

**The Center for
the Humanities**

The Graduate Center, CUNY
365 5th Ave., Room 5103
New York, NY 10016

The Center for the Humanities

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2018-2019

2018-2019 Annual Report





Front cover: Rachel Mazique presents at "Publishing American Sign Language Poetry," 2018.
 Participants at "Listening with Radical Empathy," 2018.
 Top: Hawwaa Ibrahim presents the keynote at the Y.E.S. Youth Summit, 2018.
 Bottom: Installation view of Ellen Rothenberg, "ISO 6346: ineluctable immigrant," 2019.

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Letter from the Director

The Center for the Humanities has been serving its various constituencies for a quarter century, and to commemorate our milestone year, we have chosen to arrange this annual report by celebrating the people we work with, demonstrating the variety of ways we collaborate with researchers—from individual students, faculty members, and visitors to community groups and global organizations.

Over the last academic year, the Center for the Humanities has concentrated its energies on initiating, developing, and promoting sustained bodies of research over time. These discrete projects comprise an increasing part of our work.

Moving away from delivering one-off events and conferences and toward supporting integrated multidisciplinary research, the Center has initiated collaborations with an increasingly diverse range of partner organizations across the city and internationally.

Where core themes constructively overlap, we look to amplify such crossover with bold public programming, as well as organize events that reveal and test the range of underlying research methodologies. The Center for the Humanities looks to challenge by demonstrating rather than critiquing, manifesting rather than representing what we perceive to be wider changes in research practices.

From the Amie and Tony James Gallery to the Mellon Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, from *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative* to the Object Library, we put creativity at the heart of all we do, challenging those who work with us to test themselves imaginatively along the way.

We continue to support our fellow researchers here at the Graduate Center, CUNY—whether staff, student, or faculty—in delivering projects, events, and exhibitions that serve the diverse audiences in this building, around the wider city, and online. We invite the widest of New York



Director Keith Wilson in conversation with Harry Blain, Jacob Clary, Eileen Clancy, Christian Lewis, Dilara O'Neil, and artist Mariam Ghani at screening of *Dis-Ease*, 2019.

publics to join us in study.

What follows is a brief summary of our activities through AY 18/19 with much more information available online at www.centerforthehumanities.org, including an archive of 25 years of our serving publics. Please visit us online or in person through the next year—we very much look forward to welcoming you.

Keith Wilson
Director

Letter from the Staff

The 2018–2019 academic year marked the 25 year anniversary of the Center for the Humanities. Over the last two-and-a-half decades, The Center for the Humanities has built a robust and transformational research environment in which the best of humanities work has thrived, even in the most challenging times. We offer an inventive range of dialogical, interdisciplinary, and collaborative research opportunities, complementing the foundational work of the many subject-specific programs here at the Graduate Center, CUNY with the vibrant creative activity of New York City. Together, we address urgent issues of global resonance with innovative research responses and forms of public enquiry.

In a time when public institutions are under threat, it has become ever more important that we reaffirm our commitment to the public—not only by making the activities of the Graduate Center accessible to those outside of our immediate scholarly community, but also by involving others, both across the CUNY system and elsewhere, in the production of knowledge. All of our events are free and open to the public, and we welcome dialogue with our audiences as an essential feature of all of our panels, screenings, exhibitions, and performances.

The Center for the Humanities considers CUNY—the largest public university in the United States—to be one of its most crucial publics. We are constantly seeking new ways to connect the work at the Graduate Center with the broader CUNY community, which is as diverse and varied as New York City itself. Our work involves the participation of senior and community-college faculty, adjuncts, undergraduate, master’s, and doctoral students at all 25 CUNY campuses across all five boroughs.

Our values are best exemplified in the nature of our collaborations and the projects we support and develop. We champion work that bridges disciplines, questions social constructs, and solidifies the deep connections between scholarship and social justice. In our collaborations,

researchers, practitioners, artists, and community members use their expertise to articulate and tackle urgent civic issues. We have organized our annual report to reflect our extraordinary range of collaborators, including students (pg. 11), faculty (pg. 29) and wider publics (pg. 51).

In these pages, you’ll find out about many of our exciting projects this year, including:

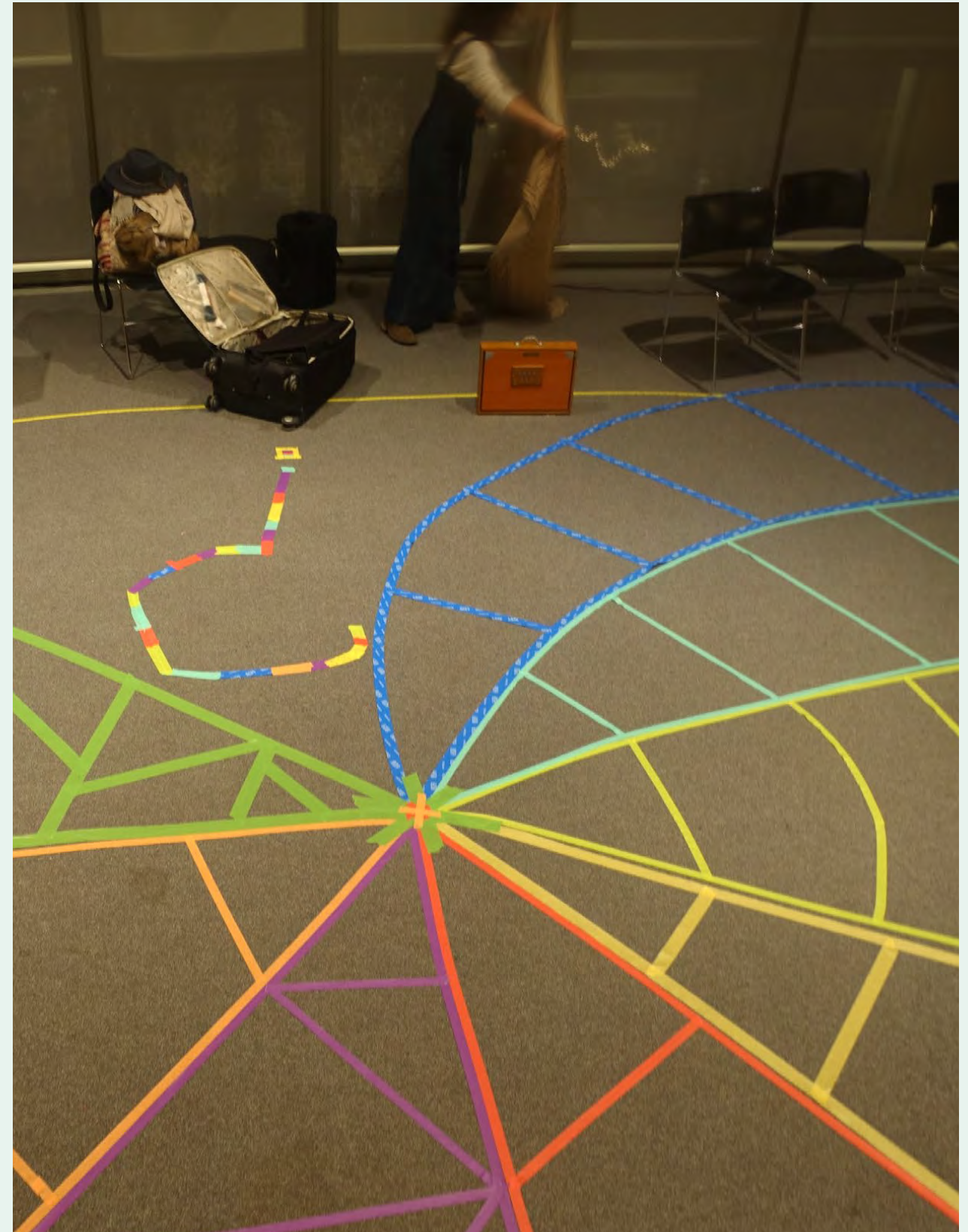
- The Center’s collaboration with the Wellcome Trust’s Contagious Cities, a multicity project that paves new pathways for how the arts and sciences can work in tandem to understand the interplay between illness and broader social contexts;
- Projects through the Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, such as original theatrical productions, books, websites, oral history projects, and a partnership between Montefiore Medical Center and Graduate Center students to produce projects that imagine the possibilities for art and VR/AR technology to provide therapeutic alternatives in pediatric long-term care;
- *Lost & Found in the Classroom*, which connects the legacies of radical poets and CUNY teachers—such as Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, and June Jordan—with contemporary CUNY teachers and undergraduate students;
- Exhibitions in the James Gallery like *Pressing Public Issues*, which spanned six CUNY community colleges, where students worked with faculty and contemporary artists to make artwork on a wide variety of contemporary issues.

None of this work would have been possible without the generous support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their support of the Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research and the Curatorial Practicum and Fellowship at the James Gallery; Amie and Tony James for their support of the James Gallery and the Object Library; the Engaging the Senses Foundation, Margo and Anthony Viscusi, Early Research Initiative, and the National Endowment for the Arts for

their support of *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative*; the Sylvia Klatzkin Steinig Fund for their support of the CUNY Adjunct Incubator; the Wellcome Trust for their support of the Object Library and the programming for the Contagious Cities project; Max Palevsky for his endowment of the Irving Howe Lecture and the family of Stanley Burnshaw for their endowment of the Stanley Burnshaw Lecture, established by Professor Morris Dickstein and hosted every other year by the Harry Ransom Center for Research in the Humanities at the University of Texas, Austin; Poetry Foundation, Sign Language Resources, Poetry Society of America, Academy of American Poets, and Poets & Writers for their support of "Publishing American Sign Language Poetry"; the Vera Shlakman Irrevocable Trust for their support in honor of the Herbert Gutman Memorial Fund; and the Provost's Office at the Graduate Center for their support of the Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, the Object Library, and *Lost & Found*. Finally, this work depends on the active and engaged participation of our publics, to whom we extend our heartfelt thanks.

We hope you will enjoy learning more about the work we do and that you might join us!

Staff of the Center for the Humanities



"Listening with Radical Empathy," 2018.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The Center for the Humanities offers a wide variety of professional development for Graduate Center students by supporting projects with broad-reaching impact across CUNY, in New York City, and beyond. By funding student research, supporting skill development, connecting students with community partners, and offering logistical support, the Center allows students to develop their work through innovative and creative strategies.

The Center has offered students time and space to learn new skills in myriad ways. For example, through the Andrew W. Mellon Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, we awarded six students two years of fellowship and programmatic funding to develop public projects with community partners, for which we ran workshops, fostered networking opportunities, and brought in professionals to give feedback and advice. As ever, we furthered

our commitment to fruitful dialogue across disciplines, this year by supporting student- and faculty-led working groups on interdisciplinary research topics and projects that explore new connections between the humanities and the sciences. We have also sought to further our digital offerings, including training students in Digital Humanities methodologies and supporting the development of public-facing digital forms of dissertation research.

We are dedicated to helping students make their research available to wider audiences. Toward this end, we have helped students

DeeArah Wright, Jaime Shearn Coan, Jessica Gordon Nembhard, and Lauren Hudson at "Solidarity Economy in the Performing Arts: What's Reparations Got to Do with It?" September 2018.

develop publications, from books to magazines, websites to blog posts, from pitch to print. In addition to providing students with editorial and graphic design support, our blog *Distributaries* published CUNY graduate and undergraduate student writing and reflections on the public humanities. Our research and publishing platform *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative* also continued its mission to engage students in collaborative archival and editorial research methods, granting 13 archival research stipends for students and publishing five chapbooks of previously unpublished writing by twentieth-century authors, researched and edited by students.

Finally, our work helps support other professional academic activities that aid our students as they pursue their future careers. Our programs support funding, logistics, facilitation, and documentation of student-organized public events and conferences, in addition to our funds for student travel to conferences and training. As students enter the classroom as instructors, we have provided them with print and digital platforms as well as classroom resources to connect

the legacies of pedagogy at CUNY and CUNY today, particularly through the *Lost & Found in the Classroom* initiative. For those who intend to pursue careers in the arts, the James Gallery has supported the research and development of large-scale research-based exhibitions through the Andrew W. Mellon Curatorial Fellowship, which provides students with one-on-one mentorship to exhibit artwork in a public gallery, welcome and engage public visitors in meaningful and accessible conversations, install exhibitions, execute a marketing plan, organize public events, and forge relationships with (sometimes international) public project partners.

These programs help build a foundation for students to successfully attain further fellowships and funding opportunities for their public projects, to work well in teams as well as alone in the archive, and to navigate their future professional careers both in and outside of academia.

SPOTLIGHT:

VR/AR, New Media Arts, Health, and the Environment

This Mellon Seminar research team combined the professional and creative intelligences of healthcare specialists, scholars, visual artists and curators, sound and media producers, CUNY faculty, and CUNY graduate and undergraduate students to develop and provide innovative and impactful healing strategies for pediatric patients.

With the needs, voices, and agency of young patients at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx at the core of this collaboration, the project aimed to produce and deliver individualized Virtual and Augmented Reality (VR/AR) experiences for children and their families coping with the

emotional and physical stresses of long-term hospital care.

Two doctoral students at the Graduate Center, CUNY, Gleneara Bates (Educational Psychology) and Hamadi Henderson (Social Welfare) acted as Ambassadors of Technology, Art, and Healthcare, aiding in these efforts by conducting on-site research to identify new technology opportunities that could improve patients' experience in the hospital. The ambassadors' findings supported patients, families, clinicians, and staff at Montefiore.

In addition, data and analysis was shared with professors and media artists Dominika Ksel and Sarada Rauch and their students at LaGuardia Community College. Employing the techniques and methodologies of immersive art, 3-D modeling, video and audio editing software, and game design platforms, Ksel and Rauch's team-taught class, VR/AR, New Media Arts, Health, and the Environment, used the findings provided by the doctoral student ambassadors to create individual and team projects designed for public and patient use at Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx and created their own website VR Immersive Arts.



Montefiore's Ambassador of Technology, Art and Healthcare, Gleneara Bates interacts with a patient at the Children's Hospital. Photo by Jay Van Buren, Creative Director of The CHILZone. Courtesy of Montefiore Medical Center.

SPOTLIGHT:

Approaching Reparations and Metamorphosis Theater

Mellon Seminar Digital Publics Fellow Jaime Shearn Coan spent the 2018–2019 academic year building on the work of a community group that convened at JACK performance space in Brooklyn for Reparations365, a series of discussions and programs that considered how reparations might be implemented in the performing arts field.

Shearn Coan commissioned and edited writing by participants, including performers, arts administrators, and writers. Their reflections were published both on the Center for the Humanities website and in the book *Approaching Reparations*. This book was accompanied by the public conversation, “Solidarity Economy in the Performing Arts: What’s Reparations Got to Do with It?”

Shearn Coan also conducted numerous oral history interviews and created an in-depth, interactive website entitled Metamorphosis Theater, which reflects on and archives the work of under-recognized but widely influential downtown NYC performer Assotto Saint. This website includes documentation previously unavailable to the public, as well as oral histories with people who knew Saint, which can be annotated by users, activating this living archive.

Shearn Coan reflected on his work, “In the course of this project I’ve learned a million skills, including how to do oral history interviews, how to edit them; I’ve made connections and built friendships with people who I interviewed. I learned how to annotate, way too much about copyright and IRB stuff. ...Looking back I’m struck by how much being in the working groups was an influence on and part of my projects that I developed. ...The people I’ve met, the skills I’ve gotten and the conversations I’ve had, which have really been with a mix of people within academia and people without, have been hugely influential in my work.”



Left: Cover of the book *Approaching Reparations*, featuring contributions by DeeArah Wright, Benedict Nguyen, Meropi Peponides, Aisha “Li” Cousins, and Jamara Wakefield, edited by Jaime Shearn Coan, 2018.

Below: Screenshot from the website Metamorphosis Theater: An Oral History Project on the Performance Work of Assotto Saint, led by Mellon Seminar Teaching Fellow Jaime Shearn Coan, 2018.

Metamorphosis Theater: An Oral History Project on the Performance Work of Assotto Saint

About Assotto About the Project

Oral Histories Ephemera

Audiovisual Archive Resources

ASSOTTO SAINT RECITES MONOLOGUE FROM RISIN' AT BLACKHEART READING (1982)

00:00 / 47:07

Recording made and provided by Sur Rodney (Sur). Blackheart Collective Reading took place on 01/16/1982 in Harlem. Saint performs Francine's rousing speech from the end of his play *Risin' To the Love We Need*.

ANNOTATIONS

[00:24:29] Assotto Saint performance begins.

KEYWORDS:

Other Countries, Sur Rodney (Sur), Blackheart Collective, Risin' To the Love We Need

SPOTLIGHT:

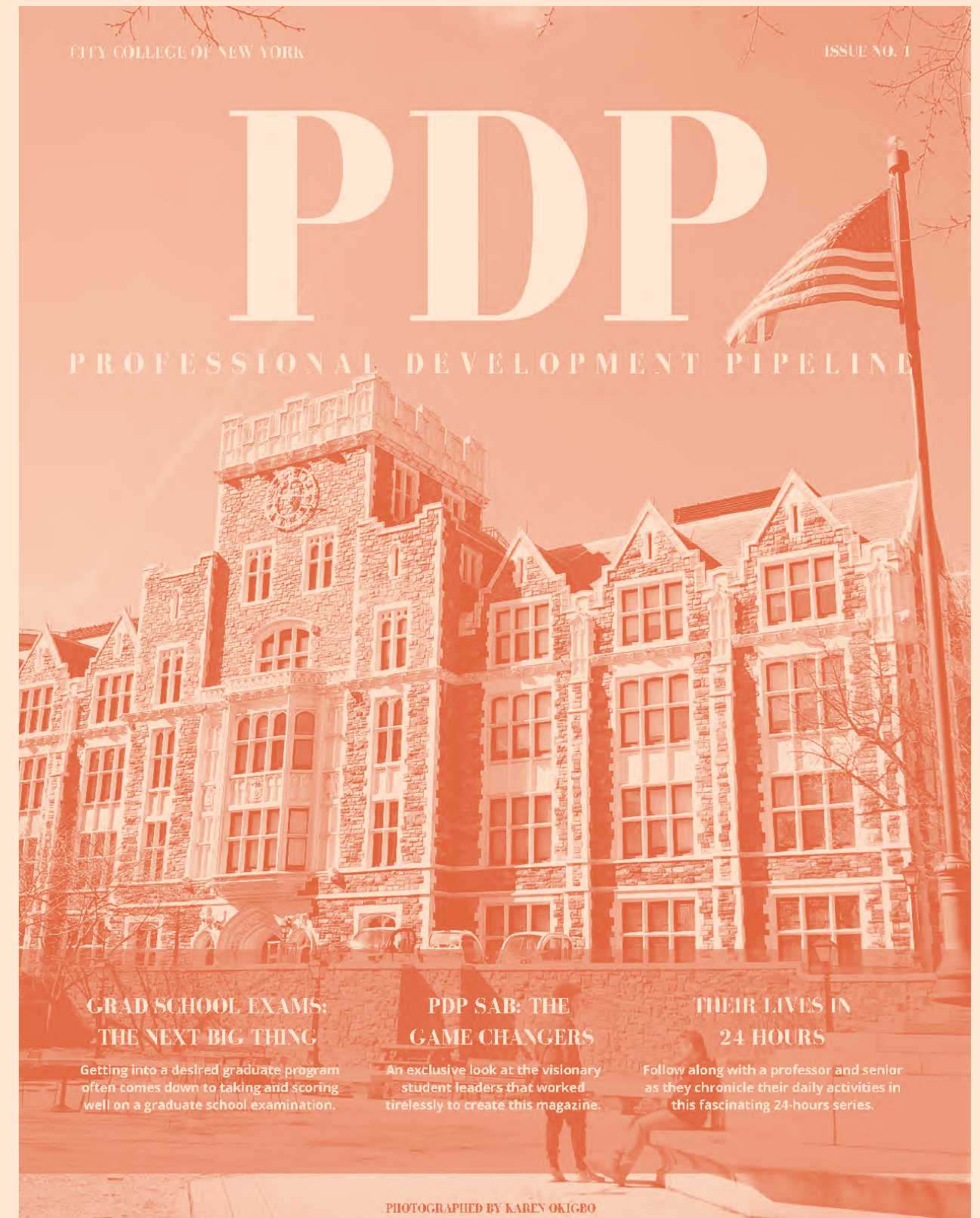
Professional Development Pipeline

Mellon Seminar Teaching Fellow Karen Okigbo invited a variety of professionals into her undergraduate sociology classroom at City College to answer students' questions about how to create a path from the university into a meaningful career. Her special guests worked in fields directly related to the topics being discussed in her class, creating a tangible understanding of how academic studies relate to professional development.

Okigbo formed a Student Advisory Board with several of her undergraduate students, who organized a day-long event connecting students and professionals who were also alumni of City College. She supported the Advisory Board students in designing and editing the print and digital magazine *Professional Development Pipeline*, which provides an impressive array of resources for students to navigate their years in college, the uncertainties of the working world, and the inequity of access to information and connections, in order to enter career paths and higher education. As Okigbo further developed her own skills as an editor and organizer of public events, her students likewise gained professional experience in these capacities. Okigbo said, "Seeing [professionals] interact with the

students and hearing some students speak about how they feel less scared about their future options has been beyond wonderful."

City College students who attended the public event reflected, "These women were gracious and honest about their experiences studying at City College, and that is what I appreciated most about the workshop. No one has an effortless experience as a college student. Here were three women who struggled and made it to the finish line, meaning I could struggle, as I have, and make it there too." "I can pursue what interests me without fearing that I cannot succeed in a given career path."



Cover of *Professional Development Pipeline* magazine, edited by City College students Spyridoula Fotinis, Nina Iandolo, and Nancy Moreno, in collaboration with Karen Okigbo, 2019.



SNAPSHOT: Climate Action Lab

Graduate Center student participants in the Climate Action Lab take part in their first meeting on the intersections of food and climate justice.

SPOTLIGHT:

The Lung Block

The Center supported English Department student Stefano Morello, co-curator (with Kerri Culhane) of the exhibition *The Lung Block*, which traces the historical connections between disease and immigration told through the story of Morello's family in the Lower East Side, held at the NYC Municipal Archives.

The Object Library helped Morello extend his project across the GC's ground floor, with elements of the exhibition featuring in the vitrines outside of the GC's café and inside the Object Library, and through events such as the panel "The Making of a Slum: A Discussion on Immigration, Housing & Health Policy in New York City, Past & Present" held at the James Gallery on April 25th. Morello and Culhane further took part in the day-long symposium "Mapping Contagion," co-organized by NYPL and the Object Library as part of the Wellcome Trust's Contagious Cities

initiative, which brought together scholars from various disciplines to talk about how they employ mapping as part of their research methodology.

As Morello reflected, "The Center for the Humanities provided valuable support to my work—they catered the resources to set up a satellite show at the Graduate Center and organized public programming events that exposed my work to a wide and diverse audience."



Image left: New York skyline from Manhattan Bridge, NYC, NY, ca. 1910–20. Photograph. Detroit Publishing Co.

Image Right: Ernest Poole, "The Plague in Its Stronghold, Tuberculosis in the New York Tenement," The Charity Organization Society, 1903.

SPOTLIGHT:

Wellcome Artist-in-Residence Mariam Ghani



Mariam Ghani (second from left) and research team at the Graduate Center, CUNY, summer 2018. © Mariam Ghani; courtesy Wellcome.

In spring/summer 2018, the Graduate Center, CUNY and the NYPL welcomed resident artist Mariam Ghani. While in residence, she and a multidisciplinary team of graduate student assistants (Harry Blain, Juliana Broad, Eileen Clancy, Jacob Clary, Josh LaMore, Christian Lewis, and Dilara O'Neil) conceptualized, researched, and produced a film, entitled *Dis-Ease*, about illness, metaphors, contagion, isolation, and the consequences of a century-plus of waging "war on disease" using archival materials from the collections of the New York Public Library, New York Academy of Medicine, and Wellcome Collection, London.

Each student was able to continue pursuing their own research interests—which included political science, history, literature, philosophy and medicine—which Ghani then wove together into a cinematic narrative.

In addition to working with GC students, Ghani took part in several events related to her residency, including a panel discussion about disease and metaphor at the NYPL with epidemiologist Jayne Raper, and the research team of Deborah and Rodrick Wallace moderated by Keith Wilson. The full version of *Dis-Ease* was screened at the Graduate Center, followed by a panel discussion with Ghani's graduate student researchers, revealing their central contribution to the making of the film.

As political science student Harry Blain recalled, “Out of both necessity and creative license, our approach was iterative. Intellectual boundaries were deliberately defined loosely; tangents were, in many ways, welcomed. [...] But if it was slightly strange to think that nearly everything was for one short film [...], it was also uniquely gratifying to see the labor of eight very different minds distilled so elegantly in a single place.”



Film still from Mariam Ghani, *Dis-Ease*, 2018-19. Featuring an ill man who is being bled by his doctor, colored etching by J. Sneyd, 1804, after J. Gillray. Courtesy Mariam Ghani and Wellcome Collection.

SPOTLIGHT: Housing Literacy

Mellon Seminar Digital Publics Fellow Kasey Zapatka developed the website Housing Literacy, which provides resources including an annotated lease to demystify tenants' rights to rent-stabilized units in New York City.



In addition to learning web development skills to code the website himself, he also organized the public event “Housing Literacy: Understanding Your Lease, the Rent Law Fight, and Your Rent History” with Tenants & Neighbors Executive Director Delsenia Glover and housing lawyer Ellen Davidson to discuss rent control law and tenant advocacy.



Above: Delsenia Glover presents alongside Kasey Zapatka and Ellen Davidson at “Housing Literacy: Understanding Your Lease, the Rent Law Fight, and Your Rent History,” 2019.
Right: Screenshot of Housing Literacy website, 2019.



OL THE OBJECT LIBRARY

**SNAPSHOT: A Sit-in At the Library:
'68 Revisited**

Sister Sylvester performs at "A Sit-in at the Library: '68 Revisited," organized by GC students Amir Farjoun, Cory Tamler, and Mara Valderrama, 2018.

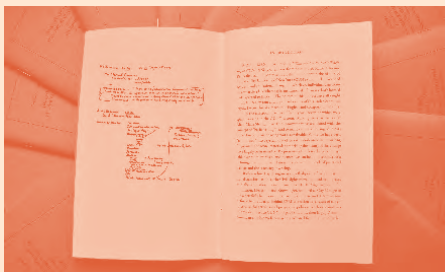
SPOTLIGHT:

Lost & Found in the Classroom

As part of our initiative *Lost & Found: In the Classroom*, we culled together materials that connected past and present pedagogical strategies.

With a focus on education, conversation, and organization, we have begun to engage the archive as blueprint, as map, a way of learning from those writers and artists who came before us and responding to a world awry. Through this initiative, we aimed to make *Lost & Found* easily available for use in classrooms, organizational spaces, and development of public actions, reframing pedagogies and beyond. We invited CUNY educators to choose from our available chapbook sets, construct a set of their own, or focus in on a single edition. Educator Nate Mickelson at Guttman Community College led his poetry class with *Lost & Found Series VII*, which features the writings of Audre Lorde, Toni Cade Bambara, June Jordan, Jack Forbes, Paul Blackburn, and Julio Cortázar.

CUNY educators Daisy Atterbury and Maxine Krenzel and their two first-year writing classrooms at Brooklyn and Queens



Spread from *Adrienne Rich: Teaching at CUNY, 1968–1974*, part of the *Lost & Found: In the Classroom* initiative.

College embarked on a semester-long peer-to-peer writing exchange inspired by Adrienne Rich's teaching materials published in *What We Are Part Of: Teaching at CUNY, 1968–1974*. Over the course of the semester, students designed their "dream course" along with a writing assignment to be completed by a student at a different campus. Students at Queens responded to assignments designed by students at Brooklyn, and vice versa. The result was an unexpected opening.

Maxine reflected on the semester: "I think what my students enjoyed the most in the project was having the chance to create writing prompts for each other—to play the role of the teacher and also realize the responsibility and accountability that comes with writing for another person. I will say that it's interesting that although we never asked our students to play the role of the 'teacher' or 'student' in their assignment, the 'teacher/student' dichotomy nevertheless came up in their reflections out of their own associations with writing in the space of the classroom. But by reflexively enacting these identities, we and our students could use the collaborative and performative aspects of the project to reimagine these roles we enact in everyday life."

SPOTLIGHT:

Lost & Found Archival Research Grants

Lost & Found supports and mentors CUNY graduate students as they research and contextualize archival materials as part of our annual Research Stipends program.



This year, thanks to generous support from the Early Research Initiative at the Graduate Center, CUNY, we offered 11 students financial and logistical support as they traveled to archives in New York City, across the United States, and abroad, both personal and institutional, developing their innovative research. These projects take on a number of final forms—dissertations, *Lost & Found* chapbooks, or full-length books published in collaboration with a larger press as part of our *Lost & Found Elsewhere* series. These projects dive deep into the archives and works of Sargon Boulus, William Carlos Williams,

Ed Sanders, Muriel Rukeyser, the Valparaíso School, Jim Schoppert, Lawrence Livermore, the Black Panther Party's Oakland Community School, Bernadette and Rosemary Mayer, and Diane di Prima.

Archival Research grant recipients included Khaled Al Hilli, Christopher Green, Gillian Sneed, Liz Donato, Josh Barber, Robert Robinson, Stefano Morello, William Camponovo, and Christopher Clarke. Mary Catherine Kinniburgh and Iris Cushing each received the Diane di Prima Fellowship for their research.

Above: Rosemary Mayer, ca. 1976. Courtesy of the Estate of Rosemary Mayer. Photographer unknown.



FACULTY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As with our student training, the Center values our ability to give faculty space, time, and support to develop and realize projects that extend their research to publics in and beyond the university. We fund individual research projects and faculty-led public programs, as well as in-depth collaborations between faculty and community partners.

Over the years we have built considerable expertise in event production, project management, curation, network building, and pedagogic methods. This year, we used these skills toward helping faculty organize numerous conferences and other academic events, publish books and websites, and facilitate public-facing projects. Along the way, we've offered a combination of professional development workshops and direct one-on-one engagement.

Through the Andrew W. Mellon Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, we

awarded faculty course releases and generous programmatic funding to produce ambitious public projects and helped faculty to build relationships with artists, activists, community groups, and cultural organizations. In the process, we provided training in creative project management, including budgeting, creating clear outcomes, supporting visual elements of projects such as graphic design, and documenting and archiving work.

The James Gallery has supported faculty-initiated programming in addition to guiding and funding faculty in innovative artist and art-centered approaches

Attendees of the "VHS Archives End of Year Party" peruse analog ephemera brought by the partygoers.

to presenting their scholarship in the public venue of the gallery.

Additionally, we have used our considerable skills in event planning to support the development and execution of numerous faculty-organized workshops, seminars, symposia, and conferences both at the GC and elsewhere in NYC. This has included liaising between our faculty and contractors, including our wonderful design firm Partner

& Partners, as well as technicians and other professionals. And we provided support in publicizing and marketing these events to wider publics.

Finally, we dedicated funds and space to faculty-led working groups on interdisciplinary research topics, which led to the creation of open-source digital research and archival platforms.

SPOTLIGHT:

Henri Peyre French Institute Collaborations

In AY 18/19, the Center teamed up with faculty from the Henri Peyre French Institute and the French Department to produce two event series.

The first, held in fall 2018, took its inspiration from the exhibition *Lydia Cabrera and Édouard Glissant: Trembling Thinking*, held at the Americas Society, which examined the work of influential Martiniquan thinker of difference Édouard Glissant, who taught at the GC from 1995 to 2011. The Center presented a range of supporting public programs related to Glissant, including a symposium, film screening, and a seminar series honoring his legacy. Each of the informal seminars—held in the French Department thesis room where Glissant taught—was led by one of his former students on a topic of their choosing, ranging from their personal experience with Glissant to the themes in his work and its ongoing influence across disciplines. These one-hour seminars offered an intimate at-one-remove experience for a small group of participants, including members of the public. Alongside the seminars, the Object Library featured two showcases dedicated to the legacy of Glissant, which held a wide range of ephemera related to his activities at the GC, including event programs, books with dedications, and a handwritten poem.

In spring 2019, the Object Library collaborated again with the Henri Peyre French

Institute and the GC's French Department to produce a series of five seminars, entitled The Object Seminar, with scholars tasked with teaching a seminar using an innovative methodology and taking the theme of objects as central to the seminar form and content. Five scholars—Frédéric Baitinger, Raphaël Liogier, Stephanie Grace-Petinos, Nathalie Etoke, and Jasmine Claude Narcisse (most of whom were alumni and faculty of the GC)—each led a two-hour seminar, with the final object seminar held in the Object Library on May 10th.



Chadia Chambers-Samadi, one of Édouard Glissant's former students, discusses Glissant with a seminar group at the Object Library showcase, 2018.

SPOTLIGHT:

VHS Archives & Analog Archives

Led by Professor Alexandra Juhasz, the VHS Archives Working Group built on their digital platform for archiving, sharing and annotating small collections of VHS material—mostly centering on queer, activist histories—by partnering with a dedicated group of participants including three community partners—the XFR Collective, Interference Archive, and Visual AIDS—and one design practice, Partner & Partners.

This year's working group widened their focus to Analog Archives, developing an open-source tool to facilitate ethical and attentive care for "digital and other fragile objects of and for the community who made or needs them" and organizing "parties" to ethically activate this material in small in-person groups. Group members then published critical reflections about this process on our blog, issuing challenges to the fields of archival and LGBTQ studies more broadly.

In her blog post, Juhasz writes, "We are committed to the safety and care of vulnerable people and their objects. We insist you shouldn't share [digital media] without care [of those whose it is and was and will be]. Attending to the experiences and wants of people, in community, at every technological step is an act of ethical obligation and its technological formatting. Thus, frames for thinking about and taking action on caring and sharing should be written into all encounters (personal, technological, interfacial) when the already fragile materials of vulnerable others become available online."



Above: Analog ephemera brought by partygoers at the "VHS Archives End of Year Party."

Left: Screenshot from Analog Archive web platform, 2019.





SNAPSHOT: Edouard Glissant: One World In Relation

Asad Raza and Manthia Diawara in conversation about the film *Édouard Glissant: One World in Relation*, 2018.

SPOTLIGHT:

The City Amplified

For the last two years, the City Amplified, led by Prof. Prithi Kanakamedala, has gathered oral history practitioners, artists, archivists, and scholars to examine, engage, and re-assess how radical archiving practices can amplify the rich range of oral history and place-based research projects occurring across the city.



The City Amplified Working Group brought together an exceptional range of colleagues and peers including the Laundromat Project, Interference Archive, Buscada, City Lore, South Asian American Digital Archive, Urban Democracy Lab, NYPL, American Social History Project, and others to re-examine how radical archiving informs the discipline and practice of public history.

Together, they developed a book, *The City Amplified: Oral Histories and Radical Archives*, which shares critical essays and best practices for creating and activating radical archives, published by the Center for the Humanities and accessible on the GC's open-source digital platform Manifold.

Kanakamedala also partnered with the South Asian American Digital Archives (SAADA) and the Indo-Caribbean Alliance to host a storytelling workshop and oral history collection for Indo-Caribbean communities in Richmond Hill, Queens, and connected oral historian Sady Sullivan with CUNY and wider community participants for "The Impact of Listening and Being Heard: Oral History, Archives, & Advocacy," a free eight-week interdisciplinary workshop.

Kanakamedala reflected, "Our CUNY community are the public. Being able to engage New Yorkers beyond the classroom with the work we do has been hugely transformative and generative."

If You're Thinking About Starting An Oral History Project

Sady Sullivan with Maggie Schreiner



Attribution +
Noncommercial +
ShareAlike

Guide also available at <https://cuny.manifoldapp.org/>



SNAPSHOT: Listening with Radical Empathy

Audience members at the event "Listening with Radical Empathy: A Listening Party!" participate in a sound bath led by Jessica Caplan, 2018.

SPOTLIGHT:

Allies in Education

Profs. Debbie Sonu and Terrie Epstein of the Allies in Education research team of the Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research sought to recenter the perspectives and activism of high school students on questions of racial injustice in public education.

They worked with high school student-led organization IntegrateNYC to host meetings, organize events, and provide artist-activist mentors to high school student designers.

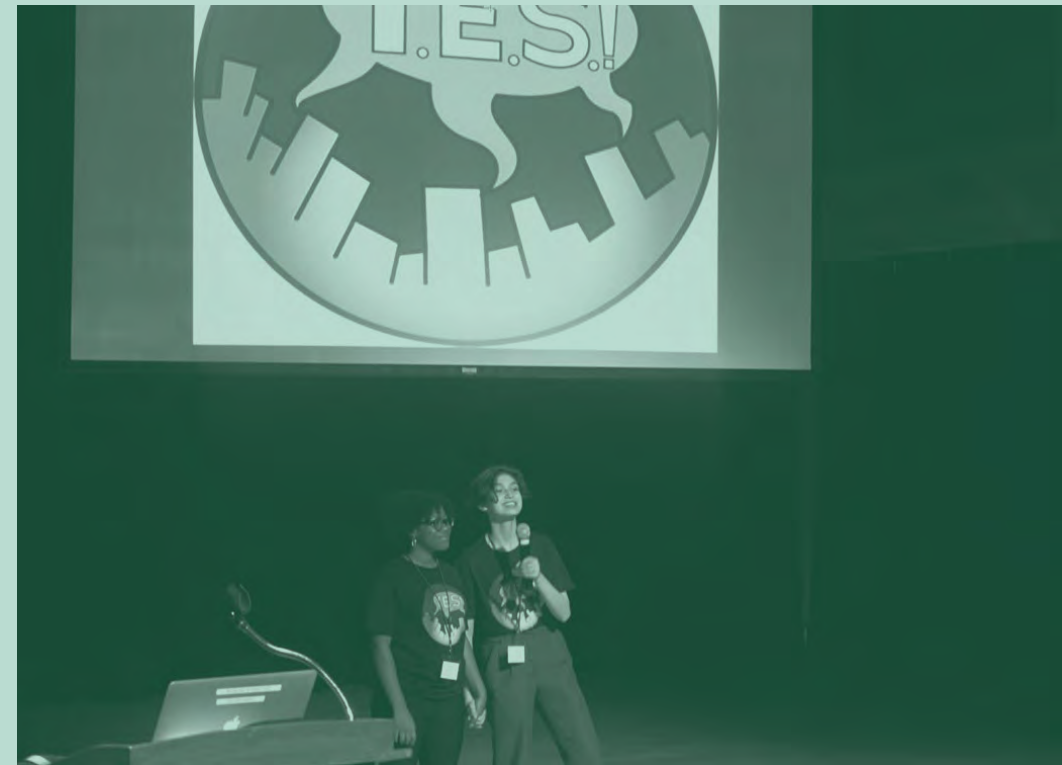
They also brought together GC PhD student Andrea Juarez Mendoza with seven teens from around the city to organize the YOUth Education Summit (Y.E.S.). High school and undergraduate students came together with their allies in educational justice to unpack issues, concerns, and realities in education through creative and artistic expression (collaborative art making, workshops, open mic, and more). Youth and allies worked together to imagine a future in education with justice and youth voices at the core.

Faculty co-leader Sonu reflected on this process, “The Center for the Humanities has been one of the most generous organizations I have ever worked with. I am deeply grateful for all the guidance and support. What began as an idea to amplify youth activism has unfolded into a series of events and projects that both inspired and humbled me throughout. From this, I have become well connected with numerous youth organizations in NYC, including IntegrateNYC, and have met many,

many people with whom collaborations are sure to continue and grow.”

Student Organizer Phanesia Pharel reflected, “Y.E.S. was a moment of community building and healing. A space where people could come together to truly hear each other.”

IntegrateNYC Director Sarah Camiscoli reflected, “We were supported in many ways by CUNY faculty and staff. Because we got space at the Graduate Center and Hunter, our regular meetings were able to accommodate the growing number of students and adult allies working with us. Our students’ big culminating event would not have been possible without the logistical support of CUNY folks connecting us with a local school where we could host the student-led Teach In. We were financially supported by sharing costs for food and materials. By covering artist stipends for two Artist mentors, our students had expert guidance in turning their vision into a reality. Beyond the material support, the belief and faith of the team at CUNY was a driving energy behind our work. The students’ vision and action was a function of the Center’s investment in us.”



YOUth Education Summit organizers Francis Mejia and Theo Rodas introduce the day’s events at the Summit, December 2018.



Participant at the IntegrateNYC booth during the YOUth Education Summit holding up the flyer designed with Allies in Education support, December 2018.

TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT

THURSDAY, APRIL 11TH, 2019
10AM-6PM
MARTIN E. SEGAL THEATRE
THE GRADUATE CENTER, CUNY
365 FIFTH AVE

Participants

Linda Alcoff, CUNY
Alyson Cole, CUNY
Veena Das, Johns Hopkins
Piergiorgio Donatelli, Sapienza Università di Roma
Estelle Ferrarese, Picardie-Jules-Verne University
Sandra Laugier, Université Paris 1 Panthéon Sorbonne
Kyoo Lee, CUNY
Charles Mills, CUNY
Claire Potter, The New School
B Stone, CUNY
Deva Woody, The New School

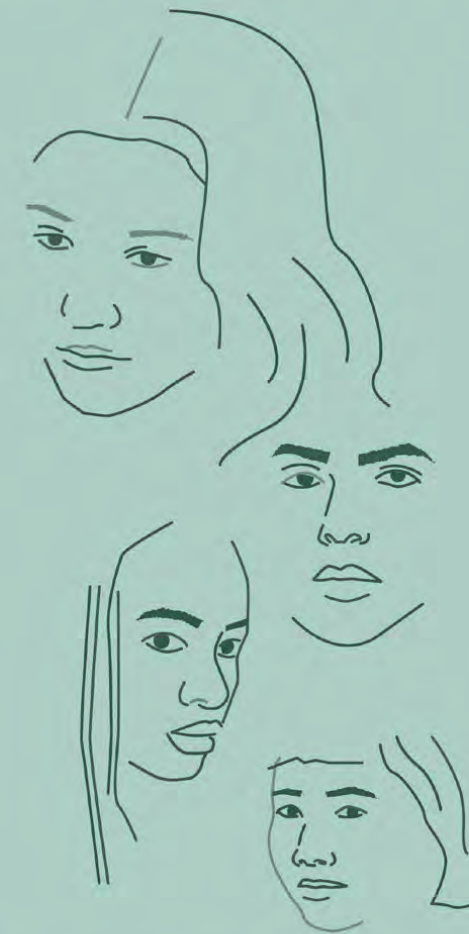
Co-sponsors

Advanced Research Collaborative
Africana Studies Program
Anthropology Program
Philosophy Program
Political Science Program
The Center for the Humanities
The Office of the Provost
Women's and Gender Studies Program

With generous support from
The Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris

The CUNY Graduate Center Advanced Research Collaborative (ARC),
the Center for the Humanities, and the Philosophy Program, together
with Hunter College, present an interdisciplinary conference on:

● #ME TOO and Epistemic Injustice



SPEAKERS

LINDA MARTIN ALCOFF
Philosophy
Hunter College & CUNY Grad Center

SUSAN BRISON
Philosophy
Dartmouth College

ANN CAHILL
Philosophy
Elon University

ALYSON COLE
Political Science
Queens College & CUNY Grad Center

KARYN FREDMAN
Philosophy
University of Guelph

MIRANDA ERICKER
Philosophy
CUNY Grad Center

MISHUANA GOEMAN
*Gender Studies & American
Indian Studies*
UCLA

SUZANNE GOLDBERG
Columbia Law School

KIM HALL
Philosophy
Appalachian State University

RAJA HALWANI
Liberal Arts
Art Institute of Chicago

ALISON JAGGAR
Philosophy
University of Colorado Boulder

KATE MANNE
Philosophy
Cornell University

DANIELLE MCGUIRE
Independent Historian

SARAH CLARK MILLER
Philosophy
Penn State University

RUPAL OZA
Women & Gender Studies
Hunter College & CUNY Grad Center

ANDREA PRESS
Media Studies & Sociology
University of Virginia

DINA SIDDIQI
Liberal Studies
New York University

SHATEMA THREADCRAFT
Government
Dartmouth College

CONFERENCE ORGANIZERS
Linda Martin Alcoff
Charles W. Mills

● Oct. 5 | Roosevelt House | 47-49 East 65th St. | 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.

● Oct. 6 | Skylight Room (9100) | CUNY Graduate Center |
365 Fifth Ave. | 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

SNAPSHOT: Terms of Engagement

Poster for Terms of Engagement, 2019.
Designed by Partner & Partners.

SNAPSHOT: #MeToo and Epistemic Injustice

Poster for #MeToo and Epistemic Injustice, 2018.
Designed by Partner & Partners.

SPOTLIGHT:

Pressing Public Issues

Spearheaded by a partnership between the James Gallery, the Teaching and Learning Center, and the CUNY Humanities Alliance, Pressing Public Issues brought together a cohort of six teaching artists and six faculty teaching courses in various disciplines at CUNY community colleges in spring 2019.



Bronx Community College students from the Black Land Ownership class worked with artist Walis Johnson to install Red Line Labyrinth on Bronx Community College main quad as part of the Pressing Public Issues collaboration.

Through a series of meetings during the summer and fall of 2018, this cohort explored, shared, and developed creative teaching practices and pedagogies to inform and shape their spring 2019 courses, and forged a collective dynamic to support each other and to find potential forms of cross-campus collaboration.

This collaboration resulted in six projects, each led by a pairing of a community-college faculty and a teaching artist who was approached and funded by the partnering organization. Their aim was to encourage students to experiment through creative modes of research, expression, knowledge production and public scholarship. In each project, faculty and students selected a pressing contemporary issue—or a set of issues—relevant to both the students' lives and interests and to the aims and focus of the course, including childcare spaces,

Asian American history, black land ownership, poetry in public space, environmental ethics, and language hierarchies. Students then explored these issues through a variety of forms of artistic expression—poetry, photography, printmaking, zines, digital storytelling, performance art, and other modes. Over the course of the semester, the students, both individually and collectively, created artistic projects that they then publicly displayed or performed in unexpected and underused spaces on their community-college campuses and in the James Gallery in May and June 2019. These exhibitions served as public-expressive forums to spark challenging and productive conversations about pressing and contentious issues with the publics of the students' community-college campuses, their local communities, the broader CUNY community, and across New York City.



Borough of Manhattan Community College students in Soniya Munshi's Asian American History class installing their artwork *What a test never taught me...* for the Pressing Public Issues exhibition in the James Gallery at the Graduate Center, CUNY.



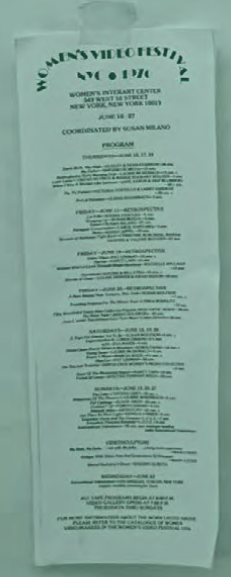
SOCIALIST FEMINIST PRACTICES



19:00
*Since Socialist Collective's
 meetings*

Women's
 Health
 Collective

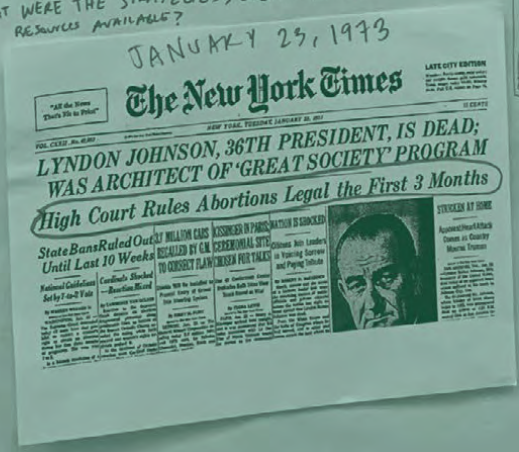
19:30



20:00
 HORIZONTAL
 DETECTION
 tape
 Degrading

How CAN
 WE REFLECT
 ON AND LEARN
 FROM THESE
 (and) LETTERS?

20:30
 ANTI-ABORTION FEELINGS =
 restrictions in Abortion Clinics
 Self-help
 practices
 WHAT WERE THE STRATEGIES, ORGANIZING EFFORTS, AND
 RESOURCES AVAILABLE?



21:30
 pan
 ma
 self
 abortion



THIS IS A PHOTO I TOOK
 OF MY HIGH SCHOOL
 IN SANTA FE IN 1970
 WHEN I WAS 6 OR
 7 MY GRANDMAMA

22:00

22:30
 "politics of
 healthcare"

What did they
 do that worked?

23:00

23:30

24:00

SNAPSHOT: VHS End of Year Party
 Annotated paper timeline from "VHS
 Archives End of Year Party, Workshop,
 and Demo," 2019.

SPOTLIGHT:

Art, Activism, and the Environment



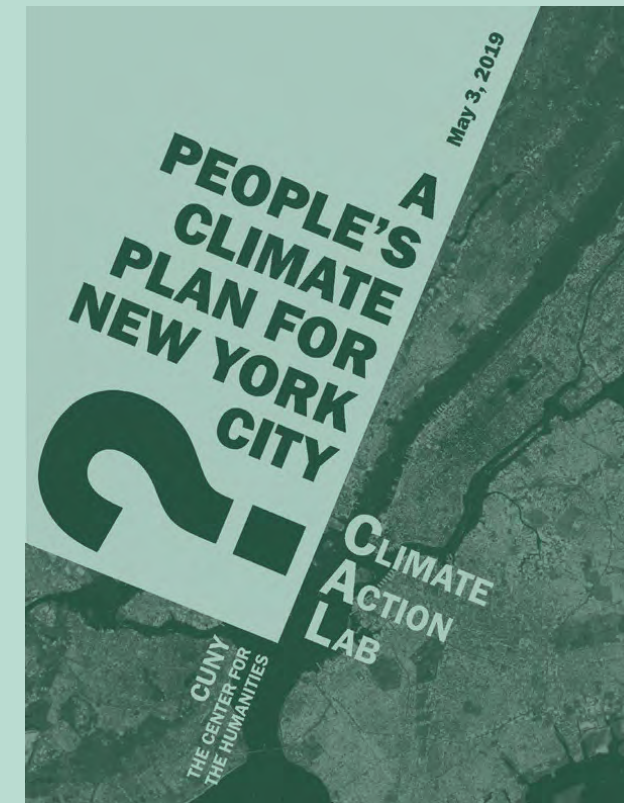
Group mapping at "A People's Climate Action Plan?," 2019.

This Mellon Seminar research team, led by Prof. Ashley Dawson, focused on the unfolding conjunction of art, ecology, and activism in the context of today's climate emergency, situating such work in a history of engaged and environmentally minded art production.

This year, this research team launched the Climate Action Lab, a series of in-depth monthly meetings that convened a dedicated group of GC PhD fellows along with guest artists, designers, community organizers, educators, journalists, and scholars to research grassroots strategies addressing crises of food production, waste management, energy use, and other urgent conditions of climate change, as well as the impact of climate change on New York

City's infrastructure and communities.

Climate Action Fellows Yates McKee (Art History) and Zeynep Oguz (Cultural Anthropology) worked closely with faculty co-leader Ashley Dawson to plan and document the monthly sessions, each of which focused on a specific aspect of climate crisis, including waste management, food production, housing, and governance. McKee and Oguz worked closely with invited guest speakers to prepare their presentations, conduct research to contextualize each session for Climate Action Lab participants, and document the sessions as project pages on the Center for the Humanities' website, making the conversations and their larger context publicly accessible to a wide web readership. Climate Action Lab culminated in the event "A People's Climate Action Plan for New York" in spring 2019, a day of workshops, lectures and hands-on research that investigated what and how organizations across the city are tackling urgent issues related to our climate crisis. In addition to publishing a series of writing on the Center for the Humanities' platform for writing in the public humanities, *Distributaries*, the group developed a publication intended to be widely distributed as a starter kit for climate action, as well as a book that will further develop their research findings.



Pamphlet for the event "A People's Climate Action Plan?," 2019.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

As the home of doctoral research across the arts and sciences at CUNY, the Graduate Center is a vibrant site of research, teaching, and public programming. The Center for the Humanities comprises a significant element of the GC's external visibility. Encouraging the public to join our faculty and students in study, we integrate art and creativity into our reflection and research. Our focus is on fostering interdisciplinary production, activating alternative modes of thought, and making our research offerings open and accessible to the public.

Over the past year, we have sought to engage people across our city and beyond, particularly through the arts. We have a long history of creating shared spaces and supporting programs that foster creative expression, enhance visibility, and center the experiences and expertise of leaders who create change in their own communities. This year, we provided innumerable connections between our scholars and cultural organizations, activists, artists, writers, and students from across NYC and CUNY.

We also gathered stakeholders to discuss community-specific concerns and linked these conversations with wider publics through free and accessible public events where they can share knowledge and resources.

The James Gallery has been integral to our engagement with our surrounding neighborhood in Midtown Manhattan as well as the vibrant art world of NYC. Through a series of exhibitions, performances, and events, the gallery helps artists and scholars to make their research visible and accessible, from conceptualization

and production to analysis and documentation. To do so, we have initiated and sustained in-depth, long-term international partnerships through collaborations on exhibitions and program series.

Core to our mission of engaging the public is our belief in the value of preserving and archiving community narratives. This year, much of the research we supported offered powerful new means of distributing these narratives and making them accessible, while thinking about the ethics of who should have access to these narratives and how. For instance, we funded and developed numerous projects that archive community narratives—oral, visual, and textual—including a book that provides a guide to starting a community archive, a web platform for ethically activating Analog Archives, and a new print ephemera series *Lost & Found: Now & Then*.

Also, we have the great privilege of serving not only the general public but the many publics that form CUNY, which, across its 25 campuses, is as demographically diverse as New York City itself. We regularly shared our knowledge and resources with the wider CUNY community

through open-source digital platforms, accessible media, writing, oral history guides, and workshops on topics ranging from creative writing and climate change activism to autoethnography and deep listening. And we bridged GC students and faculty with undergraduate students across CUNY, creating space for vibrant and varied publics to participate and engage in our programming and offering independent studies to CUNY undergraduate and master's students.

As part of our mission to heighten the visibility of our scholarly work and broaden its public impact across audiences, the Center presented new theatrical productions, publications, exhibitions, and podcasts. Further, in AY 18/19 we initiated the Object Library, a new hybrid space on the ground floor of the building that seeks to conceptually unify our public offering as well as offering a welcoming public face. We have also expanded beyond the walls of the GC, bringing our research, projects, and CUNY students and faculty into public spaces like libraries, museums, and cultural organizations across the city.



"There is a Portal: Kayhan Irani," performance at the James Gallery, 2018.

SPOTLIGHT:

The Object Library

Over the last year, the Center has been hard at work on a new initiative, the Object Library, a hybrid space that combines a library with a sculpture gallery, presenting material culture as a starting point for research and broadening our reach to the broader CUNY system and the windows of our building.



The Object Library on the ground floor of the Mina Rees Library at the Graduate Center, CUNY.
Photo by Paula Vlodkowsky.

The project launched in August 2018 with the installation of a custom block-print floor commissioned from Richard Woods Studio and entitled *logo 161*, a flexible installation structure made by Center Director Keith Wilson, and several new pieces of furniture. The Object Library now occupies the ground floor of the Mina Rees Library, welcoming publics on occasion across the entire ground floor of the building.

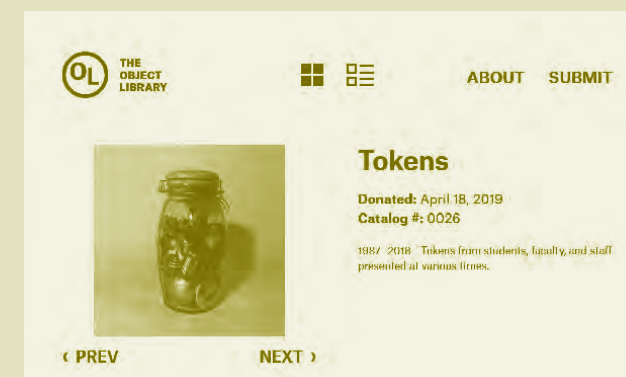
The Object Library's first temporary installation, *365 Things*, commenced in fall 2018, inviting members of the GC community to donate objects for display and documentation. Each object is accompanied by a brief intake form that describes the object or its significance to its previous owner and is mirrored on an accompanying web platform.

Beginning empty, the temporary display structure in the Object Library gradually filled with donations as objects were donated over a two-day intake on October 16–17, 2018. A launch event was held on October 17, featuring a reading of a text-based work by artist Katrina Palmer performed by *Lost & Found* editor Stephon Lawrence. The project involved the ongoing accumulation of things in an open display

system, which takes a form reminiscent of days in a calendar, throughout AY 18/19.

The Object Library's website (*theobjectlibrary.com*) launched in fall 2018 with the first day of object intake, held on October 16th. It contains a minimal interface with a list (or grid) of the objects, each of which can be expanded to view the descriptions written on the object's accompanying intake form.

Alongside the installation of *365 Things*, the Object Library also features showcases that highlight the activities of the Graduate Center community outside of our building. The first iteration was dedicated to the international legacy of Édouard Glissant, who taught at the Graduate Center from 1995 to 2011. Further iterations have held ephemera relating to our work on Wellcome's Contagious Cities project and the exhibition *Lung Block* at the NYC Municipal Archives, curated by GC English student Stefano Morello and architecture student Kerri Culhane. Featuring archival maps, photographs, and a 3-D printed architectural schema related to the exhibition, *The Lung Block* showcases formed a complete exhibition with the Municipal Archives, which Morello was able to realize with assistance from the GC's Ray Ring and Chris Lowery.



A screengrab from the Object Library website showing a donation.



**SNAPSHOT: A Conversation with
Ai Weiwei**

Tim Marlow and Ai Weiwei in
conversation, 2018. Photo by Paula
Vlodkowsky.

SPOTLIGHT:

Wellcome's Contagious Cities Project

The Center for the Humanities has expanded its public reach through creative partnerships across the city. Working with Wellcome on their international project Contagious Cities (Berlin, Geneva, Hong Kong, New York), we have been a key partner, along with the Museum of the City of New York, New York Academy of Medicine, and the Tenement Museum, as a network of related exhibitions and programs have been realized across New York City on the theme of infectious disease and epidemic preparedness.



Installing *Mapping Contagion* at NYPL, November 2018.


During AY 18/19 the Graduate Center held several public events that examined the various disciplinary approaches to the topic of infectious disease. Our lineup included a discussion with Laura Spinney, author of *Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How It Changed the World* (2017), and a conference on the statistical tools used by physicists to understand the evolution of flu epidemics.

Fall 2018 saw the installation of *Mapping Contagion: Representing Infectious Disease in New York City* in the Maps Division of the Stephen A. Schwarzman Building of the NYPL (November 2018–May 19, 2019). This exhibition included maps and data visualizations, as well as other printed and photographic materials, that explored over 100 years of mapping contagion in the city of New York, including examples of mapping yellow fever, cholera, pneumonia, sexually transmitted diseases, and tuberculosis. We worked closely with NYPL's Ian Fowler and the full map division team in making the final selection for the exhibition.

Bringing together the core partner organizations from the Wellcome's Contagious Cities project, we ran a research methods event looking at how researchers have variously used or created maps as objects of study through the unifying lens of infectious disease and with a distinctly cartographic focus. Presentations started by looking at one item from the Lionel Pincus and Princess Firyal Map Division before expanding out to reveal the role of mapping in each research field, with time set aside for attendees to visit the exhibition concurrently on display. GC student Stefano Morello presented alongside researchers from NYPL, MCNY, NYAM and the Tenement Museum, revealing the personal story that lay behind his developing the *Lung Block* exhibition displayed both at the GC and at the NYC Municipal Archives.



David Meredith Reese, *A Plain and practical treatise on the epidemic cholera, as it prevailed in the city of New York, in the summer of 1832* (detail), 1833. Artwork in the public domain; provided by the Stanford University Libraries.



TOY THEATER
-OF-
TERROR AS USUAL!!

**SNAPSHOT: Animated Objects,
Resistant Bodies**

Great Small Works performs at "An-
imated Objects, Resistant Bodies,"
organized by Edward D. Miller and
Valerie Tevere for the James Gallery.

SPOTLIGHT:

Autoethnographies of Public Education and Racial (In)Justice

The original production *Theater for Social Change: (In)Visible Freedom* explores the hopes, joys, struggles, and resilience in facing societal barriers by formerly incarcerated women, before and after their release, as well as the impact of higher education on their lives.



Edna Joyce Sams, Teronia Campbell, Katherine Sweetness Jennings, and Selina Fulford in *Theater for Social Change: (In)Visible Freedom*, 2018.

The play was created and produced through the collaboration of the Autoethnographies of Public Education and Racial (In)Justice research team of the Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research in collaboration with College and Community Fellowship (CCF). The production was written by and performed

by members of Theater for Social Change, a group of formerly incarcerated women who received support to complete degrees in higher education. Faculty co-leaders Grace M. Cho and Rose M. Kim connected GC PhD student Nina Angela Mercer with TSC to direct the play and work with the group to develop the script. Meanwhile, GC PhD student Robin McGinty worked with the group to document their process and contextualize the importance of their stories.

The Center is also publishing a book that documents the play along with the public discussion that followed the performance, which included the writers and director of the play as well as *asha bandele*, author of *The Prisoner's Wife* and co-author of *When They Call You a Terrorist: A Black Lives Matter Memoir*; DeAnna Hoskins, president and CEO of JustLeadershipUSA; and CCF Executive Director Vivian Nixon.

Nixon reflected, "It is collaborations like these that strengthen communities and inform the institutions that are charged with shaping the thinking of future generations." McGinty noted about the experience of working on this project, "To be certain, this opportunity serves as a reminder (to me) with respect to the value of collaboration, along with the notion of a co-creation, imbued with a strong sense of community, across geographies and nuance. Most importantly, I have rediscovered the richness and joy of storytelling in all its forms."

Theater for Social Change (In)Visible Freedom

The Center
for the
Humanities

THE
GRADUATE
CENTER

Theater for Social Change: (In)Visible Freedom book, published 2019.

SPOTLIGHT:

Poetry Studies Now

This two-day conference brought together poetry and critical race scholars to critically examine the current state of poetry studies while looking ahead to the possibilities opened up by recent reframings of questions of race and coloniality in and outside the academy.



Jared Sexton speaks at Poets House as part of the two-day conference "Poetry Studies Now."

The keynote speakers, Bhanu Kapil, Jared Sexton, and Roberto Tejada, put in conversation a range of critical and poetic modes. Through a cluster of panel discussions with poets and scholars, the conference fostered interdisciplinary exchange toward a centering of race and coloniality in the

discourse about poetry, working toward new horizons of thought and action. In part, this conference brought to bear the groundbreaking work in purportedly "extra-literary" fields to rethink poetry studies and excavate unexamined assumptions.

SPOTLIGHT:

Publishing ASL Poetry

This day-long event invited Deaf scholars, poets, artists, and translators to present a workshop, public performance, and a panel discussion on the historical and contemporary practices of ASL poetry.



John Lee Clark presents at "Publishing American Sign Language Poetry."

Showcasing the creative capabilities of American Sign Language to develop visually captivating worlds and express the nuances of Deaf experiences, this event

sought to challenge publishers and audiences to think through the urgency and potential to publish ASL poetry in print and digital forms that preserve its artistry and complexity.

...bringing
together Saidiya Hartman, Erica Hunt, Dawn Lundy Martin
and Claudia Rankine, all of whose visionary writings
exemplify the practice of such a radically self-present
revolutionary imaginary. Kyoo Lee will join as moderator.

Co-sponsored by mp3: Poetry, Philosophy, Performativity research team as part of the
seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research from the Center for the
Humanities at the Graduate Center



**SNAPSHOT: Radical Writing,
Feminism and Black Futures**
Kyoo Lee, Saidiya Hartman, Dawn
Lundy Martin, and Claudia Rankine
take part in the public conversation
"Radical Writing, Feminism and Black
Futures," 2018.

SPOTLIGHT:

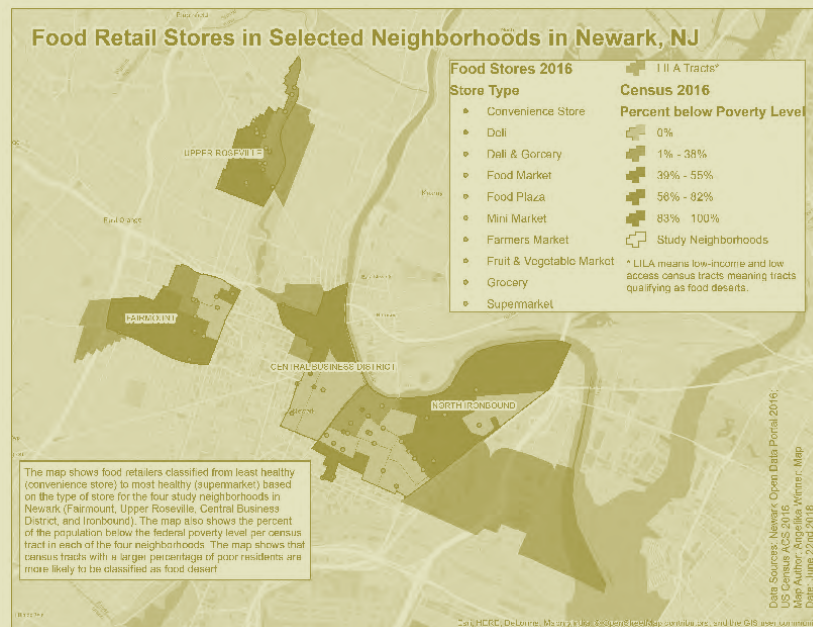
CUNY Adjunct Incubator

In 2018, the CUNY Adjunct Incubator awarded grants to 13 CUNY adjuncts from six CUNY colleges to develop a wide range of deeply impactful public and applied projects in the humanities and humanistic social sciences.

These projects varied from addressing the needs and amplifying the successes of CUNY students-parents to photo documentation of the erasure of Kurdish language from Kurdistan/Turkey; to food provision mapping that elucidates eating habits, access, and food inequities; and many more projects taking the form of concerts, dance, music, workshops, books, film, performance, classes, independent scholarship, and events.

Providing social, logistical, financial, and professional support for the production and circulation of knowledge by CUNY adjuncts, this platform promoted the crucial work of part-time faculty across CUNY community and senior college campuses.

The recipients of this inaugural grant were Aaron Botwick and Gabrielle Kappes, Maria Grewe, Emily Hotez, Nia Love, Corinna Mullin, James A. Myer, Pamela A. Proscia, Harry Stafylakis, and Angelika Winner.



Map from Angelika Winner's project "Ethnography of Food Provisioning Practices in Newark, NJ," 2018.

SPOTLIGHT:

Ellen Rothenberg, ISO 6346: ineluctable immigrant

The James Gallery presented *ISO 6346: ineluctable immigrant* (February 6–April 13, 2019), a solo exhibition of work by Ellen Rothenberg that focused on the current crisis of migration and the forces of global capitalism by considering connections between past and contemporary issues of migration.

The exhibition drew from research Rothenberg pursued in Berlin at Germany's largest refugee camp, housed in the monumental Tempelhof airport, a disused site that was originally designed and built by the Nazis. The exhibition also included objects and documents, such as passports, birth certificates, comics, and photographs—that represented earlier Jewish immigration and movement—that Rothenberg uncovered in the Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership collection.

The exhibition was complemented by several programs involving students, faculty, community partners, all of which were open and accessible to the public. These included an Israeli folk dance performance, a student-organized symposium, a faculty-led listening party, and a discussion about artists' estates.



Exhibition pamphlet from the exhibition *ISO 6346: ineluctable immigrant*, a solo exhibition of work by Ellen Rothenberg, 2019.

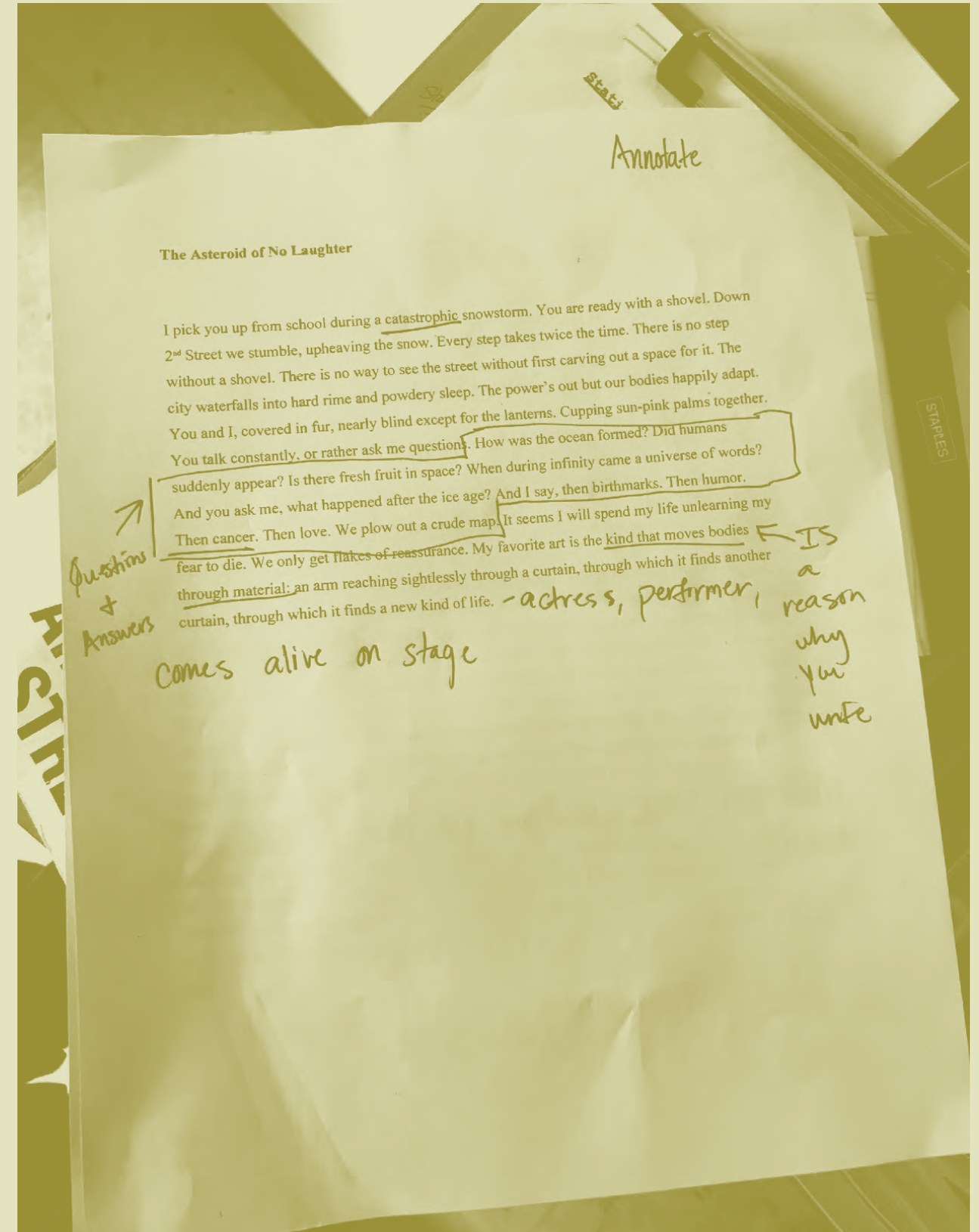
SPOTLIGHT:

Collaboration with the Academy for Young Writers

As part of *Lost & Found's* ongoing collaboration with the Academy for Young Writers, middle school students in the Writers Lab class participated in a workshop led by poet Phoebe Glick, intended to foster an interest in writing and aid the development of poetic skills learned throughout the semester.

The Writers Lab focused on different avenues of entry into poetry that are outside of the traditional canon. Students explored spoken word, rap lyrics as poetry, and natural experimentation through free writing. The workshop provided an opportunity for the students to examine different forms of poetry through writing that complicates form and subject—that embraces imperfection and the journey of writing a poem, while also speaking to the benefits of revision as a means to continue one's work.

The workshops also exposed students to different styles of poetry and creative methods for expressing their thoughts, identities, and desires for their future through their writing and brought them closer to a poetry community they had not realized existed.



Annotated poem from poetry workshop at Academy for Young Writers, 2019.



“We don’t see the ordinary things we live with. In fact, we should avoid looking at familiar objects because we can’t make a spectacle of the everyday without losing it. If we look directly, in an attempt to scrutinise its ordinariness, the very quality we want to inspect will recede.” He says this, then turns his head away from her and narrows his eyes. She withdraws into the blurry impressions on the furthest periphery of his vision.

On the other side of the room, she watches his fingers caress the handle on the desk drawer and she leans forward, curious to know what things he keeps inside it. She’s about to ask him, but just catches the grey fog of indifference to her presence descend over his eyes as he turns away.



PART 04

STATISTICS

2018-19 Public Programming Data

The Center for the Humanities hosted and organized 79 public events (including 11 conferences), attended by approximately 5,210 people. The Center also supported and launched at least 23 research-based projects (including websites, publications, films, digital tools and apps, public artworks, original music and compositions, oral histories and archival research, exhibitions, classroom initiatives, performances, workshops, and more). The Center granted and facilitated 22 fellowship positions, and hosted one artist in residence.



Audience at 12th Bi-Annual Stanley Burnshaw Lecture, "Mission Creep: Over-Policing the Poetic Imagination," delivered by Gregory Pardlo, 2018.

- The James Gallery hosted six exhibitions, 25 public events, one artist in residence, and one artist fellow, and organized and facilitated seven projects with CUNY classes and students.
- Of our dozen active seminars, working groups and workshops, we also hosted over 100 seminar meetings, workshops, and classes, with participants ranging from GC CUNY students, faculty, staff, to the greater CUNY community, to the NYC greater public at large.
- The Center for the Humanities also offered and administered dozens of grants, stipends, course leaves, fellowships and other opportunities for GC students, faculty, staff, adjuncts, and the NYC greater public.
- Hundreds of GC students and faculty have participated in or with the Center for the Humanities in 2018-19.
- The Center for the Humanities, through our publication series *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative* granted 13 CUNY graduate students

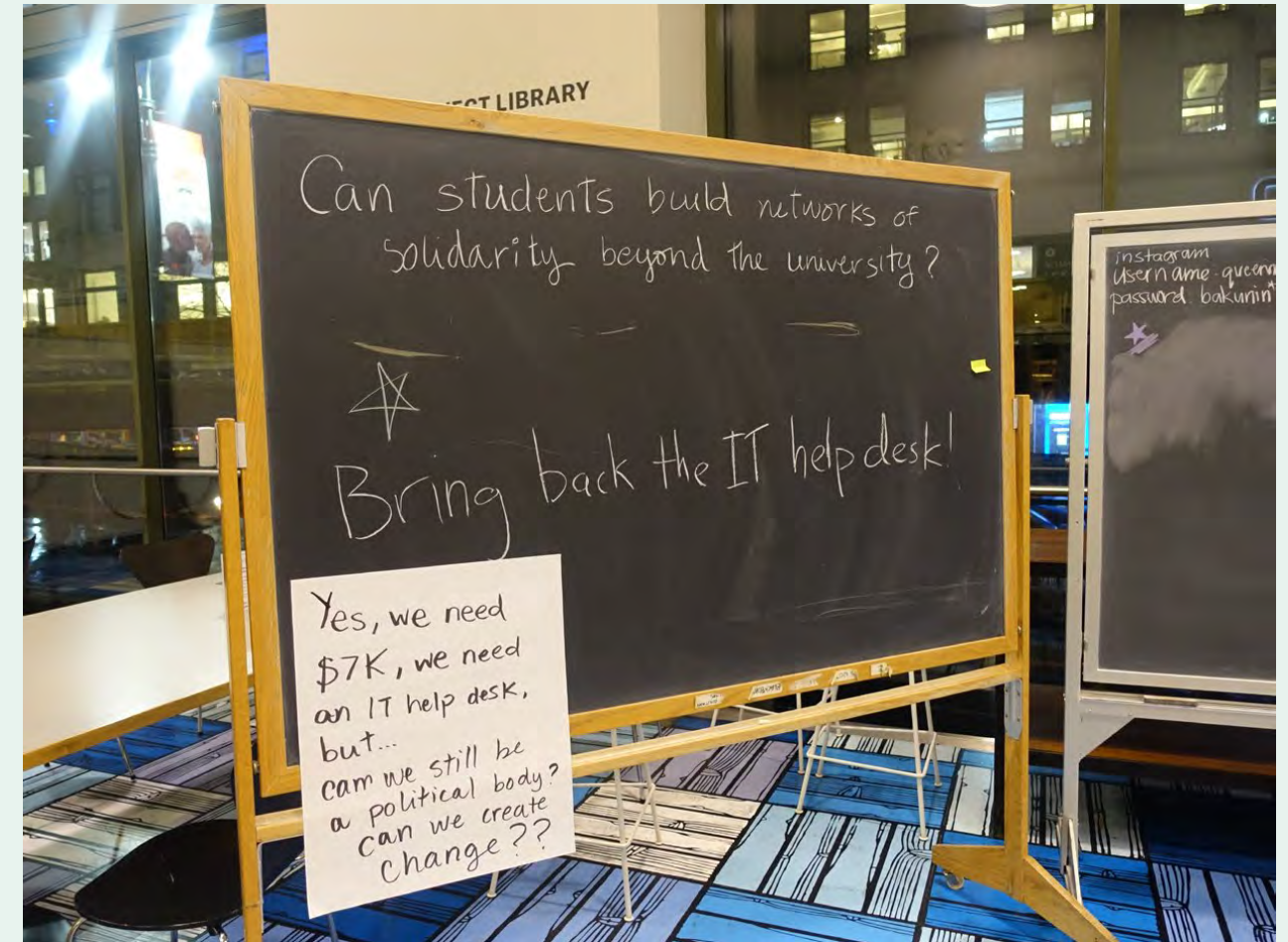
archival research fellowships, in which we provided mentorship, financial, and logistical support to help develop their innovative archival research and projects. We also introduced two new initiatives: *Lost & Found: In the Classroom*, which offers our unique archival texts and publications as teaching materials and maps to connect past and present pedagogical strategies in the classroom. And *Lost & Found Now & Then*, launched to connect younger scholars and researchers to the work and person of elders whose artistic world they inherit, and to provide a place for tribute and immediate response. In 2018-19, *Lost & Found* distributed over 6,000 copies of the newest *Series VII* of our award-winning publication of archival materials and original scholarship edited into chapbooks by GC doctoral students.

Social Media

- The Center for the Humanities' Facebook reach for the year is over 460,000 people, plus 4,616 followers.
- The Center for the Humanities' Twitter reach was over 505,000 people last year, plus 2,745 followers.
- *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative's* Facebook reach for the year is over 172,000 people, plus 1,762 followers.
- *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative's* Twitter reach for the year is over 235,000 people, plus 1,236 followers.
- The James Gallery's Facebook reach for the year is over 11,620 people, plus 124 followers.
- The James Gallery's Twitter reach for the year is over 155,000 people, plus 652 followers.

Mailing List/ Newsletter:

- The Center for the Humanities' mailing list has 39,746 subscribers.
- The *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative's* mailing list has 12,074 subscribers.
- The James Gallery's mailing list has 13,609 subscribers.



"A Sit-in at the Library: '68 Revisited," 2018.

2018-19 Website Statistics:

- Users: 113,000 (21% more than last year)
- Sessions: 146,000 (13.8% more than last year)

About the Center for Humanities

The Center for the Humanities encourages collaborative and creative work in the humanities at CUNY and across the city through seminars, conferences, publications, and exhibitions.

Our focus is connecting the interdisciplinary research and teaching at the Graduate Center with stakeholders across the city with the goal of fostering new ideas in the arts, philosophy, politics, and the humanities.

This is accomplished through four main initiatives:

- The Mellon Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research brings together over 40 faculty, students, and civic, cultural, and community partners to produce and circulate research through public projects, engaged scholarship, and interdisciplinary activities at CUNY and throughout New York City. The cohort develops multifaceted, public-facing projects that offer new ways of understanding and solving urgent social issues. Integrated research groups tackle different lines of inquiry through collaborative projects, pedagogic experiments, and events that expand the ways in which scholarly research, art creation, and activism can work in tandem to connect people and causes across academic and non-academic sectors.
- *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative* is a platform for publishing, supporting student collaborative archival research, and connecting poetics and pedagogy. In addition to awarding numerous archival research grants,

Lost & Found chapbooks are edited by doctoral students and contain original texts by figures central to and associated with New American Poetry, unearthed from personal and institutional archives located throughout the United States and abroad. Some of these chapbooks become full-length books in our *Elsewhere* series. And this year, we added a new initiative, *Now & Then*, which memorializes pivotal figures in twentieth-century poetry, music, and the arts. In addition to publishing, *Lost & Found* also implements pedagogical initiatives, bringing legacies of pedagogy at CUNY to contemporary students through *Lost & Found: In the Classroom* and hosting poetry workshops at the Academy for Young Writers.

- The Amie and Tony James Gallery, located on the Graduate Center's ground floor, brings artists and scholars into public dialogue on topics of mutual concern through exhibitions as a form of advanced research. Curated by Katherine Carl, the gallery creates and presents artwork to the public in a variety of formats, including static exhibitions, as well as performances, workshops, reading groups, roundtable discussions, salons, and screenings, produced in collaboration with scholars, students, artists, and the public.
- The Object Library, also on the Graduate Center's ground floor, offers both material objects and books as starting points for knowledge. With an eye toward opening up the ground floor library space to the public both physically and through thematic ties with the James Gallery, the Object Library inspires non-standard routes into study through temporary installations that incorporate a range of learning styles and cross-fertilize among disciplines.

We also continue to receive and support proposals for student and faculty-led public programming including screenings, lectures, conferences, and performances. The Center provides key financial, publicity, and logistical support in realizing these events.

Continuing our legacy of putting scholars in conversation with public audiences, we are the host of ongoing lecture, seminar, and reading series—the Annual Irving Howe Memorial Lecture, the Bi-Annual Stanley Burnshaw Lecture, the Essay Seminars, and the Turnstyle Reading Series.

For the last 18 years, our Working Groups in the Humanities have modelled much of the interdisciplinary research we do across our various platforms, and we continue to support four extremely active working groups, who not only meet regularly but also have created amazing public resources including open-source digital platforms for annotating analog archival material, public syllabi, and best practices for creating community-based oral histories.

Our CUNY Adjunct Incubator program grants funds and uplifts the vital work of adjuncts across CUNY in realizing public projects. And each year, we help to support two Graduate Center students as Public Humanities Fellows, in collaboration with Humanities New York.

Finally, our digital writing platform *Distributaries* provides a space for critical reflection on all of the work we do, publishing a wide range of contributors from undergraduate students to professional writers and scholars.

Across the many forms these activities take, we share a commitment to the humanities as an always evolving set of practices for making meaning, envisioning change, and communicating across the closest affinities and the widest differences.

None of this work would have been possible without the generous support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for their support of the Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research and the Curatorial Practicum and Fellowship at the James Gallery; Amie and Tony James for their support of the James Gallery and the Object Library; the Engaging the Senses Foundation, Margo & Anthony Viscusi, Early Research Initiative, and the National Endowment for the Arts for their support of *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative*; the Sylvia Klatzkin Steinig Fund for their support of the CUNY Adjunct Incubator; the Wellcome Trust for their support of the Object Library and Contagious

Cities programs; Max Palevsky for his endowment of the Irving Howe Lecture and the family of Stanley Burnshaw for their endowment of the Stanley Burnshaw Lecture, established by Professor Morris Dickstein and hosted every other year by the Harry Ransom Center for Research in the Humanities at the University of Texas, Austin; Poetry Foundation, Sign Language Resources, Poetry Society of America, Academy of American Poets, and Poets & Writers for their support of “Publishing American Sign Language Poetry;” the Vera Shlakman Irrevocable Trust for their support in honor of the Herbert Gutman Memorial Fund; and the Provost’s Office at the Graduate Center for their support of the Seminar on Public Engagement and Collaborative Research, the Object Library, and *Lost & Found*. But, moreover, this work depends on the active and engaged participation of our publics.

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Audience members join performers at "Theater for Social Change: (In)Visible Freedom," 2018.