

*Center for the Study of*

**SLAVERY**

*&* **JUSTICE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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## Director's Note

It has been a year like no other. A global pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests - in which 26 million Americans marched, particularly during the summer months of 2020, and where over 4,000 cities worldwide were shaken by solidarity marches that linked local demands and solidarity for the Black Lives Matter Movement. In this unprecedented year the CSSJ has attempted to navigate these new conditions. As the pandemic took hold, remote work and learning became the order of the day, the Center quickly adapted and over the past several months has become a virtual center. In making this shift, the Center's staff has been outstanding and I pay tribute to all members of the staff, as well as the undergraduate and graduate students who work with the Center.

As COVID-19 wreaked havoc in America, particularly on the African American community, and police violence against the black community continued, anti-black racism became increasingly dominant in public discourse, the CSSJ was faced with a choice - How should we maintain faithful to our mission as a Center, preoccupied not only with historical racial slavery, but with justice as well?

How would we do this in ways which would merge scholarship and our commitment to the practices of public humanities and public engagement? The move to virtual programming, the creation of the popular webinar, *This is America* were results of the commitment we made.

The CSSJ, we have often said, is a center which engages the world. It could not be otherwise- racial slavery and the historical European colonial projects shaped the making of the modern world. We continue to live in the afterlives of these systems. Or to parse James Baldwin, history travels through time and our bodies.

***“How should we maintain faithful to our mission as a Center, preoccupied not only with historical racial slavery, but with justice as well?”***



However, we did only do virtual programming for the year. Before the pandemic took hold, the CSSJ continued to be engaged with its many partners, particularly with Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in advancing the Global Curatorial Project. This project will culminate in a global traveling exhibition about the making of the modern world and the reverberations of this making on our contemporary moment. We also began a working group with some of the leading scholars in the world to conduct a global study of racial slavery, colonialism and the making of the modern world. All of this along with the work of the CSSJ research clusters illuminate the depth and scope of the Center's work. In the domain of public humanities and public history the Center, working with Choices, produced a major curriculum text for high school teachers and students, *Racial Slavery in the Americas: Resistance, Freedom and Legacies*. This will be the first of many Center publications in which we seek to bring to broader publics new scholarship on the history of racial slavery and its afterlives. In the sphere of art we worked with two artists to produce an exhibition with visual and written works inspired by the writings of seminal writer Octavia Butler. Unable to curate our annual commencement exhibition, we will over the next few months produce a virtual show with these artists.

As I write this, the results of the American election are in. We will in January 2021 be in a different period than previously. Yet, the need for America to confront its history, to grapple with its slavery past as one of the foundation of the American Republic has not gone away and is perhaps more necessary than before. This means that the work of the CSSJ continues to be just as relevant.

Over the years we have been able to do our work because of broad support. We thank you all for that support and look forward to seeing each and every one of you at one of our programs.

Stay safe and with my warmest greetings,

**ANTHONY BOGUES**

*Director, Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice*



## About the Center

The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice is a scholarly research center with a public humanities mission. Recognizing that racial and chattel slavery were central to the historical formation of the Americas and the modern world, the CSSJ creates a space for the interdisciplinary study of the historical forms of slavery while also examining how these legacies shape our contemporary world.

For the 2019-2020 academic year, the Center's work was organized around the following research clusters and projects:

### RESEARCH CLUSTERS

#### Human Trafficking

This project explores contemporary forms of human bondage and engages in public programming around this issue.

#### Mass Incarceration and Punishment in America

By examining the origins and consequences of mass incarceration, the cluster operates from the frame that race and anti-Black racism are cornerstones to understanding the vast leviathan of punishment in America.

#### Freedom Archive

This project creates an inventory of materials in Brown University Library's Special Collections related to slavery and abolition to help scholars more easily access these items.

#### Race, Medicine, and Social Justice

This cluster explores the history and persistence of structural racism in biomedicine as it intersects with economic and social conditions. We focus on reimagining the knowledge we produce about race and health from a social justice perspective.

#### Race, Slavery, Colonialism and Capitalism

This new research cluster explores the way that race, slavery, and colonialism have shaped global capitalism. This research cluster is reshaping scholar's understanding of the history and growth of capitalism and will bring together the best scholars in the world. This is a three year project that is co-led by CSSJ and the International Institute of Social History (Amsterdam).

#### Historical Injustice and Democracy

The making of the modern world was in part constituted by the historical injustices of colonialism and racial slavery. These injustices have played out in contemporary phenomena such as apartheid, displacement, discrimination, and other forms of domination. However, how do forms of historical and contemporary injustices shape practices of democracy? This research cluster is a joint collaborative project with the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs.

### PUBLIC HUMANITIES PROJECTS

#### Global Curatorial Project

This exhibition and curatorial project presents both the global interconnectedness of Atlantic slavery and the slave trade, as well as illuminates an alternative view about the history of our global modernity. It is co-led by CSSJ and the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture.

#### Slave Trade Film Project with Filmmaker Stanley Nelson

This research and workshop project aims to support the development of a multi-part documentary series on the Atlantic slave trade. *Creating a New World: The Transatlantic Slave Trade* will chart the economic and human cost of the slave trade across the Atlantic basin, underscoring how this expansive system of trade, violence, and profit built the modern world.

#### PBS Companion Book, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and the Making of the New World*

This is a project which will accompany the Firelight Film. The book is written by Anthony Bogue and Zach Sell, visiting professor of history at Drexel University.

#### Heimark Artist-in-Residence

The Heimark Artist-in-Residence program brings to campus musicians, poets, visual artists, and performers whose work grapples with the legacies of slavery on our world today.

### Racial Slavery in the Americas: Resistance, Freedom and Legacies Curriculum

Released in August 2020, this high school level resource challenges myths and absences in how our schools currently teach the history of racial slavery. This is a collaborative project with The Choices Program.

### The Imagined New in collaboration with Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre (VIAD)

Revolving around an interdisciplinary workshop platform, this project, creates space for critical exchange and research around African and African Diasporic art practices, as they relate to questions of history, archive and the alternative imagination(s) of Black aesthetic and curatorial practices.

### SEMINAR SERIES

#### CSSJ Advanced Knowledge Working Group

The CSSJ Advanced Knowledge Working Group is a seminar for graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and other scholars affiliated with or working alongside the CSSJ to come together to think critically about the legacies of slavery and boundaries of freedom across time and space.

#### Carceral State Reading Group

The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice facilitates a year long reading group which focuses on issues of imprisonment, incarceration, captivity, criminalization and policing historically and in the present day. The reading group is a collaboration between various sectors of the Providence community and the CSSJ at Brown University.

#### Graduate Seminar and Reading Group on Black Aesthetics

Organized by graduate students, this seminar is focused on engaging in deep study and inquiry into the discourse of history and aesthetics as praxis. The group seeks to interrogate a set of aesthetic practices bounded up in the conventions of Western thought. The group will produce publications, mixtapes, and exhibitions and aims to develop a close intellectual and artistic partnership with the Center for Humanities Research at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

### Faculty Fellow Seminar

This graduate level seminar led by Brown faculty is an interdisciplinary course that seeks to explore emerging issues in the study of racial slavery and its legacies.

### PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

#### Slavery & Legacy School Tours

The Slavery & Legacy tour examines the history behind Brown University, the State of Rhode Island and their roles in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. New digital resources help students (K-12 & college) as well as adult groups think critically about the University and state histories.

#### Civil Rights Movement Initiative

This initiative aims to help high school students understand the Civil Rights Movement as something more than events of the past, and as a bridge to understanding the present. Students meet for weekly classes at the Center and participate in a week-long visit to the South, visiting important sites in the Southern Freedom Movement and meeting with activists. In AY 21 this work will be expanded to include two additional Providence Public schools and provide course credit.

### STAFF & ADMINISTRATION

**Anthony Bogues**  
*Director*  
*Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory,*  
*Professor of Africana Studies,*  
*Affiliated Professor of History of Art and Architecture*

**Shana Weinberg**  
*Assistant Director*

**Maiyah Gamble-Rivers**  
*Manager of Programs and Community Engagement*

**Catherine Van Amburgh**  
*Center Coordinator*

*Administrative Assistance*  
**Sydney Smith '22**  
**Aidan Garrett '20**

*Atlantic Slave Trade Research Group*  
**Callie Bouton '22**  
**Halle Bryant '21**  
**Kaela Hines '22**  
**Jamie Solomon '21**  
**Serena Varner '22**

*Carceral State Reading Group*  
**Connor Jenkins '22**  
**Sophie Kupetz '19.5**

*Communications Coordinator*  
**Nathaniel Pettit '20**

*Program Coordinators*  
**Dylan Lewis '22**  
**Lillian Pickett '22**

*Graduate Associate Fellow*  
**Uchechukwu Onwunaka '19 AM '20**

*Podcast Producers*  
**Babette Thomas '20**  
**Alex Hanesworth '20.5**

### FACULTY ADVISORY BOARD

**Philip Gould**  
*Israel J. Kapstein Professor of English*

**Matthew Pratt Guterl**  
*Professor of Africana and American Studies,*  
*Chair of American Studies*

**Françoise N. Hamlin**  
*Associate Professor of Africana Studies and History*

**Juliet Hooker**  
*Professor of Political Science*

**Kevin Quashie**  
*Professor of English*

**Seth Rockman**  
*Associate Professor of History*

**Dr. Ruth J. Simmons**  
*Chair, 2012-2020*

**James T. Campbell**

**Katherine Chon '02**

**David Haas '78**

**Spencer Crew '71**  
*Chair, 2020-Present*

**Libby Heimark '76, P'11 '14 '17**

**Mary Vascellaro '74, P'07**

### AFFILIATED FACULTY

**Rui Gomes Coelho**  
*Affiliated Faculty*  
*Postdoctoral Research Associate in Archaeology and the Ancient World*

**Emily Owens**  
*CSSJ Faculty Fellow*  
*Assistant Professor of History,*  
*Brown University*

**Seth Rockman**  
*CSSJ Faculty Fellow Seminar Affiliate*  
*Associate Professor of History,*  
*Brown University*

**Zachary Sell**  
*Visiting Assistant Professor of Slavery and Justice, Brown University, 2019-2020*

### CSSJ RESEARCH CLUSTER FELLOWS

**Lundy Braun**  
*Professor of Medical Science and Africana Studies,*  
*Race, Medicine and Social Justice: Research Cluster Faculty Fellow*

**Elena Shih**  
*Assistant Professor of American Studies and Ethnic Studies,*  
*Human Trafficking Research Cluster Faculty Fellow*

**Nicole Gonzalez Van Cleve**  
*Associate Professor of Sociology,*  
*Mass Incarceration and Punishment in America Research Cluster Faculty Fellow*

### POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW

**Roselyne Gerazime**  
*Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow in Slavery and Justice, 2019-2020*

**Charlene Fletcher,**  
*Emerging Voices Postdoctoral Research Associate in Slavery and Justice, 2020-2021*

### VISITING SCHOLARS

**Pepjin Brandon**  
*Visiting Scholar, 2019-2020*

**Meadow Dibble**  
*Visiting Scholar, 2019-2021*

**Sylviane Diouf**  
*Visiting Scholar, 2019-2021*

**Naz Habtezghi**  
*Visiting Scholar, 2019-2020*

**Hadiya Sewer**  
*Visiting Scholar, 2019-2021*

**Paul Gardullo**  
*Visiting Scholar, 2020-2021*

### GRADUATE FELLOWS

**Felicia Denaud**  
*Graduate Associate Fellow*

**Melanie Ferdinand-King**  
*Graduate Associate Fellow*

**Justin Lang**  
*Graduate Associate Fellow*

**Heather Sanford**  
*6th Year Interdisciplinary Graduate Dissertation Fellow*

**Jeff Feldman**  
*6th Year Interdisciplinary Graduate Dissertation Fellow, 2020-2021*

**Malcolm Thompson**  
*Graduate Associate Fellow*

### PUBLIC HUMANITIES GRADUATE FELLOWS

**Chandra Marshall '20 A.M.**  
*Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery*

**Breylan Martin '21 A.M.**  
*Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery*

**Rai Terry '22 A.M.**  
*Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery*

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

## CSSJ Research Clusters

### HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESEARCH CLUSTER

During this year, the Human Trafficking Research Cluster (HTRC) wrapped up a two-year long research project for a 2017-2019 British Academy funded research project on *Tackling Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour in Modern Business*. Over the course of two years, undergraduate research cluster student participants helped conduct research to understand the proliferation of technological solutions to stopping human trafficking, including various cellphone apps that help migrant workers report abuse across the US, Asia, and Latin America. The results of this work were published in an article published by the *British Academy Journal* this past summer. [Elena Shih](#) authored an additional public-facing op-ed about the need for modern day slavery legislation to support worker organizing in *Al Jazeera*.

In Fall 2019, HTRC collaborated with Brown's Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity in America to convene a two-day long book workshop at Brown for a book entitled "*The Racism and Coloniality of Anti-Trafficking*" co-edited by research cluster director Elena Shih and Kamala Kempadoo, currently under advanced contract at Routledge. Building off our 2017 CSSJ conference on "Whitewashing Abolition: Race, Displacement, and Combating Human Trafficking," this book project represents the culmination of our work to understand the important erasures that global anti-trafficking movements cause.

In the fall the authors of different chapters in this book convened to workshop their papers on human trafficking and anti-trafficking work in Jamaica, Mexico, Ghana, Brazil, Canada, Norway, New Zealand, France, Italy, and Thailand. These authors offer unique perspectives on the racialized policing of trafficking, and neo-colonial modes of administering anti-trafficking response. Such contributions are vital to our larger mission to understand the limits and opportunities embedded in the new "modern day slavery" paradigm.

During Spring 2020, HTRC continued its longstanding community based research partnership with COYOTE RI. Though delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to introduce a RI house bill to study the impacts of decriminalization in the state, sponsored by house representative Anastasia Williams, initially planned for this Spring will proceed once the legislation session reconvenes. In the interim, the research cluster students have been active in COYOTE's rapid response to the corona virus, alongside its coalition members through the Alliance to Mobilize Our Resistance ([www.amorri.org](http://www.amorri.org)). These efforts have served over 160 families--immigrants, refugees, communities of color, and sex workers--in the greater Providence area.

#### ELENA SHIH

*Manning Assistant Professor of American Studies  
CSSJ Human Trafficking Research Cluster Faculty Fellow*

### RACE, MEDICINE, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH CLUSTER

The 2019-2020 academic year was an especially intellectually exciting one for the Race, Medicine, and Social Justice research cluster (Working Group) at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. Comprised of faculty and students across the university, including the medical school, the Working Group has been meeting continuously for four years to discuss the social, political, and cultural dimensions of health inequality as it intersects with the knowledge we as a society choose to produce about race and racism. Extending beyond the framework of social determinants of health, we analyzed the limitations of genetics and lifestyle as dominant explanatory frameworks in biomedicine for racial disparities in disease. We further explored how these de-humanizing frameworks have emerged historically, and how their persistence harms people of the African diaspora across the globe.

For our first session this year, emergency medicine physician, Luke Messac, led the group in a discussion of UK journalist Angela Saini's award-winning book *Superior: The Return of Race Science*. Later in the semester, internist Bethany Gentilesco led another illuminating discussion on how the uncritical use of racial categories in algorithms flattens and homogenizes understandings of race and crucially obscures how racism operates in medicine and public health. The highlight of the semester was a well-attended and enthusiastically-received public talk by UCLA professor Terence Keel. Drawing from his recent book, *Divine Variations: How Christian Thought Became Racial Science*, Keel explored the importance of Christian thought to the history of racism over three centuries.

Before COVID-19 disrupted our second semester program, we had two engaging sessions, one led by sociology doctoral student Chinyere Agbai who explored how structures of racism are embedded in housing policies that produce, deepen, and sustain health inequality. Nicole Truesdell, affiliate in Africana Studies, facilitated a vibrant and especially informative discussion on the politics of knowledge, centered on the dominant explanatory frameworks for racial disparities in disease.



At the end of the semester, the Working Group sponsored a Webinar panel discussion, entitled "Racism and COVID-19 in Rhode Island." With more than 260 participants, the webinar drew on the perspectives of six physicians in a variety of Rhode Island clinical settings to interrogate the social context of the pandemic, its causes, and the official response to the pandemic.

The data from most states thus far on racial disparities in COVID-19 death rates, especially for black Americans, is staggeringly high. Racial disparities in deaths from COVID-19 are less striking in Rhode Island than elsewhere, in part because approximately 76% of COVID-19 deaths are occurring among residents of nursing homes, a large majority of whom are white. Yet, there is much suffering and de-humanization in Black and Latinx communities from systemic racism that the pandemic has made evident for all to see. As emergency physician Taneisha Wilson noted in her opening remarks, "systemic racism in our entire nation has been highlighted in this pandemic and for most of us, this is not news." According to Wilson, emergency physicians witness this struggle in a particularly stark and concrete way. (See the Webinar here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4rOVsZhQh3k>). Next year, the Working Group will explore in more depth the history of racial disparities revealed in the pandemic.

#### LUNDY BRAUN

*Professor of Medical Science and Africana Studies  
Race, Medicine and Social Justice Research Cluster  
Faculty Fellow*



**SLAVE TRADE FILM PROJECT**  
*CREATING THE NEW WORLD: THE  
TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE*

*Creating the New World: The Transatlantic Slave Trade* is a ground-breaking multi-part documentary series directed by Stanley Nelson (Firelight Media) that will be aired on PBS in 2021. Covering four centuries and reflecting the changing global history of the slave trade, the series will reveal to viewers the centrality of the Atlantic slave trade in the making of the modern world.

The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice has been engaged in a unique, ongoing collaboration with Firelight Media in support of this necessary documentary series. Since 2017, a group of researchers at Brown University have worked to support this project through the Atlantic Slave Trade Research Group.

This year, undergraduate student researchers Callie Bouton, Halle Bryant, Aidan Garrett, Kaela Hines, Jamie Solomon, and Serena Varner conducted vital image and story research through study of the archives of the Atlantic slave trade. Their work has supported the development of a historically rich, visually dynamic, and archivally grounded documentary film series. As the research group coordinator, I was deeply impressed by the dedication of research group members to the project throughout the year. Further, Firelight Films archival producer Kevina Tidwell provided indispensable guidance to the research group throughout the Spring semester, facilitating our transition to online research and sustaining our efforts with characteristic care, humor, and expertise.



Student researchers brought their unique research skills to the project and gained new insights about the past and present in the process. Halle Bryant recalled that conducting research in the oral histories of formerly enslaved people compiled by the Works Progress Administration was particularly impactful. As Bryant stated, “It was powerful to read the perspectives of people who were enslaved during their childhood. Seeing and hearing those accounts has been really valuable. I spent additional time just reading and reflecting upon those testimonies of life during slavery because they had within them so much knowledge.”

For research group member and history concentrator Jamie Solomon, the work provided new perspectives on the process of historical research. Solomon reflected, “The stories that we worked on are complex and often painful. Telling them also requires an entirely different way of thinking about how historical documents are used because you have to think about these sources as ultimately in motion. At the same time, it would be impossible to do this research without also being moved by it.”

Despite unprecedented disruptions, undergraduate research group members worked with unwavering commitment, providing vital support for the project. As the group confronted new realities, meetings transformed. After work moved online with the closure of the physical campus, weekly discussions continued online. Weekly meetings addressed not only the meticulous aspects of film-making but also lingered on the urgent details of new books, films, hobbies, and aspirations. The research group concluded the academic year with a better understanding of the significance of collective public history work and with greater appreciation of how transformational that research can be.

**ZACH SELL**  
*Visiting Assistant Professor of Slavery and Justice*

## 400 YEARS: REFLECTION ON FROM SLAVE SHIPS TO BLACK LIVES MATTER CONFERENCE

The year 2019 marked four hundred years since the first enslaved Africans were brought to the colony of Virginia, setting forth centuries of violence and struggle which defined the Atlantic slave trade's presence in what is now the United States of America. On December 5th and 6th, 2019, scholars and practitioners from around the world gathered for the CSSJ's *From Slave Ships to Black Lives Matter* conference, in order to commemorate and problematize some of the ongoing conversations concerning racial slavery and its ongoing significance in the lives of Black people globally. In thinking about 1619 and about 2019, a few questions were raised regarding the difficulties in periodizing global systems of chattel slavery, which we know eschew and even destabilize the schema offered to us by the 1619-2019 framework.

It is always difficult to look for a singular inaugural moment for this place we call America, and for a global system of chattel slavery. Periodization is always already a troubled enterprise, yet we also feel compelled to periodize because of our desire to study and humanize our forebears on their own terms rather than our own.

As such, many of the discussions during this meeting considered what is rendered possible in our conceptual mapping of colonial modernity by pushing against the constitutive limits of the 1619-2019 narrative framing, and offered instead different benchmarks, beginning not only the shores of West Africa but in Sudan, Ethiopia, in St. Croix, Brazil, Haiti, and other locations. In this way, we managed to think in and against the authorized narrative framing of both the rise of colonial expansion/slavery and the growth of Black radicalism throughout history and in our contemporary moment as well.



RYTHUM VINOEN



RYTHUM VINOEN



RYTHUM VINOEN

Many of the conversations focused on how to consider contemporary predicaments, such as prison expansion (and abolition) within the long *durée* framework, which was the central consideration for the Carceral State Reading Group's discussions during the conference, moderated by Felicia Denaud and Dr. Joy James. We also discussed how staking claim to the founding of America is a Janus-faced intellectual move — on the one hand it rightfully corrects the record as it stands by recognizing that enslaved Africans are the reason why America exists as it does, but it also doesn't dislodge the primacy of the state (which didn't yet exist at the time) in this narrative. It does, however, allow for black people to take a place inside of that story and push the narrative towards a truly hemispheric one, as was demonstrated in the "Black Lives Internationally" panel, and particularly during Councilman Silvio Humberto's keynote on contemporary struggles for black liberation in Brazil.

We also discussed some of the pitfalls of commemoration itself, and how the act of returning to a moment is necessary so that we might be able to break with the seemingly interminable violence that follows it. In this regard, we heard from Dr. Cheryl Finley's readings of ephemera and visual archives of the Slave Ship, and Dr. Justin Dunnivant's marine archaeological explorations of slave ship-wrecks, and learned a great deal about the role of visual and material culture in working in and against the limits of the 1619-2019 framing. Ultimately, in our return to 1619, it was a return that allowed us to break with the prevailing narrative framing and propose instead a framework that considered the rupture that chattel slavery represented not only to America, but to the entire world.

**BEDOUR ALAGRAA '19 Ph.D**

*Assistant Professor*

*Department of African and African Diaspora Studies  
The University Texas at Austin*

## EXHIBITIONS

The Center curates rotating gallery exhibitions that bring together art, archival documents, and photography to help visitors explore the past and make connections to our world today. Last year the Center curated three exhibitions, the two gallery shows: Edouard Duval-Carrié and *the Art of Embedded Histories* and *Haiti: Revolution, Loas, and the Art of Blackness*. While the Center's planned 2020 Commencement exhibition, *reflection/abyss/vision/legacy* featuring new works by 2020 Heimark Artist in Residence Porsha Olayiwola and CSSJ Visiting Artist Dara Bayer '08 was delayed due to the pandemic, we look forward to launching a virtual version of the exhibition and sharing the digital catalogue publication in December 2020.

The topics explored in our exhibitions persist beyond the timeline they are exhibited for public viewing. To view the full catalogue publications from past exhibitions, please visit the Center's website (<https://www.brown.edu/initiatives/slavery-and-justice/gallery-exhibitions>) or email [slaveryjustice@brown.edu](mailto:slaveryjustice@brown.edu).

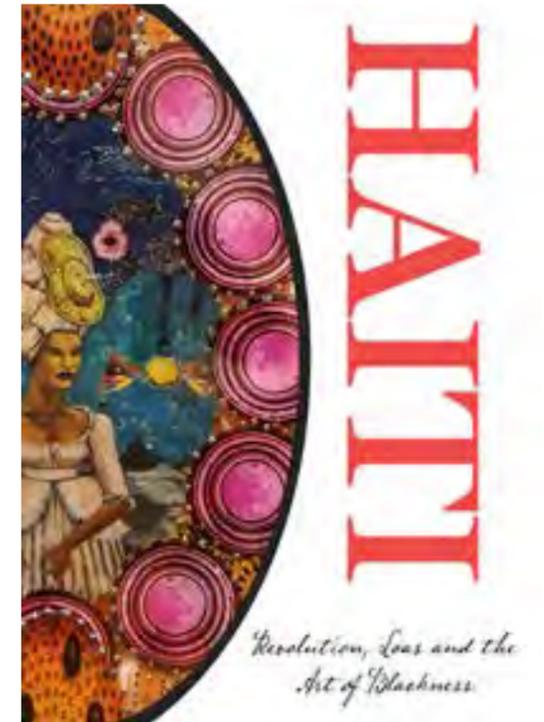
## CENTER STAFF



*Burning Amazon*  
2019, Engraving on plexiglass, 40 x 40 inches

## HAITI: REVOLUTION, LAOS, AND THE ART OF BLACKNESS

In 1802, Napoleon's army was sent to Saint Domingue to end the uprising of the enslaved on the island. A captured Toussaint L'Ouverture said, "They...struck down but the trunk of the tree; the roots are many...they will shoot up again." Since then, ordinary Haitians have been engaged in different struggles for complete freedom. Central to these struggles and to the everyday life of the Haitian people have been the Loas of the Afro-Caribbean religion, Vodou. This exhibition, on display in December 2019, presented student works which think about the Haitian Revolution, the various Loas of the Vodou pantheon and how Haitian art represents a form of Blackness in the Americas. Drawing from the many readings in an Africana course (AFRI 1190 Haiti: A New World, A Free World) on Haitian history and art, and inspired by the art of Edouard Duval-Carrié, this exhibition displayed the students' new understanding of Haitian history and art.



RYTHUM VINOEN



NICK DENTAMARO

## THE ART OF EMBEDDED HISTORIES

On view October 29–December 13, 2019, *Edouard Duval-Carrié and the Art of Embedded Histories* draws inspiration from the artist's investigation of the complex histories of the Caribbean spanning slavery, migration, colonialism and Afro-religious practices. It was installed at two Brown campus venues: *The Kingdom of this World* was presented at the CSSJ Gallery and *Memory and Embedded Histories* presented at the the Cohen Gallery in the Perry and Marty Granoff Center for the Performing Arts.

Through this exhibition Duval-Carrié continued his examination of Haitian history in part to reframe the colonial gaze that is still perpetuated about Haiti. This gaze obscures the nation's extraordinarily rich, complex, artistic, cultural and literary life. With Art of Embedded History, the CSSJ continues to engage with artists around the theme of the relationship of history to memory and the different ways in which the afterlives of colonialism and racial slavery continue to haunt our present.

Since 2014, the Miami-based Duval-Carrié has been occupied with a series of artistic experiments with material. The eleven works on display comprise mixed media embedded in resin, engraving on back-lit Plexiglas, mixed media on aluminum and works on paper.

The Cohen Gallery featured three of the artist's black and white drypoint engravings completed this year: *Henri Christophe (ou la dernière danse Taïno)*, *Burning Amazon and Migration*. These works developed from a recent artist residency at the Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Center, University of Johannesburg in South Africa, which facilitated Duval-Carrié's exploration of linocut techniques. *Soucouyant* (2017), depicting Caribbean folk talk figures, provides a vivid narrative of elements of Haitian history and the artist's growing preoccupation with the environment.

Three works from his kaleidoscopic *Memory Windows* series (#2, #3 and #9, 2017) showcased the artist's command as a master colorist. They intentionally included references to his previous work and feature new imagery and iconography drawn from Florida history, plantation life, the Haitian Vodou pantheon and well-known illustrations of slavery.



*Soucouyant #4*  
2018, Aluminum, 96 inches diameter

Created with mixed media embedded in resin and backlit, each *Memory Window* comprises eight boxes surrounding a centerpiece of figures and motifs deployed by the artist throughout his career to reveal interplay and slippage between memory and history.

On view at the CSSJ Gallery, black and white linocut prints *Amazon and Migration* and the engraving *Royaume de ce Monde* (2017) were presented in dialogue with *The Kingdom of this World*, a series inspired by Alejo Carpentier's novel "The Kingdom of this World" (published in 1949). The novel recounts stories about the Haitian revolution told from the perspective of Ti Noel, an enslaved person. *Ti Noel a San Souci* (2018), *The Kingdom of this World* (2018) and *La Fin de Ti Noel* (2018) illustrate the significance of slave rebellions and the Haitian revolution—Duval-Carrié has previously painted images of its leader, Toussaint L' Ouverture—and their various impacts across the Caribbean and the Afro-Caribbean diaspora.

Reflecting on his time at CSSJ, Duval-Carrié stated, "Decades of research has made it evident that my endeavors have always been to elucidate the trials and tribulations of my native land Haiti via the visual field...My collaboration with the CSSJ has provided me with inspiration and access to a vast array of information that would not have been readily accessible. Again, thinking retrospectively by placing the history of Haiti in a more global context has permitted me to evaluate many of the issues concerning that nation in a new light."

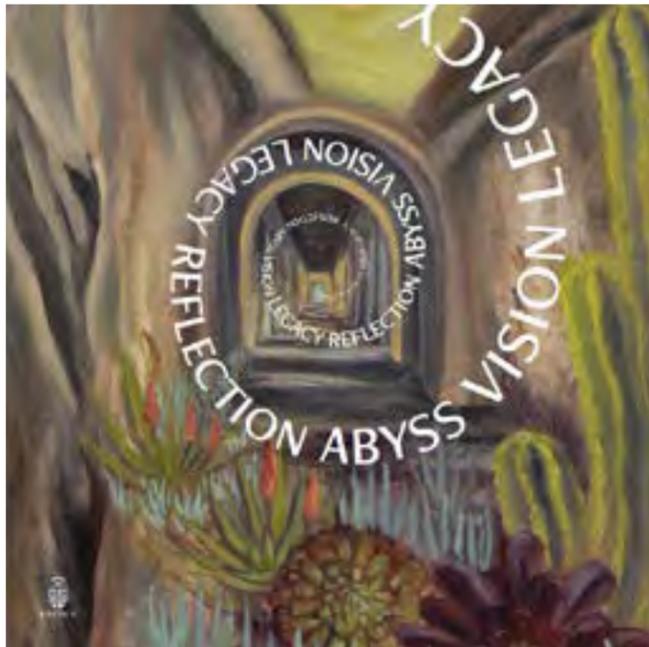


*The Kingdom of this World*  
2018, Mixed media on aluminum, 33 x 39 inches

## reflection/ abyss/ vision/ legacy

This year's planned Commencement exhibition was to feature new works by 2020 Heimark Artist in Residence Porsha Olayiwola (current poet laureate for the city of Boston) and CSSJ Visiting Artist Dara Bayer '08. While the gallery exhibition could not take place, the work for the project continued. Together Olayiwola and Bayer completed 8 new works in conversation, inspired by the multidimensional realms of Octavia E. Butler's archives, the first Black woman to win the Hugo Literary Award for science fiction. In addition to the original works created by Olayiwola and Bayer last spring, the catalogue also features archival materials from Butler's personal papers at the Huntington Library as well as essays on the legacy of Butler written by scholars of her work.

The catalogue and digital exhibition will be shared on December 8, 2020 as part of the zoom webinar: reflection/abyss/vision/legacy: Speculative Black Futures Inspired by the work of Octavia Butler.



**“All that you touch, you change. All that you change, changes you. The only lasting truth is change. God Is Change.” - Octavia Estelle Butler Memorial Epitaph, 1947-2006**

2020, in its early months, has proven itself to be an uncertain year. One of the most grounding experiences, on the contrary however, is the time we spent together sprawled on a blanket at a beach in southern California. We sat witnessing the sun turn from our side of the globe for the evening. What a reassuring and peaceful calm it felt to be near water and reflecting. We had just come from spending the afternoon finishing tacos and sitting at the memorial site of Octavia Estelle Butler. Dara brought succulents and a candle and Porsha brought sunflowers. We lay there thinking of Butler, ancestry, and legacy. Is life's culmination the reciprocal relationship of touching and changing ourselves and others? After we have passed do we live on through our impact? Here we were, at the cusp of so many thoughts and places, the edge of the country, the spin of a new day, a meeting yard of life and life past.

Two days before we entered Butler's archives at the Huntington Library completely unaware of what to expect but eager for the opportunity to pour over the contents of the archive. We took special care in learning which, among the nearly 400 boxes, we wanted, and then how to request those boxes. Though the website contained a description, each box's content was a surprise. Starting together we spent our first hour in the archive pouring over photos of Octavia Butler or photos Butler had taken: landscape, colleagues at writing festivals, a plethora of elaborate plants and landscapes. In our own separate inquiry, we each began a journey through Butler's archives. In addition to photos, we explored intimate manuscripts (some complete and published, others unfinished drafts), research material, journal entries, old posters, interviews, birthday cards and whatever else one can imagine keepsaking over the years. We both found ourselves, however, somewhere embedded in the verses of “Earthseed: The Books of The living.” Earthseed is a religion created and practiced by one of Butler's most prodigious protagonists, Lauren Oya Olamina.

Lauren, a character inspired by both the Yoruba Orisha, Oya, and Octavia Butler's own grandmother, is a teenage girl who deviates from her father's christianity to form her own religious practice and community. Earthseed is a religion that embraces shaping change and investing in the living. In an interview found in the archives, Octavia Butler states “I wanted to create a religion I could believe in.” And how powerful is that, to write and share a philosophy one can believe in. This creation of a belief system is what served as a muse and guide for us. What would it look like then, literary and visually, if we mapped the cartography of our own religion.

*Teacher, Trickster, Chaos, Clay.* This progression of words shows up in Butler's writing over and over again. They are metaphors for the concept of “God as Change” in the Earthseed verses. Scribbled as notes, they become archetypal descriptors in the unpublished Parable of the Trickster. They represent different ages and stages of collective/societal development, both past and future. They are the title of a memoir fragment about Butler's relationship to writing—both her love and obsession with her craft. The repetition of these words seems to be cyclical and iterative, a vehicle to reach greater creative insights and deeper understandings of humanity's possibility for positive transformation as well as its capacity for destruction and devastation.

In observing Butler's obsession with cycles, her searching, unpacking, unpeeling, engaging with her reality and its relationship to the future worlds she was building in her work, we began to explore our own relationship to cycles. We asked ourselves how we moved through our process of inner development and transformation, as well as how we were moving through our relationship with Butler's work. In our discussions during our time together in Pasadena and then after, four dimensions of a pattern of evolution, initiation, and consciousness emerged: **reflection/abyss/vision/legacy**. These four themes/dimensions are not linear and can be understood as existing in a cyclical way; they do, however, carry a progression, which has animated our process of creation and collaboration for this exhibition.

**Reflection** emerged as the process of situating self on a continuum of existence, of seeing where we have been in our lifetime and in our lineage, as a way to inform where we will go—the practice of Sankofa. Our experiences with each other and at the archives were anchored in our subjectivity as people of Afrikan descent with overlapping, as well as, very different lineages. Our identities as artists, and all that has shaped our creative practice, informed our relationship to Butler's writings and images.



From the place of reflection comes a widening awareness of the world and the inner and outer landscape, a process of looking down into the **abyss**. This broadening and deepening of awareness can be overwhelming, yet it is the essential ingredient for responding to our external conditions and our conditioning. With a sober understanding of an ugly reality, we think of abyss as a crossroads, a recognition and questioning of many possibilities. This was Lauren Olamina's orientation to life, her steadfast vision of "God as Change," that called for adaptation and foresight, what her father described as "[noticing] the abyss."

With looking down into the abyss, both a terrifying and luminous space, we come into our **vision**: the consciousness we need to shape our experience, to "shape God." Our visions are rooted in the interdependence of the collective and in the possibility for something to grow and evolve amidst the fiery destruction. Vision recognizes and holds all the complexity of our existence while shining a way forward. Lauren's founding of Acorn, the first Earthseed community at the end of Parable of the Sower, is a powerful reference point for how we can find ways to honor those we've lost while also co-creating something new, rooted in care and love. Perhaps most importantly, vision is not static, but a spiraling force that guides us across space and time to continually help us see within and beyond the abyss.

In manifesting our vision, we birth a **legacy**—that which we leave behind for those who come after us to reflect upon, grapple with, and further evolve. Butler possessed a powerful foresight about the significance of her work; she kept all of her notes and ensured that they were kept in a secure place, amidst the resilient succulents at the Huntington archives. What are the pieces of ourselves that we want others to hold, nurture, and grow long after we have departed this physical plane? What kind of ancestors do we want to be for future generations?

It is this question that we pondered at Butler's memorial, our humble offerings of succulents, sunflowers, and sage framing her grave stone. We sat with our hearts overflowing with gratitude for this powerful being who graced us with her imagination, insight, stories, raw determination and obsession. Butler's reflections, her journeys into the abyss, her profound manifested visions and her legacy, have materialized in our consciousness and in our bodies. This experience of legacy, of being in sacred space and relationship with each other through a shared reverence for Butler's contributions, led us to invite you, those who choose to engage with our creative work, into conversation. We wanted this exhibition, a collection of poetry and paintings, to also include an altar as an invitation for our broader communities to consider their spirals, their contributions, their legacies. Butler would never have wanted an altar that focused on her; her writings and notes warn against the obsession with the individual and the psychology of the cult. However, we could imagine honoring her by creating a sacred space for **possibility**, the consciousness that leads to questions and visions beyond our current reality.

We are in a moment of profound uncertainty and in an age where the conditions have upended the status quo. Butler's questions can be a guiding light in this time of the abyss. How will we emerge from the current chrysalis in our collective spiral? How will you participate in this movement? What will you share and leave for others as part of your calling?

**DARA BAYER '08**  
*Transformative Justice Program Coordinator and CSSJ Visiting Artist*

**PORSHA OLAYIWOLA**  
*Boston Poet Laureate and 2020 Heimark Artist in Residence*

## Beyond the Center Exhibitions

### UNFINISHED BUSINESS AT THE CENTER FOR RECONCILIATION

During Spring 2020, the Center for Reconciliation (CFR) was honored to present the CSSJ's exhibition *Unfinished Business: The Long Civil Rights Movement* both in person and online. Founded in 2015 by the Episcopal Diocese of Rhode Island, the CFR's mission is to foster racial reconciliation and racial justice by confronting the legacy of slavery. Housed in the historic Cathedral of St. John in Providence, the CFR offers a wide range of public programs, exhibitions, and workshops about the history and legacy of slavery, the slave trade, and the construction of race and racial identities in America.

Originally installed at Brown's John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage from September 2018 to February 2019, *Unfinished Business* explores the Civil Rights Movement (the Southern Freedom Movement), a catalyst for social change in America that disrupted the legal system of Jim Crow and racial segregation. The exhibition tells the story of the relationship between the Black organizing tradition and the movement from the moment of emancipation until the presidential campaigns of Jesse Jackson.



The CSSJ's loan of *Unfinished Business* to the CFR represented yet another chapter in a longstanding and generative partnership between the two organizations. Thanks to the CSSJ's generosity, the CFR opened *Unfinished Business* with a public commemoration of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday on January 23, 2020. The CFR welcomed around 200 visitors through March 8, 2020, at which point the exhibition hall closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

So that audiences could keep engaging with the gripping and timely exhibition, the CFR and CSSJ partnered to create a digital version of the exhibition, including photographs of the installation at the Cathedral of St. John, a digital version of the exhibition catalogue created by the CSSJ, and videos of panel discussions on the Civil Rights Movement and its legacies organized by the CSSJ. 138 people visited the site in the week following its launch, demonstrating the ongoing need for this urgent story, particularly in uncertain times.

Visit the exhibition website at [cfri.org/unfinished-business-the-long-civil-rights-movement](https://cfri.org/unfinished-business-the-long-civil-rights-movement).

**JULIA RENAUD**  
*Exhibition Manager and Curator, Center for Reconciliation*

## Beyond the Center Exhibitions

### ILLUMINATING HISTORY/ THE PLANTATION LIFE OF SOUTH COUNTY

The program and exhibit *Illuminating History* explores the history of slavery which fueled the plantations in the Charlestown and Westerly area of Rhode Island. It was made possible by a unique collaboration between Cross' Mills Library, Charlestown Historical Society and Ana Flores— a Rhode Island artist and resident of Charlestown. The program evolved from Flores' earlier collaboration with the Center for Slavery and Justice in 2017 which resulted in the installation, *Makers Unknown/ Material Objects and the Enslaved*.

The month-long program— of which only two events were held because of COVID-19— featured an exhibit and a speakers program at Cross' Mills Library. The library, which typically received about 5,000 visitors a month, was an ideal setting for this new exhibition and lectures. We wanted to reach a diverse swath of the public.

The two events that were held, a documentary viewing of *Traces of the Trade* and a lecture by Professor Carrington-Farmer were both standing room only because of the resulting interest in this previously unknown history. And many of the books that were displayed regarding this history were immediately checked out.

The reproduction of the Potter family portrait, a plantation family of South Carolina provided a perfect backdrop for our small exhibition. This was lent to us by the CSSJ. The exhibition also included artifacts and documents lent by the Charlestown Historical Society, antique chairs of the era, all resting on a large artful rendition of a map of the Atlantic slave trade created by Flores for the earlier exhibit at Brown in 2017.

We look forward to continuing when activities can resume and expanding on the scope of this public history and necessary public discussions. We are very grateful to the CSSJ for their interest and support for this project and also for a grant from the RI Foundation to create a catalog of the project.

ANA FLORES



## Brown Bag Lunch Series

### EMERGING SCHOLAR

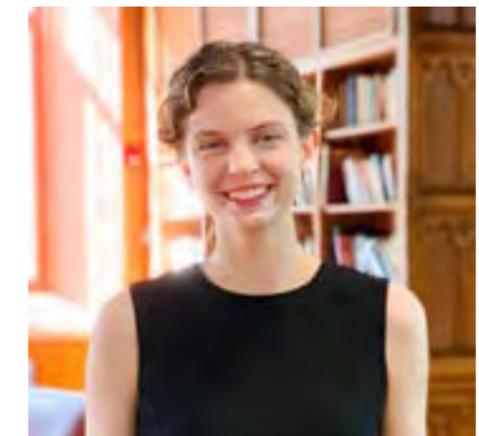
I visited the Center for Slavery and Social Justice in October of 2019 as part of the Emerging Scholars Initiative. My talk, “Enslaved Skill: Master Artisans in a Slave Society,” drew on my current book project, a history of the lives and labors of South Carolina’s enslaved and free African American artisans across the nineteenth century. During the talk, I focused in particular on the intersections of the slave economy and the knowledge economy, discussing the analytic potential of framing artisan skills as intellectual property, as well as the intriguing complications this framework poses within an economy predicated on slavery. (After all, if the artisan trades are intellectual property, what happens when the master artisans in question are themselves property?) These ideas are still in the development stage, and having the opportunity to present them at this early juncture has been crucial to my thought process.

After giving my talk, I had the opportunity to discuss my work with the scholars in attendance, which proved the highlight of my experience. The conversation was lively and thought-provoking, due in great part to the diversity of thought and expertise represented among the attendees. I left the conversation with new ideas, new resources, and renewed enthusiasm for my project.

As a first-year assistant professor, I have had little time during the past school year to focus on my own research and writing. My visit to the CSSJ was a much-needed breath of fresh air, allowing me to pick up my work anew and to test out some of my most recent ideas on a welcoming and knowledgeable audience. As a result, as I return to my research and writing this summer, the conversations I had at the CSSJ sit forefront in my mind.

ANNE KERTH

Assistant Professor in the W.E.B. Du Bois Department of Afro-American Studies,  
University of Massachusetts, Amherst



## Seminar Series

### ADVANCED KNOWLEDGES

One of the most enriching elements of a fellowship at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice is the opportunity to participate in the Advanced Knowledge Working Group. This year, I joined four other fellows – Rose Gérazime, Chandra Marshall, Breylan Martin, and Zach Sell – as part of this group of interdisciplinary collaborators. We met on a biweekly basis to work through hurdles we each faced in our research and writing. Informal writing workshops often turned into insightful discussions about different disciplinary approaches to shared questions or challenges, and proved essential to my own dissertation project. Perhaps more important than these discussions was the unfailing encouragement that I received from other fellows.

In addition to these workshops, members of the Advanced Knowledge Working Group invited two speakers to campus for public programming that aligned with the CSSJ's broader mission to spread awareness about the histories and legacies of slavery and freedom. Dr. Darnella Davis visited Brown on March 10 to share the research behind her book *Untangling a Red, White, and Black Heritage: A Personal History of the Allotment Era* (2018). The fellows enjoyed dinner and conversation with Dr. Davis following her lecture. We also invited Carol Thompson, the longtime Fred and Rita Richman Curator of African Art at the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, to give a lecture on the diversification of Eurocentric museum collections. The University's closure in response to COVID-19 unfortunately meant that Carol Thompson's lecture had to be postponed, but we were fortunate to make this connection for a potential future visit.

Though COVID-19 also made it impossible for the Advanced Knowledge Working Group to continue to meet in person, fellows convened every other week via Zoom. We used this time to discuss professional concerns, such as the precarious pandemic-era job market, and to make some much-needed human connection as we practice social distancing. The comfort of our small but close-knit community was especially appreciated during this challenging time. As I reflect on a wonderful year as a member of the Advanced Knowledge Working Group, I look forward to the future connections that our group will make together.

#### HEATHER SANFORD '20 Ph.D. HISTORY

*6th Year Interdisciplinary Graduate Dissertation Fellow*



**WHY UNTANGLING A RED, BLACK, AND WHITE HERITAGE MATTERS**

**March 10, 2020**  
5:00pm-6:30pm  
Friedman Hall Room 102



The long and intimate family saga that unfolds in *Untangling a Red, White, and Black Heritage: A Personal History of the Allotment Era* offers an opportunity to explore 19th century governmental policies that redefined communities of color living on the Western Frontier. That moment in history exposes the roots of terminology that continues to polarize our citizenry. Yet, that moment also serves as a link to a truer rendering of our national narrative.

Dr. Davis' talk will highlight some of the challenges faced as multiracial communities evolved both here in the US and within an increasingly transnational scale.

This talk is part of the Advanced Knowledge Working Group

For more information on upcoming events, please visit:  
<https://www.brown.edu/initiatives/slavery-and-justice/our-events>

Poster design credit Dylan Lewis '22

### CARCERAL STATE READING GROUP

The Carceral State Reading Group is a collection, or perhaps, a commons of Brown Students, formerly incarcerated organizers, practitioners, artists, professors; we are committed to serious study, intellectual vulnerability, and collaborative creation as we develop analyses around contemporary conditions of captivity and relationships/power to help us contest, and outlive these conditions. We meet twice a month for two hours around dinner and an assigned reading, film, poem, or piece.

The Carceral State Reading Group was designed and facilitated by doctoral student Kristen Maye and undergraduate Sophie Kupetz for the 2018-2019 academic year. It was conceived of as a laboratory for critical rigor, intellectual vulnerability, and creative collaboration among members. Different from a university course or seminar, this group was built by its participants to foster an intimate space for honest conversation, deep learning and collaborative decision-making. It is comprised of Providence and Brown community members with a focus on supporting Providence community organizations which resist the prison industrial complex and support presently and formerly incarcerated Rhode Islanders.

This year's cohort began with a community workshop co-hosted by College Unbound with scholar abolitionist Dr. Joy James in which we engaged in honest and deep conversations for over six hours with both current and formerly incarcerated activists. We then met twice monthly over hot food through March, writing letters to folks at Parchman Prison in Mississippi, discussing motherhood in organizing against state violence as inspired by Moms 4 Housing. With the outbreak of COVID-19, we unfortunately had to shift to virtual meetings while also committing to our core tenets of accessibility for all group members. Following this shift, we focused on supporting local and national decarceration efforts through Never Again RI, AMOR, PrYSM, and our community partner OpenDoors.



We reflected on how this pandemic serves as a “portal,” as imaginary Arundhati Roy writes, into an imagined world beyond bars, captivity, and incarceration, building community despite being physically apart. We think, we meet, we propose, we organize with that urgency, and in honor of that urgency. And as so much of what the prison, the city, and the state does is disappear, redact, and isolate, we seek to see, touch, feel, present one another. We look forward to continuing this group's connection to critical thinking and vulnerability with community groups in the coming years.

This year, the group is co-facilitated by Felicia Denaud, Africana Studies PhD candidate, and Connor Jenkins, Undergraduate '22 in History + Africana Studies.

#### FELICIA DENAUD

*PhD. Candidate in Africana Studies, Class of 2022*

#### CONNOR JENKINS

*Undergraduate in History and Africana Studies, Class of 2022*

## FACULTY FELLOW SEMINAR

I am a Professor of Performance Studies in the Department of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies at Brown. I was fortunate enough to be selected to participate in the CSSJ course taught by Professor Seth Rockman titled “Slavery’s New Materialisms” in the Fall of 2019. I was given course release to participate in this class which meant that I could really take the time required to focus on the materials and expand the perimeters of my own project which ultimately benefited enormously from the seminar. In fact, I have an essay titled “This Shoal which is Not One: Africans Who Fly and the Shoals of St. Simons” now forthcoming in *Island Studies* 15(2), November 2020, in a special issue titled “Nomadic identities, archipelagic movements, and island diasporas.” The essay would not have been possible without the seminar. Not only is the journal one that primarily serves the social sciences (and I am quite squarely situated in the arts and humanities), but the focus of the article on a slave ship that shoaled on a Georgia sea island and the performative orature that took flight from that shoaling could not have been realized without the generative conversation, reading material, and faculty guidance offered by Professor Seth Rockman and the faculty and students who made up the class.

On a basic level, I learned an incredible amount about slavery studies and the history of Atlantic slavery as approached by historians (from the discipline of history), archaeologists, critical geographers in the social sciences and various “cultural” and “area” studies in the humanities— art history, literary studies, Caribbean studies, Africana studies, American studies.



I became familiar with what might be called “hot spot” questions concerning the aims of historiography as those aims vary across disciplines and I gained firsthand awareness of fissures that can arise among disciplines as various historiographical approaches attempt to take up emergent methodologies (in this case the new materialism but also critical fabulation). I entered the class knowing more about the new materialism than about slavery studies. I exit enriched by slavery studies, more advanced in my grasp of slavery’s histories, and armed with sharper critical questions about the limits (and urgencies) afforded by perspectives proffered by new materialists and those employing the new materialism.

I was also enriched by the pedagogy of Seth Rockman. Another enormous benefit for a teacher who has been working in the classroom for a quarter century (more!) was the opportunity to literally be a student again. The experience was very different from the larger faculty and post-doc seminars I’ve been lucky to be a part of in the Pembroke Center (also very rewarding). In this case, Professor Rockman’s focus was really on the graduate students and so I experienced, again, what it is like to be a student. The result was that my own classes were enriched not only because I incorporated readings on slavery studies from the CSSJ syllabus but because I had a chance to think deeply about teaching in new ways. At base, being in the sustained presence of a colleague from a different discipline as he teaches graduate students (and bravely accommodates the sometimes confusing oncoming traffic of interdisciplinary input) was not only deeply rewarding for the techniques I was able to witness, but I’ve come to think that this should be an essential experience for us all! I not only learned about slavery studies and slavery’s histories but I learned about my own discipline (its limits and its rewards) through this experience. In addition, I made time to attend more talks sponsored by CSSJ than I would have been able to in a more crowded semester. I was and am very grateful for this opportunity.

**REBECCA SCHNEIDER**

*Professor of Theatre Arts and Performance Studies*

## BLACK HISTORICAL AESTHETICS READING GROUP

The Black Historical Aesthetics reading group started out of a desire for my friends and I to continue our intensive study that we began together in Professor Bogues’s Black Critique seminar. It is no stretch to say that this group of 5 scholars coming together has already been formative in my intellectual and social work here at Brown. Being an international student put me in a uniquely outside position, but coming together weekly with fellow Ph.D candidates Melaine, Bryant, Justin, and Malcolm, has enriched my life in Providence greatly. It is my contention that this small group will change the landscape of research into Black Historical Aesthetics in the years to come, both in the CSSJ and in the field of studies of aesthetics as a whole. Through funding from the CSSJ we have managed to get the books we need to continue our study, something invaluable in the climate of cost for new publications. We also have serious ambitions of bringing scholars to campus and have begun the process for getting that going. Our main goal is to begin a partnership with colleagues at the University of the Western Cape in South Africa. Other current projects include the possibility of creating a publication for our writing. In addition to all of this, we have created a website where we will post content periodically. To summarize, then, this project has been extremely remarkable and will deeply influence my work and hopefully the work of the CSSJ.

**WILTON SCHEREKA**

*PhD. Candidate in Africana Studies, Class of 2025*

## Courses

### RACIAL SLAVERY AND EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF GLOBAL CAPITAL

During Spring 2020, I was grateful for the opportunity to teach “Racial Slavery and Empire in the Age of Capital” in the Africana Studies department. The course is taught as a history of the present, introducing students to foundational writings, films, and digital resources on the devastating entanglements between slavery, capitalism, and imperialism as they continue to shape the contemporary world. The course also introduces students to counternarratives of resistance and struggles to build a different world.

This year’s course began with a walking tour of Brown University’s campus led by CSSJ student worker, Uchechukwu Onwuna, introducing students to Brown University’s connections to slavery and the slave trade. This tour was paired with reading and discussion of Brown University’s *Slavery and Justice Report* which provided a foundation for the course moving forward.

The class then continued to consider classic scholarship on the study of slavery, empire, and colonialism before focusing directly upon questions regarding the historical making of property and markets. This focus emerged based upon student interest. Here we were especially guided by discussion of the indispensable writings of Cheryl Harris and Stephanie Smallwood.

For students, the course’s capacity to respond to their own interests was a particular highlight. As Claire Costa reflected, “This class was perhaps one the most engaging and personally fulfilling classes I’ve taken here at Brown. Due to the small size, the course was able to be tailored to each individual student’s interest, which offered everyone unique insights.”

With the physical closure of the campus, the class collectively adjusted to our new reality. As the capitalist health crisis unfolded, we read and discussed W. E. B. Du Bois’s magisterial *Black Reconstruction in America* (1935). Reading Du Bois’s work, with its critical concepts for understanding the historical present, was particularly impactful this semester. We together reflected upon what it meant to publish this extraordinary book in the midst of the Great Depression and further discussed what it meant to read this powerful writing today.

Engaging with students, discussing critical concepts, and imagining different possible futures is something that the CSSJ and Africana Studies are together renowned for. It was a pleasure to see that it was possible to continue to move those interests forward even and especially in the midst of the closing down of so much else.

**ZACH SELL**

*Visiting Assistant Professor of Slavery and Justice*

**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT,  
COMMUNITY VOICES**



## A NEW CURRICULUM UNIT *RACIAL SLAVERY & THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD: RESISTANCE, FREEDOM & LEGACIES*

In 2018 the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice (CSSJ) received a generous gift from Mary & Jerome Vascellaro to create a digital and print curriculum resource for high school students and teachers, examining the history and legacies of racial slavery. The Center was adamant about not producing another textbook on racial slavery in the United States, but rather a curriculum resource that could speak to a global history of racial slavery and how that history has shaped the modern world. We also sought out to implement a new methodology for curriculum development. Instead of gathering a group of scholars and then handing off a finished curriculum to teachers, the Center decided to host a series of workshops with students, teachers and scholars to inform the creation of this curriculum resource. There were many goals for the workshops. The first was to challenge the hierarchy of knowledge production and textbook creation. Operating with a model of equitable collaboration we wanted the project to be guided by the thoughts of students, then informed and supported by teachers and scholars.

I want to also note that during the middle of this project the Institute for Education Policy at John Hopkins University in Maryland released a report which declared all of the public schools in the city of Providence, Rhode Island, the same city where Brown University resides, as failing. How were we to respond as a Center at one of the top universities in the country within a school district that was failing its students, a district primarily of students of color. When organizing the student workshop we were intentional about which schools received invitations. Students who attended the student workshop came from schools that are ranked 47th, 51st, 53rd and 55th out of the total 57 high schools in the state of Rhode Island. While we acknowledge that these schools are deemed “failing schools,” the students are bright and eager to learn and engage in culturally relevant curricula.

Students were overwhelmingly interested in learning more about history of Haiti, including slavery, independence and beyond, racial formation, Black struggle and resistance, Black & Indigenous medicinal knowledges and the relationship between slavery & capitalism. The student workshop was followed up by a two-day workshop with high school teachers from a broad geographic base. Teacher participants engaged in presentations from different scholars on campus, site visits and shared their experiences and needs in the classroom. In addition they shared the current challenge they face teaching slavery in the classroom. Teachers came with a number of recommendations; however we found these two most useful. One, make sure that whatever we create captures the imagination of students. Two, that we think of the textbook resource as less of a book and more as a set of tools.



The curriculum Unit consists of three major components, the Student Text, Teacher Resource Book and a series of short supplementary videos. The student Text provides a thorough introduction to the unit, beginning with the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25th this year and the resistance to anti-Black racism that erupted around the world in the wake of his death. At the time of Floyds death we were in the editing phase of the project and were not supposed to request any structural changes to the unit. However, this moment provided a current point of entry that not only emphasized why students should care about the history of racial slavery but it clearly illustrated one of its many legacies, including anti-Black racism.

The student text is broken down into four sections;

1. *Colonization and Creation of Racial Slavery*, which speaks on colonization in the Americas, cash crops and the plantation system as well as labor
2. *The Slave Trade*, which examines European and African involvement in the trade, the middle passage, and the arrival and trade within the Americas
3. *Life in the Americas*, which centers the enslaved experience not only focuses on labor and modes of domination but on adaptation, survival and resistance as well
4. *The Abolition of Slavery and its Legacies*, which helps students think through questions of abolition, The Haitian Revolution and Black Abolitionism, Emancipation of the trade and enslaved people throughout the Americas and Racial Justice and Modern inequalities in the Atlantic World today.

Teachers supplement the student text with an option of 9 lessons that invoke and support critical thinking, textual and data analysis, creativity and innovation, communication and collaboration. Lessons cover the human geography of the transatlantic slave trade; data with primary sources and analysis of art works. Lessons explore Juneteenth; reparative justice; public memorials and the contemporary moment of Black Lives Matter. Over 80 short videos by the most prominent scholars on the topic of slavery and its legacy supplement this curriculum, making it a rich resource for teaching and learning about one of the most critical and formative periods in the making of the modern world, the Atlantic slave trade and the system of racial slavery.

Through the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University I was able to participate in an educators workshop and provide feedback on the type of historical content that should be included within secondary education curriculum on slavery in the Americas. Over the course of two days, I learned about various counter narratives and historical facts about enslaved people in Latin America and the Caribbean. I interacted with primary sources and discussed with scholars about how we could transform trauma into hope, power, and healing in the classrooms while developing student skills. At the educators workshop, we examined how history and memory can act as an exclusionary force to promote healing and community as well as bring dignity and visibility to histories that are often not taught. As someone who teaches in an urban public high school, I believe that my classroom, especially the historical content and skills I teach should help my students learn how to think about history and how it can act as an exclusionary force to promote healing and community within communities of color and at the individual level.

**CAROL AMAYA**  
*Providence Public High School Teacher*

The finished curriculum unit was released digitally and in print this past August. We have now turned our attention to providing free professional development for teachers across the country, connecting them with resources and emerging scholars to support the use of the unit in their classrooms. Due to the generous support of the Vascellaros, the Digital edition of the curriculum unit, *Racial Slavery in the Americas: Resistance, Freedom & Legacies* will be available for free to teachers and students around the world until **September 30, 2021**. The Center is actively working to secure funding for a second year of free digital access. As this new school year began with continued uncertainty, we hope that the unit *Racial Slavery in the Americas* will be useful to teachers and students, providing a guiding structure for difficult conversations around the history of racial slavery in the Americas and the legacies that structure the United States, the Caribbean, and South America today.

**MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS**  
*Manager of Programs and Community Engagement*

## LESSONS ON RACIAL SLAVERY IN THE AMERICAS

On May 30, 2020, a small group of students from Hope High School in Providence, Rhode Island and their teacher gathered on Zoom to analyze artists' depictions of slavery in the British Caribbean and the United States. The students and teachers were piloting a lesson from a forthcoming curriculum unit on racial slavery written by the Choices Program, a national education initiative based in Brown's Department of History, in collaboration with the CSSJ. The lesson contrasted images created by abolitionists that critiqued the system of slavery and artists who portrayed slavery as a benign economic enterprise in an idyllic setting. The students examined the images in detail and considered their relationship to the history, a process that provoked a far-reaching discussion of source reliability and the artists' motivations behind the contrasting depictions.

The lesson the students did is in one of nine in the recently released curriculum unit, *Racial Slavery and the Making of the Modern World*. Each lesson is created to foster inquiry-based learning, a process by which students use primary sources to discover and explore content, raise questions, and make connections across time and space. The lessons develop analytical skills, but also provide a structure for synthesizing newly acquired knowledge and considering how the legacies of racial slavery affect us today.

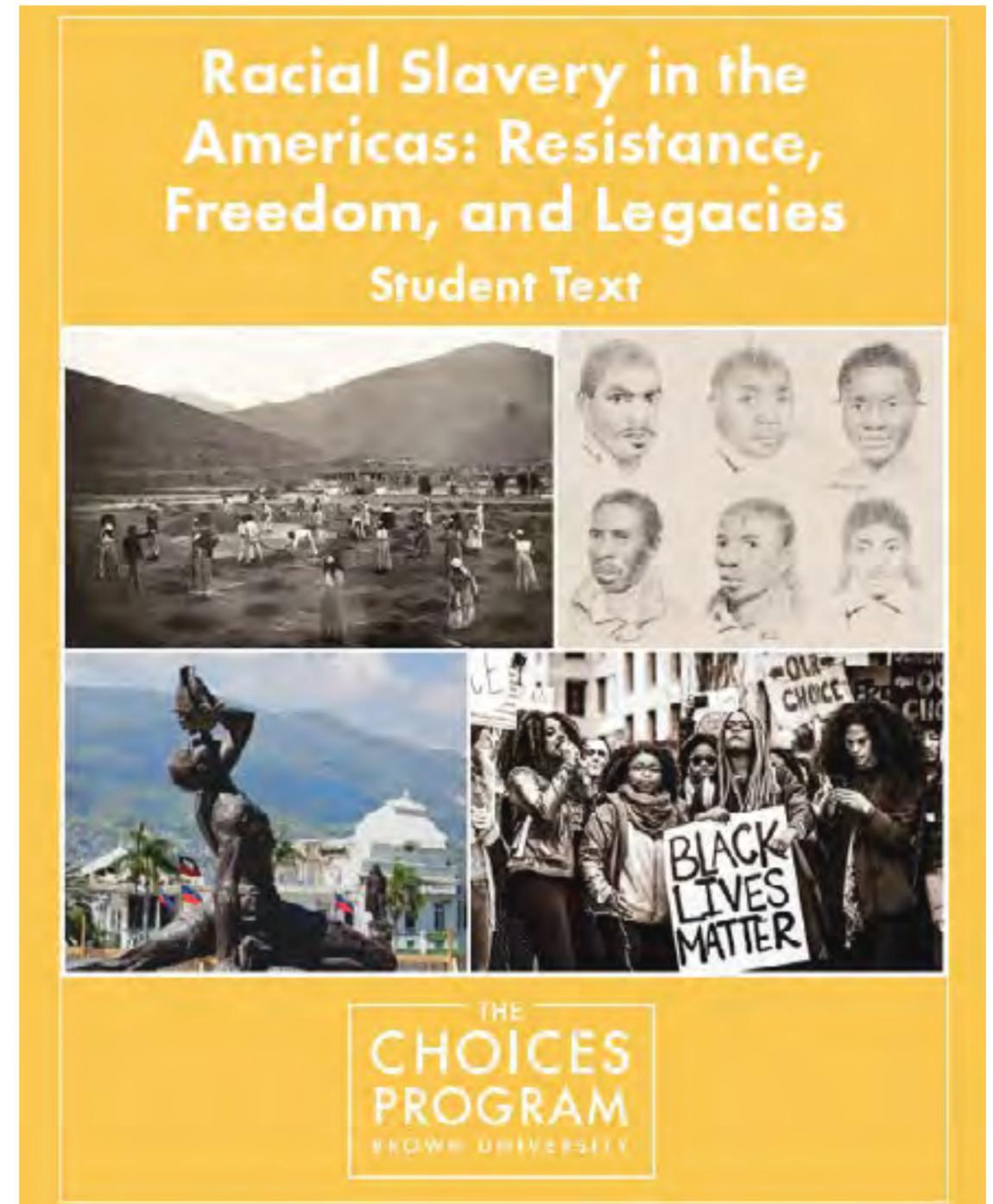
In addition to the nine lessons, the curriculum includes readings for the students created with input from faculty and staff of CSSJ as well high school students and teachers. The two-week curriculum unit, designed for secondary school classrooms, will also include more than 80 short videos of scholars that explore key questions about racial slavery. Scholars filmed include CSSJ Director Tony Bogues and Emily Owens from Brown, as well as Renée Ater, Kellie Carter Jackson, and Walter Johnson.

The Choices Program has created content that deals with slavery in particular national contexts: for example, Brazil, Cuba, the United States. This new curriculum takes a systemic look of the history of racial slavery in the Atlantic World, an approach that is both daunting and rewarding.

"One of the most exciting things about this curriculum, is that although it introduces the challenging concepts of racial slavery, colonialism, and systemic racism, we've succeeded at centering the experiences of enslaved people in both the readings and the lessons," said Susannah Bechtel, assistant director of curriculum development at the Choices Program.

The curriculum was released in August 2020 and is available in both digital and print.

ANDY BLACKADER AND SUSANNAH BETCHEL



The Digital edition of the curriculum unit, *Racial Slavery in the Americas: Resistance, Freedom & Legacies* will be available for free until September 30, 2021. To request a free Digital Editions license for the curriculum, go to <https://www.choices.edu/curriculum-unit/racial-slavery-in-the-americas/> and click Purchase. Then select the free option and add it to your cart.

## CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT INITIATIVE (CRMI) EXPANSION

In 2015, the CSSJ developed a unique initiative for Hope High School students called the Civil Rights Movement Initiative. This initiative aims to help high school students understand the Civil Rights Movement as something more than just events of the past, but as a bridge to understanding the present. Once a week for six weeks, students explore different aspects of the Civil Rights Movement, culminating with a week-long Civil Rights tour throughout the South. In the past, this seven-day trip enabled a diverse group of students to visit historic sites and museums commemorating the Civil Rights Movement and to meet the Movement's veterans and activists. The trip provides historic context for students to engage in meaningful conversations about racism, social privilege, educational inequality, and economic disparity in the United States today. To conclude the program students hold a public lunch talk at Brown University, sharing their experience with students, faculty, staff and the community.

In the summer of 2019 Johns Hopkins Institute for Education Policy released a report on the state of Providence Public Schools. While the report focused on a disorganized administration and failing test scores, it also failed to highlight the experiences and voices of the actual students. The report did not offer immediate opportunities for students and resulted in a state takeover of the school district. As a high school graduate of this same "failing" school district, I often think about my own experience and that of my students today. How does it feel to show up every day to a school that has been defined as failing? What spaces need to exist for students to feel like they are succeeding? So much of creating the Civil Rights Movement Initiative (CRMI) was about creating space for students to see themselves reflected in their education. Throughout the first four years of CRMI, students from Hope High continually affirmed that the program covers more Black history in just one week than throughout their entire schooling experience. Student reflections also affirmed that learning can and must happen outside of the classroom, that what students learn can't always be measured with a test, nor are tests the only way to prepare young people for the world.



For the first four years of CRMI, students have been supported to grapple with their own identities, the complexities of American history, as well as the structural persistence of racial injustice in America. Each year with the support of the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice (CSSJ), university offices, departments and centers, we have been able to provide this unique opportunity to students for free. On January 31, 2020 the CSSJ announced a generous \$20,000 matching gift from Barbara and Tom Bale '63 to support the expansion of the CRMI program for 2020-2021. In two short months of campaigning, CRMI met one of its many goals and raised \$20,000, matching the generous gift. This critically important funding will allow more Providence Public High School students to participate in the CRMI program next academic year, expanding their understanding of American history and empowering them to better understand this current moment.

With a lot of momentum around our schools and addressing student needs, CRMI will expand to serve 3 high schools in the Providence Public School District. The program's 6 weeks of workshops will expand to a 12 week seminar which will expose students to new texts, many archives, and topics in addition to a 7-page research paper. It will still include a week long immersive trip and public lunch talk. The Center has also begun conversations with the Providence school department to explore the possibility of students receiving an elective course credit for completing the program. Given the uncertainty of COVID-19, the relaunch of the Civil Rights Movement Initiative may push back a semester and begin the Fall of 2021. To learn more about the Civil Rights Movement Initiative, please visit our website at [sites.brown.edu/cssjcrmi](https://sites.brown.edu/cssjcrmi).

**MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS**  
Manager of Programs and Community Engagement

*Thank you for supporting the Civil Rights Movement Initiative's campaign and helping us reach one of our fundraising goals.*

## SLAVERY & LEGACY WALKING TOUR

Building on previous work done to actualize the *Slavery and Legacy Walking Tour*, I continued engaging varying groups of all backgrounds coming to visit the CSSJ throughout the semester. The Center primarily receives interest from high school groups, like the all-girls advisory from The Met in Providence that we hosted in early October this year. On the tour, students learned about Esek Hopkins and his role in the slave trade as captain of the slaving voyage the Sally which was sponsored by the Brown family. Some students on the tour are alumnae of Esek Hopkins Middle School and were alarmed to learn that their school, a school that serves predominantly Black and brown youth, is named after a man responsible for the deaths of hundreds of enslaved people. One of the students on the tour, Dreyah, approached Maiyah Gamble-Rivers, Center Manager of Programs & Public Engagement, with a proposal to intern at the CSSJ and work alongside current students and alumnae of Esek Hopkins to change the name of the school to honor Edward Abbey, an indentured man forced to serve on Hopkin's cabin crew on slaving voyages. The CSSJ also hosted students from Blackstone Academy in Pawtucket as part of a culmination of their study of John Brown's role in the slave trade, discussing the implications of this history in present-day conversations about freedom, justice, and resistance. Another group of students from the Wheeler School joined the tour with Professor Keisha-Khan Perry to reflect on the Report from the Steering Committee for Slavery and Justice and the context that informs the Center's work today.

### *Engaging Universities*

Tour participants also included undergraduates from Brown University to Rhode Island College and Rhode Island School of Design (RISD) among others. Students from Rhode Island College visited the Center and the John Carter Brown Library to view the archives used by the Steering Committee to draft the Report for Slavery and Justice. Graduate students from RISD studying global arts & cultures learned more about the research and archives that informed the creation of the Report as well as the Center's research clusters, seminar groups, and community engagement work. Each year Professor Emily Owens invites her first-year seminar course at Brown, *Narratives of Slavery*, to the Center for students to better understand the ground on which they stand—tying conversations from the classroom to the institution's role in trade to the University's present-day relationship to the City of Providence. We also hosted curators from the John Hay Library currently constructing an exhibition on University Hall, thinking through the building's construction on Indigenous land using enslaved labor to the structure's relationship to student activism through time in order to paint a more complete picture of the building's history.



### *Beyond the Academy*

We also hosted guests outside of formal academic institutions to further work through histories of slavery in the contemporary. Earlier this year, we coordinated a series of tours for Brown's annual Family Weekend reflecting on the University's historical and present-day relationship to the trade while also engaging the larger community with respect to this history and the ways in which it informs campus life and the work of the Center.

Visitors also come to the Center from across the country and the globe. Deborah Berry from USA Today interviewed both Maiyah and Professor Bogues about our work while attending the weekend symposium, *From Slave Ships to Black Lives Matter*, in commemoration of the year 1619, when the first enslaved Africans made landfall in the North American colony of Virginia. Before presenting on a panel at the symposium on The Smithsonian's *Slave Wrecks Project*, Paul Gardullo, a close friend and collaborator of the Center from the *National Museum of African American History*, along with his colleagues from the *Coalition for Racial Equality & Rights* in Scotland, went on the Tour and shared their knowledge and work leading tours in Scotland informing the public of the country's role in the trade. Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 enslaved Africans were taken from their homes on Scottish slaving voyages. Many material goods in the triangular trade, namely tobacco and sugar, drove Scottish involvement.

Encounters such as these emphasize the importance of the Center's public humanities mission—making hidden histories visible that are constantly confronted in the present.

UCHE ONWUNAKA '19 AM '20



## “I HAD NO IDEA”: INTERNING AT THE CSSJ

When I was first introduced to the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice (CSSJ) I had no idea about Rhode Island’s connection to racial slavery. My advisor from the Met School scheduled a class trip to go on the Center’s Slavery & Legacy Walking Tour and that experience engaged my class to think about how the history of racial slavery has shaped our country today. The tour prompted me to pursue an internship at the CSSJ. The Center has opened my eyes to new knowledge and a topic I have now become so passionate about.

During the Slavery & Legacy Walking Tour, I discovered that Esek Hopkins, who was the Commander In Chief in the Navy during the American Revolutionary War, also played a huge role in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. The city of Providence currently has a middle school named after Hopkins. This information was incredibly astounding, especially because some of my classmates on the tour were alumni of Esek Hopkins Middle School and they had no idea about his involvement in the slave trade. Knowing that we have a middle school right here in Providence named after a man who not only played a huge role in the trans-Atlantic slave trade but also was a slave owner, did not sit right with me. I wanted to at least put in the effort into making change. This desire for change was how my internship at the CSSJ came about. I not only wanted to learn more about the history of slavery in Rhode Island, but also wanted and needed to do more research on Hopkins and use the resources at the Center to my advantage. My internship initially began with the idea of working with current students and alumni of the middle school to change the name. While other needs of the Providence Public School District have taken priority at the moment, this is still an endeavor I hope to pursue.

During my time at the CSSJ, I dove into another interest of mine, which is criminal justice and the carceral state. My internship mentor Maiyah Gamble-Rivers brought my attention to the *Carceral State Reading Group* and I was immediately interested. While conducting my research I kept making the connections of these injustices related to our criminal justice system today and how they repeatedly tie back to slavery. I knew I wanted to have a separate project on the carceral state and its connection to slavery but was having trouble brainstorming ideas on what to do. Connecting with Sophie who was an undergraduate student helping to run the *Carceral State Reading Group* introduced me to the Choices Program, a program affiliated with the Department of History at Brown that develops mini lessons for students. The Choices Program’s work developing curriculum for high school students gave me the idea to create mini lessons for high school students on the carceral state. In the long run, the hope is to have the lessons available to educators to use with their students. After multiple conversations and brainstorming, this endeavor became the second project of my internship.



MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS



RYTHUM VINOBN

Another highlight of my internship at the CSSJ, was being invited to present my work with the Center on a panel. The panel “Education and Educating as Tools of Resistance” was a part of a December 2019 conference titled, *From Slave Ships to Black Lives Matter* that the Center in commemoration of the 400 years since the first enslaved African was brought to Virginia. My contribution to the panel allowed me to think about the history of slavery and how its legacy has shaped our country, current education and criminal justice system. As the only high school student on the panel, I felt both overwhelmed with joy and empowered. Although I had previous experiences with public speaking, I was very nervous. I kept thinking I was going to say something wrong. I repeatedly looked down at my notes, which wasn’t a good idea because it caused me to jumble my words even more.

After the first question I became more comfortable and confident. I forgot all about my notes and just spoke freely. When the panel was over I was able to fully understand the impact my words made on individuals in the audience. Audience members, younger and older, complimented my remarks and were eager to know more about my work with the CSSJ. It felt nice that people were touched by the things I had to say and actually acknowledged them as both informative and important. It was a beautiful experience and I’d do it again 100 times over. Although I’m still in high school, the Center is like a second home to me and I look forward to working there in the future and gaining more experiences like this over time.

**ANDREYAH VIDAL**  
Senior, *The Met High School*

## A GRATEFUL ADVISOR: INTERNSHIPS AND ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

As an advisor at the Met High School in Providence, one of my greatest joys is watching the impact that my students' internships have on their personal and academic development. This year, my student, Andreyah (Dreyah) Vidal, has had the opportunity to intern with Maiyah Gamble-Rivers, Manager of Programs and Community Engagement at the CSSJ. Thanks to this relationship, I had the chance to bring my entire advisory of students to attend two panel conversations as part of the "From Slave Ships to Black Lives Matter" symposium on December 6, 2019. My student, Dreyah, spoke as a panelist on both panels.

In the first panel, "Education and Educating as Tools of Resistance," Dreyah joined educators and student activists for a conversation about the current state of education for students in Providence, and the power that young people have to make change. The experience was an emotional one for me; I was simultaneously nervous for and immensely proud of Dreyah as she demonstrated poise, eloquence, and the passion she holds for social justice within our school systems. It has been exciting to watch Dreyah's intellect spring to life as she immerses herself in the work of the CSSJ, where she is forging a personal connection to history while building relationships with members of a community devoted to social justice.

There was also power for my students in seeing one of their classmates featured in such a professional and academically rigorous discussion, one where the other panelists and audience members asked questions of Dreyah and valued her responses. I believe that experience opened up a sense of possibility for each student watching, the possibility of becoming a valued "expert" in their own areas of interest. None of my students had attended an academic conference at a university before, and for their first experience to be one where the experts were people of color was profoundly impactful.

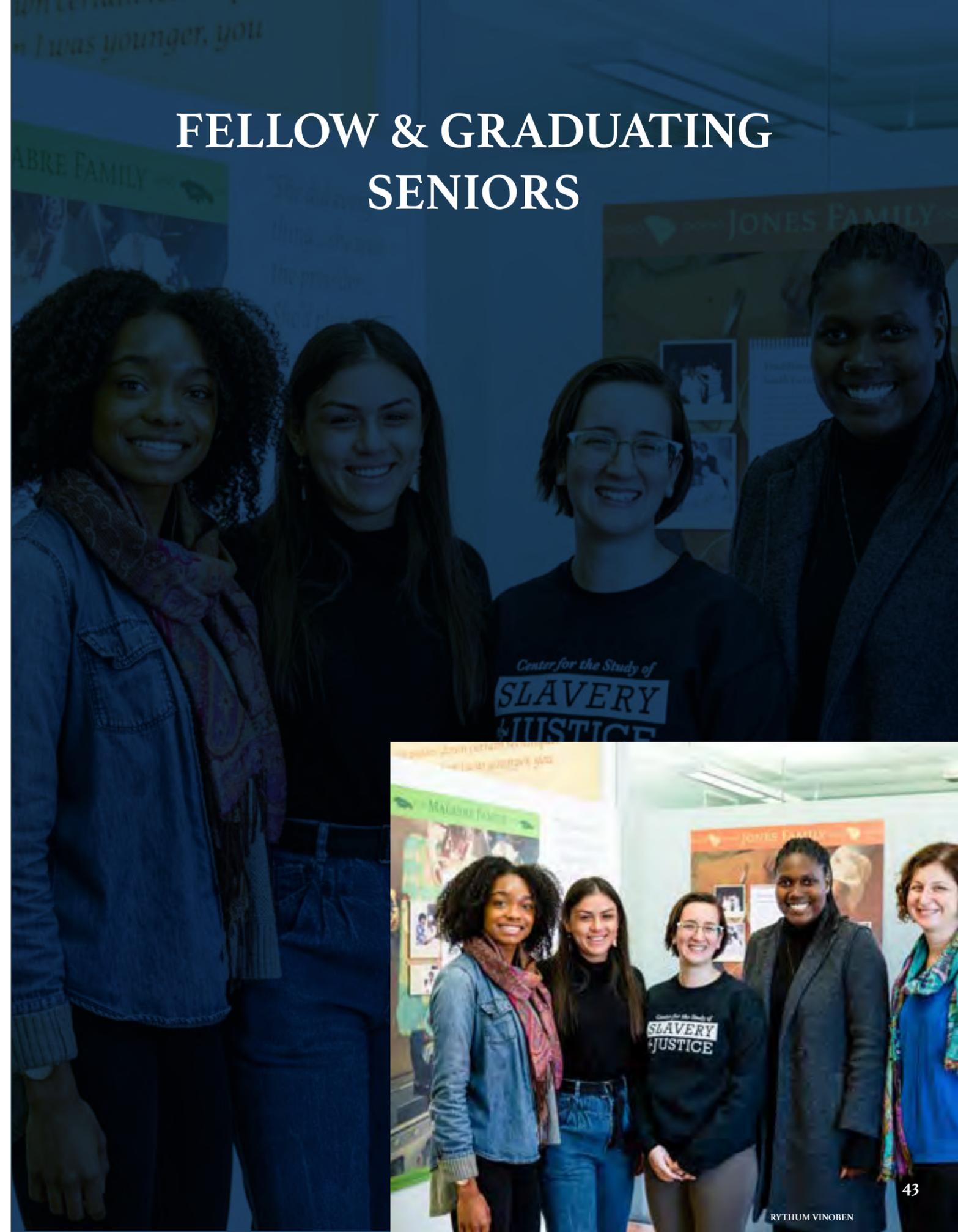
Our day at the symposium gave me several important reminders in relation to my own practice. First, hearing panelists reflect on their time in the Providence Public Schools reminded me to be cognizant of the prior school experiences most of my students come to me with. I was also reminded of the importance of giving my students access to relevant histories in my classroom, work I have been trying to do this year through the development of a Latinx studies curriculum for my students. At the same time, I am reminded of the limitations of what I can provide my students as a white woman, and that one of my most important roles is to connect students with mentors and experiences that can open possibilities for them in ways that I may not be able to.

I am grateful for the work that the CSSJ is doing to connect the theoretical work that students and academics at Brown are doing (in relation to issues like education and the carceral state) to members of our community who are most directly impacted by these concerns. Even more than that, I am grateful that the CSSJ is valuing the voices of community members by inviting them to speak next to academics on panels like those featured at December's "From Slave Ships to Black Lives Matter" symposium.

### REBECCA SIDONS

*Advisor, The Met High School*

# FELLOW & GRADUATING SENIORS



## Reflections from Our Seniors

I am honored to have been able to be a part of the CSSJ in my time at Brown. The CSSJ is an essential place of truth-seeking and truth-telling at Brown. Few academic centers on campus and in the nation have as honorable origin story as does the CSSJ. Uncovering the enduring legacy of the racial slave trade on this campus, in this state, and in our nation must be a central aspiration of the Brown University community. It's a responsibility we accept alongside the privileges of being Brown community members. That we have the CSSJ to lead us in this effort is a true institutional blessing.

Much the same, I feel so fortunate to have been able to work alongside Professor Bagues, Shana, Maiyah, and Catherine. The dedication and motivation that they bring to this work, alongside their kindness, has been nothing short of inspiring. I will miss my time at the CSSJ and look forward to supporting its critical mission in other ways, in the years to come.

**NATHANIEL PETTIT '20**



Thank you to the CSSJ for helping me ground my work and my studies in history, in place, in community, and in action during my time at Brown. Working at the CSSJ, I learned that I must understand the histories of institutions I am a part of and the legacies of such histories; that the University must be accountable to the broader community; and that scholarship is at its best when it is engaging, accessible, and collective. Thank you to the CSSJ for supporting my intellectual pursuits and for giving me the opportunity to co-create and co-facilitate the Carceral State Reading Group, which was one of the most meaningful experiences I had during my time at Brown. Through the group, I expanded my understanding of the violence of the carceral state, but more importantly I learned that if we are ever to make broader, structural change, we must first build generative communities in which we can form connections and impact one another. I was impacted by all of the Reading Groups participants - by formerly incarcerated members who shared openly about their experiences, by a professor who gave a short lesson on Italian philosopher Gramsci, by a community organizer who always made sure there was space for laughter. In the reading group, we were all students and teachers. Thank you to the CSSJ, to Maiyah, Shana, Catherine and Professor Bagues, for reminding me and for reminding the University that we are all students and teachers and for creating a space in which I and so many others can learn, listen, question, reflect and contribute.

**SOPHIE KUPETZ '19.5**

I have been incredibly fortunate to spend my senior year working at the CSSJ. I started the year as an office assistant working under Shana Weinberg on a variety of projects behind the scenes while gaining an important understanding for the myriad of projects, events and activities that the center puts on. With the advent of the coronavirus midway through the Spring semester, I was lucky to join the archival research team working remotely on the upcoming *Creating the New World: the Transatlantic Slave Trade* documentary. Having the opportunity to work both on the administrative and research sides of the center during the year has allowed me to gain a greater appreciation for all of the center's valuable efforts and form lasting relationships with the various students and researchers across the Center's array of activities.

**AIDEN GARRETT '20**



## Reflections from Our Fellows

### AFFILIATED FACULTY

I was a Postdoctoral Research Associate at the Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World over the past year, as well as affiliated faculty in the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. Both the Joukowsky Institute and the CSSJ provided me with the opportunity to engage with a dynamic community of scholars, students, artists, and activists who have positively impacted my ongoing intellectual and political commitments. I am grateful for their support and encouragement. More than ever, we need academic communities that are committed to social change. The ongoing global health crisis triggered by COVID-19 has made even more visible the racial and class divides that shape today's world, indexing the legacies of slavery and other forms of dispossession throughout history. It is our duty to continue pushing forward difficult conversations that may have a social impact in the public sphere.

Throughout the year I continued working on my book project about landscape archaeology and the sensorial regime of "Second Slavery" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil during the nineteenth century. I was invited to present my work at the University of Massachusetts, Dartmouth and at The State University of Ohio, in addition to a public lecture at the Joukowsky Institute.

I am grateful to Seth Rockman and his seminar on "Slavery's New Materialisms", which brought together a stimulating group of graduate students and faculty members last Fall to discuss the role of materiality in the institution of slavery. Our fruitful weekly discussions encouraged me to complete a chapter about the plantation world's visuality and its contemporary legacies. This piece critically engages with a stack of photographs kept by the descendant of a coffee planter in Minas Gerais, Brazil and with materials produced by me as a landscape archaeologist. The chapter, titled "Heritage and the Visual Ecology of the Plantationocene", will appear in the volume *Heritage Ecologies*, edited by Þóra Pétursdóttir and Torgeir Rinke Bangstad with Routledge.



Last Fall I also had the chance to meet with Haitian artist Edouard Duval-Carrié, who visited Brown in the context of his most recent exhibitions. My colleague Yannis Hamilakis and I recorded an interview with him and CSSJ director Anthony Bogues about the intersection of materiality and politics in his work. The conversation is currently being edited for publication.

In December 2019/January 2020 I travelled to Guinea-Bissau to start a new archaeological project. This project focuses on the development of the slave trade port of Cacheu, and the emergence of unequal power relations between Europeans and Africans in the early modern period. This project examines the long-term cultural interactions that took place in the wider Senegambia region between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries through an archaeological investigation of urbanism, architecture and consumption. The excavation of the old town of Cacheu also aims at understanding African agency in the formation of the modern world, the material circumstances behind colonial dispossession, and how contemporary communities deal with the legacies of slavery and colonialism. This community-based project results from a grassroots initiative promoted by the Guinea-Bissauan NGO *Acção para o Desenvolvimento* towards the development of a Memorial of Slavery, with the collaboration of UNIARQ—Center for Archaeology and the Center for History at the University of Lisbon, Portugal, and the support of the Joukowsky Institute. The second season of the project will take place in 2021 with the support of the National Geographic Society.

#### RUI GOMES COELHO

*Postdoctoral Research Associate  
Joukowsky Institute for Archaeology and the Ancient World  
CSSJ Visiting Scholar*

### 6TH YEAR INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE DISSERTATION FELLOW

My time as the 6th Year Interdisciplinary Graduate Dissertation Fellow at the CSSJ was one of the brightest chapters of my career as a doctoral student in History at Brown. The community at the CSSJ is unparalleled. Everyone is warm, welcoming, and committed to supporting each other in opportunities for professional and personal growth. I am especially indebted to the four fellows with whom I shared office space and countless illuminating conversations: Rose Gérardime, Chandra Marshall, Breylan Martin, and Zach Sell. I benefited from their counsel when it came to book recommendations, chapter organization, and the occasional printer jam, but the laughs and general camaraderie they provided were just as essential as I faced the stressful task of finishing a dissertation. COVID-19 cut our in-person time short in the Spring semester, but we continued to hold meetings of our Advanced Knowledge Working Group via Zoom; there have even been whispers of playing virtual games together in the coming weeks. Of course, this fellowship would not have been possible without Prof. Tony Bogues and Shana Weinberg. I am very grateful that they selected me for this fellowship, and hope that I contributed to the life of the CSSJ in some substantial way. Thanks are also due to Catherine Van Amburgh and Maiyah Gamble-Rivers, who helped me navigate the complexities of coordinating speaker visits and writing high school history curricula, respectively.

The CSSJ is special because of its mission, and because of the staff and fellows who work tirelessly each day to ensure that our communities grapple with the legacies of slavery. The CSSJ also crucially recognizes that this work is most effective when engaging conversation partners in a collaborative and intellectually open space. During my time as the 6th Year Interdisciplinary Graduate Dissertation fellow, I had the opportunity to meet incredible undergraduate researchers, artists, and authors, scholars, and various community members who visited the CSSJ. Cross-disciplinary conversations informed the framing of my dissertation and distinctly shaped certain chapters of my project. It was energizing to hear different perspectives on issues repeatedly raised across time, space, and disciplines.

These conversations frequently circled back to the present, and prompted participants to contemplate how our scholarly projects and creative endeavors relate to present struggles for justice. My time at the CSSJ helped me think more critically about how my own dissertation project – a history of food, race-making, and slavery in the colonial British Caribbean – relates to current debates about food sovereignty, alterations to SNAP options, and systemic disparities in food access for communities of color. Such reflections are deeply important as I finish my PhD and look to future directions for both my research and my activism. I will forever look to my time as the 6th Year Interdisciplinary Graduate Dissertation Fellow at the CSSJ as a profoundly enriching and exciting period in my life. I look forward to staying connected to the CSSJ community for many years to come.

#### HEATHER SANFORD '20 Ph.D. HISTORY

*6th Year Interdisciplinary Graduate Dissertation Fellow*



## PUBLIC HISTORY OF SLAVERY GRADUATE FELLOW

During my time as a Graduate Fellow for the Public History of Slavery I have worked on a diverse range of projects. I came to Brown seeking hands-on experiences in cultural and arts focused institutions, hoping to find ways to bridge my passion for education with my desire to center Black American histories. My first task for the CSSJ was helping Shana and Maiyah install *Unfinished Business: The Long Civil Rights Movement* in the Center for Public Humanities's carriage house gallery. Painting the walls, hanging the panels, and working together to ensure the exhibition would open on time would be a microcosm for the rest of my experiences at the Center. We found ways to work quickly and diligently, solving problems together so that we could do good work collaboratively and collectively.

I spent my first year coordinating the Center's Slavery & Legacy Walking Tours for K-12 students and Brown affiliated faculty and assisting the curatorial team with the 2019 Commencement exhibition. Serving as many people's first point of contact with the Center was an enriching experience. Leading the walking tours made me a more confident storyteller as I connected the legacies of slavery to Brown University and greater Rhode Island in front of a broad public. Looking back, my first year at the Center pushed me to grapple with making histories related to Black life and slavery accessible and legible to the public.

By my second year, I knew I wanted to dedicate time to a subject I had always been interested in, but never had the time to explore: the connections between Black American and Native American histories. I developed a symposium called *Entangled Legacies*, that brought together four artists of Black, Native, or Black and Native descent to reflect on their personal histories and their artistic practices. In interviews I coordinated with Becci Davis, Sherenté Harris (Narragansett), Nia Holley (Nipmuc), and Jordan Seaberry, we discussed how the silences between, and similarities within these histories could offer an opportunity to understand the United States' founding with more nuance. Collaborating with the Native American and Indigenous Studies Initiative was a wonderful opportunity in practicing empathetic project development. I wanted to take the time to understand what I did not know about Native histories in New England by finding artists who spoke for themselves or their community through their art.

Simultaneously, I wanted to find Black artists who were concerned with the erasure of their own histories. By creating a space for both, I feel that I have practiced allyship and collaboration that is grounded in giving artists the financial means to dedicate more time to their work. The digital zine proved to be a blessing in disguise during this time, as it is accessible to most audiences with no need for social distancing!

As my fellowship ends, I reflect on how the CSSJ's work and this fellowship has been essential to my growth as an adept communicator and collaborator. I am grateful to have used this time as an incubator for my interests in education and centering Black narratives, collaboration, and translating histories into accessible stories.

### CHANDRA MARSHALL AM '20

*Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery*



## RUTH J. SIMMONS POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW IN SLAVERY AND JUSTICE, 2019-2020

My position at the CSSJ has been an invaluable source of intellectual, cultural, and social diversity. Working with colleagues in History, Archeology, Political Sciences (...) and being exposed to so many different fields and backgrounds, promoted significant intellectual advancement for all involved. For instance, I have gained an even more multi-faceted perspective on the Transatlantic Slave Trade. This has allowed me to envision my manuscript (*Haunted: The Poetics of Possession in the Americas*) with a fresh set of eyes, and to create new connections across fields. My stay at the CSSJ has led me to draw a parallel between my work on intergenerational trauma and modern problematics, such as for instance, the perception and treatment of minorities in the U.S. in relation to the collective Media's narrative.

Working at the Center also gave me the opportunity to meet with international scholars, curators, and artists, namely Edouard Duval-Carrié. During his residency at Brown University in the Fall of 2019, Mr. Duval-Carrié generously offered a unique insight on his work process. I was also able to follow the installation of his exhibitions, which informed the planning of my second book project, tied around the Visual Arts.

Despite the unusual circumstances tied to the global pandemic, which have cut short opportunities for field work and in-person encounters, this year has without a doubt been one of exponential growth.

### ROSELYNE GERAZIME

*Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow in Slavery and Justice*



## INCOMING POSTDOCTORAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATE IN SLAVERY AND JUSTICE

Charlene J. Fletcher, Ph.D., is the Postdoctoral Research Associate in Slavery and Justice at Brown University and a historian specializing in 19th century United States and African American history and gender studies. Prior to attending Indiana University, Charlene led a domestic violence/sexual assault program as well as a large reentry initiative in New York City, assisting women and men in their transition from incarceration to society and served as a lecturer of Criminal Justice at LaGuardia Community College.

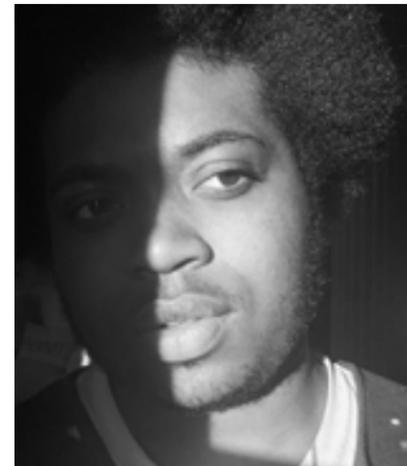
Charlene's research and forthcoming book explores the experiences of confined African-American women in Kentucky from Reconstruction to the Progressive Era, specifically illuminating the lives of confined Black women by examining places other than carceral locales as arenas of confinement, including mental health institutions and domestic spaces. She seeks to explore how these women both defied and defined confinement through their incarceration, interactions with public, social, and political entities of the period, as well as how they challenged ideas of race and femininity. Charlene's work is motivated by her personal and professional experiences — particularly her work with individuals and families impacted by domestic violence and incarceration — and these experiences continue to fuel her passion for her work today.



# ALUMS OF THE CENTER

## INCOMING PUBLIC HISTORY OF SLAVERY GRADUATE FELLOW

Rai Terry is interested in engaging the spaces, physical and digital, that Black and specifically Black queer people occupy and adorn as reclamations of life and freedom. With a B.A. in African and African American Studies-Arts from Brandeis University, Rai has a decade of experience with photography, filmmaking, and critical visual studies. Recently Rai worked in collaboration with a course to create an interactive digital timeline of Black history, currently has a fellowship with the Association of Moving Image Archivists and an A/V archiving Internship at the Rhode Island Historical Society.



## INCOMING 6TH YEAR INTERDISCIPLINARY GRADUATE DISSERTATION FELLOW

Jeff Feldman is a PhD candidate in Political Science at Brown. His dissertation considers the relationship between the categories of the “social”, the “ethical”, and the “political” by way of 20th-century discussions of the revolutionary general strike in critical theory and in the Black radical tradition. While at the CSSJ he will be researching the W.E.B. Du Bois’s conceptualization of the general strike in Black Reconstruction, focusing on the conflicts between strikers and the state as well as on the practices of resistance that fell outside of Du Bois’s frame. He holds a B.A. from Amherst College and was previously a Junior Fellow in the Energy and Climate program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.



## VISUAL ENCOUNTERS WITH WORKS OF ART

My work as a doctoral candidate in American Studies at Brown University is concerned primarily with the feeling of contemporary art. That is, I am interested in how visual encounters with works of art make one feel, and how the exhibitionary space accents these emotional experiences. These accents are not always sentimental, overtly cathartic, or even universal. In my opinion, that art is a difficult provocation as much as it is also a comforting anathema remains its most significant social value.

During my dissertation research on this subject, I often found myself at the Center. Most of these visits were for friends on staff, to attend the enriching lunch talks that so often coincided with the questions I was asking of my dissertation, or to assist with the various research projects at the Center that I helped to support. Each time, regardless of reason, I always stopped in the gallery on the building's ground floor, an exhibitionary space that was often a visitor's first introduction to the Center's work.

In hindsight, this gallery room, and the Center's commitment to the visual arts in its work on the memory and history of slavery and its afterlives, exemplifies how the contemporary art exhibition necessarily functions as a set of political questions. Whether in displaying the work of emerging artists like Jessica Hill or established visionaries like Edouard Duval-Carrié, the Center's art exhibitions present the art encounter as one with an intrinsically social and political dimension.

Consider, for example, the experience of viewing Hill's *Land of the Free and the Home of the Slaughtered* (2018) from the Center's entranceway, which displays the words of poet Frances Harper –

"I ask no monument, proud and high,  
To arrest the gaze of the passers-by;  
All that my yearning spirit craves,  
Is bury me not in a land of slaves."

– prominently in the foyer, shaping one's invitation into the space. This framework is significant, as Hill's drawings become charged by the association of the Center's larger mission, and the works become imbued with multiple meanings. As figures rise to the foreground of Hill's woodcut, merging textile with print, line with form, and impression with figuration, it's possible also to allow the grooved lines to also recall the stolen Indigenous lands worked on and changed by enslaved labor. The land has changed, and its changes are impressed into every part of the world that empire, settler colonialism, and racial capitalism made possible—including visual culture.

As an aspiring curator and arts writer, my time at the Center has irrevocably altered my understanding of the relationship between art and justice. Even now, I look back at the experience of viewing Hill's drawings in the Center's gallery, a nuanced presentation that heightened these connections and pushed for more critical readings about the political dimensions to our visual world.

**ANNI PULLAGURA**

*Ph.D. Candidate in American Studies*

## A MYRIAD OF PUBLIC FACING RESEARCH

As a graduate fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery, I spent two years working closely with the CSSJ on a myriad of public facing research—from a documentary film on the transatlantic slave trade to curating an exhibition on African diasporic cooking. From the beginning of my time at Brown, I felt fully integrated into the expansive work of the Center, which supported and pushed my coursework as a Public Humanities student. Having access to the resources of the CSSJ took me to cultural centers in the Netherlands, home kitchens in Providence, and supported my summer working at the Studio Museum in Harlem. With the Center's full support, I was able to gain direct exhibition and curatorial experience, work on image research and acquisition, and organize a multi-media storytelling initiative. These skills and opportunities are already helping me in my professional life after Brown.

After graduating, I became the Cullman-Payson Fellow in Academic Affairs and Outreach at the Yale University Art Gallery. As a fellow, I researched the relationship between art and empathy, particularly as it pertains to visitor experience and museum education. I also worked to support university curricular goals, teaching cross-disciplinary courses inside the museum, connecting students with visual and material culture. I wrapped up my fellowship in May to begin working as a Researcher & Exhibition Development Specialist at the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. I have no doubt that my experiences with the Center have prepared me for this new role. In this position, my work once again joins the work of the CSSJ through the Global Curatorial Project (GCP), a network of scholars, curators, and educators who are committed to creating critical new knowledges and public history around slavery and its legacies. For the GCP, I am contributing to research and exhibition development for *In Slavery's Wake*, an upcoming, multicontinental travelling exhibition. I look forward to working closely with the CSSJ again and am excited for this next step in my career as a cultural practitioner.

**JOHANNA OBENDA '19**

*Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery*



# FRIENDS OF THE CENTER



## Friends of CSSJ

Six years ago two members of the Brown Class of '63 founded the Friends of CSSJ to increase the awareness of Brown alumni of CSSJ's rich resources and encourage alumni to support CSSJ's programs financially. 2020 proved to be a banner year in achieving these goals.

The Friends collaborated with the alumni organizations featuring CSSJ's work and educating alumni about anti-Black racism. In January, the Inman Page Black Alumni Council (IPC), Brown Club of New York, and CSSJ co-sponsored a program titled, "Beyond 1619: Unpacking the Themes of the 1619 Project and the Work of CSSJ." A full room of alumni participated in an important discussion about the impact of slavery's long shadow on society as a whole, and for the black community in particular.

The Brown Club of Boston partnered with CSSJ to plan an event in the late spring at Boston's African American Meeting House. While this inaugural event has been postponed until 2021 due to the pandemic, we look forward to working with our colleagues in Boston to create programs about the legacies of racial slavery locally.

We continued our symbiotic relationship with the Brown Club of DC- we have been particularly impressed with their move to remote programming on important issues directly related to the CSSJ's mission, including the impact of COVID-19 on incarcerated communities.

Thanks to the generosity of Tom Bale, Class of '63 and his wife, Barbara, CSSJ received a \$30,000 gift in July 2020 to match contributions dollar for dollar from others. This gift will support the development of CSSJ programs related to prisons and mass incarceration including the student led Carceral State Reading Group and CSSJ's Mass Incarceration and Punishment in America Research Cluster. This is the Bales' second matching gift of 2020.

The first gift, a \$20,000 gift announced in January 2020 was in support of the CSSJ's Civil Rights Movement Initiative, a program for local students in the Providence Public School District. The gift was matched within months by generous supporters of the Center. CRMI is an afterschool program that serves students from Providence Public High Schools, focused on the history and legacies of the Civil Rights Movement and injustices today. Catalyzed by the Bale's gift, the \$40,000 raised will help expand the program to serve 3 area high schools and more students.

*"The family funds my wife, Barbara, and I have donated in the CSSJ matching grant have energized us. In these tumultuous times what better way is there to invest our money than to try to defeat anti-black racism? All of our fellow Brown alumni who join in this campaign will find themselves on the right side of history." ~Tom Bale*

Responding to the police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and others, the protests that followed, and increasing public awareness of the impact of structural and systemic racism, in June CSSJ launched "This is America," a series of virtual panel discussions exploring how American social, political, and economic systems and structures are rooted in anti-Black racism. The year long discussions focused on topics ranging from global anti-Black racism and police bigotry to voter suppression and reparations. The conversations are virtual, and we have been overwhelmed by Alumni support for the conversations. The CSSJ Friends in particular would like to thank members of the IPC, Brown Clubs of DC and New York for their support in ensuring that the *This is America* series reaches their constituencies.

"History not confronted is never finished," Tony Bogues, CSSJ's Executive Director observed recently. CSSJ is a unique resource for Brown alums seeking to better understand the roots of anti-Black racism and the critical need to redress the systems that perpetuate anti-Black racism today.

**ANN COLES '63**

*Co-Chair, CSSJ Friends Committee*

## INMAN PAGE BLACK ALUMNI COUNCIL (IPC) & THE CSSJ FRIENDS

The work of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice has never been more important than during this national moment of racial reckoning. Both the essential scholarship and physical campus presence of the CSSJ at Brown signals the hopeful commitment to a pathway for racial truth and reconciliation. As such, I am a Brown alumna and proud member of the CSSJ Friends -- a working group dedicated to amplifying the footprint of the Center, expanding its network of supporters, driving key strategic objectives, and ensuring institutional sustainability. Additionally, The Inman Page Black Alumni Council (IPC) of Brown University has formed an especially close partnership with the CSSJ as we seek to provide the Black community with meaningful opportunities to stay connected to Brown through programming that affirms our experiences across the African Diaspora. One example is the flagship IPC co-sponsored program with the CSSJ, entitled "Beyond 1619: Engaging Our History, Advancing Our Narratives." The January 2020 event in New York City brought together an enthusiastic crowd of 200 participants for an expert panel of Brown faculty and alumni, moderated by CSSJ Director Dr. Bogues and featuring Dr. Nicole Truesdell, Marcia Ely '80, Wilfred Codrington III '05, and Dr. William Darity, Jr. '74. Attendees were treated to a lively interdisciplinary discussion on the impact of slavery's long shadow in the American economy, academic institutions, public discourse, and political systems. These, among myriad reasons, are why the CSSJ deserves our investment as it answers the clarion call of this generation.

**ANDREA M. O'NEAL '03**

*President-Elect of the Inman Page Black Alumni Council*



## Support the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice

Supporters of the Center provide vital funding for the Center's initiatives that breathe life into the neglected history of enslaved people and their descendants.

### Support Where It Is Most Needed

Your unrestricted gift to the CSSJ will help support core programs focused on the history and legacies of the racial slave trade globally.

GIVE NOW



### Support CSSJ Mass Incarceration and Carceral State Project

Support the CSSJ's Mass Incarceration and Punishment in America Research Cluster and Carceral State Reading Group, two programs that explore contemporary policing and mass incarceration and its links to our nation's history of slavery.

GIVE NOW



## Major Donors

The Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice would like to sincerely thank its major donors for their support, Ms. Barbara and Mr. Tom Bale, Ms. Donna Emma and Mr. Larry Davis, Mr. David Haas, Ms. Libby and Mr. Craig Heimark, Ms. Sharon and Mr. Joseph Holston, Ms. Debra Lee, Dr. Ruth J. Simmons, Ms. Mary and Mr. Jerome Vascellaro, Abrams Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and the Wyncote Foundation. We also wish to thank the Friends of the Center, External Advisory Board Members, and all financial contributors to the Center. Each year the work of the Center broadens and deepens. Each contribution sustains our work.

## Acknowledgements & Thanks

The staff of the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice sincerely thanks all the individuals who contributed their time, expertise, and energy in support of the Center. The work of the Center would not be possible without the support of the Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Dean of the College, Dean of the Faculty, Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity, and the Office of University Communications. Thank you to all the dedicated individuals on the faculty and external advisory boards. We thank as well the many guests from around the world who came to Brown to share their work. A sincere thanks also to the administrators and students on campus who facilitated public discussions, faculty and staff from centers and departments across campus, and all the students and other members of the Brown community who have given the Center their full support. We would like to especially thank Maria Lima and Robert Farizer, the Center's caretaker and groundskeeper for creating a clean and beautiful space in which we can do this work. We deeply appreciate their contribution to the Center. Lastly, the staff would like to express our sincere thanks to Sydney Smith for her outstanding work in designing this year's annual report.

### Become a Friend of the Center

#### How to Give

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1. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/mpvarnl>
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