whose work focuses on transnational Leftist politics and decolonization since World War II, was appointed Lecturer in the Department of Anthropology and the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society.
African ethnomusicologist Ruth Opara (UC Boulder PhD) and artist-scholar Suzanne Thorpe (UC San Diego PhD) who studies music-making sites as critical frameworks that animate political and social concerns both joined the Music Department. Megan Boomer (U Penn PhD), Tingting Xu (U Chicago PhD), and Benjamin Young (UC Berkeley PhD) were all appointed Lecturers in Art History. Dr. Boomer is an art and architectural historian of the medieval Mediterranean; Dr. Xu works on late imperial Chinese art and the history of photography in East Asia; and Dr. Young focuses on documentary photography, primarily in the United States since (and including) the Vietnam War era.

These eight—together with continuing Fellows JM Chris Chang (East Asian Languages and Cultures), Ardeta Gjikola (History), Fernando Montero (Anthropology and CSER), Tyrone Palmer (African American and African Diaspora Studies), and Cass Turner (English)—comprised the single largest cohort in the history of the Society. The sudden increase in the number of Fellows brought its own particular challenges, but considering the damage the pandemic had inflicted on an already anemic job market, we prioritized supporting as many outstanding early-career scholars as possible. This included welcoming several CHCI-ACLS Fellows to the SOF/Heyman, two of whom (Daniel Hershenzon, Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut, whose work focuses on the history of early modern Spain; and Amir Moosavi, Assistant Professor of Comparative Literature at Rutgers–Newark) joined us in residence throughout the year. More information about these and all our Fellows (Heyman Center Fellows, Public Humanities Graduate Fellows) can be found in the pages ahead. We urge you to become acquainted with their projects and the progress they have made in advancing them this past year. Individually and collectively, they are an inspiring group.

We also encourage you to explore the many panel discussions, lectures, workshops, book celebrations, and other programming we offered via online meetings and webinars this past year, almost all of which are available as videos or podcasts on our website (sofheyman.org). Among the most timely, even prescient, of these was Apocalypse Pending: Religion, Politics, and Social Media (October 2020–April 2021)—coproduced by the Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life and cosponsored by a number of Columbia centers and institutes. Over four episodes (three of which took place months before the January 6 insurrection at the Capitol), this series examined how new media technologies have enabled conspiracy thinking to spread on a scale previously unimaginable, resulting in the alarming rise of QAnon and other reality-denying sociopolitical beliefs and their impact on evangelical Christianity in the US.

While we continued to miss the intellectual energy and pleasure of in-person events, we also came to appreciate the virtues of online gatherings: the ability to reach audiences across the globe; the relative ease in captioning and, in some cases, in providing simultaneous translation; the freedom from needing to secure appropriate space to hold an event (and enabling attendees to
participate without the need to hire a babysitter!). The Society of Fellows’ Thursday Lecture Series—which dates back to the earliest days of the Society and has long been considered a “hidden gem” on campus—expanded its reach far beyond the Common Room audience for the first time, thanks to time-and-space-defying Zoom technology.

Our Fellows made particularly creative use of the online format. Naeem Mohaiemen, whose own films and artworks have been shown at museums around the world, frequently invited fellow artists, curators, and writers to visit his classes remotely as guest speakers on such topics as conducting fieldwork in the video archive and museum dissidents and social activism. Fernando Montero organized, with SOF alumni Nisrin Elamin (2019–2020) and JM Chris Chang (2018–2021), a virtual symposium that focused on the deferral of governmental benefits as one “crucial modality of governance producing marginalized subjectivities around the world.” He also hosted and moderated a (simultaneously translated) discussion with Miskitu women activists about the sociopolitical implications of two Category 4 hurricanes for their communities in the Moskitia area of Honduras and Nicaragua.

The pandemic also heightened our recognition that the challenges we collectively face as citizens demand that academics work even more closely with partners outside the University to address them. Our Public Humanities Initiative—the mission of which is to bring the intellectual resources, values, and perspectives of the humanities to projects that advance the public good—provided modest stipends to six Public Humanities Graduate Fellows to develop and implement projects with community partners, which were then presented in the Building Publics series, created and led this past year by María González Pendás (SOF 2016–2019). Details on this series and other public humanities programming—including our acclaimed Explorations in the Medical Humanities series, spearheaded and managed by Arden Hegele (SOF 2016–2019)—can be found on pages 52–58.

Goings and Comings: Prevented once again by the pandemic from holding our end-of-year dinner party—an occasion at which we traditionally
celebrate our departing Fellows and welcome new arrivals—we take the opportunity now to congratulate the former on their new appointments. Ardeta Gjikola leaves us to take up a 2021–2022 research fellowship at the Huntington Library. María González Pendás (SOF 2016–2019), who has led our Public Humanities (PH) Graduate Fellows program for the past two years, has been appointed Assistant Professor in the History of Architecture and Urban Development at Cornell University and passes the PH Fellows program on to JM Chris Chang, who is finishing his term as a Fellow. Cass Turner and Ruth Opara begin tenure-track positions in the Department of English at Indiana University–Bloomington and in the Department of Art and Music Histories at Syracuse University, respectively. And Naeem Mohaiemen joins the Division of Visual Arts at Columbia University as Associate Professor and Area Head of Photography. Our three incoming Fellows are Youssef Ben Ismail (Harvard PhD), a historian of the Ottoman Mediterranean and North Africa who studies law and empire in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean; Emma Shaw Crane (NYU PhD), whose anthropological work focuses on race, sub/urban space, and US empire in the Americas; and Nyle Fort (Princeton PhD), a scholar of religion who joins the Department of African American and African Diaspora Studies and who considers how acts of public grief shape the Black freedom struggle.

Please send us your news, including publications, promotions, new positions, births, retirements, and other milestones. We are especially keen to celebrate the work of our alumni Fellows. As the series name indicates, “New Books in the Society of Fellows” features recent books by (usually) former Fellows, normally two or three at a time, with other scholars (generally former Fellows themselves) acting as respondents for the books being celebrated. We’ve discovered that this format works extremely well for both in-person and online events, so do be in touch!

Eileen Gillooly
Executive Director
MEMBERS OF THE
2020–2021 GOVERNING BOARD

Nadia Abu El-Haj*
Chair, Governing Board
Anthropology
Barnard College

Manan Ahmed
History

Alexander Alberro
Art History
Barnard College

Noam M. Elcott
Art History

Eileen Gillooly*
Executive Director
English and Comparative Literature

Kaiama L. Glover
French and Africana Studies
Barnard College

Rishi Goyal
Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
Department of Emergency Medicine

Turkuler Isiksel
Political Science

Brian Larkin
Anthropology
Barnard College

Eugenia Lean*
Seminar Co-Director,
Heyman Center Fellows
East Asian Languages and Cultures

Sharon Marcus
English and Comparative Literature

Dorothea von Mücke*
Seminar Co-Director,
Heyman Center Fellows
Germanic Languages

Alessandra Russo
Latin American and Iberian Cultures

Emmanuelle Saada*
Chair, Contemporary Civilization
French

James Schamus
Film
School of the Arts

Elaine Sisman*
Chair, Music Humanities
Music

Pamela H. Smith
History

Joanna Stalnaker*
Chair, Literature Humanities
French

Gareth Williams*
Director, Friends of the Heyman Center
Classics

*Ex officio
The forty-sixth Society of Fellows in the Humanities fellowship competition closed on 5 October 2020, with 916 applicants vying for the three fellowship positions available for 2021–2022. Representatives from twenty-two departments, institutes, and centers conducted the first round of vetting. Each application recommended for advancement to the next level of competition received three readings: two by members of the Governing Board and one by a current Fellow. Each applicant was ranked on a scale of one to five and subsequently reviewed by the interviewing committee, a subcommittee of the Governing Board. In mid-December, the committee invited thirteen applicants to interview via Zoom in January 2021.

The 2020–2021 fellowships were accepted by Youssef Ben Ismail, Emma Shaw Crane, and Nyle Fort. Youssef Ben Ismail is a historian of the Ottoman Mediterranean and North Africa whose research deals with law and empire in the nineteenth-century Mediterranean. Emma Shaw Crane is a scholar of race; sub/urban space; and US empire in the Americas, with a focus on the effects of war, conflict, and policing. Nyle Fort’s research looks at how acts of public grief shape the Black freedom struggle, with a particular focus on the Movement for Black Lives.
SOCIETY OF FELLOWS

COMPETITION NUMBERS

Fellowships Starting in 2021–2022

916 Applicants

22 Departments Reviewing

195 Universities Represented

30 Countries Represented

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<th>DEPARTMENT</th>
<th>APPLICANTS</th>
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<td>Anthropology</td>
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<td>Art History and Archaeology</td>
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FELLOWS IN RESIDENCE
2020–2021
Renzo Aroni is a historian of modern Latin America who is broadly interested in social revolutions, Indigenous peoples, and human rights, particularly at their intersection with culture, memory, and political violence. His current research project examines Peru’s internal armed conflict (1980–1992) between Maoist Shining Path insurgents and government forces from a micro-dynamic of wartime violence and resistance in the Andean village of Huamanquiquia. It analyzes the circumstances in which Indigenous peasants switched their support from insurgency to counterinsurgency and organized a broad multi-communal coalition against the guerrillas. The Shining Path’s response to this coalition included the 1992 massacre of eighteen Indigenous men and the braid-cutting of seventeen women in Huamanquiquia.

Leah Aronowsky is a historian of science and the environment whose work focuses on the intersections of science, capitalism, and the environment in the history of planetary-scale environmental knowledge. This past year, her first as a fellow, she continued work on revisions to her book manuscript, which explores the history of the late-twentieth-century US environmental sciences in the context of the emergent environmental regulatory state and the rise of neoliberalism. In January 2021, Dr. Aronowsky published material drawn from this book manuscript as an article in Critical Inquiry. Entitled “Gas Guzzling Gaia, or: A Prehistory of Climate Change Denialism,” the article tells the little-known story of the oil and gas industry origins of the Gaia hypothesis, the theory, developed in the 1970s, that the earth is a self-regulating system. The article documents how the theory’s inventor, James Lovelock, developed the theory in response to early reports that the gas industry’s products were causing the climate to change and used the theory to suggest that, despite exponential increases in fossil fuel consumption, the climate would eventually restore itself back to a stable state. Dr. Aronowsky also presented work from this book project to multiple virtual audiences throughout the year, including conference presentations at the International Society for the History, Philosophy, and Social Studies of Science; the British Society for the History of Science; and the International Workshop on Science, Literature, and Philosophy, as well as an invited talk at the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science. She also organized a panel on “States of Planetary Environmental Knowledge” for the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) conference.

Additionally, Dr. Aronowsky had an opportunity to workshop material from her book project during a joint session of the Science Studies and Environmental History Working Groups here at Columbia. This year she also wrote a review of Poisonous Skies: Acid Rain and the Globalization of Pollution by Rachel Rothschild for the journal Environmental History and served as a peer reviewer for Historical Studies in the Natural Sciences and Global Environmental Change. Other activities included teaching two semesters of “Contemporary Civilization” over Zoom, where her students experimented with producing their own podcast episodes as part of their final assignment, and serving as a guest respondent for SOF Fellow Cass Turner’s Thursday Lecture Series talk on “Jane Austen’s Worlds; or, The Novel vs. the World.”
Megan Boomer is an art and architectural historian of the medieval Mediterranean. Her current book project, “Reconstructing the Resurrection,” explores how architecture, images, inscriptions, and ritual presented Latin rule as a renewal of the sacred landscape in the aftermath of the First Crusade in 1099. Drawing on archaeological reports, architectural surveys, monumental descriptions, and liturgical sources, she investigates how twelfth-century patrons, masons, and viewers staged the biblical past in the medieval present. In May 2021, Dr. Boomer presented aspects of her book chapter on the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at the International Congress on Medieval Studies as part of a panel organized by the Index of Medieval Art. Her presentation for the Society of Fellows Thursday Lecture Series, “Monumental Witnessing in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” explored how the Latin rhetoric articulated by the Kingdom’s major monuments can be interpreted alongside evidence for the involvement of non-Latin communities in both creation and design. Her research on the Church of the Nativity’s twelfth-century mosaics was presented at the Byzantine Studies Conference in October 2020.


Dr. Boomer enjoyed teaching “Art Humanities” to Columbia students during the 2020–2021 academic year and learned much from the associated conversations about art historical pedagogies. She also developed and taught a summer seminar on “Sacred Travel, Shrines, and Souvenirs in the Medieval World.” She was a guest lecturer in Professor Michael Waters’s “Introduction to the History of Architecture” and Professor Hannah Weaver’s “Conquest, Colonialism, and the Normans.”

Although Dr. Boomer has not yet had the pleasure of gathering with other fellows inside the Heyman Center, she greatly appreciated and benefited from this year’s online lectures and looks forward to continuing conversations.
JM Chris Chang is a historian of modern China whose research examines systems of personnel filing and bureaucratic paperwork. His current project, “The Dossier: Archive and Ephemera in Mao’s China,” is a history of the institution of individual personnel dossiers on Chinese subjects known as dang’an. His research draws upon “grassroots sources”—files previously discarded from official archives and since resold in old book and paper markets—in order to address the intersection of political surveillance and human resources management in the lives of everyday Chinese citizens under Maoism.

In February 2021, Dr. Chang presented an article manuscript entitled “The Policeman, the Miner, and the Camera: Traces of Sabotage in Maoist China” to the Columbia University Seminar on Modern China. The paper draws upon Public Security Bureau investigations in the Ganzhou mining industry to examine how the crime of “sabotage” was utilized by bureaucratic administrators systematically to recast workplace failures as “counter-revolutionary” crimes and to rationalize accidents, poor performance, and human error that was otherwise in conflict with the vision of a society transformed by revolution. Proving “sabotage” entailed making saboteurs out of citizens by employing the perennial frictions of Maoist social engineering, including intra-bureaucratic disputes, sketchy production targets, and the material limitations of paper files. A previous version of the paper was presented to the Society of Fellows workshop series in Spring 2020, which resulted in invaluable suggestions for revision.

In April 2021, Dr. Chang presented a paper at “Governance by Anticipation,” a symposium organized by SOF Fellow Fernando Montero along with Luciana Chamorro, and Syantani Chatterjee. Contributions drew upon a diverse range of geographies and temporalities to address what the organizers broadly termed the “politics of expectation,” in which experiences and effects of hope, paranoia, suspicion, and promises are recognized as crucial governmental strategies that enable the perpetuation of political authority. Elsewhere, Dr. Chang presented a portion of his work at SUNY-Binghamton. During the Spring 2021 term, he taught a new course called “States of Surveillance: A Global History of Big Brother.”

Beginning in Fall 2021, Dr. Chang will hold an appointment at Columbia as a Public Humanities Postdoctoral Scholar at the SOF/Heyman and the Weatherhead East Asian Institute.
Ardeta Gjikola is a historian of science interested in early modern Europe and the Ottoman Empire. The topics she researches include the relations between objectivity and subjectivity, science and art, and forms of expertise. Her book project, entitled “The Finest Things on Earth: The Elgin Marbles and the Science of Taste,” asks how taste judgments are formed and how they are shared. To answer these classical questions of philosophical aesthetics, she examines the reception of the Parthenon sculptures in Britain in the early nineteenth century. Whereas influential explanatory models have considered taste judgments radically contingent on or dictated by one’s position in a social structure, the salient elements of the Elgin case demonstrate that it is possible to identify specific stages of taste formation and sharing. Analyses of the mechanisms of stabilization of knowledge claims in the history and sociology of science serve as inspiration for this study.

This year, Dr. Gjikola submitted for publication an article that articulated some of these ideas. She also organized a panel for the European Society for the History of Science annual conference that aimed to explore a framework for the study of taste by historians of science. As part of the panel, she presented an argument for the peculiar aspects of connoisseurial expertise. She also developed two other ongoing lines of research. The first concerns an epistemological problem encountered by artists in Renaissance Italy. The study of anatomy became greatly desirable and even necessary for the representation of the human body in the period, but there were doubts about how much anatomical knowledge was adequate, or “just enough” for that purpose. She identifies two hermeneutic limits offered as solutions to this problem: just enough knowledge to avoid errors, and just enough to avoid exaggerations. The second line of research examines Ottoman modes of valuation of antiquities, particularly how understandings of materiality, and the relation of past and present, as well as other factors, rendered antique remains objects that pulsed with numinous qualities. As part of her teaching responsibilities, she offered a seminar on science and art in the early modern period.

Dr. Gjikola leaves the Society of Fellows to head to the Huntington Library in Los Angeles, where she will be a National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow.
Naeem Mohaiemen works as an anthropologist and visual artist, combining photography, film, sculpture, and essays into an interdisciplinary practice. His research focuses on romantic yearning for a Left utopia in the Global South and Eastern Europe—encompassing postwar decolonization, post-1950s socialist hope, and post-1979 long decline. In his museum projects, he explores film and photography’s role in shaping human longing for (and projecting of) hopeful futures.

During his SOF Fellowship, Dr. Mohaiemen designed and taught two courses: “Edge of the Frame: Fieldwork in the Video Archive” (cross-listed with the Institute for Contemporary Literature and Society) and “Art Strike: Museum Dissidents and Dissonance” (cross-listed with Art History). In an attempt to reduce student ennui over learning during the pandemic year, Dr. Mohaiemen frequently invited guests relevant to the week’s reading.

Invited guests for “Edge of the Frame” included MacArthur recipient artist Mel Chin, Caecilia Tripp, Sumitra Rajkumar, Tomas Garduno (Mi Gente), and Ojibway artist Zack Khalil. Public events linked to this class included a book launch for Alisse Waterston and Charlotte Holland’s *Light in Dark Times* (with the Center for Global Thought); NY Academy of Sciences’ “Migration through the Camera Lens”; a Spatial Violence panel (organized by SOF/Heyman’s María González Pendás) with Forensic Architecture; and a lecture exchange with Maple Rasza (Colby College). Students made three sets of videos as their projects: there is a proposal pending at Queens Museum to showcase these videos.

Invited guests for “Art Strike” included Vere Van Gool (New Museum); Laura Raicovich (Queens Museum); Betti Sue-Hertz (Wallach Gallery, Columbia University); Sadia Shirazi (Whitney ISP); Terike Haapoja (Museum of Nonhumanity); Herb Tam (Museum of Chinese in America/MOCA); Zack Khalil (New Red Order); and Gregory Sholette (Queens College). Students went on field trips to MoMA PS1, Queens Museum, Muscota Marsh, MOCA, and Artists Space.

Dr. Mohaiemen premiered new artworks at Yokohama Triennial, Japan; Bildmuseet Umeå, Sweden; Berlinale, Germany; Chobi Mela, Bangladesh; and MOCA Cleveland. He also gave artist talks at Cooper Union, Stanford, Berkeley, Yale, Colby, Kent State, and Oberlin College.

In Fall 2021 Dr. Mohaiemen will join the Department of Visual Arts at Columbia University as Associate Professor of Visual Arts.
Fernando Montero’s research focuses on policing and militarization in the context of the so-called war on drugs in Central America and the United States. While at the SOF/Heyman, he has been working on his book manuscript, “Martial Love: Relatedness and Detachment in the Moskitia’s Military Occupation (Nicaragua/Honduras), which focuses on the everyday life of military occupation in the Afro-Indigenous Moskitia region of Central America. The book examines the complex intersections between government officials and the military, narcotics merchants, Miskitu Afro-Indigenous authorities, Miskitu women, and other local residents. Dr. Montero documents the emergence of an armed occupation that eschews mass incarceration and systematic killing yet is predicated on soldiers’ preying on Miskitu teenage women, extracting local resources, and supplanting Miskitu institutions of customary justice.

This year, Dr. Montero organized three events with cosponsorship by the SOF/Heyman. In December he invited two Miskitu women activists to discuss the sociopolitical implications of back-to-back Category 4 hurricanes that impacted the Moskitia in November. In February, he worked with Karl Jacoby to host an online discussion with Roberto Lovato about his book, Unforgetting: A Memoir of Family, Migration, Gangs and Revolution in the Americas. A co-organized symposium, “Governance by Anticipation,” focused on the deferral of governmental benefits as a punishing modality of governance producing marginalized subjectivities throughout the world. This symposium featured SOF alumni Nisrin Elamin (2019–2020) and JM Chris Chang (2018–2021).

Finally, Dr. Montero wrote an expert witness report for a case appearing before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. Miskitu divers sued the Honduran government in an effort to hold the state accountable for the extraordinary rates of injury and disability that they regularly suffer as a result of their work for Honduran companies supplying the US franchise Red Lobster. Both parties reached a settlement in April 2021 committing the Honduran state to implementing significant labor and health reforms as well as issuing reparations.
Ruth Opara is an Africanist ethnomusicologist whose research interests include African and African diasporic music traditions and the production of knowledge, women in music and the decolonial discourse, music and gender, African music, and transnational encounters. This year Dr. Opara completed a rough draft of her book, “Music, Motherhood, and Transnationalism: The Igbo, Nigerian Perspective.” She submitted her article, “Rethinking and Performing Seduction: The Ikorodo Maiden Dance of Nsukka, Nigeria,” to the journal *Ethnomusicology*. Her article “Dancing Africa in Diaspora: Music, Conundrums and Transnational Encounter” is forthcoming in *African Performance Review*.

Dr. Opara was invited to her alma mater, the University of Colorado Boulder, to present her research (“Music and the African Woman: A Conversation with Ruth Opara”). She also presented at Harvard University on “African Enough?! Women, Music, and Motherhood in the Diaspora” and at Boston University on “Music and Gender in West Africa: An Ethnography of Nigerian Married Women Musicians.” Her research on “African Women’s Music: Inspiration, Motherhood, and Creativity” has been accepted for presentation at the 66th Annual Meeting of the Society for Ethnomusicology and “Music, Persistence, and the African Girl Child: Gender Expectations in the Pot Drum Dance” has been accepted for presentation at the 63rd Annual Meeting of the African Studies Association. She will be part of the Author Meets Critics Roundtable on Kusamira Music in Uganda and will be chair of Carnegie Corporation of New York’s sponsored panel on “COVID-19: The Impact on Performance and the Performance of Impact.”

This past year Dr. Opara taught “Music Humanities: Masterpieces of Western Music.” She is currently planning a daylong colloquium, “Gendering Africa: Musical Perspectives,” featuring presentations from African and African-descended women ethnomusicologists. The colloquium will foreground the perspectives and lived experiences of women of African descent in the discourse on gender and music in Africa. It will represent a broad geographical scope that clarifies the depth and breadth of the African landscape in the conversation on music and gender.

Dr. Opara has accepted a tenure track position in the Department of Arts and Music Histories at Syracuse University, where she will be teaching music of the people of African descent both on the continent and in the diaspora.
Tyrone S. Palmer is a critical theorist whose work foregrounds the interventions of Black literature and expressive culture into discourses of affect and (post-)humanism, poetics, metaphysics, and continental philosophy. This past year he continued work on his book manuscript, “Black Negativity: Unthinking the Grammars of Affect,” which explores how key Black literary and political texts theorize the failure of a universalist conception of affect to account for the grammars of feeling that emerge from the singularity of Blackness.

In addition to the book manuscript, Dr. Palmer has been at work on a number of projects. He was invited to contribute an essay to the edited volume Worldings/Tensions/Futures: The Affect Reader 2.0, which will be published by Duke University Press. The essay, entitled “Affect and Affirmation,” argues that the insistent affirmationist drive of affect theory and its foreclosure of the negative is mirrored by and intertwined with the structuring absence of Blackness within affect discourse. Dr. Palmer has also begun work on coediting a special issue of the journal Philosophy Today, which will consider the intersection of Black critical theory and continental philosophy and is scheduled for publication in Spring 2023. In February, he published an article drawn from his manuscript, entitled “Otherwise Than Blackness: Feeling, World, Sublimation,” in the journal Qui Parle: Humanities and Social Sciences.

Dr. Palmer was invited to present his work as part of the English Department Graduate Seminar Speaker Series at Tulane University in March and to guest lecture in the Philosophy Department at Emory University in May. In June, he participated in a two-day virtual workshop on Blackness and affect convened by the Affective Societies Center at the Freie Universität Berlin (Free University of Berlin), which was organized in response to his recently published essay “Otherwise than Blackness.” In August he will serve as a faculty moderator and respondent for the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice Graduate Colloquium at Brown University. This coming September, Dr. Palmer will present a paper entitled “Against the World” at the virtual convening of the Society for Phenomenology and Existential Philosophy (SPEP) Annual Meeting.

This past spring, Dr. Palmer taught his course, “Negativity in Black Critical Thought.” He is scheduled to teach “Blackness and Affect,” a graduate seminar in the African American and African Diaspora Studies Department. Dr. Palmer will begin a new position as Assistant Professor of English at Wesleyan University in 2022–2023. In Fall 2022, Dr. Palmer will begin a new position as an assistant professor of English at Wesleyan University.
**Suzanne Thorpe** is an artist-scholar whose creative research intersects electronic music, feminist, and ecological theories. Weaving together traditional and creative research methods, she studies past and present music-making sites as critical frameworks that animate social and political concerns. Her current project, “Kitchen Table Praxis: Strategies for Belonging in Technical Learning Environment” builds on her previous work, which highlighted critical tactics that early women electronic music composers engaged to resist hierarchical social organization, normative identity articulation, and material separation. “Kitchen Table Praxis” correlates techniques from contemporary music practice with a broader intersectional critical feminist movement to foster collective action, social identity formation, and belonging in technical fields. In the spring she presented a portion of this work at the Borderline Sonorities conference, on the panel Sono-soro[ities]: Feminist Interventions in Sound Art, hosted by the Federal University of Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, Brazil, and was featured on the Diversity and Inclusion in Electroacoustic Music panel for SEAMUS’s International Virtual Conference 2021. She was awarded a grant by Columbia’s Arts & Sciences Committee on Equity and Diversity to present a symposium on “Kitchen Table Praxis” in the 2021–2022 academic year and is developing a journal article that illustrates her implementations of music and tech educational strategies in the field. In addition, Dr. Thorpe will serve as a coinvestigator to develop “Augmented Reality for Accessible and Inclusive Technical Studio Education,” a project led by Dr. Seth Cluett of Columbia’s Computer Music Center that was awarded the Provost Emerging Technology Grant, 2021.

Dr. Thorpe’s compositions with water will be featured in artist and alternative cartographer Lize Mogel’s *Walking the Watershed*, which will premiere as a walking tour in September. The project explores the physical, social, and political geographies of the watercourses, lands, and communities that supply New York City with water.

Dr. Thorpe will continue to teach Music Humanities in the Core Curriculum and looks forward to teaching her new course, “Sounding Feminist Perspectives in Electronic Music,” in Spring 2022. In addition, she will continue to codirect TECHNE, a nonprofit arts education organization she cofounded, which attends to inequity in technical fields, and to serve on the advisory boards of the Center for Deep Listening and Girls Rock, Santa Barbara.
Cass Turner is a literary scholar, whose research and teaching interests include eighteenth-century British literature and culture, the environmental humanities, global/empire studies, and the history and theory of the novel. In their second year at Columbia, Dr. Turner continued to revise and extend their book manuscript, “The Salvaging Disposition: Waste and the Novel Form,” which locates the emergence of a distinctly modern sense of waste in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Baconian science and European colonialism began to conceive of the New World as an untapped spring of inexhaustible resources. Dr. Turner’s research examines the impact of new thinking about waste (as an ecological, economic, and political concept) on literary form in the eighteenth century, especially the novel. One of the central claims of the project is that the novel emerged in the period as a form for managing the waste generated by a rapidly shifting global economy.

This past year, Dr. Turner presented papers at the annual meetings of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) and the Bloomington Eighteenth-Century Studies Workshop. An essay drawn from “The Salvaging Disposition” has been accepted for publication by the journal *The Eighteenth Century: Theory and Interpretation*. The essay shows how Daniel Defoe’s fiction dramatizes the racial hierarchy that undergirded his theory of global commerce; it argues further that this racial hierarchy served both to enrich white Europeans and to protect them against the very disposability that the economic system depended on.

This past year, Dr. Turner collaborated with Thomas Manganaro (Assistant Professor of English at the University of Richmond) to organize a session for the 2022 meeting of ASECS on “Worlds and Worldmaking in the Eighteenth Century.” Additionally, Dr. Turner taught a new course in the Department of English and Comparative Literature called “Lives of Property in the Colonial Atlantic World,” which examined how colonial models of property and personhood shaped both the eighteenth-century Atlantic world and the world we continue to inhabit today. In Fall 2021, Dr. Turner begins a new position as Assistant Professor of English at Indiana University Bloomington.

Cass Turner, 2019–2021
University of Chicago, Department of English Language and Literature, PhD 2018

Project: *The Salvaging Disposition: Waste and the Novel Form*
Tingting Xu is an art historian whose research and teaching interests include late imperial Chinese art, the history of photography in East Asia, and media studies in premodern and modern periods. In her first year at Columbia, she began adapting her dissertation, “Beyond Treaty Ports: Chinese Photography, 1860–1916—Practitioners, Contexts, and Trends” (winner of the Feitler Prize for the Best Dissertation, Department of Art History, University of Chicago), into a book manuscript. It unfolds the intellectual frameworks through which photographs were engaged, disenchanted, and re-enchanted and examines the ontological variants of photography in its first encounters with Chinese social and cultural networks.

“Prince Yihuan and the Photographer Liang Shitai’s Photo Album as a ‘Garden in the Mind,’” an article drawn and expanded from a section of the book manuscript, has been published in the edited volume *Photography and East Asian Art* (Center for the Art of East Asia, University of Chicago, 2021). It explicates an individualized affective turn in early Chinese photography through the case study of Prince Yihuan’s photographs, poems, and his lifelong dedication to building and renovating his residential gardens.

A side project, “The Group Photo as an Imbricated Ritualistic Event: Duanfang and His Altar Bronzes in Late Qing Antiquarian Praxis,” is forthcoming in the journal *History of Photography* (44:4). It was presented in the Society of Fellows Thursday Lecture Series in Fall 2020. The paper discusses the primacy of photography in the late Qing antiquarian praxis of studying, cataloguing, and displaying bronzes and proposes a ritualistic approach to understanding the genre of group photo and its commemorative purposes.

A third article, “The Landscaped Folds: Gong Xian and the Morphology of the Accordion Album,” is under review. It is part of the Accordion Album Trilogy that Dr. Xu has been working on, which foregrounds issues of medium and format in the study of Chinese painting. This year, Dr. Xu designed ten units for “Arts of China, Japan, and Korea” in the Department of Art and Archaeology—a course which she also taught. Dr. Xu collaborated with curators at the Peabody Essex Museum on publications for its upcoming exhibition on early photographs of China. She organized a series of online meetings for the Art History: New Scholarship Reading Group, which she initiated in 2019, and expanded the program to include participants from three Art History programs—Columbia, University of Chicago, and New York University’s Institute of Fine Art—to discuss the new discourses and orientations of the discipline.
Benjamin J. Young is a historian of art and photography. He received a PhD in Rhetoric from the University of California, Berkeley, in 2018, and was previously a visiting assistant professor of art history at Purchase College, State University of New York. He is also managing editor of Grey Room, a quarterly academic journal of art, architecture, media, and politics published by MIT Press.

Dr. Young’s dissertation on the artwork of American photographer Allan Sekula sets the use of photographic documents by conceptual and performance artists alongside political struggles over documentation made by police, underground newspapers, and corporations during the Vietnam War era. In this context, Dr. Young shows how Sekula’s critique of liberalism, humanism, and documentary photography leads to an emphasis on collective portraiture in Sekula’s later photographic and textual accounts of maritime space, economic globalization, and everyday life under capitalism. He is currently revising his dissertation as a book titled “Sympathetic Materialism: Allan Sekula’s Photo-Works, 1972–2000.” He is also editing an anthology on Sekula for October Books, to be published by MIT Press, and currently scheduled to enter production in February 2022.

Drawing from his research into contemporary documentary practices, Dr. Young presented a talk titled “Photography at the Factory Gates” at the Society of Fellows Thursday Lecture Series, which addressed issues of portraiture and labor raised by LaToya Ruby Frazier’s exhibition The Last Cruze, an installation of black-and-white photographs documenting the closure of the GM automobile factory in Lordstown, Ohio, in 2019. The essay on which the talk was based recently appeared in the publication LaToya Ruby Frazier: The Last Cruze (Chicago: Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago, 2020). In his role as editor, Dr. Young also recently commissioned a special project for Grey Room by American artist Michael Rakowitz, which will appear in Winter 2022. He will edit a portfolio of Rakowitz’s papier-mâché reconstructions of ancient artifacts looted and destroyed in the Iraq war, alongside Rakowitz’s “Letter to a Universal Museum Curator.” Dr. Young is also working on a book review surveying recent publications on 1930s documentary photography in America.

Dr. Young spent both fall and spring semesters of 2020–2021 teaching Art Humanities online and participating in weekly seminars with fellow instructors and Columbia faculty on material from the class, as well as in seminars with outside faculty on broader issues raised by the framework of a “Western civilization” survey.
THURSDAY LECTURE SERIES
10 September  
**Photography at the Factory Gates: LaToya Ruby Frazier’s The Last Cruze**  
*Benjamin J. Young, Lecturer in Art History*

In this talk, Dr. Young contemplates photographer LaToya Ruby Frazier’s exhibition *The Last Cruze* (2019), which documents the closure of the GM automobile plant in Lordstown, Ohio, linking it to a history of images of workers leaving the factory. Situating her artwork in relation to the critique of documentary launched by San Diego school photographers Fred Lonidier, Martha Rosler, and Allan Sekula in the 1970s, he considers the centrality of portraiture to Frazier’s account of work and unemployment. Finally, in the context of the recent rise of nationalist, racist, and xenophobic right-wing populism, Dr. Young examines how *The Last Cruze* refuses to concede the terrain of family and community to reactionary forces; rather he argues that it provides an account of work and industry—and of community, culture, and family—that taps the critical potential of working-class cultures of organizing and mutual aid.

17 September  
**Monumental Witnessing in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem**  
*Megan Boomer, Lecturer in Art History*

For twelfth-century pilgrims and patrons, monuments in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1187 CE) were sanctified by their association with the events and figures of scriptural narrative. The design and decoration of the structures staged encounters between medieval present users and the biblical past, presenting architecture as an enduring material witness to textual truth. This connection to an authoritative antiquity, however, was reconfigured in the aftermath of the First Crusade through both rhetoric and restoration. Dr. Boomer presents the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity as two facets of this dynamic and situates them within the context of her ongoing research. In the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, she argues that the twelfth-century spaces positioned Jerusalem’s Latin Christian community as the revivers of the Resurrection commemorated on the site. In the Church of the Nativity, she asks how we can understand Bethlehem’s medieval mosaic images and inscriptions as a testimony of local Christian practice and positions and as evidence of a continuous monumental dialogue within the landscape.

24 September  
**Feeling-as-Capture**  
*Tyrone S. Palmer, Lecturer in African American and African Diaspora Studies*

In this talk, Dr. Palmer argues that Dionne Brand’s 2001 experimental memoir *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, theorizes the gulf between Blackness and the World as rooted in the question of affective experience. He reads Brand’s deployment of the concept-metaphor of “the Door” and its attendant “tear in the world” as indexing the chasm from which Black feeling—outside of and against “the World” as relational container—irrupts. Brand’s text reveals that rather than offering an escape from meaning-as-capture, feeling *is* capture when considered from the position of Blackness. It is this seemingly paradoxical state of things that renders Black affect aporetic.
Feeling-as-capture is antithetical to dominant theorizations that posit that the ontology of affect is escape. In thinking of capture as endemic to Blackness and therefore at the root of Black sensorial experience, Brand locates a rift in the very structure of affect.

1 October

Duanfang and His Altar Bronzes: The Group Photo Portrait as an Imbricated Ritualistic Event

Tingting Xu, Lecturer in Art History

Conceptualizing an alternative to the Rieglian analyses of the correlation between power and composition in group portraiture, Dr. Xu proposes a ritualistic approach to understanding the group photo and its commemorative purpose. She takes as a case study a photograph of Tohoro Duanfang (1861–1911) and an assembly of scholarly officials with the altar bronzes in his collection (which despite the obscurity of time and location has been widely published in books on ancient Chinese bronzes and the culture of collecting). Her talk dates, decodes, and contextualizes this image within the imperial tradition of reinstating ancient bronzes in Confucius worship. It also discusses the primacy of photography in the late Qing antiquarian praxis of studying, cataloguing, and displaying bronzes. She demonstrates that the process of taking a group photo consists of a composite ritualistic event in which a “pro-photographic” event is imbricated with a “photographic event.” This imbricated flow of event and ritual may shed light on understandings of group photos with an intelligibility that is not visual, but temporal.

8 October

Military Custom: Conceptualizing Graft in the Central American “War on Drugs”

Fernando Montero, Lecturer in Anthropology and at the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race

Despite the ideological differences professed by the regimes that have clung to power in Nicaragua and Honduras since 2007 and 2009 respectively, both governments have addressed drug commerce within their jurisdictions in remarkably similar ways: by mass incarceration in the countries’ hegemonic “mestizo” regions and by military occupation in the Afro-Indigenous Caribbean region of Moskitia. In both countries, however, state officials at all levels of the police and the armed forces habitually enmesh themselves in drug commerce, giving shape to Janus-faced governmental interventions that the practitioners themselves often struggle to understand. Based on participant-observation research among soldiers and local residents in recently occupied Afro-Indigenous Miskitu villages, Dr. Montero conceptualizes graft not as a byproduct of Central American security regimes, but as a structuring part of them. Graft, in this context, may be most accurately conceptualized not as an aspect of “martial law” or as a practice of exceptional “extralegality,” but rather as a form of “military custom.” Law here is neither doctrine nor fiction: it is leverage. Nicaraguan and Honduran soldiers’ actions in the Moskitia make manifest the “customfare” of geopolitically subordinate states that cannot aspire, in Eyal Weizman’s words, to “develop international law through its violation.”
15 October
Gas Guzzling Gaia
Leah Aronowsky, Lecturer in History
In the 1970s, US scientists began sounding the alarm about a new kind of environmental problem: man-made chemical products that threatened to permanently damage the atmosphere and the climate. In response, chemical companies ranging from Royal Dutch Shell to Dupont began inventing new strategies for contesting this science and forestalling regulatory intervention. One especially salient strategy concerned a claim about the nature of the environment itself: that the environment was a fundamentally stable, self-regulating system and, as such, would eventually restore itself in the face of anthropogenic pollutants. Dr. Aronowsky examines one iteration of this claim—the Gaia hypothesis, the theory that life controls and maintains the environmental conditions for life to exist—and reconstructs its epistemic life in the world of industry. In so doing, she shows how the theories scientists use to produce environmental knowledge have historically been wielded to undermine efforts to link environmental problems with industrial operations.

22 October
Resonant Perspectives in a Pluralistic World
Suzanne Thorpe, Lecturer in Music
The intensifying effects of climate catastrophe have implicated anthropocentrism and the effects of human dominance on the more-than-human world. The position in which we find ourselves calls for equitable and sustainable paradigms that have the capacity to shift concepts of power and agency and emphasize materially pluralistic and agential domains in which humans are entangled and upon which they depend. Dr. Thorpe discusses an interdisciplinary methodology that she has designed to explore how the flows, velocities, and contingencies of sound may reassemble our assumptions of who perceives and amplify the intermaterial effects we have on each other. She offers as an example her creative research project Resonance & Resemblance (R&R), a sonic meditation that accentuates the mesh of geo-bio perception (of which humans are but one) and that engages nonhierarchical music-making strategies to listen with particular attention to the phenomenon of resonance in our environment. She situates this project alongside the work of sound and sculpture artist Jacqueline Kiyomi Gordon, who also figures resonance strongly in her process. These works in conversation point to what Dr. Thorpe frames as resonant perspective: a relational and situated knowing of a materially plural, protean, and impactful environment.

29 October
Jane Austen’s Worlds; or, the Novel vs. the World
Cass Turner, Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature
Dr. Turner discusses Jane Austen’s fiction within a larger conversation about worlds and worlding focusing on Austen’s fiction to show how the formal trajectory of the English novel helped create and complicate new ideas about the shape and extent of the social world. Concentrating on Mansfield Park in particular, Dr. Turner argues that Austen’s place-named novels can be understood as comparative analyses of various settings and of their suitability as environments in which disparate and distant persons might coexist. In these works, Austen ironizes any notion
of the sufficiency of representations to capture the extent of the social world. Her conclusion is not a wholly negative one, however. By virtue of the completeness of novelistic form—a work's accountability to its own materials—her novels sustain a political demand for fuller representations of the world, even as they insist on the necessary insufficiency of those efforts. By way of conclusion, Dr. Turner proposes some ways that rhetorical and literary analysis might help us better understand the political significance of more recent moves to personify the world or planet.

12 November
The Danger of Small Details: Autobiographical Surveillance in Cadre Dossier Files
JM Chris Chang, Lecturer in East Asian Languages and Cultures

It was no secret that throughout the 1950s, the cadres were among the most closely surveilled groups in the PRC. As both an instrument and a product of this surveillance, cadre personnel dossiers collected evidence and observation into a system of administrative records that at times approximated secret police files. But how did cadre dossiers from this period come to resemble the police archive? To better understand the means and ends of internal surveillance as practiced by party organs, Dr. Chang focuses on early cadre examinations (ganbu shencha) carried out from 1953 to 1957. While acknowledging historical continuities with Yan’an-era approaches to internal threat control, he highlights the professionalization of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) and the role of local police in background investigations and internal vetting. Comparing specific examples of cadre examination with published PSB manuals from the period, Dr. Chang demonstrates how PSB investigators pursued evidence by means of field research and extensive interviews, and by poring over old dossier materials. The working methods of cadre examination reveal the crucial importance of local networks of officials and witnesses to the day-to-day business of police work, insofar as evidence in these examinations was secured by trust between bureaucratic agents. The frictions between evidence and authentication that commonly arose from cadre examinations invite a further rethinking of the information flows produced by internal surveillance, in addition to their broader effects upon Maoist administration.

19 November
How Much Knowledge Is “Just Enough”? Anatomy for Artists in Sixteenth-Century Italy
Ardeta Gjikola, Lecturer in History

The centrality of the human figure is one of the most distinctive features of Italian Renaissance art. What Michelangelo in particular achieved with the depiction of the human body—understood by contemporaries to be based on an extensive knowledge of anatomy and even dissection—made anatomical knowledge a desideratum for the education of the artist in sixteenth-century Italy. It was not clear, however, how far most artists ought to pursue such knowledge. Some said that they should study “just enough.” But how much anatomical knowledge was just enough? In this talk, Dr. Gjikola
examines the nature of this epistemic predicament, as well as two answers that became prominent in the period: just enough anatomical knowledge to avoid errors, and just enough to avoid exaggerations. More generally, this talk is an attempt to reflect on qualities and states of knowledge beyond certainty, or the lack of it.

3 December
The Day after Tomorrow: Revolutionary Spirit and Its Lost Treasure
Naeem Mohaiemen, Lecturer in Anthropology and at the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
In “The Revolutionary Spirit and Its Lost Treasure” (On Revolution, 1963) Hannah Arendt considers how to preserve that spirit after the uprising has transitioned to orderly nation building. The core of the spirit is, according to her, the possibility of starting anew, the possibility of action, and the position of being beginners in an enterprise. Paradoxically, the revolution eventually set up institutions that prevented widespread participation by all, as was possible during the upsurge of revolutionary action. As Arendt bitterly points out, the name “Soviet Union” remained as a nod to the popularity of the soviet system while the actuality was reduced to impotence. In such a situation, what remains for the revolutionary except to recall through memory and retelling the spirit of the beginning? Considering the melancholy that sets in after the actual experience of postliberation, Dr. Mohaiemen considers what modes of remembering are available for postcolonial nations navigating the crushing disappointment of the day after.

10 December
Huamanquiquia: Making an Intercommunal Peasant Coalition against the Shining Path in Peru, 1983–1992
Renzo Aroni, Lecturer in Anthropology and at the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race
Conventional views portray noncombatants, such as Indigenous peasants, as helpless victims of warring sides in armed conflicts. In reality, however, they are often resistant actors who switch support from one side to another to protect their community. In this talk Dr. Aroni examines Peru’s internal armed conflict (1980–1992) between Maoist Shining Path insurgents and government forces in the Andean village of Huamanquiquia. Based on original archival research—including the community’s record books, called libros de actas, and oral history interviews with wartime peasant leaders—he argues that the Shining Path’s brutal attack on Huamanquiquia’s authorities and local affairs was the breaking point in the village, prompting the switch in support from insurgency to counterinsurgency. This led Huamanquiquia, along with its neighboring communities, to organize a large multicommunal coalition, called the Pacto de Alianza entre Pueblos, to defend their communities against incursions by the Shining Path guerrillas. Encouraged by the Peruvian state and its agents, though often on their own initiative, approximately a dozen peasant communities embraced this anti-guerrilla coalition from 1983 to 1992. This intercommunal coalition and the concomitant resistance—
combined with the armed forces’ strategy—ultimately defeated the Shining Path in the early 1990s.

17 December

**Beyond Boundaries: Inspirations and Motherhood in African Women’s Music Creative Process**

**Ruth Opara, Lecturer in Music**

Dr. Opara examines the creative process of Obiwuruotu Women’s Dance Group, a collective of married women musicians in Southeastern Nigeria, to reveal the sources of their inspiration and how their creative process is centered around their roles as mothers and mother figures. Dr. Opara argues that the African woman gets inspiration from her surroundings and experiences. She breathes nature and utilizes all its gifts in creating her arts; her experiences translate into songs, dances, clothing, and instrumentations. She consistently performs her motherly and mother figure roles by making them part of her creative process. Her inspirations could come from faraway lands, but she responds and utilizes them as soon as they are “brought” into her environment. Her creativities align with time, space, and specific contexts; a song she creates when happy may differ from the one she creates when sad: hence, the conflicts, contradictions, and complexities that characterize the descriptions and analyses of the African woman’s creative experience.
This lecture series will offer a variety of disciplinary and methodological perspectives on the question of ambivalence as it relates to affects and operations of the aesthetic, modes of political action, forms of belonging, and regimes of governance.

Ambivalence is often conceived in terms of absence or aporia. But at a time of polarization in contemporary thought, conventional perspectives on political action as grounded solely in either true belief or cynical rationalism fail to explain the many contradictions found within social organization and orders. Likewise, the “sovereign” decisiveness often attributed to political and economic configurations of power contrasts with the long-standing reliance by state and market interests on shifting, swaying, often incoherent strategies of domination and dispossession. Ambivalence, contradiction, and alternation entail both resources and risks for states, markets, and revolutionary movements alike.

Rather than approach ambivalence as an absence, we propose to think of it as a form of agency that accounts for the varying, conflicting desires and demands that position subjects. What changes if we think of ambivalence not solely as an affective experience on the level of the individual but as a structure of feeling that is central to (post-) modernity? How might ambivalence characterize attitudes toward cultural objects and performances, as well as to aesthetic operations themselves? How could adopting ambivalence as an analytical position lead to new insights into processes of dispossession, reclamation, or structural change?

Note that three talks were postponed and two ultimately canceled at the request of the organizers and participants, in solidarity with the Graduate Workers Union/UAW strike at Columbia University.

11 March
The Ideological Obstruction of the Self-Provisioning City
Kate Brown, Professor of Science, Technology, and Society, MIT

Urban farming is an oxymoron. According to popular and scholarly understandings of urban history, cities increasingly become more urbanized, separated from the environmental resources and raw materials that support them. Cities as spaces for agricultural self-provisioning stand out as an ambiguous spike in urban history, despite the fact that they are so common. City dwellers out of work or out of money grow their own food and scavenge materials to build structures on small patches of land. Most often, these municipalities: Detroit, Leningrad, Dar es Salaam, Havana—are taken as failed cities in failed polities; residents are seen as not sufficiently urban, an object of pity. Unless, that is, urbanites choose to self-provision as a hobby, out of a political commitment, or as charity: then they are exemplary citizens. Real estate values rise in a radiating circle around their gardens. Bipolar views of urban self-provisioning point to the
The major challenge hardy root vegetables growing from cracked cement present to ideological systems. Whether capitalist or socialist, economic systems work toward disarming people from their means of existence. The longer the supply chains, the more successful the system.

18 March
Work & Water: Thinking Indigenous Labor with/in the Radical Tradition
Shona N. Jackson, Associate Professor of English, Texas A&M University
“Work & Water” explores the absence of Indigenous labor in the Black radical tradition. It stems from a larger project, Marxism, Method, and Sovereignty, that reframes the radical tradition in the Caribbean and its entanglement in Marxism’s genealogies through questions about Indigenous labor and sovereignty. Extant histories construct Indigenous peoples’ actions in the Caribbean as external to plantation work. Rather than surplus, they are instead beyond labor, an orientation that reinforces their complex position as extra-sovereigns and internal citizens and their collective maintenance as an internal South. Excluded from labor histories, they are also denied claim to the postcolonial, Caribbean nation-state as workers in the same way as its Creole citizens. Dr. Jackson addresses this unthinkability of Indigenous labor by formulating a new understanding of labor history of the Caribbean in which indigeneity is centrally figured. Through attention to the ways in which the complications or ambivalences around what is defined as productive work and unproductive labor inform labor history, she argues that not only can the radical tradition be more capaciously rendered, but that we can shift from the limits of emancipatory politics to the possibilities of sovereign ones.

6 May
Portrait-Objects: Amoy Chinqua and the Early Eighteenth-Century Export Clay Portrait
Roberta Wue, Associate Professor of Art History, UC Irvine
Some of the more unusual artifacts to emerge from the flood of export products made in China for a vast foreign market include the painted unfired clay portraits of European merchants made by Chinese artisans. Produced from the beginning of the eighteenth century through the first half of the nineteenth century, these curious objects occupy a territory between throwaway novelty, polished craft, and purported portrait, between representation and simulacrum. The interesting ambiguity of these portrait-objects corresponds to their status as transnational products serving multiple purposes for their makers and customers. Dr. Wue’s talk focuses on the works of the earliest known maker of such portraits, the Chinese artisan Amoy Chinqua (active 1716–20), and the origins and logic of the export clay portrait.
Contemporary anarchist politics are often framed as “prefigurative politics,” a denomination that enunciates a temporal logic of striving to reflect a desired future society. Tracing the racial lacunae of anarchism’s praxis and political horizons, this talk addresses how *Black anarchism* may instead be defined by its uncertainty of futurity: that is, its ambivalence, which serves to reconfigure our understanding of anarchism’s “spirit of revolt.” With an attention to practices of destruction, it asks: What does it mean to reckon with the unchosen, unforeseen, and unknown that exceed praxes’ ability and attempt to contain and prescribe?
YEAR IN REVIEW

48 Events led by the SOF/Heyman

92 Cosponsored events

8,000 Registrants for SOF/Heyman-led events

30 Places Represented in Attendance

Bangladesh, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Guadeloupe, Hong Kong, India, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, Paraguay, The Philippines, Puerto Rico, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, Turkey, United Kingdom

PROGRAMMING PARTNERS

African American and African Diaspora Studies Alliance Program
Armenian Center of Columbia
Barnard College Department of Africana Studies
Barnard College Department of History
Barnard Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Brown Institute
Buell Center
Center for Contemporary Critical Thought
Center for Global Thought
Center for Science and Society
Center for Spatial Research
Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race
Center for the Study of Social Difference
Columbia Center for Oral History
Columbia Computer Music Center
Columbia University Libraries
Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma
East Asian Languages and Culture
English and Comparative Literature
European Institute
French
Germanic Languages
Glucksman Ireland House
Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation
History
ICAP, Mailman School of Public Health
Institute for African Studies
Institute for Comparative Literature and Society
Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life
Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy
Institute for Studies on Latin American Art
Institute for the Study of Sexuality and Gender
Institute of Latin American Studies
Interdisciplinary Center for Innovative Theory and Empirics
Italian Academy

Italian
Maynooth University
Maison Française
Medical Humanities and Ethics
Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies
Music
Office of the Divisional Deans in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences
Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Advancement
Philosophy
Political Science
Religion
School of General Studies
School of Nursing
School of the Arts
Sound Art Program
South Asia Institute
Stavros Niarchos Foundation
University Seminar in Irish Studies
Weatherhead East Asian Institute
Wellesley College Writing Program
EVENT HIGHLIGHTS
In spite of the limitations imposed by COVID-19, SOF/Heyman Fellows and Board Members were active this past year organizing and cosponsoring online events that frequently reflected on the challenges facing all of us. One unexpected benefit of online programming proved to be a dramatic increase in the reach—both in terms of number of attendees and geography—of our events, attracting viewers in the hundreds from around the world. While some are highlighted below, many of our events were organized as series or as part of initiatives and are found in corresponding sections of this report. Additional programming and further details—including information about speakers and cosponsors—may be found on the Events section of our website, and select events are available for viewing in the Media section.

Apocalypse Pending: Religion, Politics, and Social Media

This four-panel series examined the rise of conspiracy thinking and its influence in both the United States and Europe. It considered how new media technologies have made it possible for the dissemination of such thinking on a scale unimaginable in the past, how the moral panic it generates is impacting social and political life worldwide, and whether there are measures available to control its spread or mitigate its effects. Panelists with backgrounds in history, politics, journalism, religion, anthropology, and sociology reflected on the various manifestations of far-right thinking, the history of conspiracy thinking, and the myriad ways our current cultural discussions continue to be impacted. Co-organized by the SOF/Heyman and the Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life.

Panel 1: 20 October
Speakers: Stephanie McCurry, Professor of History at Columbia University, specializes in the American Civil War and Reconstruction, the nineteenth-century United States, the American South, and the history of women and gender.

Brandy Zadrozny is an award-winning investigative and features reporter for NBC News, where she covers misinformation, extremism, and the internet. Previously, she was at The Daily Beast, where she covered politics and the internet as a senior reporter.

Moderator: Matthew L. Jones teaches history of science and technology at Columbia University. With Chris
Wiggins, he will soon be publishing *How Data Happened*, which tells the story of the growth of data and the ways it changed power and asks what to do now.

**Panel 2: 27 October**  

Kathleen Stewart teaches anthropology and writing at the University of Texas, Austin. Her books include *A Space on the Side of the Road: Cultural Poetics in an “Other” America, Ordinary Affects, The Hundreds* co-authored with Lauren Berlant, and *Worlding* (in preparation).

*Moderator:* Courtney Bender, Professor of Religion at Columbia University, is a sociologist and ethnographer by training, whose work focuses principally on the production and practice of American religion and on the implications of religious concepts, ideas, and actions in modern social life. Her books include *Heaven’s Kitchen: Living Religion at God’s Love We Deliver* and *The New Metaphysicals: Spirituality and the American Religious Imagination*.

**Panel 3: 10 February**  
*Speakers:* Susannah Crockford is an anthropologist specializing in religion, ecology, and political economy. Her first monograph, *Ripples of the Universe: Spirituality in Sedona, Arizona*, is forthcoming. She has published in both public and academic fora on new age spirituality, conspiracy theories, and white supremacy.

Will Sommer is the author of a forthcoming book on QAnon from HarperCollins. He has covered the far-right and conspiracy theories for five years in his Right Richter newsletter and as a politics reporter for *The Daily Beast*.

*Moderator:* Elizabeth Castelli is Professor of Religion and the Director of the Barnard Center for Research on Women at Barnard College. A specialist in late ancient Christianity and its reception history, Castelli is the author of *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making*. She regularly teaches “Millennium: Apocalypse and Utopia” in the Barnard and Columbia Religion departments.

**Panel 4: 20 April**  
*Speakers:* Michael Butter is Professor of American Studies at the University of Tübingen in Germany. He is the author of *The Nature of Conspiracy Theories* and co-editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Conspiracy Theories*. He is also the Principal Investigator of the project “Populism and Conspiracy,” which is funded by a grant from the European Research Council.
Marc-André Argentino is a PhD candidate in the Individualized Program (INDI) at Concordia University. His research examines how extremist groups leverage technology to create propaganda, recruit members to ideological causes, inspire acts of violence, and impact democratic institutions. He has an MA from Université Laval and a BA from Concordia.

**Moderator:** Camille Robcis is Associate Professor of French and History at Columbia University. She specializes in Modern European History, with an emphasis on gender and sexuality; France; and intellectual, cultural, and legal history. She is the author of *The Law of Kinship: Anthropology, Psychoanalysis, and the Family in France* and *Disalienation: Politics, Philosophy, and Radical Psychiatry in Postwar France*.

**5 November**

**Feed the Fire: A Cyber Symposium in Honor of Geri Allen**

This daylong cyber symposium celebrated the work of the late pianist, composer, improviser, and educator and served as a launch for a special issue of the journal *Jazz and Culture*, “The Power of Geri Allen.” Known as someone who used her many gifts, including the capacity to recognize and encourage the creativity of others, Allen—through her work in music as a performer, composer, teacher, activist, feminist, and mentor—had a profound impact on individuals and on the contemporary jazz world. The symposium featured a keynote event with Terri Lyne Carrington (Berklee College of Music), Angela Davis (University of California, Santa Cruz), Gina Dent (University of California, Santa Cruz), and Farah Jasmine Griffin (Columbia University); a poetry reading by Fred Moten (New York University); and a solo piano performance by Courtney Bryan, as well as panels discussion with many of the leading voices in Jazz Studies. The symposium was organized by Professor of Music Ellie Hisama (SOF Board Member 2014–2017) with Michael Heller, Associate Professor of Jazz Studies at the University of Pittsburgh.

**11 December**

**Light in Dark Times: The Human Search for Meaning—Alisse Waterston & Charlotte Hollands in Conversation with Naeem Mohaiemen**

Alisse Waterston (Presidential Scholar and Professor, CUNY–John Jay College of Criminal Justice; past-president, American Anthropological Association) and Charlotte Hollands (illustrator) discussed their graphic novel *Light in Dark Times* with SOF Fellow Naeem Mohaiemen (2020–2021). This imaginatively rendered novel is the result of Waterston’s commitment to making the concepts of anthropology and political philosophy accessible to a wider audience. The event was part of programming related to Mohaiemen’s class “Edge of the Frame: Fieldwork in Video Archive” and was cosponsored by the SOF/Heyman and the Department of Anthropology. Drawing from the concept of storyboard in filmmaking, this discussion considered ways of illustrating encounters with past and present anthropologists, activists, poets, and philosophers who together, in a beautifully illustrated work, bring hope in dark times. The event was also one of the earliest book launch events for this title, which was published during the pandemic.
17 December
Unnatural Disasters: Contextualizing Hurricanes Eta and Iota from the Afro-Indigenous Moskitia
In November 2020, Hurricanes Eta and Iota, both category 4, struck the Caribbean coast of Central America in quick succession. There is no precedent for two hurricanes making landfall in the same region in such a short time, and the damage was devastating. The most severely affected area was the Afro-Indigenous region of Moskitia, which stretches along the Caribbean coast of Nicaragua and Honduras and which was already in the throes of a COVID-19 outbreak. In response to this horrific destruction, two Miskitu women activists and one Black Nicaraguan political leader from the region reflected on the wider sociopolitical context giving shape to the hurricanes and their aftermath. Specifically, the panelists discussed two intensifying threats affecting the Moskitia during the last decade: the settlement of indigenous land by nonindigenous cattle ranchers, and the rise of authoritarianism in Nicaragua and Honduras. Both of these processes simultaneously contribute to climate change and hinder the prospects for Afro-Indigenous political and economic autonomy. This event (in Spanish and English) was organized by SOF Fellow Fernando Montero (2019–2022) and cosponsored by the Center for the Study of Ethnicity and Race, the Institute of Latin American Studies, and the Department of Anthropology.

17 March–10 May
On the Possibility and Impossibility of Reparations
Organized by Anthropology graduate students Anna Kirstine Schirrer and Howard Rechavia Taylor and hosted by the SOF/Heyman, this webinar series investigated the significance of a global turn toward demands for reparatory justice for slavery and colonialism in the twenty-first century. Running over the course of several weeks, the series explored themes such as reparations on global scales, epistemologies and ecologies of repair, colonial reckoning, and reparations within and beyond the law. It gathered international scholars from across disciplines and contributed to a burgeoning conversation about reparations and repair in the social sciences and the humanities. This series was cosponsored by the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy and the Department of Anthropology.
SERIES
New Books in the Arts and Sciences

Cosponsored by the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities, the Office of the Divisional Deans in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy, this series celebrates recent work by the Columbia faculty with panel discussions of their new books. Unless otherwise noted, all participants are Columbia faculty.

16 September 2020
Eliza Zingesser, Stolen Song: How the Troubadours Became French (Cornell University Press)
Eliza Zingesser, Judith Peraino (Cornell), Joanna Stalnaker, Eleanor Johnson, and Madeleine Dobie; cosponsored by the Columbia Maison Française

23 September 2020
Victoria Rosner, Machines for Living: Modernism and Domestic Life (Oxford University Press)
Victoria Rosner, Susan Fraiman (University of Virginia), Matthew Hart, Bryony Roberts, and Alan Stewart

2 October 2020
Mana Kia, Persianate Selves: Memories of Place and Origin Before Nationalism (Stanford University Press)
Mana Kia, Kathryn Babayan (University of Michigan), Manan Ahmed, David Lurie, and Gil Hochberg

12 October 2020
Claudia Breger, Angelica Fenner (University of Toronto), Stefan Andriopoulos, Jane Gaines, and Oliver Simones

14 October 2020
Bernard Harcourt, Critique and Praxis (Columbia University Press)
Bernard Harcourt, Martin Saar (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main), Karuna Mantena, Michael Taussig, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Lydia Liu

27 October 2020
Deborah Paredez, Year of the Dog (BOA Editions)
Deborah Paredez, Aracelis Girmay (author), BK Fischer, Saidiya Hartman, and Timothy Donnelly

10 November 2020
Elleni Centime Zeleke, Ethiopia in Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964–2016 (Brill)
Elleni Centime Zeleke, Jocelyn Alexander (Oxford), Mamadou Diouf, Anupama Rao, and Gil Hochberg

12 November 2020
Casey Nelson Blake, Daniel H. Borus, and Howard Brick, At the Center: American Thought and Culture in the Mid-Twentieth Century (Rowman & Littlefield)
Casey Nelson Blake, Daniel H. Borus (University of Virginia), Howard Brick (University of Michigan), James T. Kloppenberg (Harvard), Alma Steingart, Ross Posnock, and Adam Kosto

16 November 2020
Matthew Hart, Extraterritorial: A Political Geography of Contemporary Fiction (Columbia University Press)
Matthew Hart, Merve Emre (Oxford), Denise Cruz, Adam Tooze, and Alan Stewart
1 December 2020
Mahmood Mamdani, Nadia Abu El-Haj, Mamadou Diouf, Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz (author), and David Scott

2 December 2020
Eugenia Lean, *Vernacular Industrialism in China: Local Innovation and Translated Technologies in the Making of a Cosmetics Empire, 1900–1940* (Columbia University Press)
Eugenia Lean, Deborah Coen (Yale), Jing Tsu (Yale), Kavita Sivaramakrishnan, and Wei Shang

14 December 2020
David Papineau (King's College London), Justin Clarke-Doane, Katja Maria Vogt, Michael Harris, and Michele Moody-Adams

1 February 2021
Jack Halberstam, Tavia Nyong'o (Yale), Joseph Albernaz, Audra Simpson, and Alan Stewart

3 February 2021
Dustin Stewart, *Futures of Enlightenment Poetry* (Oxford University Press)
Dustin Stewart, Sophie Gee (Princeton), Julie Crawford, Christopher Brown, and Alan Stewart

9 February 2021
Khatchig Mouradian, Elyse Semerdjian (Whitman College), Margaret Lavinia Anderson (University of California, Berkeley, Professor Emerita), Hamid Dabashi, and Gil Hochberg

11 February 2021
Clémence Boulouque, Eliyahu Stern (Yale), Gil Anidjar, Beth Berkowitz (Barnard), and Josef Sorett; cosponsored by the Columbia Maison Française

17 February 2021
Carl Wennerlind, Margaret Schabas (University of British Columbia), Emma Rothschild (Harvard), Victoria de Grazia, Turkuler Isiksel, and Lisa Tiersten (Barnard)

26 February 2021
Kaiama L. Glover (Barnard), Régine Michelle Jean-Charles (Boston College), Yvette Christiansë (Barnard), Saidiya Hartman, and Madeleine Dobie
13 April 2021
Timothy M. Frye, Stephen Kotkin (Princeton), Maria Victoria Murillo, Keith Gessen, and Gregory J. Wawro

14 April 2021
Hamid Dabashi, Ali Mirsepassi (New York University), Ellen Centime Zeleke, Atefeh Akbari (Barnard), and Gil Hochberg

19 April 2021
Chris Washburne, *Latin Jazz: The Other Jazz* (Oxford University Press)
Chris Washburne, Miguel Zenón (musician), Kevin Fellezs, Frances Negron-Muntaner, and Ana M. Ochoa Gautier

21 April 2021

14 May 2021
Reinhold Martin, Weihong Bao (University of California, Berkeley), Mabel O. Wilson, Zeynep Çelik Alexander, and Lucia Allais
New Books Series Podcasts

While many of our events are available as videos in the Media section of our website, select New Books Series events are available as edited podcasts. Podcast episodes from 2020–2021 are:

Deborah Paredez’s *Year of the Dog*

Elleni Centime Zeleke’s *Ethiopia in Theory: Revolution and Knowledge Production, 1964–2016*

Casey Blake, Daniel H. Borus, and Howard Brick’s *At the Center*

Matthew Hart’s *Extraterritorial: A Political Geography of Contemporary Fiction*

Eugenia Lean’s *Vernacular Industrialism in China*

Jack Halberstam’s *Wild Things: The Disorder of Desire*

Dustin Stewart’s *Futures of Enlightenment Poetry*

Kaiama L. Glover’s *A Regarded Self: Caribbean Womanhood and the Ethics of Disorderly Being*

Chris Washburne’s *Latin Jazz: The Other Jazz*

Frank Andre Guridy’s *The Sports Revolution: How Texas Changed the Culture of American Athletics*
Abolition Democracy 13/13

Abolition Democracy—the sixth season of the 13/13 seminar series—is cosponsored by the SOF/Heyman, organized by Benard Harcourt (SOF Board Member 2015–2018), and presented over the course of the academic year by the Columbia Center for Contemporary Critical Thought.

The seminar for 2020–2021 worked through the different dimensions of contemporary arguments for abolition (regarding prison, the police, and the death penalty, but also the abolition of property, of capital, of coverture and marital dominion, of oil, and of borders) through the lens of W.E.B. Du Bois’s idea of “abolition democracy,” which he developed in his landmark study, Black Reconstruction in America: 1860–1880. In that book, published in 1935, Du Bois outlined his ambition for a racially just society, which, he argued, required not only the dismantling of chattel slavery, but also the construction of new institutions, new practices, and new social relations that would afford freed Black persons the economic, political, and social capital to live as equal members of society. The seminars bring together organizers, activists, scholars, historians, lawyers, artists, musicians, and others who have been involved with abolitionist movements.

24 September 2020
1/13 | Abolition Today

29 October 2020
3/13 | Abolish the Police
Amna Akbar, Samantha Felix, Bernard E. Harcourt, Ghislaine Pages, Derecka Purnell, Josmar Trujillo, Alex Vitale

29 October 2020
4/13 | The Abolition of Slavery
Dennis Childs, Maeve Glass, Bernard E. Harcourt, Stephanie Jones-Rogers, Dread Scott

3 December 2020
5/13 | Property Is Theft!
Amy Allen, Etienne Balibar, Theo Bleckmann, Bernard E. Harcourt, Karuna Mantena, Dan-el Padilla Peralta

15 October 2020
2/13 | Abolition Democracy
Ivan Calaff, Flores Forbes, Robert Gooding-Williams, Bernard E. Harcourt, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Kendall Thomas, Christopher Wolfe
7 January 2021
7/13 | Beyond the Punitive Society
Miguel Beistegui, Henrique Carvalho, Irene Dal Poz, Stuart Elden, Bernard E. Harcourt, Adnan Khan, Daniele Lorenzini, Lonnie Morris, Goldie Osuri, Federico Testa, Cori Thomas

21 January 2021
8/13 | Abolish the Federal Death Penalty!
Adriano Espaillat, Lee Greenwood, Bernard E. Harcourt, Kelley Henry, Aleis Hoag, Liliana Segura, Susannah Sheffer

4 February 2021
9/13 | Prison Abolition
Reginald Dwayne Betts, Bernard E. Harcourt, Allegra McLeod

25 February 2021
10/13 | Abolishing Family Policing
Bernard E. Harcourt, Tymber Hudson, Dorothy Roberts

11 March 2021
11/13 | Abolish Oil
Alyssa Battistoni, Daniela Gandorfer, Bernard E. Harcourt, Kendall Little Owl, Spencer Little Owl, Reinhold Martin, Red Rock Perkins, John Eagle Shield Jr., Noah Smith-Drellich

15 April 2021
12/13 | Open Borders
Seyla Benhabib, Joseph Carens, Bernard E. Harcourt, Paulina Ochoa Espejo

22 April 2021
13/13 | An Abolitionist Future
Woods Ervin, Katherine Franke, Bernard E. Harcourt, Ian Manuel, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak
As part of SOF/Heyman’s ongoing commitment to fostering community participation in the humanities at Columbia and to applying the values and perspectives of the humanities to projects that advance the public good, the Humanities in Practice and Health and Medical Humanities Initiatives sponsor a wide range of programming, service, and research.

Humanities in Practice Initiative

A forum for innovation and inquiry organized by María González Pendás, Humanities in Practice provides opportunities for Columbia faculty and graduate students to expand their work beyond the classroom and into the public realm. Over the past year, as we collectively confronted a pandemic, a contested election, and increased social violence, the role of the humanities in interpreting our world became even more urgent.

Faculty, graduate students, and researchers are increasingly imagining new and creative ways to respond to our turbulent times. The Humanities in Practice Initiative is designed to channel this creativity to provide the tools for future professional humanists to both thrive in a changing academic landscape and honor their commitment to engaged scholarship. Humanities in Practice projects allow graduate students to work with faculty to become innovative practitioners in the public space with work that spills out of disciplinary-bound methods; emerges from collective forms of knowledge production; and engages the public in addressing issues of justice concerning race, environment, gender, disability, and ethnicity.

2020–2021 Humanities in Practice Graduate Fellows Projects

As part of the 2020–2021 SOF/Heyman Humanities in Practice Initiative, six Public Humanities Graduate Fellows, including two co-fellows with Humanities New York, designed and implemented projects. The group met regularly under the mentorship of the Public Humanities Coordinator, María González Pendás, to discuss project development, community organization, and the broader challenges pertaining to public humanities work. Fellows presented their projects in the Zoom workshop series Building Publics: Humanities Speak of Race in the summer of 2021.

Margaret Banks (English and Comparative Literature)

Tehya Boswell (Population and Family Health)

Julián Sánchez González (Art History and Archaeology)

Adam Horn (English and Comparative Literature)

Amanda Martin-Hardin (History)

Kevin Windhauser (English and Comparative Literature)
Building Publics: Humanities Speak of Race

The Building Publics Graduate Series, presented in Summer 2021, showcased how our Public Humanities Graduate Fellows bridge humanistic thinking with civic engagement; social justice with scholarly research; and public building with communication, in order to unleash new, more critical modes of scholarly imagination. Each year highlights a new, pressing theme. Last year’s theme, “Humanities Combating Isolation,” tackled the challenges posed by the sudden closure of public spheres. This year, under the heading “Humanities Speak of Race,” we looked at the complex dynamics of race and privilege. This work was partially supported by the Addressing Racism Seed Grant Initiative from the Vice Provost’s Office.

While it was particularly challenging to develop academic work through public ties in the context of lockdown, our fellows actively engaged in debates about privilege and race that are animating academia generally and the public humanities in particular. Over the weeks of the Building Publics series, we learned about the different ways in which our fellows are working with organizations to address and better understand these relations. Each workshop was curated by a graduate fellow or graduate collective and featured conversations with some of the community members and civic partners with whom they have worked in conceiving and implementing their projects.

Please see the SOF/Heyman website for project descriptions and profiles of the Public Humanities Fellows (www.sofheyman.org/public-humanities/humanities-in-practice). Unless otherwise noted, all participants are Columbia affiliates.

5 May 2021
Unbecoming Me: Models of Transgressive Black Girlhood
Margaret Banks, Jydin Harwell (Frederick Douglass Academy and Double Discovery Center), and Ruth Nicole Brown (Michigan State University)

12 May 2021
Spirit Sharing: An Interspiritual Conversation on Non-Hegemonic Beliefs and Community Building
Julián Sánchez González Karen Rose (Sacred Vibes Apothecary), and Delphinios (Minoan Brotherhood)

26 May 2021
Storytelling, Medical Inequities, and Intergenerational Knowledge: Diaspora Named and Archived
Tehya Boswell, and Kyle Norville

2 June 2021
Making a Place for Writing
Therese Cox, Leslie Davol (Street Lab), and K. A. Jagai (Girls Write Now)

9 June 2021
Pedagogy in the Carceral State
Nick Croggon, Rebecca Ginsburg (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign), Laura Betancur (museum educator), Lisette Oblitas, Mia Ruyter, and Ivan Calaff
Storytelling and Spatial Violence

The Public Humanities Initiative at the SOF/Heyman presented four events exploring architectural and territorial planning as instruments of violence, and the activists that use visual and narrative storytelling as a way to reclaim spatial rights. The films highlighted served not only to reflect on the contemporary global context of spatial violence; they served also as examples of instances where artistic and humanistic production engage in spatial activism. Panels featured each film’s director/producer in discussion with architectural historians, sociologists, and others. Co-organized by María González Pendás with Nisrin Elamin (SOF 2019–2020), Naeem Mohaiemen (SOF 2020–2021), and Dimitris Antoniou.

12 November 2020
Not in My Neighbourhood
Kurt Orderson (Azania Rising Productions, South Africa), Najma Nuriddin (Nsorma Films), Sujatha Fernandes (University of Sydney), and Anooradha Siddiqi (Barnard College)

19 November 2020
Forensic Architecture | Selection of Short Films
Samaneh Moafi (Forensic Architecture, London), Beth Stryker (Cluster, Cairo; ArteEast, New York), and Naeem Mohaiemen

3 December 2020
The Concrete Revolution
Xiaolu Guo (writer and director), María González Pendás, and JM Chris Chang

10 December 2020
Third Kind
Yorgos Zois (director), George Mantzios (University of Toronto), and Dimitris Antoniou
Health and Medical Humanities Initiative

The COVID-19 pandemic has shed a harsh light on existing intersections between health and social disparities. Far from being restricted to the hospital, the purview of health extends from race to class to educational access. The humanities have responded to this crisis by offering a complementary series of analytic approaches that allow us to understand the tensions of our moment in a new way.

The field of health and medical humanities offers a broad umbrella under which to study the influence of medico-scientific ideas and practices on society, and to analyze the myriad intersections of health with language, thought, critique, and culture. At stake are the problems of representation and the interpretation of cultural products from the past and present through medical models; and the challenge of establishing a set of humanistic competencies (observation, attention, judgment, narrative, historical perspective, ethics, creativity) that can inform medical practice.

The Health and Medical Humanities Initiative, organized by Arden Hegele (Medical Humanities Fellow and Lecturer in English and Comparative Literature at Columbia), provides an ongoing forum at the SOF/Heyman to explore these challenges and to continue to discover new methodological approaches.
Explorations in Medical Humanities Events

15 September 2020
Book Launch for Testosterone: An Unauthorized Biography
Testosterone, or T, is not what you think it is, and it is decidedly not a “male sex hormone.” Here is the debunking life story of a molecule we thought we all knew. Testosterone is a familiar villain—a ready explanation for innumerable social phenomena, from the stock market crash and the overrepresentation of men in prisons to male dominance in business and politics. It’s a lot to pin on a simple molecule. At this book launch, Rebecca Jordan-Young and Katrina Karkazis focused on what T does in six domains: reproduction, aggression, risk-taking, power, sports, and parenting. At once arresting and deeply informed, Testosterone allows us to see the real T for the first time. Respondents included Evelynn Hammonds (Harvard) and Paisley Currah (Brooklyn College), and the event was chaired by Arden Hegele.

10 February 2021
Disability and the Archive: Teresa Deevy in Context
This symposium included discussions between archivists, scholars, theater historians, disability activists, performance artists, and directors to examine the various ways of finding the deaf Irish playwright Teresa Deevy in a historical record that has too often blotted her out.

15 February 2021
Book Launch Roundtable: Alison Piepmeier’s Unexpected: Parenting, Prenatal Testing, and Down Syndrome
When Alison Piepmeier—scholar of feminism and disability studies and mother of Maybelle, an eight-year-old girl with Down syndrome—died of cancer in August 2016, she left behind an important unfinished manuscript about motherhood, prenatal testing, and disability. In Unexpected, George Estreich and Rachel Adams pick up where she left off, honoring the important research of their friend and colleague, as well as adding new perspectives to her work. This event highlighted Piepmeier’s work; the continuation of her book by Estreich and Adams; and responses from Alondra Nelson and Sayantani DasGupta, moderated by Arden Hegele. Cosponsored by the Motherhood and Technology Group at CSSD.

8 March 2021
Parenting in Pandemic with Jessica Calarco and Meryl Alper
The coronavirus pandemic inaugurated a global shift to online learning, working, and socializing. This event considered the immediate and long-term effects such a move has on parents and, in particular, on forms of mothering. Moderated by Arden Hegele, presentations included Mary Alper’s “Only A Mother’s Touch(screen): The Materiality of Maternal Labor and Assistive Technology” and Jessica Calarco’s “Leaning on the TV: How Privileged Mothers Are Rewriting Screen Time Rules in the Wake of COVID-19.” Cosponsored by the Motherhood and Technology Group at CSSD.
Activities and Events

- **Graduate Symposium in Medical Humanities:** This yearlong graduate pilot course, sponsored by the Provost’s Interdisciplinary Teaching Award, was taught by Arden Hegele, PhD (English) and Rita Charon, MD, PhD (Medical Humanities and Ethics) to a class of graduate students in the humanities and health professionals and students from the Medical Center. In addition to attending a weekly seminar that explored literature, history, philosophy, and medical publications, students completed external fieldwork, clinical and humanistic witnessing, and collaborative research projects.

- **Pandemic Urbanisms Series:** The Medical Humanities major at the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society was officially approved by New York State in 2020. The launch of the major was celebrated in a virtual lecture series, cosponsored by the SOF/Heyman as part of the Explorations in the Medical Humanities series, featuring speakers on topics as wide-ranging as internal medicine, anthropology, poetry and poetics, children’s literature, and activism. The launch was accompanied by a Student Design Challenge for undergraduate students across the country.

- **Increasing COVID-19 Vaccine Confidence:** This project at Columbia World Projects, led by Dr. Rishi Goyal (ICLS, Emergency Medicine) and Professor Dennis Tenen (English), with research coordination from Arden Hegele, has begun to analyze the rhetoric of vaccine hesitancy expressed on social media. Results will be used by external public health partners in an ongoing pro-vaccination campaign.


- **Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes:** The annual meeting of the Medical and Health Humanities Network, part of the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes, was hosted virtually by the University of Southern Denmark in June 2021 with a focus on “Space, Place, and Design in Healthcare.” This conference boasted more than 50 papers and keynotes from architects and clinicians. The network is administered by the SOF/Heyman,
and Rishi Goyal is the director of the Steering Committee.

- *Motherhood and Technology Working Group*: The Motherhood and Technology Working Group, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Social Difference at Columbia, is co-organized and codirected by Rishi Goyal and Arden Hegele; and it features participants from literature, obstetrics, sociology, law, and other disciplines. The group partnered with the SoF/Heyman to feature several events in Spring 2021 and hosted Jeanie Finlay, the director of the documentary film *Seahorse*, to discuss the cinematic representation of a trans man’s journey through pregnancy.
HEYMANS CENTER FELLOWS
2020–2021

Funded by the Office of the Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences, the Heyman Center Fellowships provided five junior and five senior Columbia faculty with course relief during the academic year. These fellowships allow faculty to reduce their teaching loads to a minimum of one course per semester during the award year in order to conduct research and to participate in a regular weekly seminar, chaired by seminar directors Eugenia Lean (East Asian Languages and Cultures) and Dorothea von Mücke (Germanic Languages). Four post-MPhil graduate students were 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.

“Above all, I am grateful to the Heyman Fellowship program for having given time and space to pursue my own work. However, I also benefited immensely from our weekly seminar meetings. Participating in these sessions allowed me to practice reading critically outside my discipline; to hone my skills as a questioner and respondent; and to see how other scholars write, work, and think. I learned so much. Just as importantly, for the first time since arriving at Columbia, I felt a sense of intellectual community with my colleagues here and a sense of belonging too.” —Meredith Gamer, Art History
“In each session every participant was able to contribute thoughts and suggestions; no one was ever left out. I was terribly impressed by this spontaneous and generous kind of scholarly decorum, and I know I am not alone in noticing it.” —Nicholas Dames, English and Comparative Literature
Each year, the Society of Fellows and Heyman Center for the Humanities welcomes visiting scholars including, through the Consortium of Humanities Centers and Institutes (CHCI), fellows appointed by the American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS). Fellows have access to a variety of Columbia resources including shared office space and library access. Fellows are encouraged to attend events and share their expertise with others in residence at the SOF/Heyman.

2020–2021 Fellows

Daniel Hershenzon

Daniel Hershenzon is an associate professor in the Department of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages at the University of Connecticut researching the early modern Mediterranean history of Spain. His book, *The Captive Sea: Slavery, Communication, and Commerce in Early Modern Spain and the Mediterranean* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), has won Honorable Mention in the Mediterranean Seminar First Book Prize in 2021 and has been awarded the ASPHS 2019 Best First Book in Iberian History Prize and the Sharon Harris Book Award by the University of Connecticut Humanities Institute. He has published articles in *Past and Present, Annales HSS, the Journal of Early Modern History, African Economic History, History Compass, Philological Encounters*, and in edited volumes. In 2019–2020, he was the Sir John Elliott Fellow at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies, where he was working on his current book project, “Captive Objects: Religious Artifacts, Piracy and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean.” This past year, he continued to pursue this project as an ACLS Frederick Burkardt Fellow at the Heyman Center for the Humanities in Columbia University.
Amir Moosavi
Amir Moosavi is an assistant professor in the Department of English at Rutgers University–Newark. His research and teaching interests cover modern Arabic and Persian literatures and the cultural history of the Middle East, with an emphasis on Iran, Iraq, the Levant, and Afghanistan. His primary book project is titled “Dust That Never Settled: Afterlives of the Iran-Iraq War in Arabic and Persian Literatures.” A comparative study of the fiction that has emerged from the Iran-Iraq War in both Arabic and Persian, it argues for the expansion of modern comparative literary studies across the two languages based on common experiences of war and writing under authoritarian regimes.

As an ACLS fellow during the 2020–2021 academic year, he made significant progress on his book manuscript, which he hopes to submit to publishers by the end of 2021. He also coedited a volume titled Losing Our Minds, Coming to Our Senses: Sensory Readings of Persian Literature and Culture and completed two peer-reviewed articles on the Iranian writer Hossein M. Abkenar.
ALUMNI NEWS

Joelle Abi-Rached (2017–19) published “Frantz Fanon and the crisis of mental health in the Arab world” in the digital magazine *Psyche*. She also participated as a panelist in the fourth Virtual Forum of the World Network of Psychiatric Trainees on mental health in Lebanon, with a fundraising campaign to support mental health care at the American University of Beirut.


Maggie Cao (2014–16) was appointed to the National Humanities Center for 2021–22 to work on a new book on American art and imperialism.


Jonathan Gilmore (2009–2011) published with Oxford University Press *Apt Imaginings: Feelings for Fictions and Other Creatures of the Mind*, which was awarded the American Society for Aesthetics Outstanding Monograph Prize for 2021.

David Gutkin (2015–17) received a Johns Hopkins Catalyst Award. He used the funds to take a one-year leave from teaching in order to work on his book, which deals with avant-garde opera in New York.

Victoria Holbrook (1985–87) runs a weekly online philosophy conversation series, Goodness and Beauty, which all Fellows are invited to join (write to vrholbrook@gmail.com). Her translations of *The Orpheus Double Bind: What Can Writing Save?* by Nurdan Gürbilek, and a commentary on the Quran, *O Humankind: Surah Ya Sin* by Cemalnur Sargut, both came out in 2021.


Amira Mittermaier (2006–07) was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship. She is currently working on a book on God-human relations in present-day Egypt. While telling multiple stories about how Egyptian Muslims relate to, think about, grapple with, and live with (or without) God, the book also asks broader questions about the stakes of approaching a figure like God ethnographically.

Emily Odgen (2010–13) was promoted to associate professor of English at the University of Virginia.

David Pike (1993–95) received an NEH Fellowship for College Teachers for 2021 for his book project, “Slum Lore: A Cultural History of Modern Urban Poverty.” He wishes to give special thanks to Andreas Huyssen (Governing Board Member, 1992–2004) and Deborah Epstein Nord (Fellow 1980–82) for their support of this project.


Samer Shehata (1999–2000) received an International Affairs Fellowship from the Council on Foreign Relations for the 2021–22 year. The award facilitates practical experience in the foreign policy-making field, providing a twelve-month placement at a US federal government agency, in Congress, or with an international organization.
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