

Center for the Study of

SLAVERY & JUSTICE

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



BROWN



COVER IMAGE:
Courtesy of Rythum Vinoben

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Director’s Note

We continue to live in troubled times. In many countries a current of global white nationalism is on the rise. Here in America, white nationalism as a form of authoritarian racist populism is one dominant strain of political and social ideas which frames national politics. This is an exclusionary worldview which at its core holds conceptions about Black people, about immigrants and the character of American society. It is a world view formed during the period of racial slavery. White nationalism is not a placid ideology. It is an active illiberal worldview about a world in which white supremacy should be the dominant order of the day. The African American scholar and activist, W.E.B. Du Bois once noted that anti-Black racism and American slavery had created what he called the “psychological wages of whiteness.” This, he argued, was a central problem of American civilization. At the heart of this ideology are the ways in which the human is made “superfluous,” in which difference becomes a principle to create an inferior other. Our “modernity” was born in one such moment with the genocide of the Native Indigenous population of the Americas. Since then the historical record has been filled with what the Martinican writer and thinker Frantz Fanon calls the “murder of man.” From racial slavery, colonialism, the Holocaust, the genocide of the Herero people in Namibia to the ways in which acts of massacre continue to mark our present, there is this kind of murder. Yet it is not only the spectacular deployment of violence which marks our contemporary world, it is the everyday denial of rights, in which human beings are treated as non-humans. In all of this, our world seems to be rushing quickly into a troubling storm.

Within such a context, research centers and universities need to find ways to keep alive spaces for critical thought. These institutions need to be a voice not in any partisan way but rather to foreground the principles of openness, science, and critical knowledge production. It is from this perspective that

we review our past year’s activities. Our research clusters have been outstanding as reports by Professors Shih and Braun make clear. Our work with undergraduate and graduate students in creating a reading group and public programming around the Carceral State was successful. The CSSJ *Slavery and Legacy Walking Tour* is now in high demand. We continue our robust public humanities program of exhibitions while expanding the Civil Rights Movement Initiative program for Providence Schools. The Global Curatorial Project has consolidated itself and along with one of our partners, the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture, the project began an innovative collection of oral histories of descendants of the enslaved in Senegal. During the course of this year, the CSSJ postdoctoral fellow Nic Ramos taught a number of courses which added immensely to our work. All these and our other activities point to the growth and reach of the Center.

GOING FORWARD

Next academic year we plan to add two more research clusters. The first will be a collaborative cluster implemented as a joint post doctoral position with the Watson Institute of International and Public Affairs. This research cluster titled, “Historical Injustices and Democracy,” will investigate the ways in which democracy becomes stymied in societies where historical injustice was a main foundational plank. The research cluster will think about the different modalities of democracy necessary to transform such societies. The second research cluster is titled, “Race, Capitalism and Slavery.” Following the most recent scholarship in the field of slavery studies, this research cluster will bring together some of the world’s leading scholars on slavery over the next three years to create a synthetic integrated historical narrative about slavery and the making of the modern world. This project will open new

terrains for the study of slavery and the making of the modern world. As well, working with the Choices Program the Center will complete its school textbook resource project on slavery. We are also co-convening a three year project with The Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre at the University of Johannesburg. This is a project around African and African Diaspora contemporary Art in the wake of slavery, colonialism, and apartheid. Although we are not in normal times, the CSSJ has attempted to grapple with this moment in ways which can make a difference. We hope that you the reader will attend one of our activities or that you will find ways to support the work of the Center. All the work which the CSSJ has done and its present achievements would not have been possible without the sustained work of the Center’s staff, Shana, Mayiah, and Catherine as well as the network of undergraduate students who work daily at the Center and the graduate students who have made the Center their intellectual home. The Center owes all of you its deepest gratitude.

ANTHONY BOGUES

*Asa Messer Professor of Humanities and Critical Theory
Professor of Africana Studies
Director of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice*



MAYIAH GAMBLE-RIVERS

Reflections from Provost Locke

Brown is a vibrant community, bustling with talks, exhibits, and performances. As provost, I am rarely able to take full advantage of the array of offerings. Often, I am left to be grateful simply reading the program or catalogue that follows an opening, vowing to try to “get to the next one.”

Such was almost the case with *Memory Work*.

Unable to attend the opening of works by the CSSJ’s 2019 Heimark Artist-in-Residence, Rénoald Laurent, I glanced through the exhibition catalogue, drawn by the gripping image of *Mutation*. I immediately wrote to CSSJ Director Anthony Bogue to congratulate him on the publication. His prompt, gracious reply included an invitation for a personal gallery tour, which I accepted with enthusiasm.

So, one rainy, raw, Wednesday in March, I climbed the steps of the Center, and opened the door to be awakened by bright, bold, abstract art pieces—pieces that convey powerful stories.

There is the story of the artist—a remarkable young painter and poet from a small town in Haiti renowned for its concentration of artists. Tony (Bogue) shared his memories of first meeting Laurent at his rural studio in Haiti and being immediately struck by his use of color.

There is the story of the art itself, with each work offering a glimpse into the complexity of Haiti—past and present. I admired the mixed media neutral tone of two 2008 works titled *Sans Titre*, yet I found myself returning to the large, provocative and intense *Liberté Guide Le People*, and *Les Danseuses*.

And there is the story of the exhibition, and importance of centers like the CSSJ, and universities such as Brown, to showcase art that lays bare the realities of the world in which we live, challenging us to think, and perhaps live differently.

After thanking Tony for his work and hospitality, I descended those same stairs, reminded that the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice is a true point of pride. It engages in consequential scholarship, and offers dynamic and poignant programming, like *Memory Work*.

The Center is at the core of so much that we are seeking to accomplish at Brown through our strategic plan, *Building on Distinction*. Through the interdisciplinary work of the CSSJ’s faculty, students, staff, and visitors, we seek to contribute to Creating More Just, Peaceful and Prosperous Societies; Exploring the Human Experience; and Cultivating Creative Expression.

Memory Work demonstrates how these goals are intertwined: It is through creative expression—through music, sculpture, poetry, and paint—that we seek to understand the world in which we live, to grapple with some of the most challenging periods of humanity, and to celebrate great triumphs.

I look forward to the next exhibition, and to continuing to work closely with the CSSJ to advance their work and mission, which is so integrally woven with Brown’s.

RICHARD M. LOCKE

*Provost
Schreiber Family Professor of Political Science
and International and Public Affairs*



Reflections from the Faculty Advisory Board

During my second year at Brown, when Tony Bagues asked whether I would be willing to join the CSSJ's Advisory Board, I enthusiastically replied, "yes." The previous year (my first on campus) I taught an undergraduate course on "Gender, Slavery, and Freedom" that explores how gender shaped the experience of slavery in the Americas, and the notions of freedom developed by enslaved people and their impact on post-emancipation societies in the United States and Latin America. One of the cornerstones of the course is that rather than some long-ago past, slavery and its afterlife continues to shape the places in which we live and work. To that end, I always include a tour of the spaces on campus where we can still see the traces of slavery and a discussion of how the university has grappled with its ties to slavery. At my previous institution this meant talking about the confederate monuments that still lined the campus and the university's

ensuing silence about slavery. Happily, at Brown this was a very different discussion, as we were able to grapple with Brown's effort to trace and confront its ties to slavery during the presidency of Ruth Simmons that led to the memorial to slavery on the Quiet Green being erected and to the creation of the CSSJ. In fact, when I asked to have my class tour the CSSJ to learn about that history and about the Center's current initiatives, its wonderful staff happily complied, even though at that point I had no particular affiliation with the Center. Since then, I have been impressed with all that the CSSJ does to bring the most prominent scholars working on questions of slavery and justice to campus and to engage faculty, students, and the community at large in deeply important conversations. It is a pleasure to be part of this community and to help guide it in any way I can as a member of the Faculty Advisory Board.

JULIET HOOKER

Professor of Political Science
Brown University



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 2018–2019 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.

Investigating the American Criminal Justice System

This project focuses on prisons and relations between the police and communities of color.

Freedom Archive

This project creates an inventory of materials in Brown University Library's Special Collections related to slavery, abolition and other freedom struggles 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.

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.

Slave Trade Film Project with Filmmaker Stanley Nelson and the Atlantic Slave Trade Research Group

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.

Slavery & the Americas Textbook Resource Project

This is a high school curriculum project which seeks to challenge myths and the current absences in how our schools teach the history of slavery. This is a collaborative project with the Choices Program at Brown and is currently in development. The project works closely with youth and educators to discern their understanding of the topic, areas of interest, and classroom challenges. We believe it is essential to work closely and collaboratively with teachers and students in order to create the most impactful curriculum.

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.

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. The group meets bimonthly to discuss both shared readings and work-in-progress. Throughout the academic year, this group will also host several locally-based, emerging scholars and artists to share their current research and projects with the larger campus community.

Carceral State Reading Group

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

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Civil Rights Movement Initiative

This after-school program invites a new cohort of students from Hope High School every year to the CSSJ to explore different aspects of the Civil Rights Movement before embarking on a week-long immersive Civil Rights trip throughout the South.

High School Summer Internships

Through Brown's Royce Fellowship the CSSJ provides internship opportunities for students during the summer. Research projects explore different aspects of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade to analyze the contemporary implications of that history.

Slavery & Legacy School Tours

The *Slavery & Legacy* Tours examine the history behind Brown University, the State of Rhode Island and their roles in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The tours help students (K-12 & college) think critically about the University and state histories.

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 Public Engagement*

CATHERINE VAN AMBURGH

Center Coordinator

THORALF ISLAND '19

*Student Researcher/
Administrative Support*

QUERUBE SUAREZ-WERLEIN Class of 2020

*Student Researcher/
Communications*

JASMINE THOMAS '19

*Student Researcher/
Administrative Support*

SOPHIE KUPETZ

*Class of 2019.5
Student Researcher/
Administrative Support*

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MARION ORR, 2012–2019

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MARY VASCELLARO '74, P'07

CSSJ RESEARCH CLUSTER FELLOWS

LUNDY BRAUN

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

ELENA SHIH

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

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

CRYSTAL EDDINS

*Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral
Fellow in Slavery and Justice,
2018–2019*

NIC JOHN RAMOS

*Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship
on Race in Science and Medicine,
2017–2019*

VISITING SCHOLARS

SYLVIANE DIOUF

Visiting Scholar, 2018–2022

ZACH SELL

Visiting Scholar, 2018–2019

HADIYA SEWER

Visiting Scholar, 2018–2019

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FELICIA BEVEL

Dissertation Fellow, 2018–2019

PAUL M. B. GUTIERREZ

*Associated Graduate Fellow,
2018–2019*

PUBLIC HUMANITIES GRADUATE FELLOWS

SANDRA ARNOLD '18.5 A.M.
*Graduate Fellow for the Study of
the Public History of Slavery*

JOHANNA OBENDA '19 A.M.
*Graduate Fellow for the Study of
the Public History of Slavery*

CHANDRA DICKEY
*Class of 2020
Graduate Fellow for the Study of
the Public History of Slavery*

THE YEAR
IN REVIEW



RYTHM VINDOEN

CSSJ Research Clusters

HUMAN TRAFFICKING RESEARCH CLUSTER

Human Trafficking research cluster fellow Elena Shih was awarded funding as a Principle Investigator from the British Academy (BA) program, *Tackling Slavery, Human Trafficking and Child Labour in Modern Business*. The research project aims to understand the proliferation of technological solutions to stopping modern day slavery, including various cell phone apps that help migrant workers report abuse across the US, Asia, and Latin America. The BA grant supported four work study student research cluster positions, and the convening of two public talks on “Combating Labor Abuse in Global Supply Chains: Worker Voice, Private Sector, Technology, and Worker Driven Social Responsibility Models” (September 21, 2018) and “Worker Voice: Are We Making Worker’s Lives Better” (March 30, 2019). These discussions featured leading figures in the field including, Lisa Rende Taylor, Founder and Executive Director, Issara Institute, Bangkok Thailand; Penelope Kyritsis, Education and Outreach Coordinator, Worker Driven Social Responsibility Network; Brad Blitz, Professor of International Politics, Middlesex University London, Director of the British Academy’s program, and Aaron Halegua, Law Fellow at NYU Law School.

The research cluster’s ongoing partnership with COYOTE RI—the state’s only sex worker rights organization—was fruitful, resulting in the introduction of a historic House

Bill to study the impact of the 2009 re-criminalization of indoor prostitution in the state. Five student research cluster participants (Dayana Tavaréz, Yanhoo Cho, Malana Krongelb, Meghan Peterson, Julianna Brown), drew on their research cultivated through the CSSJ over the past few years, testifying to the house judiciary committee on their expertise in areas of public health, low wage work, and the targeting of racial and sexual minorities in the state. More information about the house bill, HB 5354: Creating Special Legislative Commission to Study the Health and Safety Impact of Revising Commercial Sexual Activity Laws as well as videos of student testimonies, can be found at the Center’s webpage (<https://www.brown.edu/initiatives/slavery-and-justice/human-trafficking>).

ELENA SHIH

Manning Assistant Professor of American Studies
CSSJ Faculty Fellow



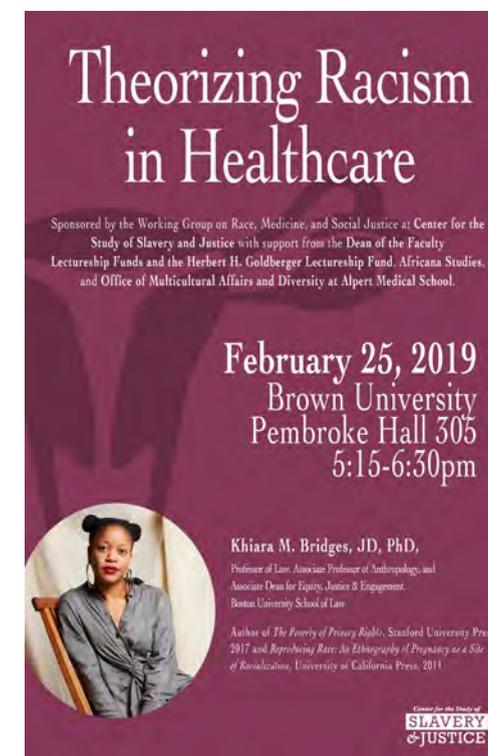
Human Trafficking Research Cluster Students Dayana Tavaréz '19, Malana Krongelb '19, and Yanhoo Cho, class of 2021, testify at the Rhode Island House Judiciary Committee in favor of House Bill (HB 5354): Creating Special Legislative Commission to Study the Health and Safety Impact of Revising Commercial Sexual Activity Laws.

RACE, MEDICINE, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE RESEARCH CLUSTER

“Because we have a moralized construction of poverty... People feel comfortable in thinking that the reason that Black women are three to four times more likely to die during childbirth than white women is because there must be some genetic disposition towards...death, as opposed to interrogating a society that makes it deadly to be a person of color and then to try to reproduce. Biological race is diverting our attention from the things that are actually making people of color’s lives shorter and less healthy.”

KHIARA BRIDGES

Interview with The College Hill Independent, March 1, 2019



Health inequality, especially racial inequality in health, has been a topic of concern in medicine since the 1990s. While there is some acknowledgement of how racism operates in the clinical context, the racialization of the “evidence” that guides clinical practice has been largely ignored. The Race, Medicine, and Social Justice Working Group of the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice has been meeting regularly for three years to probe knowledge production and racism in medicine. With the addition of numerous faculty from the medical school over the past year, we identified and discussed many sites of racism in medicine: mental health for the under-insured; genetics, race, and health; black women’s maternity care; and algorithmic-based racism. We also heard from medical students about the work they are doing to address racism in the medical curriculum.

The Working Group invited two outside speakers this year, who gave public lectures and met with our group to discuss their books. Sociologist Jenny Reardon from University of California, Santa Cruz drew on her new book *The Postgenomic Condition: Ethics, Justice, Knowledge After the Genome* to analyze the on-going controversy featured in the *The New York Times* in March 2018 about genetic explanations for racial differences in disease and, most disturbingly, in intelligence. In a lecture to a full auditorium, Professor Khiara Bridges from Boston University School of Law and Department of Anthropology (now University of California, Berkeley) examined pathologizing narratives for racial disparities in disease, focusing on the high death rate for Black women in childbirth. Supported by several units at the University, Professor Bridges’ talk, “Theorizing Racism in Healthcare” addressed the many dimensions of racism as it manifests in the healthcare infrastructure, from providers to the production of “evidence.” In a final, exciting session, which we will continue in the fall semester, the Working Group explored the historical processes by which race and racism have been incorporated into medical algorithms with increasing frequency in clinical practice and the consequences for “evidence.”

LUNDY BRAUN

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

IN SLAVERY’S WAKE: A GLOBAL CURATORIAL PROJECT

In Slavery’s Wake: A Global Curatorial Project (GCP) is shifting the way many museums think about and represent the history of slavery, race, and colonialism and their continuing relevance to our world today. The GCP’s primary focus over the next few years is to create an international exhibition in partnership with communities and a global network of museums, non-profits, and university partners focused on the history and legacies or afterlives of slavery. In tandem with the exhibition development process, the project has created a series of public conversations on the topic of the history and aftermaths of slavery and colonialism entitled “Unfinished Conversations.” These conversations, organized by GCP partner institutions around the world, will help to create new archives and new curatorial stories about slavery’s impact at the local level.

This year the CSSJ and the National African American Museum of History and Culture, in partnership with Institut Fondamental d’Afrique Noire, Senegal laid the groundwork for an ambitious oral history project with descendant communities in Senegal. This project will collect, archive, and disseminate the oral histories of the enslaved in Senegal, Cape Town, Brazil, Caribbean and the United States. This oral and visual documentary project will reshape scholars’ and the public’s understanding of slavery. The project is divided into two parts: selected oral testimonies for the proposed traveling exhibition and then the creation of a documentary project which will include all the oral histories collected. The Brown University Library is a critical partner in this work.

SHANA WEINBERG

Assistant Director, Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice

REFLECTIONS ON “SLAVERY, CAPITALISM, AND THE MAKING OF THE MODERN WORLD”

On the evening of December 3rd, 2018, the Sawyer Seminar on Race and Indigeneity in the Americas hosted Brown’s Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice for a thought-provoking seminar entitled “Slavery, Capitalism, and the Making of the Modern World.” As the title suggests, the evening brought together leading scholars of race, slavery, and labor to discuss the role of slavery in the development of capitalism. Participants in the seminar included moderator Zach Sell (CSSJ Visiting Scholar), Jennifer L. Morgan (Professor of Social and Cultural Analysis and History at NYU), Seth Rockman (Associate Professor of History at Brown University), Walter Johnson (Winthrop Professor of History at Harvard University), and Anthony Bogues (Director of CSSJ and Professor of Africana Studies at Brown).

The seminar began with presentations from each of the invited participants and spanned from micro to macro level examinations of the relationships between slavery and capitalism. The first presenter, Dr. Jennifer Morgan, opened her talk by warning against the potential for race and racism to make us “lazy thinkers” when we allow them to unreflexively stand in for complex social and historical processes. It is neither appropriate nor accurate, she noted, to consider the early development of slavery via the lens of 18th century abolitionist narratives. These narratives obscure the role of slavery as a type of economic trade, and as such renders part of the system of trade invisible. More specifically, it renders certain historical subjects within the system invisible—especially women, whose bodies were treated as sites where the law is enacted and hereditary racial slavery reproduced. Dr. Morgan instead advances process-oriented approaches such as her recent work on colonial numeracy—or the uses and logics of mathematical concepts—in relation to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. By tracing how ideas about countability—of currency, populations, the commodification of people—are co-developed in 17th century European markets at the start of the slave trade, she seeks to provide new insights into the early logics of hereditary racial slavery and its effects.

The second presenter, Dr. Seth Rockman, gave a more micro account of the extensive reach of slavery as an economic system by detailing the interconnections between laborers in industrializing New England and the Southern plantations. He opened with a narrative of a 13-year-old Rhode Island seamstress who sewed clothing for enslaved women on a Mississippi plantation. Pondering whether that young seamstress ever considered the experiences of the women who would wear her clothes, he raised questions about the entanglements of remote lives in the production and circulation of goods within slave economies. His approach to slave economies as situated within large commodity chains brought to mind parallels between these economies and the global commodity chains of “late capitalism.” By following these chains, he argued that we can see how the spectacular opportunity that is enabled by capitalism is simultaneously linked to oppression throughout American history.

Dr. Rockman was followed by Dr. Anthony Bogues, who approached the question of slavery and capitalism via the history of capitalism writ-large. He began his examination with Du Bois’s 1935 *Black Reconstruction* and the relationship between the categories of the worker and the enslaved. Capitalism, Du Bois argued, as a mode of production is inseparable from slavery. Dr. Bogues then traced this argument about capitalism as a mode of production through World Systems Theory and Latin American theories of colonial modes of production. Dr. Bogues wants to trouble the periodization of capitalism, as marked by prefixes such as “merchant,” “financial,” “late.” These prefixes, he argued, presume certain conceptions of commodification, accumulation, circulation, exploitation, and the operations of economic institutions that need to be rethought. Instead of these periodized understandings of capitalism, he prefers the use of “Slave Capitalism,” which better accounts for labor, racialization, double commodification, alienation, exploitation, and domination. He offered examples of how 17th century trading companies like the West India Trading Company had diverse portfolios that showed characteristics of both trading and finance companies. He explained how these companies invested in a slavery-based economy by investing in the development of plantations in the Caribbean in order to establish plantations. These plantations later became sources of trade



goods as well as customers for the slave trade. In this way, the system was one of investment that troubles the idea that merchant capitalism is somehow separate from financial capitalism.

Finally, Dr. Walter Johnson explored the ways in which slavery exceeds a straightforward class relationship, looking at white supremacy and settler colonialism. He argued that settler colonialism marked a new moment in world history, bringing together a particular blend of commerce and xenophobia. While racial domination and economic exploitation have long histories before settler colonialism, this new moment is defined by racial capitalism characterized by the slave trade and the genocide and expropriation of lands from Indigenous peoples. Dr. Johnson argued that treating the history of slavery and the history of the world as a history of racial capitalism would redefine the historical subject away from the white wage laborer. It would instead center a different historical subject, a racialized subject that has always been at the center of this system while simultaneously being rendered, in Dr. Morgan’s words, “marginalia.”

When the presentations concluded, the panel engaged in a lively discussion about the themes that emerged across the paper. The full-house crowd offered thoughtful questions and reflections.

LAUREN DEAL

PhD Candidate in Anthropology, Brown University
Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies Mellon-Sawyer Fellow

REFRAMING HAITI

The Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice (CSSJ) has made remarkable strides in its promotion of public awareness of the enduring legacies of the enslavement of Africans and their descendants. The national and international profile of the CSSJ is testament to its important role in this work.

I was honored to be invited to deliver the CSSJ's Debra L. Lee Distinguished Lecture in Spring 2019. My lecture was titled, "Our Haiti: Conflicting Visions of a Black Nation." The purpose of the lecture was to widen the focus on Haiti's history after 1804 to include Caribbean considerations of Haitian independence with the more studied relations Haiti had with the United States in this period.

Drawing on original research of Haitian-Jamaican relations in the nineteenth century and recent studies of the nineteenth century Caribbean, I presented evidence of how powerfully Haiti figured into the vision of a post-slavery Caribbean through the works of Caribbean publics in Jamaica, Cuba, Trinidad, and the eastern Caribbean. I emphasized that Haiti was seen as both an example of black progress and a cautionary example of the misfortunes of independent nationhood. These contrasting views, which carry over into our own time, had a specific history that can only be appreciated when we consider three key factors: the anti-slavery project in the Caribbean; relationships with empire; and migration of Haitians to nearby territories. Taken together, and examined closely rather than against the broad sweep of the

age of emancipation, it becomes clearer that Haiti represented many things for Caribbean contemporaries who understood and interacted with the republic.

My lecture was part of the CSSJ's 'Haiti Week' which also featured a panel discussion on the work of Haitian artist and CSSJ's 2019 Heimark Artist-in-Residence, Rénold Laurent. Laurent's breathtaking *Memory Work* exhibition which was on display in the CSSJ, was the basis for the deeply insightful commentary on the artist, his work, and what it means to invoke often traumatic intergenerational memories through art.

The CSSJ's emphasis on Haiti through these activities reflects its commitment to treat the tangled threads of enslavement and the responses of its survivors as a global matter. Haiti was the first country in the Americas to abolish slavery. The study of slavery and justice cannot be fully explored without consideration of Haitian history. That the CSSJ not only recognizes this but also takes it seriously in its work and approach is but one sign of its vital importance to the intellectual community at Brown University and beyond.

The CSSJ facilitated two other related public events during my visit. The first was a screening of a documentary film I directed, *The Past is Not Our Future: Walter Rodney's Student Years*, and the second a public workshop session on current research on Jamaican music, titled, *Jamaica, the Moon Above: The Moving History of Jamaican Music*. The CSSJ's hosting of these diverse activities suggest its larger commitment to public education.

Walter Rodney, a revolutionary and major Caribbean intellectual, devoted his life to fighting for justice for the descendants of slavery. This core aspect of his work and life has been a critical element of the history of Jamaican music which I have been studying closely. At that session, I played several songs from the 1960s through to the 2000s which highlight the threads of influence on Jamaican musicians and the evolution of the message of history and radical social change that became part and parcel of Reggae music.

The discussions at these events were rich. Members of the Brown community and the Caribbean community in Rhode Island were in attendance and helped to steer the conversation to areas of interest to the community.

I am grateful to have had this experience to share my work and engage with a diverse and highly interested audience. I was impressed with the organization and leadership of the CSSJ. The strong and reciprocal support that the Center provides for graduate students in Africana Studies and other related departments on campus is inspirational. The CSSJ has a strong team behind it and can be proud of the work it is doing.

In my capacity as scholar and director of the Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British slave-ownership at University College London, I look forward to working closely with the CSSJ in the future in its mission to advance knowledge, scholarship, projects, and awareness on the diverse and multiple issues relative to the history of slavery and justice.

MATTHEW J. SMITH

Director, Centre for the Study of the Legacies of British Slave-Ownership, University College London



MEMORY WORK: A HAITIAN ART PANEL

Memory Work: A Haitian Art Panel convened a public discussion on Heimark Artist-in-Residence Rénoald Laurent's exhibit *Memory Work* and was the concluding event in a week of public programming on Haitian art, politics, and history in March 2019. Rénoald Laurent is a Haitian visual artist, writer, and poet whose work grapples with questions of abstraction, memory, form, and materiality. *Memory Work* featured paintings carried out over several years, with the most recent pieces completed in residence at CSSJ. As Anthony Bogues notes in the exhibition catalogue, "Laurent's work is about the work of memory, and its meanings for the present and for a possibility of something different in the future. It is, as he says, a communication between resistance and liberty, thus firmly embedding his art within the traditions of Haitian art." *Memory Work*, as Laurent himself insists, "examined how different materials, from oil and acrylic paint to coffee grounds, enter into artistic dialogue with one another and make new meanings across space and time."

The featured panelists included Jerry Philogene, Associate Professor of American Studies at Dickinson College, who specializes in 20th century African American and Afro Caribbean visual arts and cultural history; Patrick Sylvain, poet, social and literary critic, and photographer whose academic fields of expertise include postcolonial theory, transatlantic modernism, political anthropology, literature of migration and diaspora, translation and socio-linguistic studies, realism, and critical race theory; and Felicia Denaud, a third year PhD student in Africana Studies at Brown University. Rénoald Laurent offered remarks following the three presentations and Anthony Bogues moderated. Panelists reflected on Laurent's place within contemporary Haitian art practices, his technical and philosophical transformation, the centrality of abstraction in Black visual expression, and the relationship between the word and the image in Laurent's oeuvre. Included here is an excerpt of Felicia Denaud's remarks from that panel, entitled "Color in and out of the Hold/Sensing the Image."



Célébration | Celebration
2019, Acrylic on Canvas, 60"x 30"

Color in and out of the Hold/Sensing the Image

"My remarks are a meditation on what it means for someone like me, someone thinking between captivity and revolution, to encounter someone like Rénoald. And what this may mean for the possibilities of Black Study.

Blackness historically emerges within a regime of physical capture of course, but I'd like to dwell on the larger sensorial invasion that enslavement and colonization inaugurate. No sense was left unviolated—smell, sight, touch, taste, hearing—all were recruited, refashioned and marshalled towards sowing human hierarchy. And there's a story that could accompany each: slave traders licking the sweat of the captive to determine his health, the conversion of touch from a form of therapeutics to one of predation, the way the groan, the moan, the yell become constitutive speech acts in Black existence. No sense was left the same. It is a project that embeds itself at the level of the nervous system, the network of cells and fibers which transmits nerve impulses between parts of the body, and as I would argue, the body of the World.

The viscosity of it all, has always been one of the most important sites of capture. The eye, if you look closely enough, is a recurring symbol in Black thought and artistic production. It's an organ akin to the brain in its importance as a space of cognition, of knowing, thinking, assessing not just perceiving.

Rénoald's corpus, then, invites us to enter a mode of viscosity that's staging the world-to-come, that's speculating around what it will mean to see when we enter a new dis-order of the sensible. This is the power in his decision to leave so many pieces untitled (however frustrating that might be to those of us who desire a prompt, desire a name, desire an analysis). The naming is in the contact, as Rénoald explains, in the dialogue, in the space we are all so afraid to inhabit: the gap between the viewer and the viewed. To see, in this world to come, will not be a way of fixing or nailing something in space. Seeing will be the frustrating though glorious struggle to allow many out of one.

Memory work is a universe where our bodies become circulations of blue, currents in yellow, where breasts become conch shells, where your thigh, is his arm, is her womb, where our skin is the detritus of coffee production and it is beautiful, where our backs bend but not because they are broken but because there are so many more ways to live with a spine (or maybe that's a railroad track? or a ladder?), where we exist beyond the figure of the human *beyond figuration*, and as something so much more demanding, more interesting! circuits of symbols, colors compelling each other to *show up and show out*. *Close your eyes right now and tell me: what is your blue to my green? How can they ever meet? And what kind of dance will they choreograph? Close your eyes and assume another posture. Feel your neck reach out to your feet, talk to the perimeter of your stomach, demand that it become something more. See your eyes in the hands of the person next to you.* Mutation, Celebration, and Renaissance all may have some answers to give us.

Négrier II, one of my favorite pieces in the exhibit, brings all of these fragments: color, that which can be carried in the head/body, the making of a Black self through and beyond the figure of the human, together. *Négrier II* is a rendition of the blueprint of a slave ship. Superimposed on the blueprint is the outline of a head using what almost looks like the material of a veil or an old kind of collar. The head and the face, then, contain within them the units of the hold in the belly of the ship. A place of torture, pain, breakage, violation, fear, loss, anger, not only lies in the head, but is the head. The hold is memory itself. Simultaneously, the outline of a head (the most sacred body space in Yoruba cosmology for example, the place where



Négrier 2 | Slave Ship 2
2019, Acrylic on Canvas, 30" x 40"

power/life/corruption can be transferred/the most vulnerable and powerful entry point) breaks forth to make the piece, ever so slightly, three dimensional. The head exceeds the hold. The head intervenes on the hold, on the schemes, on the blue-prints. And quite powerfully, color is used to communicate the violence and the chaos of it all. And perhaps more importantly, the colors communicate the various literacies that fused in bondage as pathways to think and act out of captivity. In the hold, Macaya and Kossolu, red and blue, Dantor and Ogou, all composed themselves to make my head, my memories, me.

Haitian art and Black art more generally is so often conscripted into a mode of instruction. Tell us how to see you! Tell us what this pain feels like! Show us! Through rigorous study and experimentation, Rénoald arrived at abstraction against dominant demands and in so doing, says to me, we must be wary of the ways in which figuration is part of the violence of the sensible, that sight is compromised and thus, our visual production, and all forms of creative production, must use memory as a wormhole towards the unknown and the unknowable, a different kind of body and life. The figurative is forsaken for the much more dangerous pursuit of that which can not be interpreted by the means available, and yet must be. Rénoald's artistic and sensory insurrection, then, lies in defying the mandate to translate reality and daring to instead create it."

FELICIA DENAUD

Ph.D. Candidate, Africana Studies

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: *Unfinished Business: The Long Civil Rights Movement*, *Memory Work*, featuring works by Haitian artist Rénoald Laurent, and *Memory Dishes: Women and African Diasporic Cooking*. Free catalogue publications are produced to accompany exhibitions and provide visitors with greater historic and contemporary context. We frequently receive requests from high schools and adult educators for copies to be used as student resources. Additionally, as part of our commitment to our public humanities mission, for each exhibition we develop public programs that help us to explore themes of history and justice with scholars, activists, and community practitioners.

Opening on the 50th anniversary of the Black Student Walkout at Brown, *Unfinished Business: The Long Civil Rights Movement* was an important part of the Black Alumni Reunion held in September 2018 organized by the Inman Page Black Alumni Council. At the opening reception at the John Nicholas Brown Center for Public Humanities and Cultural Heritage, the CSSJ

curatorial team discussed the exhibition which examines the history of the Black organizing tradition from Emancipation to the presidential campaigns of Jesse Jackson. Visitors shared their own memories of the Movement and how those moments, both empowering and disheartening, shaped them. In conjunction with the exhibition, CSSJ also organized a day of conversation, titled *Living Unfinished Business: the Legacies of the Civil Rights Movement, Memory, and Voting Rights Today*. This all-day program brought together activists, artists, curators, and lawyers to discuss past and present threats to freedom and democracy.

Memory Work featured paintings by Haitian artist and Heimark Artist-in-Residence, Rénoald Laurent. Laurent's work uses vivid colors and found objects to explore Haitian history and imagine a future that might yet be. At the exhibition's opening reception, Laurent shared the influences for his work. Anthony Bogues helped to put Laurent's work, as a major Haitian abstract expressionist painter, in context with the history of Haitian art movements. *Memory Work* allowed the Center to explore Haitian art, history and culture through a series of programs in March titled *Reframing Haiti: African Diasporic Politics, Art,*

History and Culture. Historian Dr. Matthew Smith explored conflicting views of Haiti from the time of revolution to today while also examining how the country is viewed in a Caribbean context. The program ended with a panel on Haitian art featuring poet Patrick Sylvain, Rénoald Laurent, Felicia Denaud, Prof. Jerry Philogene, and Professor Anthony Bogues. The panel helped to place Laurent's work within the tradition of Haitian art.

Our academic year ended with the opening of our Commencement exhibition *Memory Dishes: Women and African Diasporic Cooking*. CSSJ Graduate fellows Johanna Obenda and Chandra Dickey curated and developed a set of public programs for the exhibition. Anchored by the food stories and oral histories of six local families of African descent, *Memory Dishes'* programs explored the vast world of African diasporic cooking and the ways food traditions are passed on and reimagined through intergenerational exchange. Chandra thought about how the exhibition could foster critical conversations about food, storytelling, and the various diasporas present in and around Providence. Over the course of the semester she brainstormed programs and events that would bring the exhibition outside of

the gallery and into the surrounding community. She organized and planned a "Curator Talk Back" and two community dinners facilitated by poet and storyteller Maurisa Li-A-Ping. The intimate conversations cultivated at both dinners created a platform for the broader community to share their knowledge and stories and explore the deep social-connections rooted in memories of food and family. By pairing the exhibition's multimedia design with community-based public programming, the Center was able to reach new audiences and provoke thoughtful conversations.

The topics explored in our exhibitions persist beyond the timeline they are exhibited for public viewing. We've chosen to include the full curatorial statements from each of this year's gallery exhibitions in the following pages. 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.

CENTER STAFF



Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice



ANNUAL REPORT



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**UNFINISHED BUSINESS:
THE LONG CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT**

This is America

As we thought about this exhibition, and the individuals who were and are part of the Black Freedom Struggle, we could not help but reflect on the 2017 violent attack in Charlottesville, Virginia. On the anniversary of the counter-protest to the “Unite the Right” rally, we see glimpses of the freedom struggles of the 20th century and the violence and risks that regular people took in their resistance against white supremacy. While images of men in the night with torches and sheets over their head conjure up visuals from films such as the 1915 *Birth of a Nation* or memories of rural 1960s Mississippi, many in the nation were surprised to see the hateful ideals of white supremacy embodied by hundreds of unmasked white marchers in 2017. This public display made it clear that white supremacy is normalized in American society.

Charlottesville happened at a time when many cities were rethinking their monuments and the history and memories they convey. In 2018, the Southern Poverty Law Center stated that following Charlottesville, 30 confederate monuments had been removed. While the racial tension in Charlottesville



supposedly surrounded the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue, it was fueled by questions of belonging and about not only who owns “Southern History,” but also, “American History.” The marchers’ chants of “we will not be forgotten” and “white lives matter” raise questions about what is presumed lost for some in the white community when rights are given to communities of color. What is at stake in telling a more inclusive history? Former Grand Wizard, David Duke of the Ku Klux Klan, told white protestors, “we are determined to take our country back... we are going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump. That’s what we believe in. That’s why we voted for Donald Trump, because he said he’s going to take our country back.” This national myth about the founding of America and who it belongs to already centers whiteness in its narrative. An alternative narrative threatens the racial power structure that has been sustained since the start of slavery. This idea that America needs to be taken back perpetuates a belief that white America is under attack when historically that has never been so.

“We hope that this exhibition represents a form of activism while presenting historical knowledge... showing America for what it is instead of what it never was.”

When we began working on this exhibition we were thinking about how museums and exhibitions nationally often present the history of the Civil Rights Movement as finished, in the past. We hope that *Unfinished Business: The Long Civil Rights Movement* challenges this idea by showing a sustained fight within the Black community to resist white supremacy, oppression and demand their unalienable rights. We highlight the ways in which various groups have created strategies to demand the freedom they ought to have.

During this challenging time we find ourselves in a political climate in which elected officials can run on an openly white supremacist ticket, and where the rights of communities of color are being taken away or exposed to the risk of violence. We must remind ourselves of past individuals who risked their lives to vote; to end segregation in public spaces; to take control of their communities and imagine what freedom in America could look like.

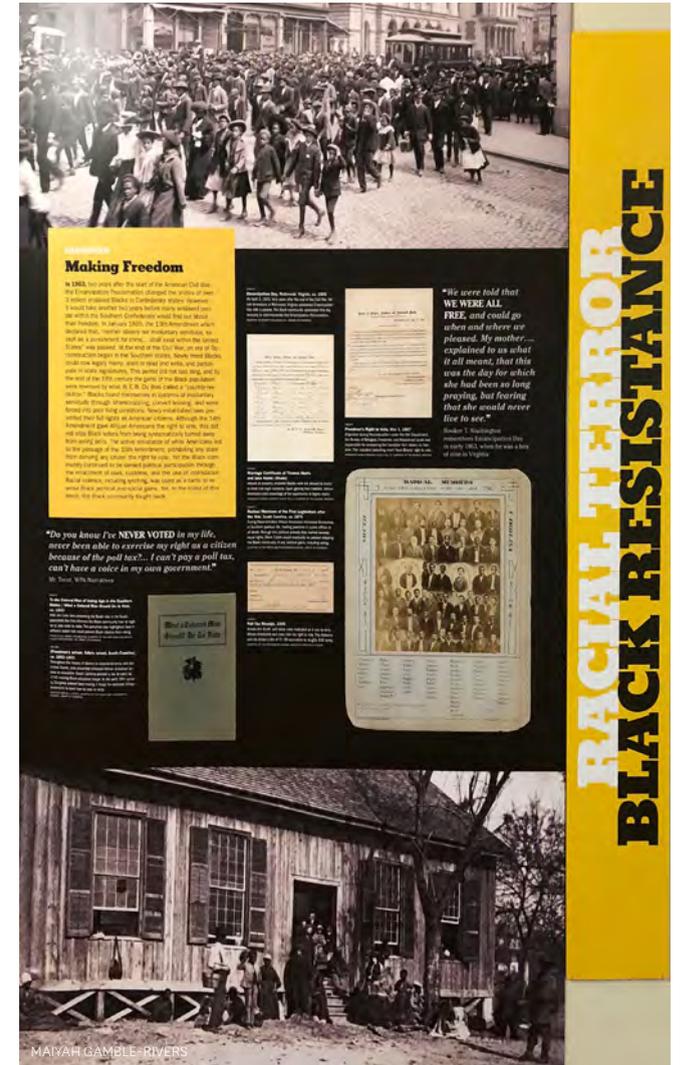
We are also reminded of the words of Toni Morrison who in 2015 wrote,

“we are in a time of dread... but there is no time for despair, no place for self-pity, no need for silence, no room for fear. We speak, we write, we do language. That is how civilizations heal. The oppressors plan is simple... distract with themes of ... defiant national pride that enshrine past hurts and humiliations...I know the world is bruised and bleeding, and though it is important not to ignore its pain, it is also critical to refuse to succumb to its malevolence. Like failure, chaos contains information that can lead to knowledge—even wisdom. Like art.”

This is a crucial moment when the reverberations of Charlottesville are felt throughout America. So too are the afterlives of Charlottesville, the 2016 Presidential election, the deaths of Mike Brown in Ferguson, Freddie Gray in Baltimore, the nine worshipers in Charleston, Sandra Bland in Texas, and Eric Garner in New York. The poor water conditions of the low-income communities of Flint, the general conditions of life for the residents of the lower ninth ward of New Orleans, and the ways in which citizens of Puerto Rico were treated after hurricanes Irma and Maria, all point to these reverberations. Central to all of these moments is the manufacturing of white fear. We hope that this exhibition reads as a form of activism while presenting historical knowledge. We hope to show America for what it is instead of what it never was.

SHANA WEINBERG is the Assistant Director at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University.

MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS is the Manager of Programs & Public Engagement at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice at Brown University.

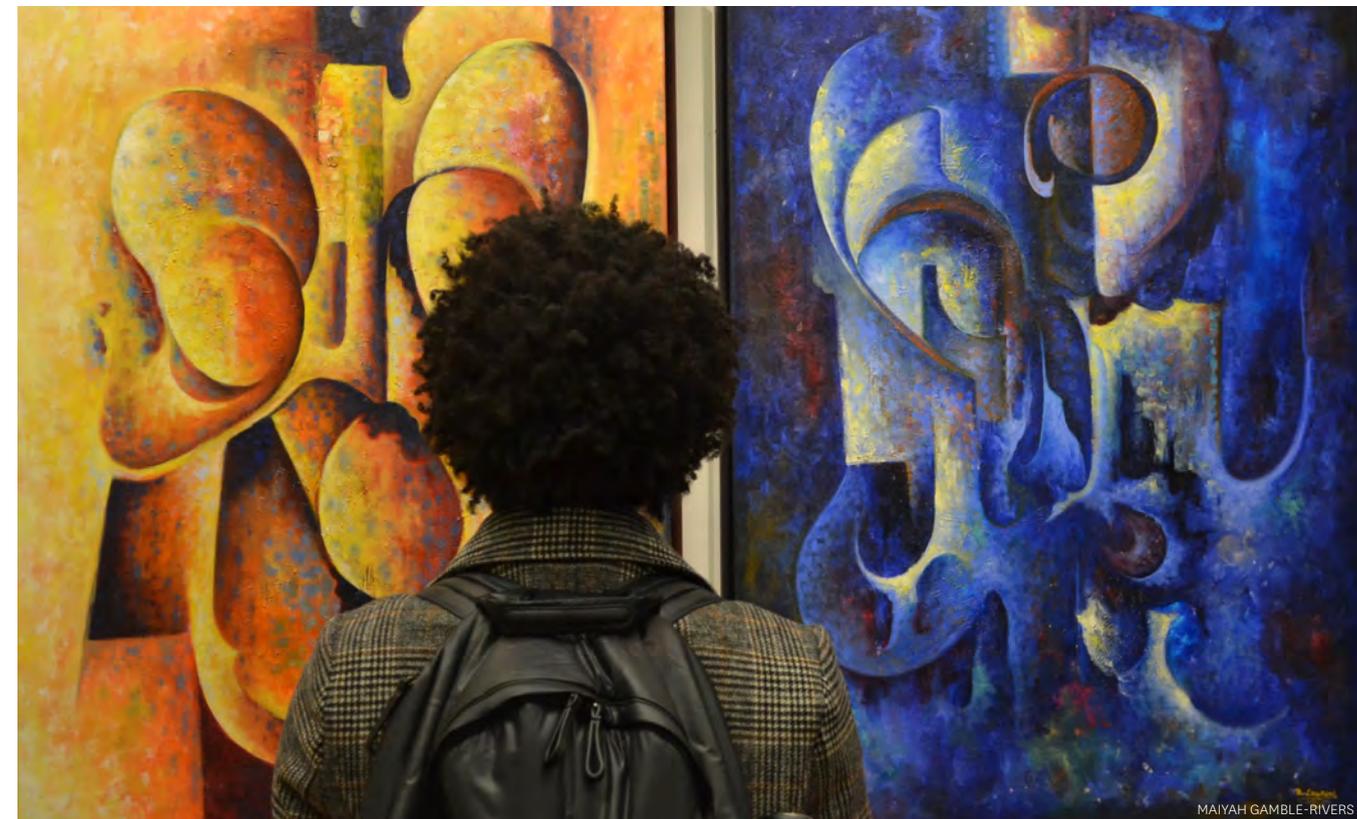


MEMORY WORK

Artist's Statement

Essentially, my subject matter is communication on various levels: whether it's dialogue between the materials and the media I choose to work with, an intra-dialogue among the various collections of my oeuvre, or a dialogue with the viewers of my oeuvre. The vehicle of dialogue allows me to put specific concepts such as "memory," "resistance," and "spirituality" in conversation with one another, thereby demonstrating how these concepts are not mutually exclusive—how they, in fact, depend on one another.

I use different materials—both conventional and unconventional. Depending on what domain I'm working in, I will privilege certain materials over others. For example, the most recent domain involves a specific technique in which I deploy mixed media—including, but not limited to, cloth, charcoal,



resin, and sometimes even coffee grounds—in order to create a kind of recuperation. And by recuperation I mean how I ultimately reuse and transform these materials. In this kind of recuperation, I hope to convey how artistic imagination can compensate for the economic limitations many poor people have in acquiring or buying material objects in the first place. I try to respect and protect my local environment by reusing and recycling materials that are often discarded and within easy reach. I try to keep memories alive that way too.

"Memory Work" assembles a set of paintings carried out over several years. The most recent were painted as part of the 2019 Heimark Artist-in-Residence Program at Brown University's Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice. "Memory Work" examines how different materials, from oil and acrylic paint to coffee grounds, enter into artistic dialogue with one another and make new meanings across space and time.

RÉNOLD LAURENT

2019 Heimark Artist-in-Residence

Professors Tony Bagues and Patrick Sylvain pose with artist RénoLD Laurent at the CSSJ exhibition opening of *Memory Work*.



MEMORY DISHES

When we began curating *Memory Dishes*, we wanted to work collaboratively with the Providence community to share stories of African diasporic cooking. That goal led to incredible relationships forged with six generous, open, and dynamic families. Human connections are central to the exhibit in both its content and form. In this exhibition, it is important that the families highlighted in *Memory Dishes* tell their cooking histories in their own voices. Thus, the exhibit centers their oral histories and is multifaceted—textual, digital, and object-based—to match the complexities of the families' stories and the world of African diasporic cooking. Thank you to the Jones, Powell, da Graça, Alcantara, Aubourg, and Malabre families for allowing us to amplify your voices in this space. And thank you to the CSSJ for allowing me the opportunity to explore a non-traditional mode of curating, straddling the lines of history, culture, and art.

Why African diasporic cooking? The culinary presence of enslaved Africans and their descendants are evident in many of the foods we enjoy today, from gumbo to barbeque. Rhode

Island is a dynamic part of the African diaspora, a constant site of migration which has been shaped by the Transatlantic Slave Trade, the Great Migration from the South in the twentieth century, and contemporary immigration. The people of African descent who have made Rhode Island home through these waves of migration have left a specific mark on the culinary scene. I was particularly drawn to the area's contemporary moment, where Black American food comes from the Southern United States, Africa, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. This is why the exhibition centers contemporary Rhode Islanders of different diasporic backgrounds. In the food stories of these Rhode Islanders of African descent, past histories are carried into the present through memory.

Women are at the heart of African diasporic cooking—this is the theme that became the most evident as we collected oral histories from the families. Not only were all of the interviewees women, most cited women cooks (grandmothers, mothers, aunts, domestic workers) as the most prominent cooking influences in their lives. It became clear that it was not the specific food items that should be highlighted in the exhibition



RYTHUM VINOBEEN



RYTHUM VINOBEEN

Toni Tipton-Martin, Johanna Obenda, and Dr. Jessica B. Harris discuss African diasporic cooking at a CSSJ Commencement Forum.

but the interpersonal relationships between the women who prepared said food. The importance of these relationships informed our decision to film the women of *Memory Dishes* cooking meals central to their personal and cultural identities, so that these essential interactions could be highlighted in the exhibit. While many interviewees highlight the ways cooking is shared intergenerationally amongst women, they also point to a shift in the traditional gendering of African diasporic cooking as mothers and grandmothers pass culinary traditions to sons and grandsons. This is one of the many reminders that African diasporic cooking is not a static practice simply passed down unaltered, but one that is reimagined and reconfigured through each generation to fit the needs and reality of the moment.

This exhibition makes it clear that cooking, while a seemingly quotidian process, is a complex practice that can highlight social relationships, individual histories, and collective memories. *Memory Dishes* has been an exploration into the families' identities as much as it has been about food. While all members acknowledge having culinary roots connected to the



Joanna da Graça and aunt pose proudly in front of their family's panel in the exhibition, *Memory Dishes*.

continent of Africa, they possess several different identities—Latina, African American, Black, African. These identities are as vast and complex as the dishes they cook, with some overlapping with each other and others remaining distinct. Like African diasporic cooking, the beauty of the diaspora lies both in its common roots and in its unique contemporary manifestations. I hope visitors are able to see themselves in the food histories and meals of the families of *Memory Dishes*, if not explicitly, in the ways that memory and the past impact so much of our present, even down to what we put on our plates. Often we turn to exceptional figures and moments to glean knowledge about the human condition, but there is an infinite amount of knowledge, experience, and history living within ourselves and our own communities, and—through our memories—in our ancestors. I hope the exhibit inspires people to reflect on their own memory dishes and think about the significance of the everyday.

JOHANNA OBENDA '19 A.M.

CSSJ Masters Fellow for the Public History of Slavery



Lunch Talk Series

BLACK RADICAL ARCHIVE

On December 4, 2018, graduate students Bedour Alagraa, Shamara Alhassan, Felicia Denaud, Connie McNair, and Kristen Maye engaged in a roundtable discussion of their ongoing work with the CSSJ’s “Black Radical Archive” Project (BRAP). This project seeks to construct a Black radical archive gathered from the works of living Black radical thinkers and writers, beginning with Jamaican writer, Sylvia Wynter, and Barbadian novelist, George Lamming. The BRAP required the panelists to travel to Bridgetown, Barbados, and Round Rock, Texas, to begin building the archive from the personal papers of both Wynter and Lamming (including notes, correspondences, books, manuscripts and other personal items). In addition, the panelists, who are preparing the manuscript of Sylvia Wynter’s 1970s monograph “Black Metamorphosis” for publication, also discussed the process of how both the archival project and manuscript work were more alike than not, thereby challenging the assumed discreteness of editorial and archival work. This process raised myriad practical, ethical and theoretical questions. Among the questions raised were: Which documents are necessary to contextualize and complete our understanding of a thinker’s published and unpublished body of work? How can we use the archives of individuals to construct and conceive of a broader, Black radical archive?

Through the first-hand experience of archiving the life-work of these important thinkers, this talk also sought to question the constitutive limits of the very notion of *the archive*. “The Archive” is often conceived of as timeless and enduring, and as a repository for “traces” from the ‘past’ (or past-present). This presentation explored the possibility of developing a working notion of the archive not as a descriptive marker, but rather as a tool for framing, or mapping what might be possible to know about the history of a particular subject. In this discussion, we considered how BRAP might assist in a broader conceptual struggle, where the archive is engaged as a way of considering what might be possible, rather than as a way of fixing our retrospective glance.

BEDOUR ALAGRAA ’19 PH.D. AFRICANA STUDIES

EMERGING SCHOLARS LUNCH SERIES: A WONDERFULLY PRODUCTIVE EXPERIENCE

Participating in the *Emerging Scholars Lunch Series* was a wonderfully productive experience for me. The work we do as scholars requires us to find intellectually rich spaces where we can develop our ideas, test out theories, and be challenged to think in new ways. *The Emerging Scholars Lunch Series* served that purpose for me and more. I presented material concerning early modern botany and natural history in West Africa, which will be part of my book manuscript, *To Heal and to Harm: Medicine, Knowledge, and Power in the British Slave Trade*. The lunch discussion drew from diverse segments of the Brown community and beyond. In attendance were historians of science and medicine, scholars studying race and medicine, those with research interests in slavery and colonialism, and independent scholars based in Rhode Island and Connecticut. I left the discussion feeling intellectually nourished by the generosity and open exchange that ensued. I was challenged to think in new ways. I left inspired with a collection of new ideas to play with and explore in the weeks and months ahead. My book will be stronger because of this. The community at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice is an ideal blend of warmth and intellectual brilliance. Importantly, because the Center foregrounds the importance of studying slavery and its legacies in our present historical moment, attendees were attuned to the high stakes involved in producing excellent scholarship about such fraught issues. This was a gift.

CAROLYN ROBERTS

Assistant Professor, History of Science & History of Medicine; African American Studies, Yale University

Seminar Series

CSSJ ADVANCED KNOWLEDGE WORKING GROUP

During the 2018–2019 academic year, the Advanced Knowledge Working Group met every two weeks on Thursday afternoons to discuss readings and workshop dissertation/manuscript chapters, conference papers, journal articles, spoken word performances, and exhibit plans. The group consisted of: graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and visiting scholars who all worked within and alongside the CSSJ. It was created for the purpose of creating a structured space to build intellectual community at the CSSJ. Because it was composed of scholars at various stages in their academic career, this working group also served as a space for exchanging advice on various aspects of academia like the job market process and publishing. In many ways, it became a support network for the participants.

Over the course of the year, we invited two guest speakers. In September of 2018, Dr. Caroline Bressey from the University College London delivered a public talk titled “Migrations and Incarcerations: African Americans in Late Nineteenth Century Australia.” During this visit, she also held a workshop about method and archival practice with the seminar participants. These two events were followed by a dinner at the CSSJ. In April of 2019, New York City based interdisciplinary artist Kameelah Janan Rasheed came to campus to give a public talk and then lead a dinner/discussion about her artistic practice and archival methods around public facing work on blackness and surveillance. Inviting these two guest speakers was intentional. First, both speakers were doing work that overlapped with the interests of several members of the working group. This allowed participants to be in conversation with scholars with whom they could potentially collaborate in the future. Second, our decision to invite an artist as our second speaker represented our commitment to aligning with the Center’s mission to do public facing work and collaborate with practitioners.

FELICIA BEVEL ’19 PH.D. AMERICAN STUDIES

CSSJ Dissertation Fellow

CARCERAL STATE READING GROUP

During the 2018–2019 academic year the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice facilitated a year long reading group which focused on examining the Carceral State. The reading group is a collaboration between various sectors of the Providence community and the CSSJ. Meetings were held twice monthly to discuss issues of imprisonment, incarceration, captivity, criminalization and policing historically and in the present day.

The “Investigating American Captivity and Carcerality” research cluster, or “Carceral State Reading Group” was designed and facilitated by doctoral student Kristen Maye and undergraduate senior, Sophie Kupetz during the 2018–2019 academic year. The reading group was conceived of as a laboratory for the exercise of critical rigor, intellectual vulnerability, and creative collaboration among its members. Different from a university course or seminar, this group was built by its motley participants to foster an intimate space for honest conversation, deep learning and collaborative decision-making. Over the course of the academic year the group of about 10 Brown University undergraduates, graduate students, university workers, Providence area non-profit personnel, returning citizens, and local musicians met roughly twice a month, to read, think and talk over dinner. Given the diverse, and structurally uneven background of our membership, participants were pushed to think critically about how they show up in space, their motivations for being a part of this group, the origins of the questions they brought to this subject matter, and their capacity to contribute to each other as committed interlocutors. Through sustained close readings of texts exploring the violence of carceral practices (slavery, incarceration and surveillance) in the United States, we created a unique learning environment that engaged participants as whole beings, and modeled



MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS

critical thoughtwork as an active, collaborative life-practice. This group took up the written works of captive intellectuals like George Jackson, Dhoruba bin Wahad, Antonio Gramsci, Mumia Abu Jamal; the scholarship of academics like Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Jared Sexton, Joy James, Marc Lamont Hill; and the creative works of the Poetry + Neighborhood Arts Project Prison Collective and Emory Douglas. Finally, our year of work together culminated with a powerful open lecture and workshop in early April, for which the group invited Williams College Professor Joy James to serve as keynote speaker.

KRISTEN MAYE

PhD. Candidate in Africana Studies, Class of 2022

SOPHIE KUPETZ

Undergraduate in History, Class of 2019.5

Courses

THE AFRICAN ATLANTIC DIASPORA: RACE, MEMORY, IDENTITY AND BELONGING

During Wintersession 2019, Dr. Shontay Delalue, Vice President for Institutional Equity and Diversity and Maiyah Gamble-Rivers, Manager of Programs & Public Engagement at the CSSJ co-facilitated a course titled, *The African Atlantic Diaspora: Race, Memory, Identity and Belonging*. This course examined conceptual frameworks on notions of ‘Blackness’ across the African Atlantic Diaspora examining the ways in which blackness is viewed individually and collectively by groups. As a part of the Global Experiential Learning and Teaching (GELT) program, the course consisted of a travel component to Ghana in West Africa where students explored parts of the history that has shaped the present day diasporan community through a series of faculty led workshops, tours and meetings with local organizations.

During the course in Ghana, students visited both Elmina and Cape Coast Castle.



MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS

A JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY: A PERSONAL REFLECTION

As a South African student, my four years at Brown have been a journey of discovery. Questions about my blackness, where I belong and what defines my identity have re-emerged periodically in various forms. Taking the Wintersession course *The African Atlantic Diaspora: Race, Memory, Identity and Belonging*, allowed me to use theoretical tools to critically analyze and attempt to answer these questions.

Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie has often remarked that “[She] did not think of [herself] as black and [she] only became black when [she] came to America”. Some of my peers have expressed similar sentiments, but for me this was never the case. I have always known I was black, but identifying as such here in the US always felt like I was being an imposter. It felt like being able to identify as black was something to be earned—and I had not.



MAIYAH GAMBLE-RIVERS

The course itself exceeded my expectations in some areas, while also shattering a number of misconceptions and assumptions that I had. The in-class component allowed me to get to know my classmates, learn about their experiences and how they relate to the readings and concepts discussed in class. I was able to delve into questions about belonging, and the role that (mis-)remembering plays in how we see ourselves in the present.

I was able to see the value in reading texts and having conversations where the opinions expressed did not align with my own. Being in Ghana allowed me to realize the need to respect spaces in which I am a foreigner, especially the way in which I interact with people and their stories. As we attempt to build community, it is necessary to interrogate how privilege shifts, as well as whose stories are deemed valid and worthy to be told. For me, this is an important step to take as we move towards a place of collective healing.

NOTHANDO ADU-GYAMFI '19



MY IDENTITY WAS ONLY REPRESENTED BY MY NATIONALITY, GHANAIAN

Growing up in Ghana meant that for 15 years, my identity was only represented by my nationality, Ghanaian, and my ethnicity, Akuapem and Ewe. I did not identify as *African* or *American* until I moved to the United States. I did not identify as *Black* until college. Having experienced half of my formative years on the continent and the other in America meant that I had different perspectives on many issues which would cause a generational rift in my family at times, and which led to my quest for more knowledge on identity-formation.

Once in college, I began to question the varying stories I heard in each place, and the narratives I was told about myself and the “others.” In my application to the ETHN1750Q wintersession course, I wrote about my experiences growing up in two places divided by the infamous Atlantic and currently feeling like I never fully belong in either. The course gave me an optimal channel to explore these questions, and visiting Ghana was the highlight. I gained immeasurable insights from the people we interacted with and the places we visited.

In my final research paper for the class, I wrote about Pan-Africanism. I posed a simple question: How does one unite people on the African continent and those in the Diaspora if these groups do not feel connected as sharing an identity? I discovered that my disconnected identities were a result of the dichotomy in social memories between the Atlantic. Yet I found hope in one of the works we read, by Jemima Pierre, who ends her exploration of racial consciousness in Ghana by saying that the interconnectedness of trade, travel, and trends between the two groups will continue to bridge the gap in the perceived separate identities through conversation and reshaping historical narratives.

YVONNE DIABENE '19

RACE, SEXUALITY, AND MENTAL DISABILITY HISTORY

The CSSJ was the home for two seminar courses taught by the CSSJ’s Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow Nic John Ramos. In Fall, the CSSJ’s seminar room hosted twenty-two students in Professor Ramos’ senior seminar titled *Race, Sexuality, and Mental Disability History* (Africana Studies 1060z) which traces the rise of psychiatric racism in the nineteenth century as well as the campaigns to depathologize race and homosexuality in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In Spring, the CSSJ also hosted thirteen students enrolled in Professor Ramos’ *African American Health Activism from Colonialism to AIDS* course (Africana Studies 0550) which explores the history of medicine from the perspective of the enslaved and formerly enslaved.

“I think holding class in CSSJ’s seminar room created another layer of urgency and importance to the discussions and readings my students were having with each other,” said Dr. Ramos. “The entire building is dedicated to having often difficult and uncomfortable conversations about history and the present.” According to Mamaswatsi Kopeka ’22, *“I felt that being in a space that is dedicated to the commemoration of enslaved people, seeing the art in the classroom walls and being able to meet PhD fellows at the CSSJ was as crucial to my learning as was engaging with texts in the course. Prior to the course, I had only been in the building once and I did not know that the center was accessible to all students. So it was a worthwhile learning experience and environment.”*

“I think holding class in the CSSJ helped create an environment that met multiple modes of learning: sometimes the exhibits of the CSSJ aligned very directly with the portion of the syllabus that we were currently working through.” Andy Pham ’19

“I think holding the class in the CSSJ enhanced my thinking about the course material because it made me think about how much history matters in terms of thinking about the future. The course material heavily focused on the treatment of slaves in terms of health, and we still see the mistreatment of black people within the healthcare system currently. This in a way influenced my team’s thinking about

our podcast because the past has such a huge impact on the way the healthcare system is currently structured. I think the work that the CSSJ does is very important in terms of thinking about the future.” Adrianna Maxwell ’22

Although the CSSJ’s seminar room is by no means large, Yasmin Toney ’19 believed the intimacy of the space fostered better engagement amongst students. “The CSSJ is generally a bright building, from the yellow exterior to the art gallery in the front room, to the small kitchen area with teas and on lucky days—food!” said Toney. Although the seminar room “was small-ish but not cramped,” Toney found the seminar room’s community table “made it easier for students to engage in conversation” because students could see the Professor, the projector, and more importantly, everyone’s faces as they spoke during class.

Both courses reflect the center’s ongoing work with the Race, Medicine and Social Justice Working Group, a group convened by Professor Lundy Braun to explore the intersections of race, medicine, health, and social justice.

NIC RAMOS

Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow, 2017–2019



WORKING OUT LOUD: AN AUDIO STORYTELLING WORKSHOP

Created by Johanna Obenda and Babette Thomas, *Working Out Loud* is an audio storytelling workshop that helps Brown students acquire the skills they need to produce high quality, ethical audio stories. This workshop challenged its fellows to create audio stories that address themes central to the mission of CSSJ, including the history and legacies of racial slavery. Over the course of a month, this workshop sought to address the many barriers that prohibit people from using podcasts as a medium for activism and storytelling, allowing participants to use their own voice to share a message and challenge the status-quo of traditional radio.

The workshop began with a day-long intensive training on audio storytelling—created in collaboration with Laura Garbes, a teaching assistant for Prof. Nic Ramos’ class titled, *African American Health Activism from Emancipation to AIDS*. The training led the *Working Out Loud* fellows, as well as students from Prof. Ramos’ class, through the technical aspects of audio storytelling, such as recording, interviewing and editing, as well as questions of ethics, power, narrative building and audience. During the workshop, each *Working Out Loud* fellow was paired with a facilitator or expert. Alongside the guidance of their facilitators, these fellows worked for a month to collect interviews, transcribe tape, record narration and to eventually produce their very own audio stories.

At the culminating listening party for the workshop, we listened to four audio stories from four brilliant fellows: Eve Grassfield with a piece on utopian visions of the future, Jo-Ann Huyn with a piece on the formation of an Asian-American punk-rock band, David Wiegner with a piece about the presence of Nigerian Bronze sculptures at the RISD Museum, and finally Kasturi Pananjady produced a piece about English language learners in Providence. We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to put on this workshop, which would not have been possible without the generous support of the CSSJ!

BABETTE THOMAS

Class of 2020

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT, COMMUNITY VOICES



Youth Programming

CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT INITIATIVE (CRMI)

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. This seven-day trip enables 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.

AN OPPORTUNITY I WAS VERY FORTUNATE TO HAVE

This week long trip is something that only a handful of people will ever get to experience and it is an opportunity that I was very fortunate to have. Initially I thought I was prepared for this experience and the truth is, I wasn't...well, emotionally I wasn't. I thought I was going to have this "in the bag" and would understand everything more clearly because I was familiar with the history after going through the six weeks of workshops. In the beginning I was still sort of in denial. The things I saw were horrendous, but they weren't fully resonating with me and I was confused. I was confused as to why I wasn't feeling the emotions that my peers were. I couldn't come to terms with the history, all the while the proof was right in my face.

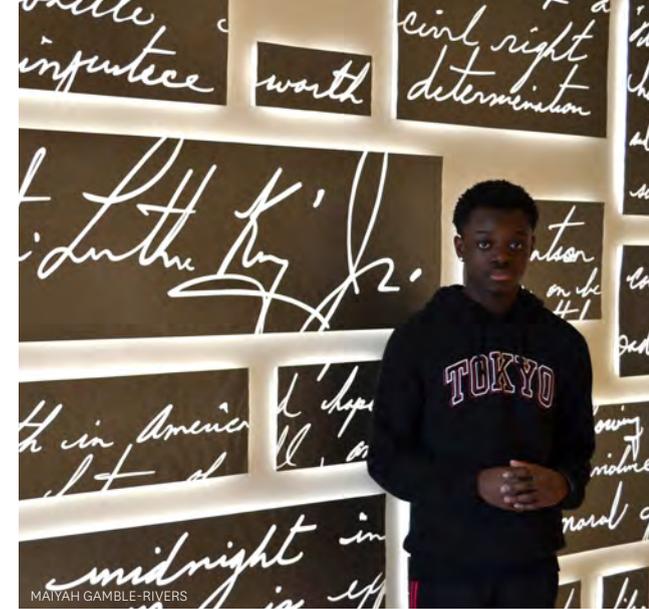


Places like the Ebenezer Church where Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. co-pastored or the real Woolworth counter were amazing and impactful. They had many artifacts, tons of information, and pictures that told stories that helped reshape my view of the Civil Rights Movement. Going to new museums each day and seeing all the pain and anguish displayed inside them started to take an emotional toll on me and my perspective began to shift. Meeting Ambassador Andrew Young in Atlanta, Georgia was a pivotal moment for me. Seeing him in many photos and learning about him in the workshops was what made this history real. I was seeing someone from the Civil Rights Movement alive and breathing. After our conversation with Ambassador Young all the museums and other activists we met like Cleopatra Goree, Catherine Burks Brooks, and Roscoe Jones and sites such as The Legacy Museum, The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, really impacted me.

Crossing over the Edmund Pettus Bridge was life changing. While clapping and singing I felt like I was actually there that Bloody Sunday in 1965 and feared that we were going to be met with violence by officers like those who marched that day. At that moment it all felt too real, but I took those feelings and used them to help aid my perspective on the rest of the trip. The program as a whole was something that I would do again. It was a great eye-opening experience and has changed the way I see things in every way.

DELIANA LORA

Hope High School, Class of 2019



“The Civil Rights trip opened my eyes to the world, way more than school ever has. Everything that we talked about in our workshops fueled the fire to learn even more about Civil Rights and this trip provided the opportunity. I initially thought that I was ready to go on this trip, but I was wrong. There was so much more for me to learn and experience, from meeting activists to being able to tell others my story. This trip had helped me realize that I’m a part of something bigger in this world. The biggest moment for me was crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge and finally opening up about things that have been hard for me to say. It took me awhile to get to that point, but I learned that I have support from people all over. Meeting the other kids on this trip also made me realize that the movement lives on through us, everyone there was so passionate about what they were learning and had their own perspectives on things. I only spent a week with the students from Baltimore, but throughout the week I developed a deep connection with them and still talk to many of them to this day.”

ERROL TAYLOR

Hope High School, Class of 2019

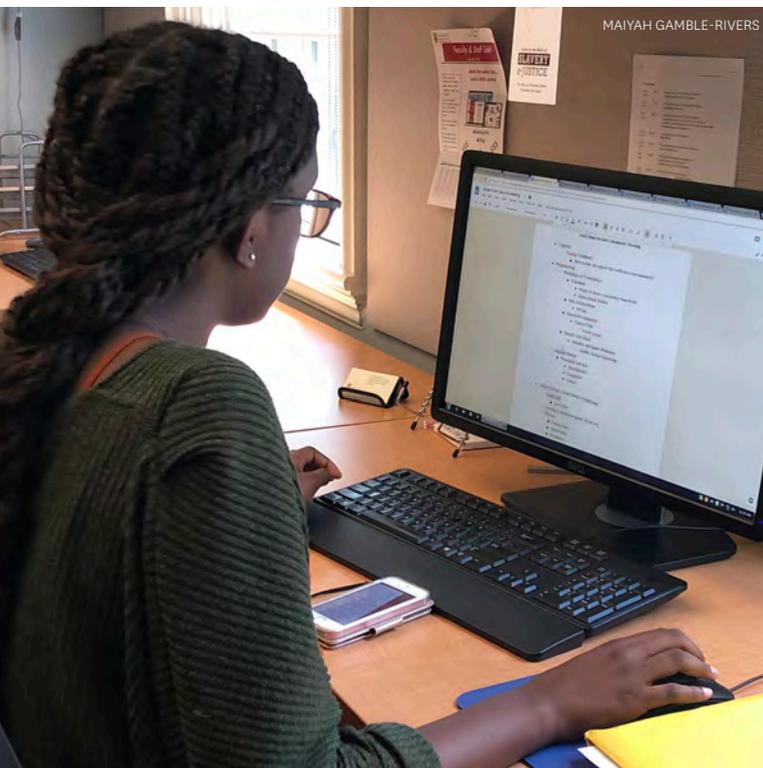
ANNUAL REPORT

HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER INTERNSHIPS

The CSSJ participates in the Sophia-Royce Program, a college readiness and research exposure collaboration between Sophia Academy, an all girls independent middle school in Providence serving students from low-income homes, and Brown's Royce Fellowship. Each summer the CSSJ provides internship opportunities for high school students. Research projects in the past have included exploring Providence's connection to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade to analyze the contemporary implications of controversial monuments dedicated to this history. Additionally, the *Slavery & Legacy* street tour created by a former intern examines the history behind local street names and campus locations. This tour is now an important part of graduate student orientation and helps students think critically about the Brown University landscape and its history.

YOUTH ACTIVIST OF COLOR CONFERENCE PROJECT: EMPOWERING YOUTH OF COLOR

During the summer of 2018, I had the opportunity to intern with the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, helping to envision an international Youth Activists of Color conference. Over the summer, I have worked on numerous projects relating to the planning of this conference. Part of my time was spent researching. My research centered around finding grassroots organizers, activists, and non-profits able to be potential conference partners. I was able to discover how large an influence activism has internationally, thus affirming the importance of having a conference. I found activists, who at my age, led non-profits and started movements. One activist that stood out to me was Elyse Fox, who after creating a documentary on her depression, started the Sad Girls Club, an online community meant as a safe space for women of color with mental health issues. This was quite inspiring to see how anyone with the tenacity can be leaders in their communities.



Aside from research, part of my internship required that I connect with the Providence community to establish what the conference should look like. During the community meetings, I was able to hear the voices of the community, which is crucial for a local conference. We extended the invitation to various Providence nonprofits, such as Black Studies, Providence Student Union, and PrYSM. We discussed “collective anger and collective hope”: using anger to promote positive change, as well as the pertinence of self-love and self-care being a crucial start to activism. We also stressed the importance of community grassroots outreach, ensuring the conference is by the community.

From my time at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice, I have gained so much. Compared to previous occupations, I was given much more independence at the CSSJ, therefore, I was responsible for completing my work in a timely manner. With this independence, I was able to uncover more about my community. I was able to discover local social justice groups that were unknown to me prior to being at the Center. This research has not only peaked my curiosity, but it has also interested me in community involvement.

One misconception about activism is that only a select few are able to craft change in their communities, but my time at the CSSJ has proven that anyone with the will and drive to fight for social justice can positively contribute to a movement. In the future, I plan to continue this work. With the conference far from now, I know that there will be more work necessary to fully develop this conference in the future. With the insight I have gained from being at the Center, I feel a sense of purpose towards being involved in my community. From working with the Center, I feel as though I was able to contribute to the Providence community.

JUNIA GENEVIEVE JANVIER

Wheeler School, Class of 2019

SLAVERY & LEGACY WALKING TOUR

The Center’s *Slavery & Legacies* Walking Tour invites guests to learn about the history and legacy of slavery as it pertains to Brown University and the state of Rhode Island. Major stops on this hour-long walking tour includes the Ruth J. Simmons Quadrangle, University Hall, the Slavery Memorial and the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice. Over the last year, we have received many requests for this tour from groups on and off campus. During 2018–2019 graduate fellow Chandra Dickey led tours for youth from local schools, as well as groups visiting campus (including from units on campus such as Professor Brian Meeks, chair of the Department of Africana Studies for a group of scholars and activists that came as part of the *50 Years Since 68: The Global and the Local conference*). Six tours were led in the fall semester for the RISD Social Equity Inclusion group comprised of faculty and staff interested in the history of College Hill. Tours were also led for all campus tour guides for prospective students. The goal was to ensure that tour guides were knowledgeable about the campus’ history, connection to slavery and the slave trade as well as the work of the Center. For the first time this year, CSSJ organized tours led by staff, graduate students, and postdoctoral fellows during Brown’s Family and Reunion/Commencement weekends. We had approximately 100 visitors at Family weekend and 200 at Commencement. Walk participants included community members, parents, grandparents, alumni and students. They were eager to understand more about this history and share their own experiences around the landscapes and legacies of slavery in their communities.



In 2016, the Graduate School collaborated with the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice to incorporate a walking tour for new student orientation. The tour is in response to students’ request to enhance orientation by providing incoming students information about Brown’s history with the American slave trade. The tour touches on Brown’s actions in the past decade following reflection on the milieu in which this and other American institutions were established and sustained.

For the past three years, the tour has become an integral component of the Graduate School’s general orientation. Over 400 graduate students have participated in the tour and the feedback has been positive. The tour serves as an introduction to Brown’s commitment to acknowledging the history of racial inequality and economic injustice in the United States. The US has done very little to acknowledge the legacy of slavery. As a result, people of color are disproportionately marginalized and disadvantaged, and more must be done to advance our collective knowledge to change these inequalities.

MARLINA DUNCAN

*Assistant Vice President of Academic Diversity,
Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity
Associate Dean of Diversity Initiatives, Graduate Schools*

**THE SLAVERY & LEGACY WALKING TOUR
BEYOND BROWN UNIVERSITY
RISD/BROWN: A NEW PARTNERSHIP**

In November 2018, RISD's Diversity Dialogue Group recently coordinated three *Slavery & Legacy* Walking Tours, led by Brown University Center for Study of Slavery & Justice's Manager of Programs and Public Engagement Maiyah Gamble-Rivers; Assistant Director Shana Weinberg; and Graduate Fellow Chandra Dickey. Participants included 18 members of the staff as well as 18 members of the faculty, librarians and curators.

During the hour-long tour, participants visited sites on the Brown campus and learned about how 18th century slavery permeated every aspect of social and economic life in Rhode Island. Major stops included the Ruth J. Simmons Quadrangle, University Hall, the Slavery Memorial and the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice. The tour also included a viewing of Jessica Hill's exhibition *Herstory*. Additionally, participants also learned about the history and legacy of slavery as it pertains to Brown University and the state of Rhode Island.

Feedback is exemplified by the following:

Ned Draper, Director Academic Budget & Resources responded *"I think RISD's place in Brown's sphere of influence is important to understand. Brown predates RISD by 113 years, much happened in that time, and much has happened since 1877. Milestones for both help with context of what we can expect for change in the current environment."*

"I was amazed by how much I learned and saw in only one hour. I walk by those buildings and the memorial every weekday, and never knew the history or significance. I also enjoyed viewing the exhibition. The prints on cloth were beautiful, and to view all the detail in the prints makes one stop and think," shared Senior Library Assistant Stephen McCaughey.

In December 2018, eleven participants, including staff, faculty, librarians and curators at RISD, attended a tour of the *Unfinished Business* exhibition. All seemed to perceive this to be an educational experience that expanded their knowledge and understanding of "The Long Civil Rights Movement."

LAURIE CHRONLEY

*Senior Division Administrative Coordinator
Fine Arts Division
Rhode Island School of Design*



FELLOWS &
GRADUATING
SENIORS



Our Seniors

As a first year student, I was amazed to see a network of engagement with the history and legacy of slavery both at and beyond the school I just arrived to. Participating in some of the Center's programs my first year, it immediately felt like an academic and intellectual home. For the next three years, I worked with various programs at the CSSJ, from conferences to lunch talks and internal office work to gallery installment. In each task and project I had, everyone I worked with had such distinct perspectives, work, and points of entry into this world of study. But what unites everyone at the Center beyond a shared interest in justice and critical history is a genuine warmth and openness as well as the belief that what has been learned and uncovered since the formation of the Steering Committee can and should be shared with anyone. I am so grateful for the time I had at the CSSJ and know the stories I have heard and lessons I have learned will live and grow in my own life for years to come.

THORALF ISLAND '19

Thoralf worked with the CSSJ from Sophomore to Senior year

My experience at the CSSJ over the past three years has taught me that publicly engaged, intentional, responsible scholarship is not only possible, but necessary. I am inspired by the CSSJ's commitment to reaching beyond the University by forming partnerships with people throughout Providence, recognizing that expertise does not only lie with those who have advanced degrees, supporting student activism, and hosting engaging and relevant events that are free and open to the public. The CSSJ's work to critically interrogate the University's past, examine what its history means for its present, and act upon those obligations, has helped remind me that study and activism can be complementary. In my role as a co-creator and co-facilitator of the CSSJ's Carceral State Reading group during the past year, I have put my experience at CSSJ into practice. I have had the privilege to work with folks from around Providence to build a space rooted in community, intellectual rigor, and the genuine desire to learn collectively. I feel grateful to have been a part of the CSSJ during my time at Brown. Thank you to Shana, Maiyah, Catherine, Professor Bogues and everyone else at the CSSJ for supporting my intellectual and personal growth, creating opportunities for me to work on meaningful projects, inspiring my future work, and feeding me delicious food on countless occasions!

SOPHIE KUPETZ

Class of 2019.5

Sophie worked with the CSSJ from Sophomore to Senior year

I have absolutely loved my time working here. At the start of my junior year, I was looking for a campus job but wanted to feel like I was doing work that had a positive social impact on the Brown community. The CSSJ turned out to be a perfect match for me. The Center's mission is so important to me personally, but also to the University at large. I have been lucky enough to be directly involved in the CSSJ's many endeavors, from exhibitions to conferences to lunch talks, and have gotten to learn from them as well. More than that, I have managed to make wonderful relationships with the staff here. Reflecting on these past two years, I am so grateful to have had this as part of my college experience. It's been a lovely environment to work in and one I wish I had started sooner. I will definitely be keeping in touch and plan to bring the mission of the CSSJ with me as I continue with life after Brown.

JASMINE THOMAS '19

Jasmine worked with the CSSJ from Junior to Senior year

Reflections from our Fellows

RUTH J. SIMMONS POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW 2018–2019

As the 2018–2019 Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow with the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice, I had the opportunity to develop my book manuscript *African Diaspora Collective Action: Rituals, Runaways, and the Haitian Revolution*, and to share my ideas with others in and outside of the Brown community. I was honored to be asked to participate in the “Slavery’s Hinterlands: Capitalism and Bondage in Rhode Island and across the Atlantic World” symposium, which was aired as an episode on The Dig podcast. Though I did not teach a course, a guest lecture for an Africana Studies class resulted in being asked to give a brief lecture to the mock United Nations debates students to discuss the Haitian Revolution, race, and modernity. Lastly, I organized a manuscript review workshop and invited two senior scholars to provide feedback on my book.

Generally, what I’ve aimed to do with *Rituals, Runaways, and the Haitian Revolution* is to bridge my two disciplines (Africana Studies and Sociology) and speak to several fields of study: African diaspora studies, Atlantic world and Haitian history,

Historical sociology, and social movements and revolutions. My goal in broadest terms was to tell a story from an African Diaspora perspective about how collective consciousness is shaped by social conditions and reinforced by interactions, then influences collective action. But more specifically I’m arguing that the webs of networks between maroons, enslaved people, and some free people of color helped build a sense of racial solidarity that helped make the Haitian Revolution successful.

I was honored to have distinguished leaders in the respective fields of African Diaspora Studies and the sociology of Social Movements to review my work: Michael Gomez, who is Silver Professor of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University and the director of the Center for the Study of Africa and the African Diaspora; and Rory McVeigh, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for the Study of Social Movements at the University of Notre Dame. They came to Brown after having read a first draft of the manuscript to share their comments and suggestions for improving the work, which will be invaluable as I seek outlets for publication and prepare for the next phase of my career.

CRYSTAL EDDINS

2018–2019 Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow

PUBLIC HISTORY OF SLAVERY GRADUATE FELLOW

As a Graduate Fellow for the Study of the Public History of Slavery, I have been able to immerse myself in the many histories of slavery and its contemporary legacies. Throughout the two years of this fellowship, I have engaged with the CSSJ and its research by wearing many different hats—student, researcher, archivist, educator, curator. When I first began at the center, I was able to join a collaboration between the CSSJ and Firelight Films. As an interdisciplinary team of scholars, we worked as researchers, aiding Firelight in their quest to create a multi-part documentary on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. This has been a particularly wonderful project to work on, combining my background and interest in documentary film and Atlantic history. This important, collaborative project was just the beginning of many initiatives and projects I would be privy to working on as a graduate fellow.

In the second year of my fellowship, I was able to further ground myself in the CSSJ’s home of Rhode Island through a series of public facing projects. With Babette Thomas, in partnership with Nic Ramos and Laura Garbes and student group *Now Here This*, I conceptualized and realized an intensive, ethically-based audio storytelling workshop called *Working Out Loud*. This month-long workshop, housed through the CSSJ, provided a group of undergraduate students the tools to produce their own short audio stories that engaged with the center’s work and research interests. I also undertook my own research this year, curating an exhibit titled *Memory Dishes: Women and African-Diasporic Cooking*.

Through *Memory Dishes*, I was able to build relationships with six local families of African descent and explore a thoughtful, responsible way to share their cooking stories



and oral histories with the public in the CSSJ gallery space. It was a wonderful opportunity to engage in research with the local community and an equally exciting opportunity to engage with scholars of African diasporic and African American foodways. In conjunction with the exhibition opening, we welcomed scholars and writers Dr. Jessica B. Harris and Toni Tipton-Martin to share their work at a Brown University Commencement Forum. The exhibit and commencement forums’ blend of public engagement and scholarship was a wonderful way to wrap up my time as a graduate fellow. It is remarkable to now take a step back and reflect on the work of the CSSJ and this fellowship.

JOHANNA OBENDA '19 A.M.

CSSJ Graduate Fellow for the Public History of Slavery

**INCOMING RUTH J. SIMMONS
POSTDOCTORAL FELLOW, 2019–2020**

Roselyne Gérard is the Ruth J. Simmons Postdoctoral Fellow in Slavery and Justice at the CSSJ. She received two Masters (in American Studies and in French Literature & Pedagogy) from the University of Lille 3 (France), before completing a PhD in French at Emory University.

Prior to joining the Center, she was an Andrew Mellon Fellow (2017–2018) at Morehouse College and a Visiting Assistant Professor of French (2018–2019) at Emory University.

Rose Gérard's latest research focuses on the expression of spiritual beliefs in Caribbean and American literature. Her academic interests encompass Postcolonial studies, Caribbean studies (French, Spanish and English speaking), African American culture and literature, Psychoanalysis and Visual Arts.



DISSERTATION FELLOW, 2019–2020

Heather Sanford is a PhD candidate in History at Brown. Her dissertation focuses on the relationship between food and experiences of enslavement in Barbados from colonization in 1627 to full emancipation in 1838. She examines the racist food system constructed by slaveholders in Barbados to preserve white hegemony, which slaveholders across the British Caribbean later adopted. Informed by scholarship from Africana studies, food studies, archaeology, and anthropology, she attempts to push the limits of the historical archive to show how generations of enslaved or formerly enslaved black Bajans responded by using food and food-related practices to create sources of communal, spiritual, and sociopolitical nourishment.



**INCOMING PUBLIC HISTORY OF SLAVERY
MASTERS FELLOW**

My name is Náajeyisklaa, Mother of Cape Spencer, my English name is Breylan Martin. I am of the Yéilor Raven moiety in the T'akdeintaan clan or Tern clan. I come from the Xáakw Hít or Sockeye house originating from Hoonah, the people from the direction of the North Wind, and Tenakee Springs, the people of Coppery Shield Bay. I am Wooshkeetaanyádi, daughter of the Shark clan and Kaagwaantaan dachxán, granddaughter of the Wolf clan. My Tlingit identity links me to my ancestors and through honoring my heritage, I honor them. I believe it is my duty to preserve and protect our collective history. This is why I am furthering my education in the Public Humanities program at Brown.

Because I believe cultural knowledge has the potential to be transformative, I am dedicated to responsibly representing Native American and all minority cultures in museums to better transmit accurate histories to the general public.

Understanding and engaging with difference is vital to creating an interconnected and compassionate world. For this reason, I am excited to work at the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice. Here, I hope to further examine how the negative effects of slavery are still seen today through racial discrimination in the justice, healthcare and education systems. This information can break down barriers built by ignorance and motivate change where our society chooses to embrace and learn from diversity. Gunalchéesh, thank you.



SLAVERY'S NEW MATERIALISM: A FACULTY & GRADUATE SEMINAR

In the Fall 2019 semester, CSSJ will launch its inaugural graduate/faculty seminar, bringing together researchers from across disciplines and career stages to consider questions of slavery and its legacies. Professor Seth Rockman of the History Department will lead the seminar on the topic of "Slavery's New Materialism." While graduate students will enroll in the course for credit, several faculty members will also join the seminar in order to advance their own scholarly research. Professor Rebecca Schneider (TAPS) and Professor Itohan Osayimwese (HIAA) were chosen in a competitive process, and thanks to the support of the Center, the Dean of the Faculty's office, and their respective departments, they will have the unusual opportunity of taking a class in lieu of teaching one.

"Slavery's New Materialisms" seeks to explore an emerging dynamic in Slavery Studies: a move away from an older materialist history that had foregrounded modes of production, class struggle, and capitalist transformation; and toward a new(er) materialism organized around human/non-human entanglements and drawing on recent theoretical work on things, networks, and assemblages.

The last thirty years have witnessed concurrent and overlapping conversations about materiality across Philosophy, Archaeology, Science and Technology Studies, Ecology, Political Science, Critical Theory, Literary and Performance Studies, and other disciplines in the Social Sciences and Humanities. This polyvocal conversation gathered under the umbrella of a New Materialism seeks to embed the human past in a broader matrix or relationships to the environment, animals, and what once would have been called "inanimate objects." Scholars are only beginning to weigh the implications of this move for the study of Atlantic Slavery.

This seminar will consider the potential benefits and costs of this scholarly turn. Will greater attention to non-human agency deepen the analytical frames of the existing historiography?

Or, will the quest to subdivide agency and to imbue "things" will agential power pose overwhelming political and ethical challenges to a field where black historical actors have only recently found a place at the center of the narrative and in which "agency" remains a crucial (if always problematic) watchword? To put the question most provocatively, what are the consequences of pursuing a scholarly agenda of #allthingsmatter in the era of #blacklivesmatter? Some critics have suggested the inability of New Materialist scholarship to account for the kinds of power inherent in the relationships of dominance to be found in the hold of a slave ship or on the auction block of the slave market. Other critics contend that Indigenous and diasporic African epistemologies have always been "new materialist" to the extent they never possessed the Western tradition's prima facie commitment to a subject/object dichotomy. If so, how useful are the interventions of the New Materialism conversation for recovering the subjectivities of the enslaved?

Recent historical scholarship in Slavery Studies is grappling with these issues—sometimes with explicit theorization and oftentimes without—as it explores landscape, space, and environment; making, healing, and working; market relations and processes of commodification; and the political struggles of the plantation. Seminar readings seek to expose participants to the enduring questions of slavery's "old materialisms," derived from Marxist social history, world-system analysis, and the history of (racial) capitalism, while at the same engaging slavery's "new materialisms" informed by STS, Environmental Studies, Symmetrical Archaeology, and other emerging fields. By engaging the old and the new materialisms, seminar participants will develop a critical vocabulary for analyzing the structures of Atlantic slavery and the subjectivities of African and African-descended peoples in diaspora. Dissertating, postdoctoral, and faculty participants will incorporate the seminar's insights into their own research with the goal of workshopping their findings at the end of the semester.

SETH ROCKMAN

Associate Professor of History

FRIENDS OF CSSJ



Friends of CSSJ

This past year the Friends of CSSJ undertook important steps to increase the visibility of the Center and raise funds to support its work. We co-sponsored several events with the Brown Club of Washington, DC and helped host receptions at the CSSJ during Black alumni weekend and Brown commencement weekend. We engaged in productive conversations with Brown's Offices of Alumni Relations and Pembroke Center board members regarding ways to grow and strengthen membership in the Friends.

A significant step forward involved expansion of the Friends Steering Committee. Sean Siperstein '05, an attorney and former president of the Brown Club of Washington, DC, replaced Tom Bale '63 Clinical Social Worker and a founder of the Friends as co-chair along with Ann Coles '63, Senior Fellow, uAspire. Three new members with significant experience in public humanities and community engagement joined our steering committee—Erin Arcand '05 legislative aide, US Sen. Jack Reed (D-RI), Emily Dietsch '06 Academic Consultant in public history and the arts and Communications Chair of the Brown Club of DC, and Josette Souza '14, Marketing and Communications Manager, American Alliance of Museums. Other Steering Committee members include Russell Malbrough '98, Director of Alumni Relations, Suffolk County Community College and President of Brown's Inman Page Black Alumni Council, Danielle LeBlanc, '99 Co-op Developer, Green Workers Cooperative, Alissa Mayers '03, Community Engagement Manager, NYC Kids RISE, and Earl Carlile '70, U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

In the coming year, Friends of CSSJ will deepen our successful partnerships with the Center's staff, the Office of Advancement, and Brown Clubs and affinity groups around the country. As the Brown community marks 50 years of the Open Curriculum and looks toward its future, we'll be joining in to spotlight how the Center's interdisciplinary, public-facing work embodies that promise. We're particularly looking forward to educating alumni about the Center's convening role—alongside the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture—in the Global Curatorial Project, working on a landmark international exhibition about the legacies of the transatlantic slave trade.

Alumni events spotlighting the Center are in the works for Boston and Atlanta, and the West Coast. We will also continue supporting the successful *Artful Career* series in Washington, DC, and look to export that model to other communities.

As the Center moves into the next decade, Friends of CSSJ will continue to mobilize the awareness and financial support among Brown alumni that will empower its faculty, staff and students. We'll continue to work on bi-annual solicitations to the alumni community at large, while also supporting other avenues of outreach.

Studying the foundational role of slavery in the development of the modern world, and exposing more widely how that legacy continues to shape contemporary injustices, has never been more essential to understanding our present. Join us today!

ANN COLES '63 AND SEAN SIPERSTEIN '05

Co-Chairs, CSSJ Friends

IN APPRECIATION: TOM BALE '63, FRIENDS CO-FOUNDER

On May 25, 2019 the CSSJ honored Tom Bale '63. Tom co-founded the Center's Friends group in 2014 and served as its co-chair until 2018. During his time at Brown, he was active in the Civil Rights Movement and served as president of Brown's chapter of the NAACP. After Brown, he spent his career as a social worker outside of Philadelphia. On the occasion of his 50th reunion in 2013, Tom began discussions with CSSJ about how the newly formed Center could connect with alumni. He worked tirelessly to create the CSSJ Friends and build a strong working group of committed alumni across class years and regions. Tom believes strongly in the Center's mission of historical understanding and social justice work and is always thinking creatively about how to promote the Center. The CSSJ staff and Friends would like to express their sincere appreciation to Tom for his vision and leadership in support of the Center.



“Tom came to the 50th reunion of the Class of 1963. He was excited to learn about the newly established Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice and sought out Tony Bogues to learn more and how he and other Brown alumni could support it.

Subsequently, after reading what I wrote about racism at Pembroke College in the Class of '63 50th reunion yearbook, he emailed me to introduce himself; why hadn't we ever met as undergraduates? Why hadn't I been a member of the campus NAACP of which he was president? He told me about CSSJ, of which I was unaware. He felt strongly that CSSJ needed alumni support to thrive and grow. He wanted to establish a Friends of the CSSJ and wanted me to join him as co-founder. He was so adamant, plus the CSSJ was such a good fit with my interests and concerns, I immediately agreed to do so.

Tom wanted the Friends to achieve amazing things in three years to help CSSJ fulfill its mission. For instance to commission an opera about some aspect of the history of slavery that Brown students would perform. “Why can't we do this right away?” he said about the opera and other equally creative ideas he generated. “The need is urgent and CSSJ is the perfect place to make this happen.”

Tom, I greatly respect your commitment to CSSJ and your vision for the important role it plays at Brown and in the larger community. You have inspired us to work hard in the coming years to fulfill your vision for the Friends in the best possible way.”

—Ann Coles

SPOTLIGHT: A NEW FRIEND OF THE CENTER, EMILY DIETSCH

As an undergraduate at Brown, I had a powerful experience with then-president Ruth Simmons's initiative to study, and talk about, the university's historical attachments to slavery. To me, it was a vibrant lesson in how to have important but difficult conversations about our country's history—which aligned with Brown's intellectual philosophy writ large. In essence, my takeaway was this: Don't be afraid of facts, don't hesitate to be bold, but be compassionate and careful as well. All three things can co-exist.

I joined the Friends of CSSJ in 2019 as a joyful continuation of my experience with the study, now that it has evolved into a robust Center that examines the legacy of slavery locally and globally. As someone who works in communications, and connects people with ideas in my post-Brown life, I was drawn to CSSJ's current impetus to broadcast the work that they're doing to the public. It's a story worth sharing, and amplifying—and I'm deeply gratified to be a part of that growth.

As a Friend, I've participated in monthly calls to develop our outreach strategy, and beyond that, I've worked to refine messaging through drafting sessions. Through it all, I've benefited from the wonderful, inter-generational team of the Steering Committee, all of whom bring unique insights and talents to the table. As Communications Chair of the Brown Club of DC, I also co-created the Artful Career Series in Washington, with the Center's strong support. It's an ongoing series that gathers Brown alums and allies, celebrates diversity, and champions work that impacts social justice. It's been an opportunity to build upon CSSJ's partnership with the National Museum of African American History and Culture, too, by engaging staff as speakers and guests. All part and parcel of the Center's core mission to make a difference.

EMILY DIETSCH '06

CSSJ Friends Steering Committee



MEET DR. ALYSSIA COATES—ADVANCEMENT

Alyssia Coates is the Director of Development for Academic Initiatives—Diversity and Inclusion.

Dr. Coates formerly served at the University of Notre Dame as Regional Director of Development for University Relations, First Year of Studies (FYS) Faculty, Core Conditioning and Strengthening Instructor for the Office of Recreational Sports, Director of Outreach and Engagement Recruitment, Director of the Office of Pre-College Programs, Director of the Trio Upward Bound and Educational Talent Search (ETS) Programs, and Recruiter for GEM, National Consortium for Minorities in Engineering and Science.

Dr. Coates started the Office of Admissions Outreach and Engagement Recruitment with the Enrollment Division and developed a national early outreach model and established a Notre Dame presence across the United States to identify and recruit 7th–9th grades students and cultivate a pipeline of highly talented students. Dr. Coates' administrative experience includes success in fundraising, strategic planning, staff development, grant management, organizational leadership, event planning, and stewardship.

Alyssia is happily married to Jua Coates and they have two amazing children, Ashley and Ian.



I recently joined the Advancement Division in April and I am excited to be the liaison for the Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice to connect and share with donors the importance of the Center's work. Every day members of our society, children, students, parents, educators, businessmen, and our leaders are faced with challenges around social justice issues that stem from slavery's historical formation of the Americas and the modern world. Our society is looking for answers and ways to unite, find common ground, and engage in civil discourse. Brown University's Center for the Study of Slavery and Justice has created a space to grapple with issues of social justice and racial equality. It is my privilege to share with our alumni, donors, and friends of Brown the incredible opportunity our undergraduate and graduate students have to study with renowned faculty and collaborate on research opportunities that will shape our future conversations and decisions and ultimately change the world as we know it.

Friends of CSSJ

Friends of the Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice (CSSJ) provide vital funding for the Center's public humanities initiatives that breathe life into the neglected history of enslaved people and their descendants. Support from Friends gives Brown undergraduate and graduate students the opportunity to create K-12 field trips, podcasting workshops, reading groups on the prison system, and gallery exhibitions, amongst other endeavors.

CSSJ FRIENDS RECEIVE:

- CSSJ special reports and exhibition publications
- Access to special events during Brown's Family Weekend and Commencement
- Invitations to Brown Alumni Club events spotlighting the Center's scholarship
- Opportunities to meet distinguished scholars, artists, and public historians visiting the Center

Become a Friend of the CSSJ today and help create a unique platform for students' voices by making a gift of \$50, \$100, \$250 or a contribution of any size that fits your budget.

Become a Friend of the Center

How To Give

SECURE ONLINE GIVING

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

The Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice would like to sincerely thank its major donors for their support, 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.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO
DR. SPENCER CREW '71, CSSJ EXTERNAL
ADVISORY BOARD MEMBER**

A special congratulations to CSSJ external advisory board member, Dr. Spencer Crew '71, who was recently appointed to serve as interim director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture (NMAAHC). A dedicated member of the CSSJ's external advisory board, the staff at the Center have long appreciated his commitment to making the history and legacies of slavery visible through his nearly four decades as a museum curator, scholar and director. He served as president of the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center for six years and worked at the National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution for twenty years. (NMAH) Nine of those years he served as the director of NMAH. At each of those institutions he sought to make history accessible to the public through innovative and inclusive exhibitions and public programs. His most important exhibition was the groundbreaking "Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940" which generated a national discussion about migration, race, and creating historical exhibitions.



"The National Museum of African American History and Culture is a special place which has touched many people since it opened in 2016. I am honored to have the opportunity to help guide it as it continues its journey. The museum is a reminder of how important a role history plays in helping us navigate our present day world."

Crew has published extensively in the areas of African American and Public History. Among his publications are *Field to Factory: Afro-American Migration 1915-1940* (1987), and *Black Life in Secondary Cities: A Comparative Analysis of the Black Communities of Camden and Elizabeth, N.J. 1860-1920* (1993). He co-authored *The American Presidency: A Glorious Burden* (2002) and *Unchained Memories: Readings From The Slave Narratives* (2002).

Crew is an active member of the academic and cultural communities, serving on many boards that work to generate enthusiasm for history among the general public. He is the Past Chair of the National Council for History Education and serves on the Board of the National Trust for Historic Preservation as well as the Nominating Board of the Organization of American Historians. Crew has been selected to The Organization of American Historians' Distinguished Lectureship Program, a speakers bureau dedicated to American history and speaking to diverse audiences across the country at the collegiate and general public level.

The Center sends its best wishes to Dr. Crew and our colleagues at NMAAHC!

The Year Ahead: 2019-2020

The next academic year, 2019-2020, will be, by all accounts, a crucial one for our country and the world. In this regard, the CSSJ will explore issues such as immigration, reparations, voter suppression, displacement, and gentrification through the *Race Today* program organized jointly with the Center for the Study of Race & Ethnicity in America. In the Fall we will host a one day program titled *From Slave Ships to Black Lives Matter* in commemoration of the 400th anniversary of the landing of enslaved Africans in Virginia. In the Spring we plan to introduce the Race, Slavery and Capitalism research cluster. This will launch an international working group of the best scholars in the world to study the ways in which race and slavery intersect with capitalism globally. This field illustrates the many ways in which CSSJ develops cutting edge scholarship. Beginning in the 2020-2021 academic year, we will host the first postdoctoral fellow with the Watson Institute focused on historical injustice and democracy. This two year postdoc is the first step in creating a new research cluster on historical injustices and democracy. We will also have our regular seminars, faculty and graduate student workshops and we will host the Heimark Artist-in-Residence. This year we will host the second workshop of *The Imagined New* at Brown University in collaboration with VIAD (Visual Identities in Art and Design Research Centre), and the Department of Africana Studies. *The Imagined New* is an interdisciplinary platform 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 the Black Tradition. In the Spring we plan to launch the High School Curriculum Project, *Racial Slavery & the Making of the Modern World: Resistance, Freedom and Legacies*. This project seeks to create high school curricular resources that will challenge myths and absences in how our schools currently teach the history of slavery. This is a collaborative project with The Choices Program which produces award-winning curricula.



Center for the Study of Slavery & Justice

94 Waterman Street
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